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LAKE PLEASANT MILLERS FALLS MONTAGUE CENTER MONTAGUE CITY TURNERS FALLS

# The Montague Reporter

YEAR 6 - NO. 11

also serving Gill, Erving and Wendell

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THE VOICE OF THE VILLAGES

DECEMBER 13, 2007

## Gill Financial Woes Deepen

**BY DAVID DETMOLD**  
The town of Gill has been running for the last five months on borrowed time, and with borrowed money.

"What really concerns me is, we don't have a budget. We're borrowing our budget... part of it anyway," lamented selectboard member Nancy Griswold, at the board's December 10th meeting. Griswold pinned the town's financial plight on the delay by the state Department of Revenue in certifying Gill's property values, which has held up the town's ability to set a tax rate and mail out 2008 tax bills. "The town has done everything it can do to resolve the issue," Griswold said.

The board has been unable to set a tax rate for 2008, awaiting DOR certification following the town's triennial revaluation of property this year. Consequently,

tax bills have still not been mailed, and Gill has had to take out a three-month, \$650,000 loan to keep the town's bills paid on time.

Also waiting in the wings is a \$93,000 Proposition 2½ override vote - now delayed until February 5th, to coincide with the new date for Massachusetts' presidential primary - to fully fund town departmental budgets and the Gill-Montague school assessment for the current fiscal year. The board has repeatedly put off the date for the override until a tax rate can be set, believing that residents would be unwilling to approve the measure until they can ascertain what its actual impact on their taxes will be.

The town's cash flow problems had grown worse by Monday, December 10th, as town treasurer Ronnie LaChance informed the

see GILL pg 6

## GMRSD Votes to Move Grades from Hillcrest, Close Montague Center School



Montague Center School

DETMOLD PHOTO

**BY ALEX GOTTSCHALK**  
On Tuesday, December 12th, the Gill-Montague school committee voted 8 - 1 to close the Montague Center School, and move the first and second grades out of Hillcrest, bringing a long and passionate debate on reconfiguring the Montague elementary schools to a close.

For now.

The proposal that eventually passed would allow a period of three months for a community group to form to support a

different governing structure to keep either Montague Center or Hillcrest open as a charter school, magnet school or pilot school within the district.

Even as the board brought the issue up again on Tuesday, after the motion to consolidate schools had failed by one vote just two weeks ago, it seemed like the board might once again get bogged down in the wording of the motion, until chair Mary Kociela spoke up.

"I'm going to step out of my role as chairperson," Kociela said. "I really feel like we have a good motion in front of us that we can vote on tonight. There are endless questions. We could sit here another five years," and fine tune this. "Nothing we come up with is going to be a done deal. We need very badly to move forward. I feel like we are putting the district at risk if we don't, and I feel very strongly about this."

Kociela's comments

seemed to galvanize the rest of the board, which had spent the last hour debating the pros and cons of various amendments.

Earlier, interim G-M superintendent Ken Rocke voiced similar feelings. "Resolving the elementary school configuration is the biggest step to a turnaround, and it's in the best interests of all if we make a decision on that tonight." Rocke then offered words of encouragement to the committee

see SCHOOLS pg 10

## Pearl Harbor Day Wreath Laying

**BY DAVID DETMOLD**

**ERVING** - John Laughton, president of Rolling Thunder Vermont Chapter #1 out of Bennington, VT, organized a memorial wreath laying service on Pearl Harbor Day, Friday, December 7th, beside the French King Bridge. "We're doing this to honor all the service members from Pearl Harbor who were attacked on December 7th, 1941 and all the civilians who were killed that day, and all the military personnel who served in World War II." As Laughton reminded the crowd, the Japanese sneak attack on the U.S. Pacific fleet at Pearl Harbor was the precipitating cause of America entering that global conflict, with 2400 American dead and five battleships destroyed that morning.

Among the dozens of veterans who showed up for the ceremony, on the Erving side of the bridge, were a few World War II veterans, including Bert Williams, of Athol, who served in the European Theater from 1943 to 1945, in the 36th Infantry Division of the 143rd

Regiment.

"I joined up as a replacement that spring, after a winter offensive," in Italy, Williams recalled. "We landed in Celano, and went up to Rome," before the battle of Anzio, where the Germans inflicted heavy losses on the Allies in the early months of 1944.

Williams said his company was next engaged in the invasion of Southern France, where he helped

secure a beachhead. "We managed to get in there pretty good. We did lose half the company at that time." He recalled the Germans fought from fortified positions in "big villas surrounded by cement walls."

Williams, born in Hale, in Cornwall,



DETMOLD PHOTO

Veterans line the side of Route 2, with memorial wreaths, on Pearl Harbor Day.

Joe Young and Bert Williams, third and fourth from left.

England, moved to Athol when he was young; his father worked in the Starrett tool factory. He heard about the attack on Pearl Harbor on the radio, and later saw a newsreel about it at the York Theater, in downtown Athol. Williams made it through the war without visible injury, but

watch some of their heroes like Ted Williams and Johnny Pesky of the Red Sox, and Johnny Sain of the Boston Braves taking flight training there. Kostanski signed up in 1943.

His uncle, William Kostanski, of James see PEARL pg 5

suffered "combat fatigue," which sent him to the hospital for a time.

Another WWII vet on the scene was Walter Kostanski, of Turners Falls, who recalled hearing about the attack at Pearl Harbor while he was still a high school student in Turners Falls. Shortly thereafter, he and other baseball fans would hang out at the airport in Turners to

**PET OF THE WEEK**

**King Thom**



**Thomas**

My name is Thomas and I am a feisty 4-year-old male cat looking for a home where I can be the king of the world! I get along fine with dogs but don't like other cats. I am definitely an adults-only cat as I like to play rough and get wild from time to time. I have been indoors and outdoors and would probably like to continue in this regard so that I can get out my energy climbing trees, catching mice and other good stuff. I can be very affectionate and quite a flirt. For more information on adopting me please contact the Dakin Pioneer Valley Humane Society at 413-548-9898 or email leverett@dpvhs.org.

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Turners Falls, MA 01376

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**Green Power Sources Workshop**

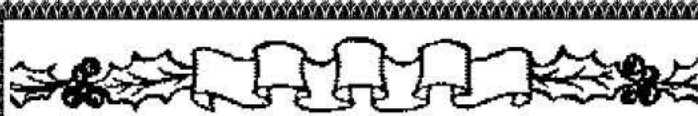
"Replacing Electricity from the Vermont Yankee Nuclear Reactor with Energy Conservation/Efficiency and Safe, 'Green' Power Sources."

A presentation by Harvey Schaktman of the Citizens Awareness Network (CAN) regarding the status of the reactor in nearby Vernon, VT, and a presentation by a staff member from the Franklin Regional Council of

Governments (FRCOG) regarding the "Pioneer Valley Clean Energy Plan." Discussion afterwards

WHEN: Saturday, December 15th 2-5 pm

WHERE: Green Fields Market, 2nd floor conference room, 144 Main St., Greenfield. Sponsored by the Five Rivers Council



**Fiesta De Navidad Latina**

Todos estan invitados con sus familias a una reunion para celebrar las Fiestas Navidenas. El domingo 23 de Diciembre de las 4:00 de la tarde hasta las 7:00 de la noche, en la iglesia "Our Lady of Peace" 80 Seventh St. Turners Falls. (Iglesia de ladrillos que queda atras de la libreria) Por favor, trae un platillo de tu gusto y refresco para compartir con todos. Habra musica, buenas comidas y u buen ambiente de amistad y union. En caso de que el tiempo de invierno este malo, por favor, llama al 772-0871 ext. 109 para informacion sobre cancelacion. Tu participaciones muy importante, muchas gracias po asistir. - Teresa, Nelcwit

**Paz en elmundo!!!**

**Latino Christmas Festival**

Everyone is invited with their families to a Christmas celebration Sunday, the 23rd of December from 4 to 7 p.m. at Our Lady of Peace Church, 80 Seventh Street, Turners Falls. (The brick church behind the library) Please bring a dish of your choice and a soft drink to share with everyone. Music, great food and a great atmosphere of friendship and welcome. In case of bad winter weather please call 772-0871, ext. 109 for cancellation information. Your participation is very important. Thank you for your help. - Teresa, Nelcwit.

**Peace on Earth**



**SENIOR CENTER ACTIVITIES Dec. 17th - 21st**

**GILL/MONTAGUE Senior Center**, 62 Fifth Street, Turners Falls, is open Monday through Friday from 9:00 a.m. to 2:00 p.m. for activities and congregate meals. Council-on-Aging Director is Bunny Caldwell. For information or to make reservations, call 863-9357. Meal reservations need to be made a day in advance by 11 a.m. Messages can be left on our machine when the center is not open. Mealsite Manager is Chris Richer. The Center offers a hot noon meal weekdays to any senior. A reservation is necessary and transportation can be provided.

**Monday, 17th**  
10 a.m. Senior Aerobics  
11 a.m. Easy Aerobics  
**Tuesday, 18th**

9:30 a.m. T'ai Chi  
**Wednesday, 19th**  
10 a.m. Senior Aerobics  
12:45 p.m. Bingo  
**Thursday, 20th**  
9:30 a.m. T'ai Chi  
**Friday, 21st**  
10 a.m. Senior Aerobics  
11 a.m. Easy Aerobics

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

**FACES & PLACES**

**The best laid plans of mice and men**  
*The new bump-out and wheelchair ramp in front of the Turners Falls Post Office was covered by a mound of ice and snow this week.*

**Feng Shui Workshop**

The National Spiritual Alliance is sponsoring a Feng Shui Workshop on Sunday (Dec. 30) from 3 to 5 p.m. at Thompson Temple, across from the Post Office in Lake Pleasant. Workshop facilitator will be Katherine Mayfield. Feng Shui is an ancient Oriental art used in the home to create harmony with natural energies and facilitate a more positive life direction. Workshop attendees will find out how to spot "problem areas" in the home that mirror problems in their lives. In addition, they will learn how to alleviate those problems and create more positive energy.

**PUBLIC FORUM**

**Protect our local water resources.**  
**Monday Dec. 17th**  
**6:30-8:30 p.m.**  
**Doyle Conservation Center, Leominster**  
**Open to the public.**

**Great Falls Middle School Students of the Week**

**Grade 6**  
Alissa Ames

**Grade 7**  
Joshua Cardaropoli

**Grade 8**  
Jesse Langknecht  
Carlos Naranjo

*"He was shipped overseas to a far off place we'd never heard of..., Omaha Beach"*

**From Local Color #9**

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**OFF THE BEATEN TRACK**

# New Owner at the Book Mill

**BY FLORE**  
**MONTAGUE CENTER** - Most of Susan Shilliday's friends reacted as if she were totally deranged when she announced she was taking off to take the helm of a fantastic place in far off Montague! Moving away from L.A.? Whoever heard of such a thing? How to breathe normally away from the sweet-scented air of the City of the Angels? What about the terribly cold winter of New England? And how to convince them you were serious, taking on your first retail endeavor in a former hydro-powered machine shop miles from the nearest highway, selling *Books You Don't Need in a Place You Can't Find!*

Some people travel life's tight rope without a safety net. Others plod through melting slush in waterlogged snowshoes. Still others live to dream, until their dreams become reality, and take wing. Such a one is she, the new owner of the Montague Book Mill.

"Being raised in western Pennsylvania... Pittsburgh... I am used to the snow, grew up with it, in fact. Furthermore, surrounded by three rivers as a child, I need water around."

There is plenty of it here, rushing at the foot of the old mill, tumbling down the broken dam.

Truth is, Shilliday came to Montague often in the past.

"Simply, I already love the place!"

She used to visit the Book Mill at least three times a week, even dreamed of acquiring it someday. Might it ever be for sale?

Then one day, there it was, in the classifieds, written in big let-

ters, as she poured frantically over the announcement! She could not believe her luck.

In the past, she would sit quietly at the Book Mill and work at her screenplays, her *metier*, when visiting Lizzi, her older daughter, attending Hampshire College. Her younger daughter, May, is now registered at N.Y.U.

Those were "my rat race, Hollywood days..." Shilliday mused.

Do you remember the popular TV show *Thirtysomething*? She was its scriptwriter. Does the movie *Legends of the Fall* ring any bells? There also, she co-authored the screenplay!

When asked how she feels about the screenwriter's strike, Shilliday answered, "I approve of it totally!

It's about time the public realized the exploitation of people working under the power of the Hollywood studios."

Now, she is at another turn of her creative

quest. Ageless and soft-spoken, Shilliday is also a poet, and looks forward to return poetry readings to the Book Mill's agenda. She plans to continue to build up the reading stock. Install a Children's Hour, for the little crowd. "The Book Mill will continue to be a community place," she avers.

With soft couches and welcoming armchairs for readers to pause in. Children, dogs and friendly cats.

Shilliday will soon resume the winter movie series, and live music performances. Talks and guest lecturers will make their appearance.

And there will be new legends written by the old waterfall.

Shilliday is the first woman to succeed seven gallant men, including David Lovelace, *bien sur*, who ran the Book Mill for the past 15 passionate years. Just think, putting back the clock, when the original building was erected on the Sawmill River, back in 1884. Known then as Stone's Gristmill, horse and buggies were drawn here, people would come loading up on grain ground into flour, for their families' larder. Who could predict the different lives the Mill would lead?

From manufacturing hydraulic marking machines, to the mixing of books to dream by?

*Bienvenue* to you, Susan Shilliday, forging the eighth life for the old Mill!



*Susan Shilliday, the Montague Bookmill's new owner*



FLORE PHOTOS

*The Montague Book Mill*

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# The Montague Reporter

58 4th Street, Turners Falls, MA 01376

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**Founded by**  
Harry Brandt David Detmold  
August, 2002

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Lisa Davol  
Joe Parzych

**Technical Administrators**  
Michael Muller  
Michael Farick

## Reporter Benefit a Great Success

BY DAVID BRULE & CHRIS SAWYER-LAUCANNO

**MONTAGUE CENTER** - The Night Kitchen was the place to be on Tuesday night - for the *Montague Reporter* Holiday Cocktail Party - or at least 100 supporters of your newspaper thought so. Within minutes of the doors opening at 5 p.m., the first toasts were pronounced, glasses clinked together, the food appeared, platter after platter, and Art Gilmore, often surrounded by a bevy of talented choristers, many Town Hall staff among them, entertained on the keyboard for two non-stop hours.

The Night Kitchen's owner and marvelous chef, Max Brody, whipped up countless plates of

group, a holly crown perched askew on his head. It was one of those Bacchanalian nights.

But while the food and drink were plentiful, it was the good will and generosity that brought everyone together. Old friends caught up with each other, and a fair number of new friendships got formed on the spot. Editor David Detmold had to confess he didn't know everyone who turned out for the event. But everyone, of course, knew David, or at least knew of him through his work on the *Montague Reporter*.

The *Montague Reporter* Board, who with the extraordinary help of Lake Pleasant's own Marge Levenson, put the event together, was overwhelmed by the



DAVOL PHOTO

The Frank Abbondanzio Singers wassailed the night away at the Montague Reporter Holiday Cocktail Party

scrumptious *hors d'oeuvres* that seemed to pour magically from the kitchen throughout the evening. It seems no matter how many appetizers the party-goers managed to gobble, more were brought to the table. And the cash bar did a pretty good business, as well.

Before long, a ring-dance formed, while Tim DeChristopher as the Lord of Misrule pirouetted around the

turnout and the enthusiastic response. The goal was to raise \$750, the amount needed for the newspaper to file its application with the federal government to become a non-profit, 501c3 corporation. At presstime, with checks still rolling in from those who couldn't attend in person, (or who found all four parking lots at the Book Mill full) the take more than doubled that amount.

The board wants to thank

everyone - including Max and Richard of the Night Kitchen - who contributed to the highly successful fundraiser.

We are, in fact, staggered by the outpouring of generosity. For five years we've been publishing week after week, without ever having a balance of more than a few extra dollars in the bank (and sometimes not even that). We aren't rich yet, nor will we ever be. But we are, and will be, your community newspaper for many years to come.

We look around, five years on, and watch the downtown business district growing, with new entrepreneurs, bars and eateries, and a flourishing arts community. Ad revenues are up, but we still rely on the direct support of subscribers and individual readers to keep the paper strong, and to keep our revenues on par with steadily rising printing, mailing and distribution costs. That is likely to be the case for many years to come.

That is why we appeal directly to you to support the *Montague Reporter*, and it is to you, our readers, we are responsible for providing lively, in-depth news coverage of the events that affect our lives in our towns and vil-

lages.

When you come to think of it, those events include many of the same topics that command the attention of readers throughout the nation and the world. Things like war and peace, how to truly support our veterans, the warming of



MC Art Gilmore rocked the mic at the Night Kitchen, for two hours straight!

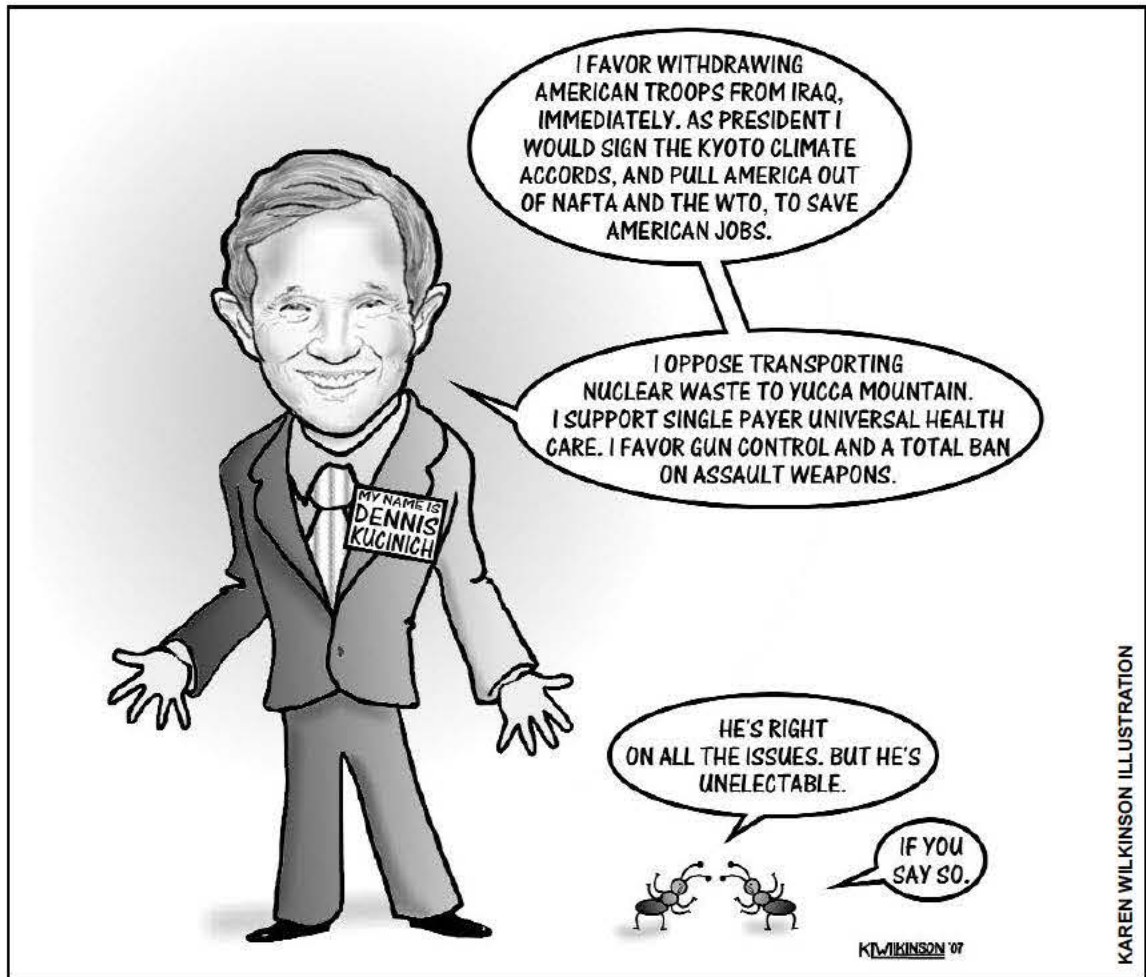
the planet and how we can combat it, the question of illegal immigration and how we can welcome and include those who live in the shadow of Immigration and Customs Enforcement in the heart of our community, the lack of resources for education and how we can reverse the erosion of our

public schools, the loss of industrial jobs and how we can rebuild an economic base with the talent and skills of our own citizens, and the help of the creative economy. All these issues and more fill the pages of 'The Voice of the Villages' each week, along with poems from your neighbors, the insights of hometown sages who grace our editorial pages, the recollections of area historians, and the daily drama of the local police logs.

If everyone took care of their own community, the world would be an infinitely better place. We believe that. And with your help, we'll whip this town into shape in short order, and provide a fine example for the rest of the country to follow.

With friends and supporters like you, we know the *Montague Reporter* has put down roots. We're here to stay. Readers in decades to come will join us in thanking you, once again, for showing us the strength and vitality of our community. We are proud to be your newspaper, and proud to be able to count you as our readers, friends and supporters.

Thank you.



KAREN WILKINSON ILLUSTRATION

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## Cheesemaking Workshops at Upinngil

Cheesemaking workshops will be offered at Upinngil, January 12th and January 19th, 2008. The January 12th workshop is a beginners course. Soft cheeses will be featured that can be made with minimal equipment and ordinary kitchen implements. The January 19th workshop is on the dipped curd cheeses (Italian and Swiss cheeses). Both courses will cover the specifics and fundamentals of cheesemaking and curing. These are hands-on workshops; participants will make and take home product.

Space is limited to ten participants, and pre-registration is required. As always participants are invited to bring milk from their own animals and may make a specific cheese of their choice if desired.

These workshops are in advance of the NOFA practical skills workshops that will be offered in March and May of 2008 at Upinngil.

For details and registration, contact Clifford Hatch at 413-863-2297 or email pickens@crocker.com, or visit Upinngil, 411 Main Road, Gill, MA 01354.

**We welcome your letters**  
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**reporter@montaguema.net**

## American Dead in Iraq and Afghanistan as of 12/12/07

**US FORCES**  
Casualties in Iraq as of this date  
**3,888**

Afghanistan **469**

Wounded in Action **28,629**

US Marine Corps League

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

**NOTES FROM THE ERVING SELECTBOARD**

# First Steps on \$6.4 Million Sewer Plant Upgrade

**BY NICHOLE CLAYTON** - Art Pace, Erving's newly hired environmental supervisor, who has been running the wastewater treatment plant in Erving since the resignation of Mike Pierce last month, asked the selectboard on December 10th to set a date to decide what to do about the treatment plant being down one fulltime person. The board agreed to discuss the matter at their January 7th, 2008 meeting. Pace also asked the board's help in finding missing data reports from Pierce, the previous plant operator. Board chair Andy Tessier gave Pace direction in finding the information he needs to complete the reports.

The selectboard turned next to a presentation from the engineering company Tighe and Bond for the planned \$6.4 million renovation of the wastewater treatment plant. Among other upgrades, the plan includes replacing windows and doors at the existing building, energy efficiency improvements, a new roof, and improvements to the treatment process at the plant, with a switch from chemical-based to ultra-violet wastewater treatment. The selectboard voted to spend \$15,900 to have Tighe and Bond come up with engineering plans for an additional heating system upgrade, also needed at the plant.

Tighe and Bond representatives Peter Valinski and Mike McManus said they hope to hold meetings every other week with the town, to go over details of the plant renovation.

The selectboard then went into a meeting with the planning board, which needs to fill a vacancy left by the death of Joann Taylor. The board interviewed three applicants for the post. Asked why they were interested in being on the planning board, and what their qualifications were for the position, the first replied, "I am Joe Stacey, a GCC student in my last semester. I am transferring to UMass. I'm interested in town law, and have a vested interest in Erving."

Second candidate Annemarie Gilbert stated, "I am an Erving

resident, born and raised. I sit on the senior housing and senior center boards. I recently lost my husband, whom I had been caring for, for several years, and I thought this would be a fun and interesting way to learn about the community, and to help out where I can."

The final candidate was Tim Mackin. "I am a licensed electrician, familiar with the regulations when it comes to building permits. When I saw the opening for the board I decided to get involved and do something for the community, rather than just living in it."

The planning board and the selectboard voted to appoint Mackin as the new planning board member, and asked the

other two candidates to serve the board as alternates. All candidates accepted the positions offered.

Mackin will have to run again for the position in May of 2008, and the other candidates will also have the opportunity to run at that time. Jeff Dubai, who sits on both the selectboard and the planning board said, "We welcome all the help we can possibly get. Alternates are encouraged to attend meetings and offer input."

The selectboard closed the meeting with a discussion of Cost of Living Adjustments (COLAs) for town employees and elected officials. No decision was taken on this topic at the meeting.

**PEARL** from page 1

Street in Greenfield, now nearing 90 years old, was serving in the army at the Schofield barracks, providing mobile defense of Pearl Harbor and the entire island of Oahu on December 7th, 1941. Reached by phone this week, Kostanski shared his memories of that day. "I was having coffee," in the mess hall, Kostanski said, when the attackers came flying low over the island, on their way to bomb the harbor. "I said, 'What the hell are they doing having maneuvers on a Sunday morning?'"

Kostanski said the defenders at Schofield had little advance warning of the impending attack, other than a message three weeks earlier: "Don't fire on nobody till they fire on you."

"We were caught with our pants down," said Kostanski, who added his company was the same one immortalized in story and film in *From Here to Eternity*. "They were more interested in sports and having fun in Honolulu," than in preparing for an enemy attack, Kostanski opined.

He said some of the men on his base were in a local bar that

happened to take a direct hit during the attack, even at that early hour of the morning on a Sunday. "A lot of guys died there."

He said a mountain shielded Schofield from direct sight of the harbor, and he did not see the battleships bombed and sinking. But as the Japanese planes circled back over the island on their return, some came in low over the army base. "We'd been ordered up on the roof. I was carrying a 20-round Browning Automatic. I didn't even have tracer bullets. One plane leaned over low, I could see him right there, but I missed him. I was so goddamned angry. I missed him."

Kostanski said the Japanese seemed uninterested in the army base. "They were after the ships. They didn't even strafe us."

Among the speakers at the wreath laying on Friday was state senator Stephen Brewer (D-Barre), who chairs the senate committee on veterans affairs. He spoke extemporaneously, saying, "Sixty-six years ago the cowardly sneak attack on Pearl Harbor took the lives of thousands of Americans, including 21 sets of brothers who both went down on the U.S.S. Arizona. Think of the

hurt their families suffered." Brewer said that when the Pearl Harbor attack occurred, America's military might was ranked 37th in the world, behind countries like Romania. "In the four short years to Hiroshima and Nagasaki, we became the preeminent power on the planet." He credited America's "arsenal of democracy," for "the triumph over the axis of evil: Germany, Italy and Japan," and he called the that victory, "a tribute to the brave veterans of World War II." He added, "There's a generation of Americans now that have a hard time recalling [Pearl Harbor] was the defining moment in their lives." He faulted the present generation for hero-worshipping celebrities who are "famous only for being famous," and, gesturing to the veterans standing by the side of the highway, he said, "These are the real heroes."

Master Sergeant Joe Young 52, of Orange, was one of the first Massachusetts National Guardsmen to earn a Bronze Star for service in the Iraq War, where he served two tours of duty. He told the crowd, "America takes care of us. She doesn't ask much of us. If I want to walk down the

street saying, 'I hate this person,' or 'I hate that person,' I don't get arrested for it. It has been my honor and privilege to fight for America. No man could ask for more."

Young said on his second tour of duty, in January of 2004, he was assigned to serve at the Abu Ghraib prison in Baghdad. Accounts of prisoner abuse and torture at that American controlled facility first surfaced in April of that year, and seven American soldiers were eventually tried and convicted in courts martial for dereliction of duty, maltreatment, aggravated assault, and battery there. Young said, "You all know the story of Abu Ghraib. I didn't take the photos."

Wreaths were laid on the side of Route 2 to honor veterans of each branch of the armed service: marines, navy, army, air force, coast guard, merchant marines, as well as the prisoners of war and those missing in action. After Williams, with National Guardsman Joe Young supporting him by the elbow, placed the wreath in honor of army veterans, there came a sudden lull in the traffic on Route 2, which had been constant along the busy highway all morning. No cars or

trucks came from either direction for a full three minutes, as if the state police had blocked the road for the occasion, though this was not the case. As wreaths were laid for the air force and coast guard, an eerie silence fell around the ceremony, and the words of the speakers could be clearly heard for the first time. Then, as suddenly as it began, the lull in traffic ceased, and the ceremony ended with the procession of the Oak Ridge detachment of the Marine Corps League color guard, marching in careful step across the icy drive.



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### GILL from pg 1

December 10th, as town treasurer Ronnie LaChance informed the board, "Money is not coming in very well," from residents who choose to prepay their 2008 tax bills, using estimates from last year's bills. She told the board she had arranged to roll over the \$650,000 loan, which comes due on December 21st, for another three months, at 3.69% interest.

On top of that, fire chief Gene Beaubien brought Gill's former fire chief, Mike Hastings, to the meeting to advise the board on the results of the recent pump test of Gill's fire trucks. Engine #3, the oldest truck, passed the annual test, though Hastings said that was because the town spent some money on repairing that engine recently. Engine #2 would have passed the test, but a relief valve failed. But a more

major problem, and far more expensive repair bill, was identified for Engine #1. On that unit, "The impeller is worn," said Hastings, who explained, "You have to pull the whole pump out, including the gear box, to get to the impeller." At that point, it might be advisable to replace the gear box as well as repair the impeller, for a combined total of more than \$15,000, Hastings said. Without the gear box, repairs would still equal nearly \$14,000, said Hastings, whose company, Bulldog Fire Apparatus, conducted the annual pump test inspection for the town.

Beaubien said, "The truck is not out of service at the moment." But Hastings noted the pump capacity for Engine #1 was rated at 1500 gallons a minute, and with the degraded impeller, it was now only able to pump 1200 gallons a minute.

Hastings, who served on

Gill's fire department for 35 years, the last ten of them as chief - following his father in that post - until 1992, said the problem was, "In Gill, the trucks draft from streams, and when you draft from streams, you pick up a bunch of crud that acts like sandpaper in the pumps."

Board member Ann Banash said, "Right this second, I don't see where we are going to get \$14,000. We basically don't have a budget."

### Group Home Planned for Boyle Road

Ken Sprankle approached the board with concerns he had regarding the plans of a Wethersfield, CT-based non-profit organization called the Corporation for Independent Living (CIL) to build a group home on a two-acre site they have recently purchased near the Gill Elementary School. According to their website, CIL works "to create small residences in residential neighborhoods for people with disabilities." CIL has a for-profit wing that develops market rate housing to offset the decline in state and federal dollars available to assist their non-profit community-based housing development efforts for people with disabilities.

Reached by phone, Tom Perkins, director of housing development for CIL, said, "There is going to be a group home," at the Boyle Road site, which his agency's non-profit wing will build, but which another agency, the Association for Community Living (ACL), based in Springfield, will administer. ACL's website

(www.theasn.org) describes its mission as "creating opportunities, building relationships, and improving lives for children and adults with developmental disabilities."

ACL's division director, Gail Brown, said her agency supports residential and employment opportunities for more than 90 individuals with disabilities in small group settings throughout Western Massachusetts, at the present time, including four residents of a group home on West Gill Road. "We have a wonderful reputation for providing quality programs and maintaining properties," Brown said. She said ACL would have a manager on site at the new residence 24-hours a day. She estimated construction would be complete within nine months.

Sprankle had written a letter to the board seeking clarification of the group's plans, and followed up in person, saying, "I have young children. How could I let them go down to school to play?" without knowing what sort of population will be served in the group home next door.

The board will invite CIL to send a representative to a future meeting to answer any questions or concerns members of the community may have about CIL's plans. [Brown said she would be happy to meet with the board to answer those concerns.] Banash said it was likely the town's bylaws concerning the number of unrelated persons living in the same residence would be superseded by CIL's charter, [and Brown confirmed that, as 501c3 educational institution, this was so].

CIL purchased the two-acre

plot on Boyle Road from HBM Properties LLC of Leverett, which, in 2006, purchased and subdivided into eight parcels 36 acres of land previously owned by the Kuzontoski family of Main Road.

In other news, the board granted permission for Steve Damon to continue his summer concert series on the town common, provided a check with the Gill police confirms there were no problems with last year's events, and that adequate parking is available for the concerts.

Town administrative assistant Tracy Rogers announced the Franklin Mediation and Training Collaborative has a subsidized program available to local residents to receive intensive training to become peer mediators. For more information on this program, contact Rogers at town hall, at 863-9347.

In a bit of positive financial news, Rogers gave the board a spread sheet of November's town expenses, showing spending has been in line with budgetary goals. "We're as good as we can be for spending budgets without having a budget," Banash said, wryly.

Rogers cautioned that the selectboard's expense line was nearly tapped out, due to the expense of advertising the Mariamante property in the *Boston Globe* and *Worcester Telegram*. She also noted that "three quarters of the police department's expense line is going to be spent on gas."

The board will meet again on Friday, December 21st, at 9:00 a.m.



## MCTV Schedule

### Channel 17: Dec. 14th - Dec. 20th

**Friday, December 14**  
 8:00 am Positive Profiles in Courage  
 10:30 am Montague Select Board (12/10/07)  
 11:30 am Carlos W. Anderson: So What  
 11:30 am Montague Community Band  
 1:00 pm Physician Focus: GI Health  
 6:00 pm Montague Update: Tim Neumann  
 7:00 pm GMRSD Meeting (12/11/07)  
 10:00 pm On The Ridge: Getting Ready for Bow  
 10:30 pm Physician Focus: Men's Health  
 11:00 pm Preachin The Blues

**Saturday, December 15**  
 8:00 am Montague Update: Tim Neumann  
 9:00 am GMRSD Meeting (12/11/07)  
 12:00 pm On The Ridge: Getting Ready for Bow  
 12:30 pm Physician Focus: Men's Health  
 1:00 pm Preachin The Blues  
 6:00 pm Carlos W. Anderson: Here All Along  
 7:00 pm Montague Update: Susan Shilliday  
 7:30 pm Prevailing Winds in Denmark  
 8:00 pm Windchanger: Purple Koi  
 9:00 pm Independent Voices 35  
 9:30 pm Art Fest 2007

**Sunday, December 16**  
 8:00 am Carlos W. Anderson: Here All Along  
 9:00 am Montague Update: Susan Shilliday  
 9:30 am Prevailing Winds in Denmark  
 10:00 am Windchanger: Purple Koi  
 11:00 am Independent Voices 35  
 11:30 am Art Fest 2007  
 6:00 pm Chronicles of Czestochowa: Tridentine Latin Requiem Mass  
 7:00 pm Montague Update: Ted Graveline  
 7:30 pm Carlos W. Anderson: Shekinah  
 8:30 pm Discovery Center: Woodpeckers  
 9:30 pm Block Party 2007 Part 1

**Monday, December 17**  
 8:00 am Chronicles of Czestochowa: Tridentine Latin Requiem Mass  
 9:00 am Montague Update: Ted Graveline  
 9:30 am Carlos W. Anderson: Shekinah  
 10:30 am Discovery Center: Woodpeckers  
 11:30 am Block Party 2007 Part 1

**Tuesday, December 18**  
 8:00 am Independent Voices 39  
 8:30 am Common People Concerts: Stephanie Marshall  
 9:30 am TFHS Presents: National Honor Society Induction 2007  
 10:00 am Over the Falls: PVMA and the Big Read  
 6:00 pm Sustainable Energy  
 7:00 pm GMRSD (12/11/07)  
 10:00 pm Coffee House Series: Jeff Martell

**Wednesday, December 19**  
 8:00 am Sustainable Energy  
 9:00 am GMRSD (12/11/07)  
 12:00 pm Coffee House Series: Jeff Martell  
 6:00 pm Chronicles of Czestochowa: Tridentine Latin Requiem Mass  
 7:00 pm On The Ridge: Scents and Sensibility  
 7:30 pm Enjoy the Ride  
 8:00 pm Independent Voices 38  
 8:30 pm Seabrook 1977  
 10:00 pm Windchanger: Mona Lisa  
 11:00 pm Thomas Jefferson Speaks

**Thursday, December 20**  
 8:00 am Chronicles of Czestochowa: Tridentine Latin Requiem Mass  
 9:00 am On The Ridge: Scents and Sensibility  
 9:30 am Enjoy the Ride  
 10:00 am Independent Voices 38  
 10:30 am Seabrook 1977  
 12:00 pm Windchanger: Mona Lisa  
 1:00 pm Thomas Jefferson Speaks  
 6:00 pm Memorial Day Parade & Ceremony (12/17/07)  
 7:00 pm Montague Select Board: (12/17/07)  
 8:30 pm Carlos W. Anderson: The Cost of Freedom  
 10:30 pm Common Man Concerts: Cowbell Prescription

### HIGHLIGHTS FROM THE GILL POLICE LOG

## Wounded Deer

**Thursday 12-6**  
 9:35 a.m. Medical emergency at Northfield Mount Hermon.  
 10:03 a.m. Welfare check conducted on Mountain Road, all appeared o.k.  
 11:50 a.m. Alarm at Oak Street residence, accidental set off.  
 8:15 p.m. Assisted drug task force with search warrant in Montague.

**Saturday 12-8**  
 9:30 a.m. Assisted with medical emergency at West Gill Road residence.  
 11:15 a.m. Report of milk truck rolled over on Main Road, responded and found truck, same was not rolled over.

**Sunday 12-9**  
 7:18 p.m. Assisted resident with obtaining emergency restraining order at station.

8:25 p.m. Restraining order served on South Cross Road, further charges under investigation.

**Monday 12-10**  
 6:29 p.m. Report of gunshots in the area of Center Road and Ben Hale Road. Checked area, unable to locate source.

**Tuesday 12-11**  
 12:10 p.m. Report of deer walking with arrow stuck in its side near residence on Franklin Road. Responded with environmental police. Deer fled into woods.


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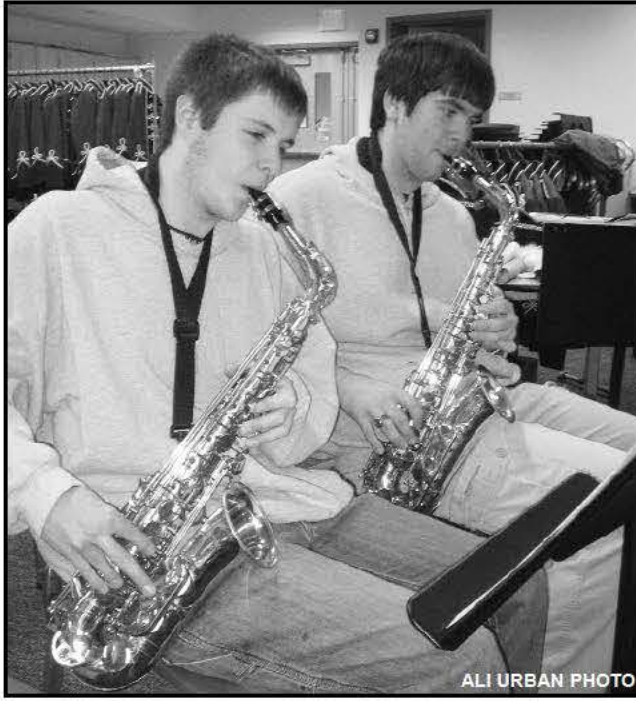
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# TFHS Students Busy as Year Draws to an End

**BY ALI URBAN** - As 2007 draws to an end and the first semester nears completion, Turners Falls High School students are staying active with musical, community and social events.

The music department's annual winter concert will take place on Tuesday, December 18th, at 7 p.m. in the TFHS Theater. Featured will be the TFHS Symphonic Band and Choir, Great Falls Middle School Concert Band and Chorus and the TFHS and GFMS Jazz Band.

Music director Brenda McGurk explained that students have been studying music from the Baroque Period (1600-1750), Tin Pan Alley, Ragtime, Dixieland and Early Blues and Rock and Roll from 1950 to the early 1960s. "These musical eras



Seniors Aaron Cappucci and Corey Leveille practice music for the annual TFHS and GFMS Winter Concert which will take place in the high school auditorium Dec. 18 at 7 p.m.

have really been our focus for the year," said McGurk. "The students have been working

on the sax in high school," he said. "I especially like (one of the Symphonic Band's



hard at playing some more difficult songs."

This will be senior Aaron Cappucci's last winter concert in high school and the alto saxophone player said he is looking forward to it. "It will be one of my last times performing

(one of the selections) 'Sleigh Ride' because I love this time of year, and it shows off our holiday spirit."

To help boost holiday spirit for others, the student council and project chairperson Zach Little are literally wrapping up this year's Adopt-a-Family program. The high school has participated in this program for more than a decade.

This year, TFHS sponsored two local families in need, for holiday gift giving. Each class was designated an individual or category for which students and faculty collected donations. Requests varied from clothes to books to toys to toiletries. Donations were then collected, sorted and wrapped. Each family will receive their gifts,

and enough food for a holiday dinner.

To kick off winter vacation, the student council will host the annual Snow Ball on Friday, December 21st, at Thomas Memorial Golf and Country Club. This semi-formal dance is one of the highlights of the school year for Turners Falls High School students, as they celebrate the coming holidays and just enjoy the fun of being together. Students will also enjoy dancing and music from DJ Tim Dowd, refreshments and door prizes at the event. More than 120 tickets have been sold so far.

Student council president Lara Ames believes the dance is good because it brings everyone together before the holiday break. "It's an important tradition to continue," she said. "Parents and students all anticipate it and everyone plans on it."

## Drug Bust on L Street

**BY JEAN HEBDEN**

**TURNERS FALLS** - On Thursday, December 6th at 8:30 p.m., the Montague police in conjunction with the Franklin-Hampshire Narcotic/Gang Task Force, the state police and the Greenfield K-9 unit executed a search warrant at an apartment at 59 L Street in Turners Falls. An investigation had been ongoing for several weeks



This building, at 59 L Street, was where the drug bust took place.

as a result of information received by detective Lee Laster of the Montague police from vigilant neighbors of that apartment. Steven P. Clarke, 42 of 59 L Street Apartment #1, was found in possession of twelve individually wrapped packages of heroin. He was arrested and charged with possession of a Class A drug, possession of a

Class A drug within 1000 feet of a school, conspiracy to violate drug laws, and possession to distribute a Class A drug. Antonio Wiggins, 47, of 18 Capron Street C, Walden, NY, was found in possession of nine individual bags of crack cocaine, twelve packages of heroin, a package with 24.1 grams of cocaine, another bag containing 44.1

grams of cocaine, nine rocks of crack cocaine, about 40 Ecstasy pills, scales, cutting material, and packaging material. He was arrested and charged with possession of a Class B drug, possession with intent to distribute a Class B drug, possession of a Class A drug, possession of a Class A drug with intent to distribute within 1000 feet of a school, conspiracy to violate drug laws, possession of a Class B drug (not cocaine), possession of a Class B drug with intent to distribute (not cocaine), and trafficking in cocaine.

Montague police chief Raymond Zukowski credits the neighbors of this apartment for

noticing and reporting suspicious activity. Asked what school was located within 1000 feet of the apartment on L Street, between 2nd and 3rd streets, Zukowski said the Central Street parent-child development center, as the

crow flies.

Clarke appeared in Greenfield District Court and was released on his own recognizance. Wiggins was held on \$50,000 bail.

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~ J.R.R. Tolkien

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## NOTES FROM THE MONTAGUE SELECTBOARD

## Ross Lauds RiverCulture

BY ALEX GOTTSCHALK - Lisa Davol, coordinator of the downtown Turners Falls arts-based economic development RiverCulture program, reported on her organization's progress and future plans at the December 10th meeting of the selectboard. RiverCulture has been funded for the past two years with grants from the Mass Cultural Council (MCC), in partnership with the town of Montague and area businesses and organizations. MCC has invited RiverCulture to apply for a two-year grant for 2008-'09, and Davol said that application is complete.

"This is an abbreviated version of what we want to do," said Davol, as she outlined RiverCulture's recent events and future goals. "We are trying to function as something that will bring everyone together, with public



Lisa Davol

art pieces, new maps, bringing in people through arts events and marketing. We are trying to make the village a fertile ground for new businesses, while supporting existing cultural events."

Davol mentioned that over the course of the last grant year, the RiverCulture project and its partnership organizations have been able to pull approximately \$785,000 in direct and indirect spending into Turners Falls, through events such as the downtown block party, concerts, theater at the Shea, museum shows and studio tours. Davol took this figure from an impact study commissioned by RiverCulture from the Center for Policy Analysis at UMass Dartmouth, based on participant surveys. "That is a conservative number," Davol said.

Looking ahead to the next two years, Davol said, if funding is received RiverCulture plans to focus in particular on studying and supporting programming at

the non-profit Shea Theater, to determine the market for different kinds of shows at that venue.

"We want to consider what kind of programming is available elsewhere in the Valley, and then earmark funds for something new for [the Shea] to produce," said Davol. She also plans to work with the new Shea director, once hired, to develop an actual Shea program - of the hand held variety - that can be passed out to theater patrons, showing them places to eat and other cultural attractions in town. A large percentage of participants who filled out surveys at the Shea last year said they would return to town to attend other events, or to shop and dine independently of arts programs.

Davol said approval of a new grant would allow her organization to also develop "Artful Connector" pedestrian walkways on the old, now somewhat deteriorated sidewalks through wooded areas between downtown and the Hill, as well as ways to "lure" traffic from the canal side bike path into the downtown business area. Adding bike racks downtown, perhaps in "cool, funky designs," is also on Davol's agenda.

Other planned activities will include a photo retrospective of Turners Falls, in conjunction with the Hallmark Museum, showing how the village has changed over the years. She would like to arrange public forums simultaneously, to allow residents to share their memories of Turners.

Davol intends to increase RiverCulture's collaboration with other towns, "to move people through the area," by highlighting cultural attractions in each. Finally, she intends to

use the next grant cycle to establish RiverCulture as a more self-sustaining entity, perhaps with a formal board, non-profit status, and fundraising stream.

The selectboard responded positively to Davol's presentation. Board member Allan Ross in particular singled out RiverCulture for helping to improve the public perception of Turners Falls in the last few years. "It's incredible what you've done, and the variety of people you've recruited. It's very impressive, paying attention to the aesthetics of the [connector] paths and the bike trail, the website, everything. It's a great report."

At last week's selectboard meeting, in a discussion about extending Davol's contract with the town, Ross called on her to sign disclosure forms noting an apparent conflict of interest between the goals of RiverCulture - which include expanding cultural tourism in Turners Falls - and the possibility that the town may seek to site a landfill on Turnpike Road, for which DPW head Tom Bergeron has said the preferred truck route would travel down Avenue A. Ross also asked Davol to disclose her domestic partnership with the editor of the *Montague Reporter*, David Detmold, in case he should pressure her to take a position against the landfill.

*(Ed. note: Whether or not you accept the quaint notion that husbands can tell their wives how to think, the only position the editor of the Montague Reporter has taken on a proposed landfill in town is in favor of a vigorous debate on the subject, should the selectboard ever get it together to present the town with an actual proposal for the Turnpike Road site. Furthermore, while we believe any member of the board is well within their rights to raise concerns about possible conflicts of interest, we wonder why, at the same meeting where Dr. Ross*

*noted Davol's domestic relations, he did not take similar exception to the relationship of Mark Allen, of the Turners Falls Fire Department's Prudential Committee, to Pat Allen, the chair of the Montague selectboard, before appointing him to the police station building committee. Not doing so raises the question whether Ross is using the conflict of interest law to an advance a political agenda of his own, rather to apply fairly to all comers.)*

Also on Monday, the selectboard began their meeting at six thirty to give time for further discussion about expanding the size of the airport commission. Airport commission chair Peter Golrick said his commission had written a letter to the Massachusetts Aeronautics Commission (MAC) calling into question the selectboard's vote of December 3rd, which added two seats to his five-member board, on grounds that the move to expand the board may conflict with the town's written agreement with MAC "not to attempt to reorganize the airport commission or in any way to interfere with the authority of the airport commission without the express approval of the MAC," while the grant funded \$5 million dollar runway project progresses.

Nevertheless Golrick said, "The airport commission will go to bat for the proposed change, but we need to have a clear policy in place first. Having new people looking at things differently? That's not a problem with us."

Over the course of the next half hour, the possible political implications of such a move were debated, along with the effect it might have on the voting powers of an expanded commission. In particular, the definition of a quorum (of a seven-member board with only five members presently appointed) and the voting rights of non-Montague residents on the board garnered scrutiny from the selectboard.

Airport liaison and selectboard member Allan Ross suggested, "In order to really be effective, maybe we need to have all town residents [on the commission]; maybe that should be the policy."

This comment drew an impassioned response from one of the airport pilots who was present. Josh Simpson, of Shelburne Falls, said to those assembled, "We talk with people from different towns, we marry people from different towns. It strains credibility to think that someone from out of town can't vote sensibly on a town board. It seems silly, frankly".

The issue has come into focus as one of the long-time commission members, Brian Carroll, is moving out of town. If past practice prevents non-residents from voting on fiscal matters that come before the airport commission, and two of its other five members must recuse themselves from voting on fiscal matters that might pose a conflict of interest for them, (since they are tenants at the airport as members of the Franklin County Flying Club), then the five-member board as presently constituted will be a non-functional board, the selectboard opined.

Town administrator Frank Abbondanzio said, "I think this is a question of getting all this in writing. We've had de facto policies [around recusing and quorum procedures] before, but we need a clearer policy overall."

The discussion ended inconclusively, with Ross defending the board's vote to expand the size of the airport commission, and voting "No," on board chair Pat Allen's motion to rescind it. Patricia Pruitt abstained. The board reported that four applications for seats on the board have already been received. The board will attempt to come up with a written policy for airport commission appointments, before filling the two new seats.



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# Kids on the Block Come to Sheffield

BY DAVID DETMOLD

**TURNERS FALLS** - "Kids ask exactly what they want to know," said Michael Stein, of Springfield, who teamed up with Kim Audette of Sunderland to bring "the Kids on the Block" puppet show to Sheffield School on Monday, December 10th. The show features three-foot tall puppets who portray children with disabilities engaged in real life interactions with their able puppet peers.

Sure enough, after each skit, the children from Sheffield School wanted to know plenty about the puppets' disabilities, and how they came to terms with them.

"How does it feel being in a wheelchair?" That was the first question, and 'Mark Riley', the puppet who portrayed an 11-year-old with cerebral palsy, answered it this way: "I've always needed a wheelchair. My mom had me in a stroller till I was five. Then I was in a wheelchair by myself. I never knew how to walk, so I never knew anything else. But sometimes I get frustrated when I can't climb monkey bars, or climb stairs like other kids."

More honest questions and answers soon followed.

"Do you have many friends in a wheelchair?"

Mark said he started out in a school for kids with disabilities, but now he goes to a regular school, and has all kinds of friends. "We hang out



Kim Audette (left) with Mark, and Michael Stein, (right) with Mel, act out a puppet show about disabilities as the Kids on the Block come to Sheffield School Monday

together," he said. "Is it fun being in a wheelchair?"

"When my mom isn't looking, sometimes I pop wheelies! But other times it's hard, because I can't do things other kids do."

"Why do you wear a helmet?"

"Because I also have epilepsy. Sometimes my brain goes on the fritz and I black out. So my mom gets worried and makes me wear this helmet. But now everybody in the school knows me, and they kind of look out for me and take care of me."

"Why do you wear that napkin?"

"Sometimes my brain doesn't send the right messages to my muscles, to my mouth. I don't talk too good, and

sometimes spit and drool kind of leaks out." Audette delivered this speech, like the others she gave Mark, in a slurred drawl that was still distinct enough to carry to the back rows of the intent 3rd, 4th, and 5th graders.

Next question: "What do you want to be when you grow up?"

"I want to be an engineer, because I'm really good with math."

"How do you swim?"

Audette had her puppet explain, "Water takes away the pull of gravity. I use these big arm muscles to swim." Mark uses his arms to power his wheelchair, and he flexed his bicep to show the kids how strong he was. "I also have a special sit-down shower."

Another child, way in the back of the hall, raised her

hand. "My great grandmother also has cerebral palsy."

Mark's turn to ask a question. "Is she in a wheelchair?"

"Yes."

The Kids on the Block educational foundation originated in 1977 in response to the United States passing a law that required children with disabilities to be educated in the least restrictive environment. The puppet shows aim to fill the need of children with disabilities to have their non-disabled peers understand and accept them. If

children learn best by example, the puppets on stage provide matter-of-fact, often humorous role models of differently able children for them to learn from.

Audette and Stein, dressed in black, and working in the bonraku "open to be seen" style of Japanese puppetry, gave another skit, where Stein's character, an African American girl with glasses named Melody, engaged a younger girl named Jen who has dyslexia, or a similar learning disability, that makes it hard for her to distinguish her p's and q's.

At the end of that skit, one child wanted to know, "Are the puppets alive?"

"Sort of," replied Stein. "They're alive in your imagination."

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### SCHOOLS from 1

community and the students. "detail" and that Castro-Santos' revisions had made the plan "too vague". And while school principal and director of elementary teaching and learning for the GMRSD. Linda Kulkewicz stated, "It seems to me we don't often talk about what is best for the children. We want them to have as many options as possible."

Other issues discussed were the actual closing date of Montague Center School, hand-capped accessibility at that school, concerns about how long term the move of kindergarten to Hillcrest might be, and the availability of special education resources for students with above average learning capacity, as well as those with more traditional special education needs.

Community member Ted Castro-Santos offered amendments to the school consolidation plan to build confidence in the committee would not arbitrarily vote against a community proposal to reorganize the Montague Center School as a charter school, pilot school, or magnet school. Committee member Joyce Phillips felt the earlier draft of the proposal, put together by Kociela, had more critical in the long run to both the DOE that we are not chronological making a decision will show the everyone," Rockefeller pointed out, stressing the need to find common ground.

Earlier this year, the state Department of Education placed the Gill-Montague school district on its underperforming list, in part because of the failure of the school committee to take leadership on the issue of school configuration, according to a recent DOE report on problems at the Gill-Montague schools. Rockefeller went through a list of why the move would be beneficial in the long run to both the DOE that we are not chronological making a decision will show the everyone," Rockefeller pointed out, stressing the need to find common ground.

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"We have opportunities and challenges in both directions," said Chip Wood, Sheffield elementary teaching and learning for the GMRSD. Linda Kulkewicz stated, "It seems to me we don't often talk about what is best for the children. We want them to have as many options as possible."

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### Letter of Intent Presented to the G-M School Committee from the Montague Center School Research Group

December 11th

On behalf of the Montague Center School Research group, I would like to officially notify you that we welcome the opportunity to research alternative options for Montague Center Elementary. Twelve members attended the initial organizing meeting.

We welcome your criteria as soon as possible so that we can all guidance from this committee as to their expectations of preparing a plan for an educational opportunity that provides options for Montague Center supports this district, is responsible and can be supported by this committee, the town, and meeting.

We also welcome any and all guidance from this committee as to their expectations of preparing a plan for an educational opportunity that provides options for Montague Center supports this district, is responsible and can be supported by this committee, the town, and meeting.

## Great Falls Middle School 1st Quarter Honor Roll

### Grade 6

#### First Honors

Alissa Ames  
Shayna Aubrey  
Chase Fuller  
Jessica Fuller  
Kolbe Martineau  
Rayanne Mercure  
Karti Mizula  
Tyler Peters  
Jonathan Rawls  
Tyler Richardson

### Second Honors

Kathryn Ausuin  
Danielle Bassett  
Meghan Casey  
Teaghan Felton  
Linnell  
Lauren Grimard  
Emma Johnson  
Heather McKenna  
Morgan Ozdarski  
Kaineca Pabon  
Malcolm Smith

### Third Honors

Keisie Deschaine  
Courtney Euglin  
Britana McCaffrey  
Samantha Peabody  
Katerina Sankova  
Kyle Wawrzyniak  
Nicholas Wells  
Hayley Westfall

### Grade 7

#### First Honors

Meredith Brown  
Cody Brunelle  
Carolyn Campbell  
Katelyn Dodge  
Shawn Englehardt  
Emilee Felton  
Nicholas Fisher  
Summer Forest-

### Second Honors

Troy Langknecht  
Brandon Lenois  
Daniel McCormack  
Timothy Meyer  
John Ollari  
Jeremy Paffer  
Nicolas Royer  
Abigail Rubin  
Dakota Smith-Porter  
Kelsey Yollish

### Second Honors

Breanna Breault  
Wayne Conant  
Ceara Dolhenty  
Kayla Drumgool  
Jasmine Farr-  
Marcum  
Summer Forcier  
Riley Howe  
Alexander Interlande

### Grade 8

#### Third Honors

Brittany York  
Nala Vaughn  
Christian Sawicki  
Jonathan Marguet  
Bethany Laramie  
Haylee Keene  
Justin Wyman

### First Honors

Wyatt Borubeau  
Kate Brunell  
Shannon Hersey  
Sean Howard  
Jayna Kelly  
Mitarho Kelly  
Michaela Loynd  
Lindsay Luippold  
Brooke Martineau  
Brookia Mattos  
Amanda Sicaud  
Olivia Tardie  
Nichole Voudren  
Tyler Whipple

### First Honors

Casey Banning  
Jolina-Rose Blier  
Jane Booth  
Samantha Caouette  
Megan Foster  
Matthew Fowler  
Stephanie French  
Christopher Gordon

### Grade 9

#### Third Honors

Mark Hudyma  
Lily Kane  
Victoria Kyser  
Jesse Langknecht  
Samuel Letcher  
Jeremy Mankowsky  
Alyssa Nicotra  
Malik Odeh  
Haley Ozdarski  
Iancu Placinta  
Emily Pollard  
Todd Richardson

### Second Honors

Thomas Anderson  
Jenna Costa  
Taylor Crotau  
Colton Hallett  
Sara Hanley  
Breanna Miller  
Quincy Ortiz  
Thomas Sanders  
Cameron Savinski  
Kayleigh Turn

### Third Honors

Zacharie Boisvert  
Brandyn Boroski  
Jessica Keene  
Kyla Kelly  
Corban Mailoux  
Patrick Moretti  
Caroline Sena  
Samantha Shaw

## GMRSD Motion to Reconfigure Montague Elementary Schools

*Approved 8 - 1, December 11th, as amended below.*

also actively pursue other collaborations with the Town of Montague.

5. Any community group can form a committee to research and present an alternative plan for use of the Hillcrest or Montague Center buildings. The group must promote equal access to services and programs for all students, we/I make the following motion:

1. Move grades 1 and 2 from Hillcrest to Sheffield by January 8, 2008 meeting. The group must then develop and present a plan at the March 11, 2008 meeting that includes the following criteria: a timeline, and move K to Hillcrest and grades 1, 2 and 3 to Sheffield, unless the school committee approves an alternate plan as provided in paragraph 5, that a serious community effort to develop a sustainable transition, the school committee will immediately appoint a building planning committee to assess the cost for necessary renovations to Sheffield. The SC is committed to a K-5 grade span and will actively seek funding for these necessary renovations in order to fully implement this plan.

4. Immediately research appropriate alternative educational uses for any unused portion of the Hillcrest building. This may include a SPED collaborative, retaining Pre-K, ECH Learning Center, housing Admin offices etc... We will

3. Move all K in the town of Montague to Sheffield by August 2009, provided adequate facilities are available, unless the school committee approves an alternate plan as provided in paragraph 5, that a serious community effort to develop a sustainable transition, the school committee will immediately appoint a building planning committee to assess the cost for necessary renovations to Sheffield. The SC is committed to a K-5 grade span and will actively seek funding for these necessary renovations in order to fully implement this plan.

2. Close Montague Center School by August 2008 following criteria: a timeline, and move K to Hillcrest and grades 1, 2 and 3 to Sheffield, unless the school committee approves an alternate plan as provided in paragraph 5, consistent with the proposed plan and application. The intent of this provision is not town of Montague to Sheffield by August 2009, provided adequate facilities are available, unless the school committee approves an alternate plan as provided in paragraph 5, that a serious community effort to develop a sustainable transition, the school committee will immediately appoint a building planning committee to assess the cost for necessary renovations to Sheffield. The SC is committed to a K-5 grade span and will actively seek funding for these necessary renovations in order to fully implement this plan.

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By 8:30 p.m., the board approved by a simple majority of the full school committee." [Castro-Santos'] proposal is the same; it's a tightening up. It's not fundamentally different from Mary [Kociela's] plan."

After checking with legal counsel, and a final reading of the motion by Kociela, the board voted in favor of the motion as amended, 8-1. Hillcrest School] is not that all senting vote, although there was palpable tension in the room when Kulkewicz paused significantly before voting to approve the motion. At present, the positive vote of eight school committee members is required to close a district school.

"Where are the fireworks?" joked Kociela, as the board took a recess before going into executive session.

Additionally, Castro-Santos inserted language stating, "Any sufficient time to do so."

**WASTE NOT**

# How to Dispose of Batteries

**BY AMY DONOVAN GREENFIELD** - The Franklin County Solid Waste Management District is asking District residents to separate batteries from their trash. There are many different types of batteries. Some contain mercury, and other heavy metals. Batteries can release mercury, cadmium or other heavy metals into the air and water, ultimately entering the food chain and posing health threats to people and the environment. Please read below for disposal instructions for specific battery types.

Alkaline (flashlight) batteries are the most common household batteries. They are available in many sizes and shapes such as AAA, AA, C and D. Alkaline batteries manufactured since 1994 do not contain mercury. They can go into a landfill, but should not be incinerated.

Trash from the towns of Montague and Wendell, along with the trash from most of the towns in Franklin County, goes to an incinerator: Eco Springfield in Agawam. There it is burned to create energy for 7,000 homes. Montague and Wendell residents can bring alkaline batteries to their town's transfer station, where they can give them to the attendant or put them directly into the Bulky Waste container, which will go to the landfill. Erving and Gill residents can put alkaline batteries into their trash, since it goes to the landfill, and not the incinerator.

Rechargeable batteries are

found in those electronics and appliances that can be recharged, such as power tools, cordless phones, cell phones, some toys, laptop computers, some digital cameras and more. These types of batteries contain heavy metals and should never be thrown away; they should always be recycled. All towns in the Franklin County Waste District have been supplied with a special "Call 2 Recycle" box for rechargeable battery collection. These boxes are at the transfer station attendant's shed in Montague and Wendell, and at the town halls in Erving and Gill. The specific battery chemistries accepted in these boxes are: Nickel-cadmium (Ni-cad), Nickel Metal Hydride (Ni-MH), Lithium Ion batteries (Li-ion) and Small Sealed Lead (Pb).

Be sure to check your batteries before disposing them. Some batteries, such as the short and fat lithium batteries used in

cameras, resemble alkaline batteries, but should be recycled in this box and not sent to the landfill.

For more on the company that sponsors this rechargeable battery recycling program, see [www.rbr.org](http://www.rbr.org).

Button batteries are the small round silver batteries found in watches, clocks, calculators, and hearing aids. Button batteries contain mercury and must be disposed of properly. These batteries are also found in other household products such as flameless "flicker candles," so the battery should be removed and recycled before disposing of the candle.

Collection cans have been placed at the transfer station attendant's shed in Montague and Wendell and at the town halls in Erving and Gill. When full, these cans will be picked up by Solid Waste District staff and mailed to a company that recycles them safely.

If you would like to cut down on the number of alkaline batteries you are sending to the landfill, you could purchase an inexpensive battery charger and some compatible NiCd batteries. These batteries can be used and recharged over and over again, but remember to recycle them when they cannot be charged anymore.

If you have any disposal questions or if your town is not covered in this article, please contact the Franklin County Solid Waste District at 413-772-2438, or email [info@franklin-countywastedistrict.org](mailto:info@franklin-countywastedistrict.org).



JESSICA HARMON ILLUSTRATION

*Amy Donovan is Program Director for the Franklin County Solid Waste Management District.*

**HIGHLIGHTS FROM THE WENDELL POLICE LOG**

## Missing Metal

**Sunday 11-25**

Substantial amount of various iron and metal stolen from New Salem Road location.

B&B Railroad reported cows on tracks between Farley Road and Millers Falls. Owner located and cows taken home.

**Tuesday 11-27**

Door to American Tower on Locke Hill reported open. Checked same and reported.

**Monday 12-3**

Domestic family problem on Farley Road. Parties resolved it among themselves.

Student assaulted by another student at Lake Grove School. Advised to seek own complaint at Orange District Court.

**Wednesday 12-5**

911 misdial on Lockes Village Road. All OK.

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ILLUSTRATION BY ANJA SCHUTZ

THIS WILD PLACE

# Make No Assumptions About Wrens

BY KARL MEYER

**GREENFIELD** - Never make assumptions - particularly when it comes to wrens. I failed to follow that sensible rule yesterday, and a wren got

the jump on me. It was a good lesson. The weather was brooding and dreary. The afternoon world was wrapped in dulling late-fall rain. Then a wren barged in, spring-boarding off the window casement three feet from me. Its scratchy wildness scuttled any thoughts of surrender to dreariness. A world with wrens is a magic world. I'll never again assume to the contrary.

It's not that I ever discount wrens. In southern New England we're never completely without them. A few hardy winter wrens, secretive denizens of evergreen shadows, don't retreat south from our winter chill. And Carolina wrens, a species that jumped north to our latitude in the mid-1900s on global warming's edge, are now widely dispersed through varied scrubby habitats. They hold their turf in winter to the point where significant die-offs occur some years due to intense cold. The other wren

varieties we enjoy from this plucky, gravy-boat-shaped family - the house, sedge, and marsh wrens - all retreat south at winter's approach.

But here, out of the bleak afternoon universe on the cusp of winter, comes the wren. It's a lightning bolt visit. Quickness is the livelihood of wrens. Just a flash: a head with a curving bill, a bright eye with arching white eyebrow, and the briefest flicker of a stubbed brown tail. Then it bolts from view. Wren! Unmistakably wren. Quick, stubby, plucky, and warm brown - a Carolina wren!

You may not know this bird from sight, but likely somewhere you've heard it, in spring, summer, or fall, in the last decade. In the size-to-volume range this wisp of feathers pumps out song like it has a bullhorn. It's a boldly sweet, "tea-kettle, tea-kettle, tea," pause, "tea-kettle, tea-kettle, tea," pause, "tea-kettle, tea." And then again, over and over, until it's through with that variation, and moves on to something quite similar but varying by a quarter note. Then it runs through that repertoire. And then another barely perceptible change, and then another run of wren song. It's what wrens do.

More Carolina wrens are making it through more northern Massachusetts winters, further north and at higher elevations, as our climate warms.

That's good news for the wrens, while we'll have to do the math on what it means for humans. In summer, now you hear "tea-kettle-tea" high in hilltowns where that song was never heard before. So, even at winter's approach it's incumbent on all of us to prepare ourselves for wrens. You just never know.

The actual prep work isn't much really. It amounts to uncultivating our certain routines, that collect in a dulling sameness, leaving us vulnerable to the element of surprise. And then, WHAM! That wren hits your window. To those not mentally prepared, this might assault our slowed senses as annoyance - there's a branch, a twig, some sparrow blundering onto the deck. It is not. It is magic come to visit - so don't be fooled.

Why a wren you might ask - why here, why now? Well, because insects and spiders crawl around your porch steps and window casements. All are winter gifts to a Carolina wren. And then, even in urban neighborhoods, there are likely a few choice berry and seed producing shrubs that can supplement a wren's insect diet through a winter. With enough scrubby shelter and available water, this half-ounce feather ball just might make it to spring, and a new round of tea-kettling in your neighborhood.

If that happens, there'll be

life. The males do the bulk of the tuneful singing, but they both work on the domed nest that's wound like a beehive and is made from bark, grass, leaves, hair, and even plastic. There will be an entrance at the side, and 3 - 7 eggs will be placed at its center. It'll make for a very melodious summer.

Meanwhile, if you're out in the wilder, dense evergreen woods, you might listen for the intense little spit-stutter-scold of the tiny winter wren. These guys are tiny, grayish-brown, secretive and amazingly quick. They are usually not far from water and dense cover, which includes brush piles. Don't let them get the jump on you!

Curiously, the winter wren is the only wren species that we share with Europe, Asia, and Africa. Same bird. In Ireland, there's the medieval tradition of the Wren Boys. On St. Stephen's Day, December 26th, groups of young boys go around and get the jump on a winter wren, known simply as "the wren." They kill the poor creature, tying it to a stick. They then go around dressed up, singing songs and begging money for the dead bird on a stick. When there's enough money for a party, they give the wren a solemn burial, then drink themselves silly. So, never assume anything, especially when it comes to wrens.

*Cooling thought: Celebrate without waste this season. Deck the halls and doorways in the simplest way possible - a single light says as much as a thousand. It says peace.*

Signed copies of Karl Meyer's children's book *Wild Animals of North America* are available through the author. He can be reached at: karlm@crocker.com

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JESSICA HARMON ILLUSTRATION

**BY FRED CICETTI**  
**LEONIA, NJ** - Q. I've been told to drink more water. How much is enough?

First, water intake is a health issue that you should discuss with your doctor before deciding how much you should drink. The amount you drink is dependent upon the state of your personal health.

Drinking insufficient amounts of fluids is the common problem. However, some conditions such as heart failure and kidney disease may require cutting back on fluids.

The simplest answer I could find to this very complicated question is this: If you aren't

thirsty and you produce one to two quarts of light yellow urine daily - the average output for an adult - you're probably taking in enough water.

If you are concerned about your water intake, remember that you get water from more than just straight water. About 80 percent of your total water intake is from all beverages, which includes soda, coffee and beer. You get the remaining 20 percent from food.

Here are more general answers to your question:

There is the "8 x 8 rule," which has been around for as long as I can remember. This rule states that you should drink eight, eight-ounce glasses of water a day. That's a half-gallon of water. I could never follow this rule, myself. All that water on top of the soda, coffee and beer had me constantly doing what my granddaughter calls,

"the pee-pee dance."

Some authorities recommend using your weight as a guideline for water intake. They say you should divide your weight in half and use the number of pounds to determine the number of ounces of water you should drink daily. For example, if you weigh 120 pounds, you should drink 60 ounces of water a day.

Another way to insure that you have enough water is by following a replacement guideline. You urinate one to two quarts a day. About another quart of water is lost through sweating, exhaling and defecating. You have to make sure you drink and eat enough each day to compensate for the lost fluids.

The Institute of Medicine, a component of the National Academy of Sciences, advises men to consume more than 3 quarts of beverages daily. The IOM recommends that women consume more than 2 quarts of total beverages a day.

These guidelines are designed for normal health, activity and weather.

Diarrhea and vomiting dehydrate you. You need to replace

lost fluids if you are sick with these symptoms. To replace fluid-loss from diarrhea, adults should consume broth, non-citrus fruit juices, flat ginger ale and ice pops.

When you exercise, you perspire more and lose fluid. To replace this fluid, you'll need to take in about two to three cups of water for each hour of exercise.

When the temperature and humidity rise, you sweat more, so you have to drink more.

Water is important because, without it, we become dehydrated and all of our systems suffer. Dehydration is especially dangerous to seniors, who are less able than younger people to sense dehydration.

A good way for seniors to check their water level is the "pinch test." Pinch the skin on top of your hands. If the pinched skin doesn't return to its normal state, you need to get yourself a drink of water.

Here are some more signs of dehydration: fatigue, headache, dizziness, flushed skin, elevated pulse rate, muscle spasms, increased breathing rate and swollen tongue.

In rare cases, you can drink too much water. Your kidneys can't handle an overload and this condition leads to low sodium levels in the blood. Marathoners can run into this problem.

If you have a question, please send an email to [fred@healthygeezer.com](mailto:fred@healthygeezer.com).

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### HIGHLIGHTS FROM THE MONTAGUE POLICE LOG

## Trafficking and Assault

**Thursday 12-6**

8:06 p.m. After an investigation [redacted] was arrested and charged with possession of a class A drug, possession of a class A drug with intent to distribute within 1000 feet of a school, conspiracy to violate drug laws, and possession of a class A drug with intent to distribute.

[redacted] was arrested and charged with possession of a class B drug, possession to distribute cocaine, possession of a class A drug, possession with intent to distribute a class A drug. Possession with intent to distribute within 1000 feet of a school, conspiracy to violate drug laws, possession of a class B drug (not cocaine), possession with intent to distribute a class B drug (not cocaine), and trafficking in cocaine.

**Friday 12-7**

2:45 p.m. Report of an assault on a school bus. Two youths involved. Juvenile officer mediated the situation.

**Saturday 12-8**

12:28 a.m. Report of a loud noise disturbance on 3rd Street by the Exxon. A loud group of people were walking on 3rd street yelling and spitting. Officer calmed them down and sent them on their way.

4:27 p.m. Walk-in to station reported an assault. A woman was assaulted by another woman. Summons was issued.

**Sunday 12-9**

12:30 p.m. Walk-in to station reported a motor vehicle theft from 4th Street. Vehicle was towed for snow removal. Referred to tow company.

**Monday 12-10**

9:32 a.m. Report of an assault at a 5th Street address. Caller reports ice and snow was thrown at him at the bus stop. Report taken.

3:29 p.m.

[redacted] was arrested on a default warrant.

8:29 p.m. Walk-in to station reported he was beaten up in the alley between 3rd and 4th Streets. Officer went to the scene. Witnesses said subject fell.

seatbelt violation.

**Saturday 12-8**

12:30 p.m.

Medical emergency on Prospect Heights Lane. Assisted Erving EMS and Orange ambulance. Life Flight requested. Assisted with landing zone.

**Sunday 12-9**

8:10 p.m. Suspicious motor vehicle at Freight House Antiques. Spoke with subject, waiting for someone. All set.

**Monday 12-10**

Arrested [redacted] for active warrant.

**Tuesday 12-11**

6:15 p.m. Loose dog on Route 2. Returned to home on Forest Street.

### HIGHLIGHTS FROM THE ERVING POLICE LOG

## No License

**Wednesday 12-5**

10:01 a.m. Suspicious motor vehicle at Usher Plant.

2:46 p.m. Disabled motor vehicle at Country Store on Route 2. Spoke with owner, vehicle ran out of gas. No hazard.

**Thursday 12-6**

2:30 p.m. Accident car vs tractor trailer, no injuries, assisted Erving Fire and State Police.

3:20 p.m. Accident car vs telephone pole on Church Street. Vehicle located on North Street next to pole. Vehicle was disabled, no accident.

**Friday 12-7**

10:00 a.m. Arrested [redacted]

[redacted] for suspended license and failure to inspect motor vehicle.

4:40 p.m. Neighbor problem Old State Road. Subject is concerned that neighbor is causing air pollution in his yard from wood stove. Turned over to fire chief.

10:03 p.m. Arrested [redacted]

[redacted] for operating under the influence of liquor (3rd offense), license not in possession,

## HOUSING REHABILITATION PROGRAM

The Franklin County Regional Housing and Redevelopment Authority (HRA) has funding for the Towns of Ashfield, Erving, Leverett, Turners Falls, Rowe, and Shelburne.

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4	\$57,350.00
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7	\$71,100.00
8	\$75,700.00

If you are interested in applying for the Housing Rehab program please call Charity Day @ (413) 863-9781 ext. 132 or email at [cday@fchra.org](mailto:cday@fchra.org)



# JEP'S PLACE: Faith, Hope and Other Disasters Part LVIII

## ONE FOR THE ROAD

**BY JOSEPH A. PARZYCH GILL** - With a frown, Charlie heaved his body up into the van and began stacking items on the tailgate, carefully checking off each item. When done, he sat down on the tailgate with his feet dangling. He drew a line through the items next to my father's name.

"Thank you, Charlie," said Pa. "Thank you very much. Can I offer you something to eat? Some eggs, maybe?"

"No, no. I just et. I'm getting so damn fat, now, I can't hardly move. Besides, I gotta get going. I ain't got time."

"Well, how about one for the

road? I got a quart of whiskey for my heart. A shot every day, the doctor says."

"Well, now, a drink don't sound like too bad an idea. I like to take a drink now and then, myself. A fellah needs something to cut the dust in his throat from all these dirt roads."

Pa hurried into the house.

"Get two shot glasses out of the cupboard," Pa said, reaching for the bottle. "Hurry."

Outside, Charlie watched him pour. He licked his lips. Pa didn't completely fill the glass closest to him.

"I already had my dose this morning," Pa said, not looking at Charlie. They held up their glasses to toast each other, "Good

luck," and downed the drinks.

Charlie set his glass down. Pa refilled it. Charlie downed it, and set it down, again. Pa had the cork close enough for Charlie to reach. But Charlie didn't look like he was in any hurry to reach for the cork. Pa poured, again.

Charlie drew a cigar from his shirt pocket. He took a few puffs and studied the clipboard. He reached for the pencil stuck up under his cap, and drew a line across the page.

"Well, Joe, you've got yourself a little extry meat. Homer's got a good job, let him buy his own goddam comed beef."

He picked up the shot of whiskey and swigged it down for emphasis.

Pa hurried to pour him another shot. Charlie studied the clipboard again, tilting his head so the cigar smoke didn't get in his eyes. After a few thoughtful puffs, he drew another line across the page.

"Them two is both working," he said, his words a little slurred. "They don't need no surplus food. Let them buy their own damn

food. If the guvment keeps giving stuff away, who going to buy any? No wonder the country's going to hell. That's the trouble with them assholes running the guvment. They never think about practical stuff."

Pa just kept pouring. Charlie found a reason to scratch every name he came to.

By now, afternoon shadows were beginning to fall across the truck. Charlie hauled out case after case of all manner of food: grapefruit, oranges, fruit juice, corned beef, bags of flour, and several crates of eggs.

"Charlie, for chrissake. No eggs!"

"Well, you're getting 'em, whether you want them or not."

"What I do with eggs? I got eggs I can't sell, now. These are white eggs. Nobody wants white eggs. They not fresh."

"You ain't telling me nothin'. I been hauling them eggs around in this truck all week. Another day riding around in the hot sun and I'll be delivering baby chicks. Them eggs has gotta go. I got to move that widder woman's

furniture, tonight. Got a little bonus promised, iffen I don't charge too much," Charlie said with a wink.

He stacked the food on the lawn. I could hear the eggs cracking as he plopped the crates down. He sat on an egg crate to rest, wheezing and coughing, as he mopped his face. The egg crate creaked. I waited for the crate to collapse into a giant omelet, but it held.

Pa gathered up the glasses with one hand and bottle in the other. He pointed at Charlie with the uncorked bottle and gave him a questioning look.

"Don't mind if I do. One for the road, I always says."

After downing another drink, Charlie hauled his bulk up into the truck cab. He started the engine, and grinned. He gunned the engine a few times so we could appreciate the powerful sound of the V-8.

Charlie backed out of the driveway with a roar. He backed a little too far, and one pair of duals dropped into the ditch. He shifted into first gear and raced the engine wide open. The tires smoked and shrieked as they churned their way out of the ditch, hurling out a hail of mud and stones.

Charlie honked the horn as he roared off down the road, leaving the smell of burning rubber in the air. The brake lights winked on as he slowed to line his truck up with the narrow bridge. The truck sailed over the planks, one dual coming perilously close to the edge. Soon the truck was nearly hidden by dust as it picked up speed. The brake lights came on again as he turned the corner. It tipped to one side, settled back, then picked up speed again, and was soon gone from sight.

Pa held the whiskey bottle up to the light to see what precious little was left. Then he looked at the food stacked high, and smiled.

"I don't know what we going do with all them eggs, but we having corned beef and cabbage for supper."

*Continued Next Week*

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 - PUBLIC HEARING

The Gill Selectboard will hold a public hearing on Friday, December 21st, 2007 at 9:30 a.m. at the Town Hall, 325 Main Road, Gill, MA. The purpose of this meeting will be to discuss and solicit public response to elements and activities that could be included in the FY 2008 Community Development Block Grant application. The Town wishes to encourage local citizens to attend the meeting, where any person or organization wishing to be heard will be afforded the opportunity.

- Leland E. Stevens, Chair, Gill Selectboard

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# ARTS & ENTERTAINMENT



JACK COUGHLIN ILLUSTRATION

**FRIDAY, DECEMBER 14TH**  
Great Falls 2nd Friday Coffeehouse: Musician/composer Michael Nix celebrates the release of his CD *Barton Cove*. Nix performs on the seven string Banjar. The concert will include a special "chocolate reception" as well as the drawing for the Friends' of the Discovery Center's annual Holiday Raffle. 7 p.m., doors open at 6:30. There is a suggested sliding scale donation of \$6 - \$12 (free to children). 863-3221 X 3.

Deja Brew, Wendell: **The Relics** - Blues/Reggae, 9 - 11 p.m.

**FRIDAY TO SUNDAY, DECEMBER 14TH TO 16TH**  
Ja'Duke Productions Holiday Spectacular at the Shea Theater, Turners Falls. Friday & Saturday 7 p.m. and Sunday at 2 p.m.

**SATURDAY, DECEMBER 15TH**  
Athol Christmas Bird Count, 7 a.m. Team leaders pick up their zone folders and meet their crews at Cinnamon's Restaurant at 491 Main Street, Athol. Feeder watchers may call in their day's sightings, anytime before 5 p.m., on 12/15 to the Environmental Center's message machine (978) 248-9591; leave the address for where your birds were observed and a return phone number. Contact Dave Small at Dave@dsmall.net or (978) 413-1772 to set up teams.

The 25th annual Winter Solstice Celebration at The Roundhouse, Colrain. Storytelling, music, juggling, and Mumpers play, refreshments! Benefit for The Food Bank of Western Massachusetts and Oxfam America, donation \$10/ adults and \$26/ family of four and \$3/ each additional child. 7 p.m. 624-5140 info@roundhouseculture.com.

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Deja Brew, Wendell: **Nexus** - Rock, 9 - 11 p.m.

**Full Moon Follies** at The Wendell Full Moon Coffee House. \$6 - \$12 (978) 544-5557. Partial proceeds benefit the Wendell Free Library. Doors open at 7 p.m., Open Mic at 7:30. www.wendellfullmoon.org.

At the Smokin'Hippo, **Erving-Katie Clark and the Green River Band** perform 6:30 to 8:30 p.m.. Fresh off the release of their new CD, *Wrap me in Green* and Katie promises "If you ever wanted serious barbecue and a 'rip-roarin' good time all at once, look no further. This is your night".

**UNTIL DECEMBER 16TH**  
Hallmark Museum of Contemporary Photography, Turners Falls on display: Michael Yamashita's *Great Wall of China & The Silk Road*.

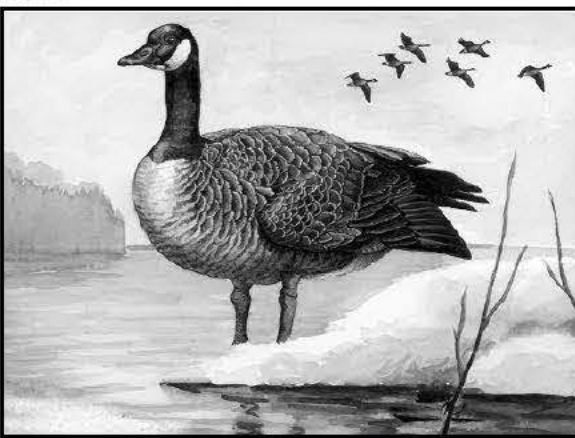
**SUNDAY, DECEMBER 16TH**  
Deja Brew, Wendell: **Adam Bergeron**: Classical Piano, 7 - 9 p.m.

Scandinavian Dance at the Montague Grange, Montague Center. Music for traditional couples dancing will be played by Marilyn Butler, Andrea Larson, Amy Parker, and friends. Refreshments and a Swedish pageant of lights with Sancta Lucia! All levels of experience. No partner necessary, \$8 donation suggested. 3 to 6 p.m.

**MONDAY, DECEMBER 17TH**  
Live jazz at Ristorante DiPaolo, Turners Falls, **Cidade Duo**, Charlie Apicella-guitar, Amy Bateman-violin, 6:30 - 9:30 p.m.

At The Rendezvous, 78 Third Street, Turners Falls: **Ghost Quartet**, progressive electric jazz trio with guest (ghost) vocalists, trumpeter and other soloists, 8 p.m., no cover.

**TUESDAY, DECEMBER 18TH**  
At The Rendezvous, Turners Falls: Craft Night, 7 p.m. on. Careful mixing and drinking though - remember, it's all fun and games



"Canada Goose" the Junior Duck Stamp 2006 Massachusetts Best of Show by Daniel Quirk, Springfield Central High School "What we need to understand is that we're destroying their land and as we continue to pollute, we contribute to their loss of life." - Daniel Quirk  
View the Junior Duck Stamp artwork from Massachusetts at the Great Falls Discovery Center through December 15th.

until somebody loses an eye.

**WEDNESDAY, DECEMBER 19TH**  
Mid-Week Music Series Concert with Mohawk Trail Regional High School Select Chorus directed by Nick Waynelovich. Donations go to The Recorder's "Warm the Children" Fund. This Christmas offering is always a lively performance. All Souls Church, Greenfield. 12:15-12:45 p.m.

At The Rendezvous, Turners Falls: Monthly Quiz Night with Quizmaster Chad (prizes!), 8 p.m.

**THURSDAY, DECEMBER 20TH**  
Winter Solstice Celebration sponsored by The National Spiritual Alliance, 7 to 9 p.m. at Thompson Temple, Lake Pleasant. Workshop facilitator will be Luci Adams. Through songs and stories, learn about & celebrate, the seasonal holidays of various faith traditions. Followed by a finger food potluck.

At The Rendezvous, Turners Falls: **Robert and Glenda Holmes Lounge Duo**. Former Til Tuesday member Robert and Glenda interpret tunes from the 60s to the 80s, everything from Bill Withers to Ozzy Osborne and back. 5:30 p.m., free.

**FRIDAY, DECEMBER 21ST**  
Rt. 63 Roadhouse, Millers Falls: **Heros** - Christmas Party, come dance! 9:30 p.m.

At The Rendezvous, Turners Falls: **The Equalites and I-ganic Soundsystem** (DJ), 9 p.m., \$5.

Deja Brew, Wendell: **Josh Levangie** - Johnny Cash covers, no cover. 9 to 11 p.m.

**SATURDAY, DECEMBER 22ND**  
Rt. 63 Roadhouse, Millers Falls: **Catamount & John Sullivan Band** - Come to dance! 9:30 p.m.

At The Rendezvous, 78 Third Street, Turners Falls: Jen Tobey's - Valley Advocate Singer/Songwriter Contest Winner 2004 - 9 p.m., \$3.

Deja Brew, Wendell: **Blame It On Tina** - Folk Rock, no cover. 9 to 11 p.m.

**SUNDAY, DECEMBER 23RD**  
Deja Brew, Wendell: **Steve Crow, Peter Kim & Don McAuley** - Acoustic Trio, no cover. 9 to 11 p.m.

**THURSDAY, DECEMBER 27TH**  
Mocha Maya's Coffee House, Shelburne Falls: Susan Souza. Free Admission. Tips are encouraged for the musicians, musician info www.womenskiss.org 7 p.m.

**SUNDAY, DECEMBER 30TH**  
Family Dance, Montague Grange, Montague Center. Simple dances for little feet. Each last Sunday of the month, through April '08. 4 to 6 p.m., \$4/ person, or families \$7 - \$12 sliding scale, snack included.

**MONDAY, DECEMBER 31ST**  
Starry Starry Night in Orange, all day event! New Year's Eve celebration in downtown Orange. Featuring music, food and more. (978) 544-2821.

Happy New Year's Dinner presented by Our Lady of Peace Church. Ring in the New Year with a lovely

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**MONDAYS** - Drop-in, 3 - 6 p.m.  
**TUES & WEDS** - Ongoing Music Project, 3 - 6 p.m.  
**THURS** - Drop-in, 3 - 6 p.m. & Movie Night, 6 - 8 p.m.  
Free (except some trips), open to local teens. Some require permission slips.  
Info: Jared at 863-9559.  
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www.greatfallsma.org **Upcoming at the Great Falls Discovery Center** 2 Avenue A, Turners Falls  
Winter hours open: 10 a.m. to 4 p.m. Friday & Saturday and by special arrangement (413) 863-3221

**THROUGH DECEMBER 15TH**  
View the Junior Duck Stamp artwork from Massachusetts students grades K - 12.

**THURSDAY, DECEMBER 15TH**  
*Beginning Birding*, 9 - 10 a.m. Join Refuge staff on this early morning scouting trip for local birds. Handouts, field guides, and binoculars will be available to borrow.

**Living Like an Animal** - 'become' a bat, a bird and a fox. 10:30 - 11:30 a.m. We will use our senses to experience life on the wild side. This program is for elementary age students and their caregivers.

**FRIDAY, DECEMBER 21ST**  
*Winter Moon - Full Moon*. Stories about the Full Moon. Figure out with refuge staff how it seems to change

each night. Learn how animals change their behavior in the winter moonlight. 3 to 3:30 p.m.

**SATURDAY, DECEMBER 22ND**  
*Birds in Winter- What's their Dinner?* Come learn about how birds survive the winter while building a feeder for winter birds with the help of Refuge staff. Participants will be able to bring their birdfeeder home.

meal (prime rib) prepared by Chef Tom Mimitz. Includes entertainment, door prizes and raffles. Held in St. Kaz Hall, Turners Falls. 5:30 p.m. Reservations: 863-2585.

Comedy at the Shea: New Year's Eve Comedy Bash Featuring Jennifer Myszkowski with Bill Campbell, Myq Kaplan, and Joe Wong, 8 p.m. to 12 a.m. 863-2281 or www.sheacomedy.com.

At The Rendezvous, Turners Falls: New Year's Eve Dance Concert Bash with DJ Tommy TBA, Wood Green Empire (gypsy jazz), H'ors D'oevres, Champagne Toast, Open 'til 2 a.m. \$10.

**FRIDAY, JANUARY 4TH**  
**Moonlight & Morning Star** at Smokin' Hippo Restaurant, Erving. (413) 423-3220, www.thesmokinhippo.com, 6:30 - 8:30 p.m.



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3. HITMAN R	DAILY 6:30 9:00
4. MR. MAGORIUM'S WONDER EMPORIUM G	DAILY 6:45 9:15
5. DAN IN REAL LIFE PG13	DAILY 6:45 9:15
6. ALVIN AND THE CHIPMUNKS	DAILY 7:00 9:30 PG in DTS sound
7. I AM LEGEND PG13	DAILY 7:00 9:30 in DTS sound
	MAT FRI, SAT, SUN 12:30 3:30



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# Christmas Green and Hoarfrost

BY FRAN HEMOND  
MONTAGUE CENTER

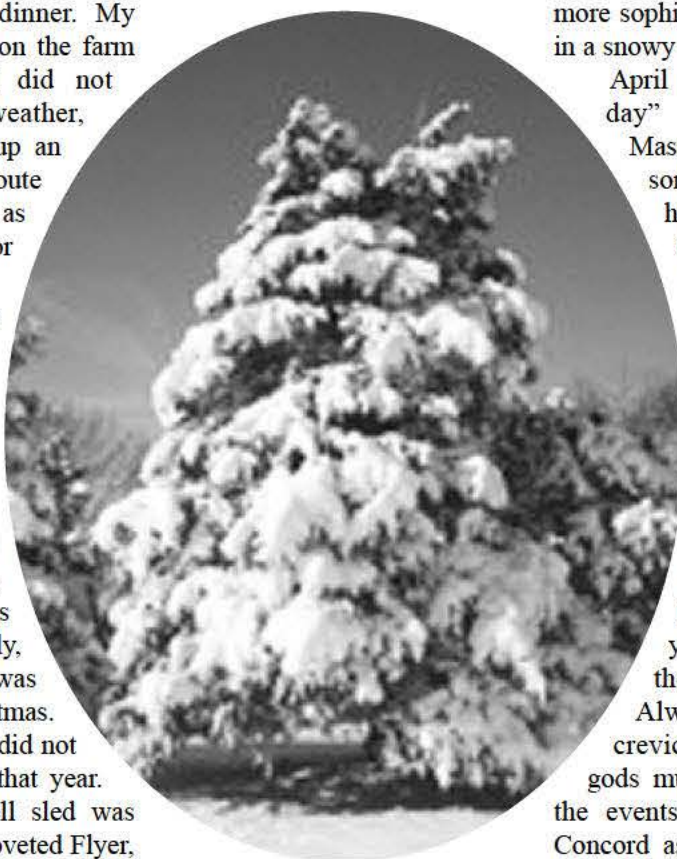
Some of us try to cut our Christmas greens in early December before the zero temperatures freeze off our fingers. For years, a rule of thumb seemed adequate. Get out there before the twelfth, and pruning the spruce and hemlocks would be an unhurried and considered operation. But this year we are reminded that we live in New England. It was barely above zero in the evergreen stand on recent mornings. And maybe Christmas greens will have to wait until January thaw, unless the old saw - 'If you don't like New England weather, wait a bit, it will change' - comes true.

The influence of weather on our holiday experiences is memorable. This year the main concern about the Thanksgiving Day trip to grandmother's house was the size of the turkey and the delicious squash pie. No matter what 'Over the river and through the woods,' says about a merry sleigh ride, years ago freezing rain on Thanksgiving Day kept some of the cousins

from the family dinner. My father, brought up on the farm where the world did not change for the weather, drove our family up an ice-covered dirt Route 5 in our old Essex as if it were a minor inconvenience.

In the same decade, the snowy winters made Flexible Flyer sleds a first call on the Thanksgiving letters to Santa. My brother was one of the chosen, and his new sled was under the tree. Sadly, that winter there was no snow after Christmas. The Flexible Flyer did not frolic on the hills that year. My little Speedwell sled was just as fast as the coveted Flyer, as they both sat out the winter in the garage.

On the other hand, skates asked for cold and no snow, cold enough to freeze the ponds to what our parents considered safe. As flooded rinks became



widespread, the cold alone was sufficient and weather lost some of its clout. Here in Greenfield, the toboggan slide near Poet's Seat, a brisk walk from the Snow Train's depot, offered a

more sophisticated winter sport in a snowy season.

April 18th is a "weather day" for some Massachusetts kids. For some years we used the holiday to climb in the Mount Tom reservation: Mt. Nonotuck, where once there was a hotel, Goat's Peak with its fire tower, and other assorted trails that some said they knew and we followed. It was spring in the high woods, some years greening up in the warm spots. Always snow in the crevices. The weather gods must have recognized the events at Lexington and Concord as worthy of tribute, for we hiked every year.

I am likely to predict each coming June by the fabulous June 30th, when my granddaughter was married here on the grounds at the farm. Warm but not hot, a starry night when

the young folks danced until midnight. Only in New England; unforgettable and unpredictable. But it's best to forget the Junes of graduations in the rain: Japanese lanterns weeping in the gloomy evening, dripping raincoats and the straggly hair.

New Englanders adapt and handle all this. Come Fourth of July, we hope for hot and sunny weather. But if it rains, we just postpone our fireworks to another date. Nowadays safe barbeques replace the firecracker binges of earlier years: the four-inch salutes, the garbage can covers flying high, propelled by the most powerful firecracker of the year, even the lady fingers popping off in a string, and skyrockets showering the neighbor's porch. The general abandon was eventually tempered by the loss of too many eyes and fingers. The exciting Do-it-Yourself holidays were sad in the rain.

Here in Montague, we get a little bit of everything. If we don't like it, we wait a bit, and it will change.



## Michael Nix at the Discovery Center

icy morning this week to talk about his concert plans, his work, and the inspiration for his latest release on CD entitled *Barton Cove*.

Nix draws his material from a variety of sources and styles, from jazz, folk, classical and world music. The interpretations featured on the CD are all played on the banjar, a seven-string instrument that combines the textures and tones of the banjo, classical guitar, and lute. This instrument is actually no synthetic newcomer to the world of stringed instruments, although it has been ignored in this country for centuries. Nix researched its histo-

ry, going back to the African origins of the banjo, more than likely a gourd instrument that 17th century slaves brought with them to the New World, and about which Thomas Jefferson wrote.

In the 1860s, the seven-string banjo attained some level of popularity, according to Nix, but then faded, although its presence remained a fixture in the British Isles for decades. Nix has given this instrument a new lease on musical life, and by using modern guitar-building techniques plus a number of innovative features, he has developed a versatile instrument

with enough punch for the concert hall, yet capable of newer subtleties that its ancestor never had. It is fascinating to hear what this beautiful combination of ebony, maple, mahogany, and rosewood can produce when fitted out with classical guitar strings and its ringing *chanterelle* - the seventh string.

*Barton Cove* is the name of the new release, and Nix explained that musical history, our natural landscape, and a zest of the poetic inspired the choice of title. He cited composers Charles Ives and Wallace Stevens, who found inspiration and subject materi-

al in the natural features of New England. For Nix as well, the landscapes and cultural history of our Valley are well-springs for his inspiration and imagery. Having spent time sailing on the Cove and hiking the trails on its shores, his sense of the timelessness of the spot and its evocative moods are evident in his writing and playing of the title composition.

This is a concert not to be missed, to help drive the cold winter away, and celebrate the release of this new composition inspired by the riverscape that lies just on the edge of our village.

BY DAVID BRULE  
GREAT FALLS - Michael Nix is one of the artists who make our Valley unique. A musician, teacher and poet of sorts, he will be in concert at the Great Falls Discovery Center in Turners this Friday, December 14th, at 7 p.m. Nix stopped by the *Reporter's* offices early one

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