



# New Fire Truck!

## LEVERETT HOLDS AN OPEN HOUSE

MARA WASK EWICZ PHOTO

LAKE PLEASANT MILLERS FALLS MONTAGUE CENTER MONTAGUE CITY TURNERS FALLS

# The Montague Reporter

YEAR 10 - NO. 12

also serving Erving, Gill, Leverett and Wendell

75¢

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THE VOICE OF THE VILLAGES

DECEMBER 15, 2011

## New State Teacher Evaluation Guidelines Explained

EVALUATIONS WILL BE BASED ON STUDENT TEST SCORES AND HOW WELL TEACHERS MEET THEIR STATED GOALS

BY JEFF SINGLETON GREENFIELD

"I know people are nervous that the new [state mandated] evaluation framework is designed to do other things, but the primary purpose is to promote teacher and leadership growth and development."

So began former state assistant education commissioner Karla Baehr in a presentation to the Franklin County School Committee Caucus on November 19th at the Greenfield Middle School.

The caucus was created several years ago to foster collaboration between school districts in the county, as well as to respond to state pressure for district consolidation. Baehr had been invited to explain the recent state initiative that mandates a new process for evaluating teachers and administrators. Other presenters at the forum included Louise Law, education director for the Frontier Regional School District, and Paul

Dunphy, legislative aide to state representative Steve Kulik (D-Worthington).

The new teacher evaluation framework originated with Massachusetts' successful application for federal "Race to the Top" funds in the spring of 2010. The application committed the state to "develop and implement a new educator evaluation system in which student growth is a significant factor." Last March, a task force report proposed a 'breakthrough framework' to implement the policy, and in June the state board of education adopted the new regulations.

Schools designated 'Level 4' (Needs Improvement) and districts that decide to become 'early adopters' have already begun to implement the new teacher evaluation policy. Over the next two years all other districts in the state will be required to follow suit.

see GOALS pg 10



## A Dream Come True for Erving Seniors



DETMOLD PHOTO

The new Erving senior center opened this week, on time and under budget.

BY DAVID DETMOLD

There is something heartwarming about a community coming together to celebrate seniors. True, the invitation said: "Ribbon Cutting for the New Senior Center," so technically the two hundred or so Erving residents, young and old, who showed up on 1 Care Drive on Sunday were there to celebrate the successful completion, on time and under budget, of a new \$2.2 million building project. But they were really there to celebrate the senior

citizens of Erving, who had pushed for a new senior center for ten years, and finally were able to take their seats in the expansive new dining room and enjoy the fruits of their long labor.

After Erving's redoubtable Kim Gregory, dressed in his role as the Town Crier, read a welcoming proclamation to the gathered town folks, they pledged allegiance to the gleaming flagpole, with the help of local Scouts. Promising to keep the out-

door part of the ceremony brief, town administrator Tom Sharp called on senior center director Polly Kiely to come forward with a pair of scissors to cut the green ribbon.

Green was the appropriate color for a ribbon cutting on a building designed to save the town money on energy, while not scrimping on space for senior activities, like a 1750 square foot multi-purpose room (which can be divided to form a classroom and smaller dining area for con-

gregate meals), a 455 square foot arts and crafts classroom, and a 600 square foot games and exercise room.

After Kiely cut the ribbon, the crowd trooped indoors, walking through rooms lit by solar powered skylights, and entered the spacious dining room, as more than one person exclaimed, "This is so big."

"We're insanely jealous!" called out Montague selectboard member Pat Allen, at one point.

see DREAM page 11

## "A Natural Music School" in Gill



Steve Damon performed at the Tuba Christmas in Shelburne Falls

BY JOHN FURBISH

TURNERS FALLS - As a child in Shelburne Falls, helping with maple sugaring and milking cows and working on the family dairy farm, Steve Damon might have been headed toward a career in farming, like his forebears for the

last 200 years. But even as a child he was excited to learn about a great aunt who taught music in New York City and New Jersey.

A decade later, after graduating Greenfield High School, he entered college, and his first assignment in music was

go see "The Rite of Spring," by Igor Stravinsky. The excitement he experienced watching that ballet with its polyrhythmic pagan dancing crystallized his path in life and helped open him up to all kinds of experi-

see MUSIC page 11

## Erving Delays Action on Adult Entertainment Bylaw

BY KATIE NOLAN

After a long discussion over a proposed adult entertainment bylaw and how it might affect the town and local businesses, the Erving decided to suspend the December 12th special town meeting until January 9th, 2012 in order to gather more information about the proposal.

The bylaw put forward by the planning board specifies that adult entertainment establishments (adult bookstores, adult motion picture theaters, adult paraphernalia stores, adult video stores, or establishments displaying live nudity) will be allowed in the central village zoning district under special permit and after site plan review by the planning board.

Under the proposed bylaw, adult entertainment

facilities in this zone would not be able to locate within specified distances from certain land uses, such as residentially zoned districts, churches, public parks, day care centers, senior centers, or other entertainment establishments.

Existing adult entertainment establishments are allowed to continue in the same location, but are required to apply for a special permit within 90 days of adoption of the bylaw.

Planning board chair William Morris said that in March, he became aware that a business in Springfield had inquired about setting up an adult entertainment business in Erving. He said that adult entertainment is considered protected free speech and can't be prohibited, but it can be regulated as to

"time, place and manner."

Morris told the meeting the proposed bylaw is very restrictive, and would make it difficult for an adult entertainment business to find an economically viable location in Erving. He asserted that adult entertainment businesses in a town reduce the value of real estate, increase fire and police costs, and drain a community economically.

French King Entertainment Center owners Erik and Ralph Semb asked whether the bylaw would affect their business, since the bowling center occasionally rents its function room for private bachelor or bachelorette parties that sometimes include nude or nearly-nude dancers. They Sembs have a general see BYLAW page 12

**PET OF THE WEEK**

Ready When You Are



**Pumpkin**

Hi, I'm Pumpkin, a three-year-old female cat in need of a good home. I've had a bit of a time of it so far. I was young, homeless, alone and pregnant and thought I had found a safe and cozy place to raise my kittens. But I was discovered and brought to the shelter. The angels there found a foster home for me to continue rearing my young safely and I was very grateful. But now my kittens have all been adopted and I'm alone and homeless again. Won't you give me a forever home with you? To find out more about adopting me, please contact the Dakin Pioneer Valley Humane Society at 413-548-9898 or via email at info@dpvhs.org.

**LEVERETT LIBRARY NEWS**

**Winter Yoga on Thursdays Beginning January**

Winter Yoga 2012 at the Leverett Public Library begins Thursday, January 5th. For more information visit [www.livingroomyoga.net](http://www.livingroomyoga.net), call 413-367-2658, or email [enzer@earthlink.net](mailto:enzer@earthlink.net). Sponsored by the Leverett Recreation Commission  
**Bliss Yoga** - Seven classes, Thursdays 4:45 to 5:45 p.m. January 5th through February

16th. An hour focused on the foundations of a yoga practice with emphasis on relaxation and stress relief.  
**Evening Yoga** - Seven classes, Thursdays 6:00 to 7:15 p.m. January 5th through February 16th. Postures, concentration, and community. A moderate level class.

**ERVING LIBRARY NEWS**

**New Technology Update**

Let us know if you need help. This month we are showing off our new ebook readers. During December, we will feature "playtime" with our new devices. Then, in the new year, we will be circulating the ebook readers for those who request a book that we can't provide in hard copy.

You can download ebooks and audiobooks at home to your computer or to most ebook readers, now including Kindle.

Kindle books are now available on the C/W MARS Digital Books website. Start at [digitalcatalog.cwmars.org](http://digitalcatalog.cwmars.org). The transaction is free. Kindle ebook loans are for 7 or 14 days.

Not every ebook title is available in Kindle format, nor will patrons have access to all Kindle titles on the Amazon website. They are still limited to the C/W MARS OverDrive Catalog.

Patrons will be able to use the highlighting and annotation features of their Kindle with library ebooks, and if they choose to check out or purchase the title at a future date, everything they annotated will be available again.

Wireless sync of Kindle titles will only be available through wifi. Kindles with only 3G or no wifi access, can still transfer their Kindle title using the USB cable, similar to other ereaders.

**MONTAGUE LIBRARY NEWS**

**Gingerbread Construction in Millers Falls**



**MILLERS FALLS**  
*David Johnson of Millers Falls and other Library Club participants enjoyed making easy gingerbread houses at the library on Tuesday, December 6th. The Millers Falls Library Club is a free, drop-in after school program for children of all ages that meets every Tuesday from 3:30 to 4:30 p.m.*

For more information, call 413-863-3214.

**SENIOR CENTER ACTIVITIES – December 19th through 23rd**

**GILL-MONTAGUE Senior Center**, 62 Fifth Street, Turners Falls, is open Monday through Friday from 9:00 a.m. to 2:00 p.m. Congregate meals are served Tuesday through Thursday at noon. Meal reservations must be made one day in advance by 11:00 a.m. The meal site manager is Kerry Togneri. Council on Aging director is Roberta Potter. All fitness classes are supported by a grant from the Executive Office of Elder Affairs. Voluntary donations are accepted. For information, meal reservations, or to sign up for programs, call 413-863-9357. Messages can be left on our machine if the center is not open.

**Monday, December 19th**  
 10:00 a.m. Aerobics  
 10:45 a.m. Chair Exercise  
 1:00 p.m. Knitting Circle  
**Tuesday, December 20th**  
 10:30 a.m. Seated Health Program  
**Wednesday, December 21st**  
 10:00 a.m. Aerobics  
 11:00 a.m. Christmas Carol Sing with Steve Damon  
 12:00 p.m. Christmas Lunch  
 12:45 p.m. Bingo  
**Thursday, December 22nd**

9:00 a.m. Tai Chi  
 1:00 p.m. Pitch  
**Friday, December 23rd**  
 10:00 a.m. Aerobics  
 10:45 a.m. Chair Exercise  
 1:00 p.m. Writing Group

**ERVING Senior Center**, 18 Pleasant Street, Erving (Old Center School, 1st Floor), is open Monday through Friday from 8:30 a.m. to 2:30 p.m. for activities and congregating meals. For information and reservations, call Polly Kiely, Senior Center Director, at 413-423-3308. Mealsite Manager is Jim Saracino. Lunch is daily at 11:30 a.m., with reservations 24 hours in advance. Transportation can be provided for meals, shopping, or medical necessity. Please call the Senior Center to confirm activities, schedule and to find out when the next blood pressure clinic will be held.

**Monday, December 19th**  
 9:00 a.m. Tai Chi  
 10:00 a.m. Osteo-Exercise  
 12:00 p.m. Pitch  
**Tuesday, December 20th**  
 8:45 a.m. Chair Aerobics  
 10:15 a.m. Senior Business Meeting



Jeremy Mankowsky and John Ollari received the Cannon Novak Awards on Sunday, December 11th, for Turners Falls Highschool Football.

**Save January Dates to Count Eagles**

**WESTBOROUGH** - As part of an annual nationwide midwinter bald eagle survey, anyone spotting an eagle in Massachusetts from January 4th - January 18th, 2012 is strongly encouraged to report their sighting to the Division of Fisheries and Wildlife (DFW). Please provide date, time, location, and town, number of birds, juvenile or adult bird, and observer contact information. Images are welcome, but not required. Report sightings either to: [Mass.wildlife@state.ma.us](mailto:Mass.wildlife@state.ma.us) or by postal mail to "Eagle Survey," MassWildlife, Natural Heritage and Endangered Species Program, 1 Rabbit Hill Road, Westborough, MA, 01581.

Dr. Tom French, DFW's Assistant Director of Natural Heritage and Endangered Species, noted that citizen interest

in the eagle survey has been very helpful. "With higher numbers of eagles dispersing throughout their range, we can't possibly cover the entire state. Citizen spotters play an increasingly important role in our survey efforts. In January of 2011, we received 61 emailed reports from people who saw eagles during the two-week survey period."

A target date of January 6th, 2012 will be used for a concentrated survey of major rivers, lakes, reservoirs and the coast by staff from the Division of Fisheries and Wildlife and volunteers across the state. In 2011, a record 107 bald eagles were documented in Massachusetts during the one-day event.

**Psychic Fair**

The National Spiritual Alliance is sponsoring a Psychic Fair on Saturday, December 31st, from 11:00 a.m. to 4:00 p.m. at Thompson Temple across from the Lake Pleasant post office. More info: [www.thenationalspiritualallianceinc.org](http://www.thenationalspiritualallianceinc.org)

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

- Grade 6**  
Maya Hancock-Pezzati
- Grade 7**  
Jordyn Fiske
- Grade 8**  
Conner Myren  
James Fritz

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more info? call: 863-2054

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# Local Briefs

JESSICA LARKIN ILLUSTRATION

**COMPILED BY DON CLEGG** - Northfield Mountain Recreation Area is offering a **holiday and solstice celebration** for hike lovers on Thursday, December 22nd, from 6:00 p.m. to 8:00 p.m. This romp will take place on the carriage width ski trails at Northfield Mountain. Headlamps will light the way on the longest night of the year, as hikers share solstice facts and quotes from literary lovers of the night. A visit to a mid-mountain campfire and shared cider and snacks will be provided. Pre-registration is required, so please call 800-859-2960. The hike is free and recommended for ages 12 and older.

The choirs of Greenfield Alliance Church and North Leverett Baptist Church will hold a free cantata titled **"Night of the Father's Love"** on Sunday, December 18th at 7:00 p.m. at the North Leverett Baptist Church, North Leverett Road in Leverett. All are welcome.

The Scottish Rite Masons in the Valley of Greenfield will be **assisting Santa Claus** as he makes personal calls to local children on Monday, December 19th from 4:00 p.m. to 7:00 p.m. Parents may pick up a form to fill in, which will be forwarded to Santa Claus, at the following locations: in Turners Falls at the Carnegie Library, Scotties on the Hill, and 2nd Street Bakery; in Greenfield at Foster's Super Market, Greenfield Cooperative Bank, Greenfield Public Library, and the Garden Theater Cinemas. Forms must be mailed to the Masons no later than Friday, December 16th. For more info please call Allen at 413-863-4982.

Join with Moonlight, Morning Star and the Greenfield Savings Bank as the traditional **celebration of Kwanzaa** comes to life. Be informed and entertained by these gracious presenters along with singers from the Wendell community choir. This is sure to be an enjoyable and totally free event at GSB. 282

Avenue A, in Turners Falls from 10:00 a.m. to noon on Saturday, December 17th. For reservations, please call 413-863-4316. Light refreshments will be provided.

Himalayan Views, 265 Greenfield Road, South Deerfield is holding a **holiday raffle** to benefit the Food Bank of Western Massachusetts. The unique prize is a 10-inch, hand-hammered singing bowl made in Nepal, a silk cushion, and a wooden striker. Total value is \$260. Tickets are \$5 for one, \$20 for five. Manager Susan Blauner said, "I encourage people to visit, play our singing bowls, rest in our quiet corner, read a book, listen to music, find relaxation. This holiday raffle is another way to support the community and add peace in the world."

In the East as well as the West, singing bowls are used for meditation and healing. Craftsmen tune each singing bowl to a particular note on the musical scale, and each note corresponds with an energy center, or chakra, in the body. To win the \$260 bowl, cushion, and striker, purchase tickets at Himalayan Views by Tuesday, December 20th. The drawing will take place Wednesday, December 21st. The winner chooses from several bowls, each with its own tone. All proceeds benefit the Food Bank of Western Massachusetts.

In addition, Blauner will donate 50 hand-knit woolen hats from Nepal to the patients at the oncology unit at Baystate Franklin Medical Center in Greenfield. For more info, call 413-665-5550 or email [himalayanviews@gmail.com](mailto:himalayanviews@gmail.com).

Thanks to **Seeds of Solidarity**, a large maple bowl has been donated for a raffle to raise money for the new playground at the Wendell Free Library. This bowl was created by Sam Scherer, and will be raffled off on Wednesday, December 21st at 7:30 p.m. at the library. All proceeds from

## Work Proceeding on Historic District Designations

**BY BETSY DOUGLAS NORTH LEVERETT** - On Tuesday, November 29th, the Leverett historical commission held a meeting in the North Leverett Baptist Church fellowship hall with homeowners from North Leverett, Moores Corner and East Leverett, the areas where new National Register Historic Districts are proposed.

Betsy Friedberg from the Massachusetts Historical Commission in Boston gave a Powerpoint presentation describing the purpose of this kind of historic district: recog-

nition for the history and architecture of the area, with no restrictions on what a property owner can do with privately owned property in the designated areas.

Bonnie Parsons, the consultant from the Pioneer Valley Preservation Commission in West Springfield who has been hired to do the research and write the applications for the districts talked about how she will proceed with the work. The first task is to fix the boundaries of the districts. Parsons would like to know of anyone who has

memories or articles about the past that might be relevant to her work. If anyone has such information, please call 548-9320.

The whole project will be finished and submitted to the Massachusetts Historical Commission by the end of May, 2012. The final awarding of the NRHD designation will follow a year or so later.

The Leverett historical commission welcomes residents who might be interested in serving on the commission to also call: 548-9320.

## UMass Permaculture Committee Wins Real Food Award

**AMHERST** - Boston-based Real Food Challenge (RFC), an organization that aims to shift university food purchasing from conventional to "real" sources via student-led campaigns, recently honored the 12-member University of Massachusetts Amherst Permaculture Garden Committee with its national Real Food Award in the student group/activist category.

The award recognizes excellence in promoting real food at colleges, developing new leaders and building bridges between worker-student, producer-consumer or town-gown communities, say RFC organizers. They define "real food" as not artificial, a seed-to-plate system respecting human dignity, health, animal welfare, social justice and environmental sustainability. RFC's goal is to shift at least 20 percent (about \$1 billion) of U.S. college and university spending on food to local or sustainable sources by 2020.

Campus teams were nominated by students nationwide; winners were chosen by RFC students and staff based on the votes and comments of over 2,000 peo-

ple, mostly students. RFC says the Real Food Awards are the only national recognition for excellence in food service voted on by the customers themselves.

UMass Amherst's Ryan Harb, chief sustainability coordinator for auxiliary services, says campus permaculture interns and volunteers were recognized for transforming two campus lawns into sustainable permaculture gardens over the past two years. This involved over a dozen local K-12 schools and more than 1,000 participants who moved more than 500,000 pounds of UMass compost, recycled cardboard and wood chips without using any fossil fuels on site.

The flagship garden near Franklin Dining Commons has supplied over 1,000 pounds of locally grown fruits, nuts, and vegetables and provided a working classroom in sustainability to the campus, he adds. "For UMass Amherst, permaculture serves as a reminder of what one big idea, a lot of recycled newspaper, cardboard and food waste, and a supportive community can accomplish in an ongoing effort to make the Earth a more sustainable and

healthier place to live."

In addition to awards, the RFC organization has developed a real food calculator providing definitions and a tracking system for institutional purchasing. It assigns real food to one of four core categories: Local or community-based, Fair, Ecologically sound and Humane.


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**CELEBRATION OF LIFE SERVICE**  
for  
LES BRIDGES  
will be held Wednesday, December 21st at 11:00 a.m. at the Montague Center Congregational Church. Reception will follow in the Fellowship Hall.

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Katren Hoyden  
Janel Nockleby

**Photography**  
Claudia Wells  
Joe Parzych

**Editorial Assistants**  
Hugh Corr  
Shira Hillel  
Gloria Kegeles

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Don Clegg

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Janel Nockleby

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## Peace on Earth

In December of 1950, I was 16 years old, and the country was about six months into the Korean War. Every year just before Christmas, it was the tradition at the small school I attended on the shores of Long Island Sound to stage a medieval play in a city cathedral, in which pageant the entire student body took part, from the smallest children in kindergarten who were cherubs to the seniors who took the coveted parts of Mary and Joseph, wise men and angels. It opened with a moving speech by the prophet Isaiah (as gleaned from the King James version of the Bible).

Just the other day, I came across in an old scrapbook an article I had written for the school newspaper, The Dolphin, in December of that year. It juxtaposes newspaper headlines and radio reports of the war with pronouncements by the prophet as spoken in our play (Isaiah 9:2-7, and Isaiah 11:9). Sixty-one years later it still, I think, resonates.

## Unto Us a Child is Born

BY LYN CLARK  
Korea - June, 1950.

War in Asia... war by jet and by G.I.... stirs pride of U.S. but exacts a payment... 45,000 Reds attack on 200-mile front... Communists breach Kum River in major Taejon drive... first Marine division on its way... Navy skyraiders strike out... mobilization in U.S. has started... draft revived... reserves will be called as needed, married men are not exempt... veterans will return to army, young doctors and dentists will be under pressure... Situation in Korea takes headlong dive... U.N. forces are slowly being pushed off peninsula....

"The people that walked in darkness have seen a great light: They that dwell in the land of the shadow of death, upon them hath the light shined. For unto us a child is born, unto us a son is given, and the government shall be upon his shoulder."

Korea - August, 1950.

U.N. troops invade Seoul. Planes pave way for landing... bombers hit Red roads and rail-

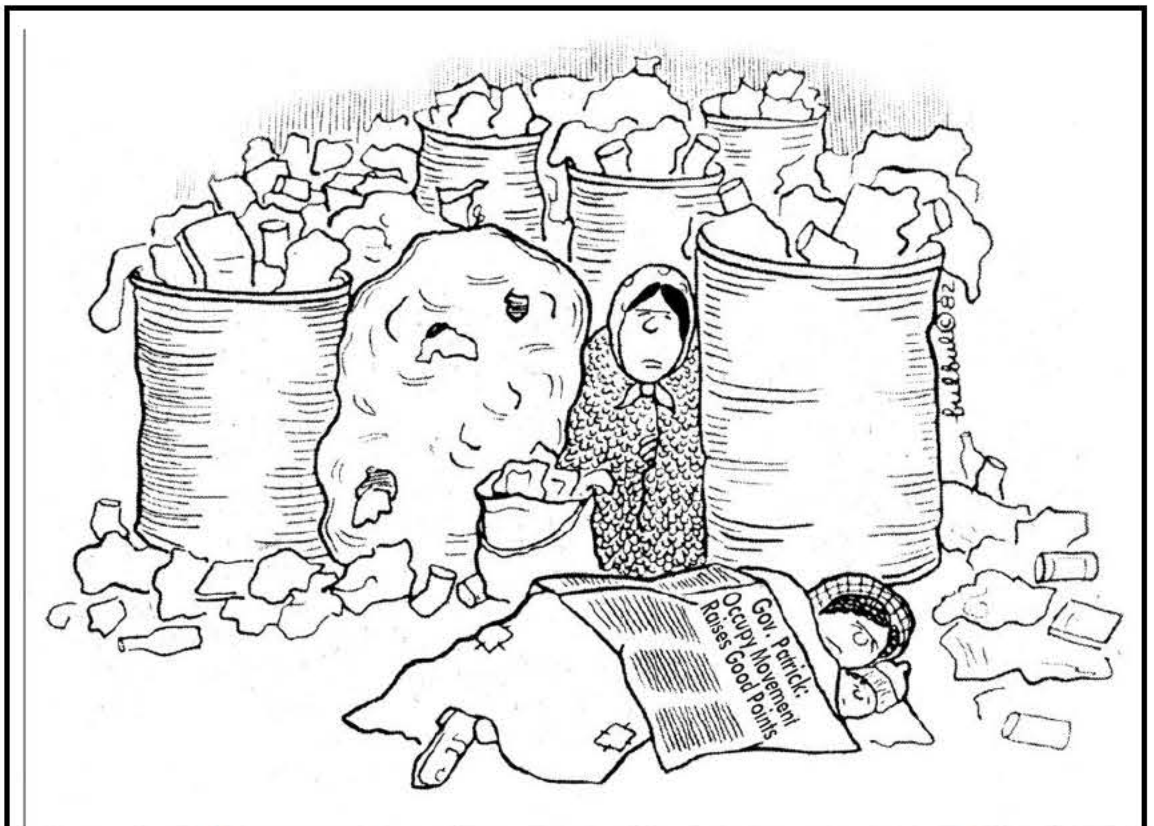
ways, leave gutted plants and bridges... pattern of war changed as U.N. forces strike the Red rear... City of Inchon taken in twelve hours... Marines besiege hills in Seoul... G.I.s race north to trap Red force... Kimpo taken and Han River crossed... victory in the lap of the U.N. army...

"Of the increase of his government and peace there shall be no end, but to establish it with judgment, and with justice from henceforth even forever."

Korea - November, 1950.

U.N. troops delayed by snow, insufficient clothing... Manchurian Reds slowly withdrawing... supply routes cut by heavy drifts... airlift may be needed... 600 North Koreans sentenced to death for collaboration with Communists... 45% of the First Cavalry Division of U.S Army wiped out as Reds slash back...

"They shall not hurt nor destroy in all my holy mountain: for the Earth shall be full of the knowledge of the Lord, as the waters cover the sea."



One in 45 children in the USA — 1.6 million children — were living on the street, in homeless shelters or motels, or doubled up with other families last year, according to the National Center on Family Homelessness.

## LETTER TO THE EDITOR

### Act Locally to Stop Global Nuclearism

Vermont law requires that the Vermont Yankee nuclear plant cease operations on March 21st, 2012, but the fact that Entergy (the reactor's owner) spent \$100 million last month to refuel suggests they have other plans. The SAGE (Safe and Green Energy) Alliance is preparing a non-violent direct action campaign to begin on that date, in the event the reactor is still operating.

If you, like me, have been wondering about how to get involved in this issue, this is it. Please come to an informational

meeting on forming an affinity group in Wendell on Sunday, December 18th at 11 a.m., at 5 Morse Village Road, between the meetinghouse and the town offices, rear apartment. Members of the SAGE coordinating committee will fill us in on next steps we can take as a local group, including arranging a one-day training in non-violent direct action.

This issue goes beyond simply closing an aging reactor. The nuclear industry does not want to see a precedent estab-

lished whereby individual states, and (gasp) even citizens, prevail over corporate interests. What is happening right now in Vermont has national and global implications for the future of nuclear power and democracy. If you would like to be part of influencing the outcome, please come join us for this meeting.

Contact: Alistair MacMartin at 413-992-7604 or email macmartin4@gmail.com for more information.

- Alistair MacMartin  
Wendell

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MONTAGUE DIRECTORY.

## Turners Falls Reporter.

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Our enterprising correspondent, Ed Gregory, sends us this advertisement from the 1883 Montague Directory, courtesy of the Montague Historical Society. Help us carry on the tradition (with better spelling)!

## Time to Renew? WHILE YOU'RE AT IT...

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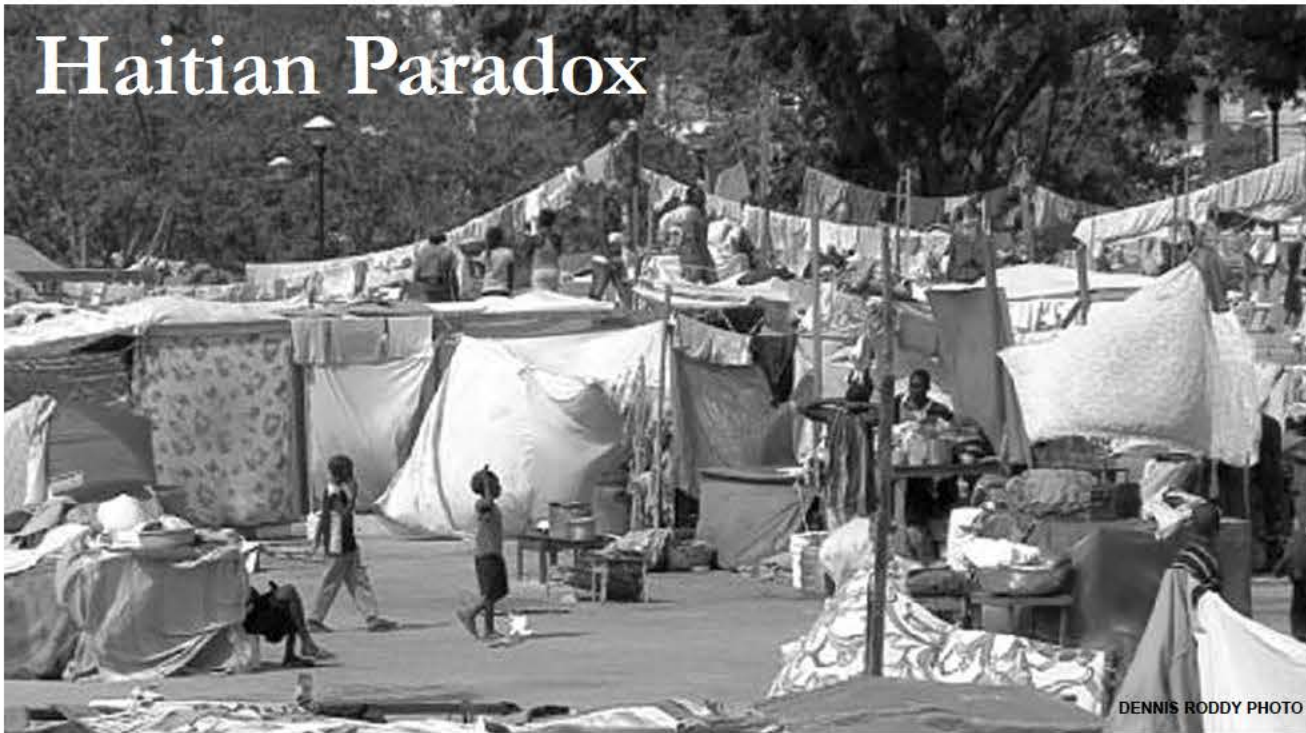
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# Haitian Paradox



DENNIS RODDY PHOTO

An estimated 600,000 Haitians still live in the tent cities set up immediately after the January, 2010 earthquake that struck near the capital, Port-au-Prince, where this photo was taken.

BY MARK LANGE

**LEOGANE, HAITI** - Tent cities and sewage, President Carter and Garth Brooks, 90 degree heat and no shade, armed guards and barbed wire, Irish cooks and performers, destruction and need everywhere - Haiti was surreal. It took a while for me to gain perspective on my week with Habitat for Humanity in the poorest island country of the Caribbean. The gratification was twofold: working with Haitian families to construct 100 homes in a week; and working alongside 400 optimistic volunteers to improve those families' lives.

This was the first time I had joined an International Habitat

for Humanity Jimmy Carter work project. But even the regulars agreed the work week in Haiti was one of the most daunting projects they had ever undertaken. Despite billions in emergency aid, an estimated 600,000 Haitians are still living in makeshift tent cities set up after the magnitude 7.0 earthquake struck outside the capital of Port au Prince on January 12th, 2010.

On our drive from the airport we passed food markets next to sewage-tainted streets. The obvious pre-existing poverty was only made worse by earthquake damage still apparent two years after the crisis.

The logistics of moving volunteers and materials, while providing protection for both, was mind-boggling. Our living quarters and work site were surrounded by fences, barbed-wire and armed guards. When there is desperation everywhere, nothing and no one is safe.

The constant, dramatic contrasts provided a week of unparalleled paradoxes. Like the Haitians, we lived in tents, but

ours were clean and safe. And those outside our compound had none of the luxuries we enjoyed: clean water, electricity, flush toilets, showers and plenty of food.

More importantly, we knew that our term in these meager quarters would be up in only seven days. The Haitians have no idea how long they will have to wait for the basic amenities of life. And while we worked hard during the day, we were entertained each night. We even had beer.

The homes we built were more modest than modest. At 12 by 16 feet, they were the size of a typical dining room in the United States. Even so, they were mansions compared to the tired tents so many of our partner families inhabited. While we worked in the scorching sun, armed guards patrolled the perimeter, occasionally coming down the paths between the homes.

It was startling at times to nearly bump into a soldier, and unnerving to consider the potential violence this armed presence represented. This was yet another

chuckle about another touching absurdity: here we were, thousands of miles from home, treated to a priceless, personal, café-style performance that couldn't be had in a sold-out stateside arena. Immediately after the concert President Carter delivered one of his briefest, and best, speeches ever. We felt like the luckiest people on Earth.

I have long thought Carter to be the best ex-president this country has ever known. My respect for him and Rosalynn continued to grow as we learned of the global efforts of the Carter Center to bring peace to the far-flung corners of the world, often tackling obscure problems unknown to most of us (African guinea worm disease?) but critical to the lives traumatized by them.

I mentioned to a friend that I wished my daily environment had the positive atmosphere of that week. We were a large group, committed to the same mission, and supportive of each other in the midst of challenging conditions. His response was, "Why can't our whole country be that way?" Maybe it was the influence of President Carter, but seeing the impact of our efforts reminded me of a wider, political irony. As I surveyed

the 100 homes in progress it occurred to me that the cost of this project was probably less than a million dollars. I thought of the 600,000 Haitians in displacement camps and realized that Habitat's approach could solve the problem with a chunk of cash and a lot of volunteers. I started thinking of our country's willingness to spend billions to invade a far-away land and leave death and destruction in our wake, while we can't seem to rally to the aid of a nation close to home. Had we invaded Haiti with hammers, instead of Iraq with guns, we could have housed a whole country while saving ourselves half a trillion dollars. And instead of hundreds of thousands of deaths, we would have had millions of admirers. Sometimes paradox is a thin veneer for travesty.

So, I survived Haiti, and Haiti survived my efforts. I am richer for the trip and I am deeply appreciative of the support of friends and family that made my journey possible. When Garth Brooks and Trisha Yearwood talked about why they do Habitat work projects, they admitted they do it as much for themselves as for those who are supposed to be the beneficiaries.

I found that to be especially true on the last day. Jehosephat was the husband in one of the partner families. I had the pleasure of working with him all week as he happily tackled anything required. As we packed up on the last day he thanked each of us personally.

Joe took my hand in two of his and said, in pretty good English, "Thank you. May God repay you for this, if not in this life, in the next." My teary response arose from one last glaring contrast. Here was a man who had so little, praying that I would directly benefit from a token week's work. It didn't take much personal reflection to appreciate the simple truth of my life:

I had already been paid - in advance - many times over.

In these holiday times, I hope you feel that way too.

Mark Lange is the associate dean of undergraduate education at UMass Amherst. He spent a week working with Habitat for Humanity in Haiti just after Thanksgiving. He lives in Amherst

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**NOTES FROM THE ERVING SELECTBOARD****Idling Trains Cause Complaint in Erving**

BY KATIE NOLAN - Citizens Brenda Silva and Tim Cronin from Central Street, which is located near the Pan Am railroad spur and switching area near the Erving and Millers Falls border, complained of trains idling for long periods of time in their neighborhood at the selectboard meeting on December 12th.

According to Silva and Cronin, the trains block the roadways at the train crossings and flout federal Environmental Protection Agency air pollution regulations that prohibit extended idling of diesel-powered trains.

Selectboard member James Hackett said the town had previously contacted Rosenberg about the extended idling, but had not had a reply. He added that officer Heath Cummings had tried unsuccessfully to contact Pan Am on the issue of

idling trains. Hackett said the Erving police were considering whether there was a way to ticket the train operators for blocking roadways.

Town administrator Tom Sharp said he had been in contact with Montague administrator Frank Abbondanzio, and the two towns intend to work together to get Pan Am to reduce excessive idling. Montague has previously contacted Pan Am and the US EPA staff to discuss citizen complaints about excessive train idling, noise and pollution in other parts of Montague.

The selectboard signed a contract with the Franklin County Sheriff's department for regional kennel services, after receiving a letter of support from police chief Chris Blair. Blair stated in his letter that Erving officers would respond to calls regarding dogs and handle

them as they have always done. Hackett said the regional kennel would be a better option for any animals that need to be boarded; currently Erving holds strays at the water treatment facility.

The Erving selectboard approved an all-alcohol license for Ralph Semb's planned package and convenience store near the French King Bowling Center after a public hearing on December 12th. The selectboard's approval will be included with a submittal to the state Alcoholic Beverages Control Commission requesting the license. The selectboard previously asked state senator Stan Rosenberg to prepare special legislation that would allow a third package store license in town, because the two licenses currently available in Erving have already been granted.

**NOTES FROM THE WENDELL SELECTBOARD****Wendell Considers Adopting Community Preservation Act**

BY JOSH HEINEMANN Open space committee chair Marianne Sundell and others met the Wendell selectboard at their December 7th meeting to recommend that Wendell adopt the Community Preservation Act (CPA).

The CPA is a state law any town can accept at town meeting to allow a property tax surcharge of ½% to 3%. That money will be matched up to 100% with state money and may be used for with-in the town for historic preservation, affordable housing, land conservation, and outdoor recreation, with the approval of a local community preservation committee, and the further approval of town meeting.

The first \$100,000 of property value is exempt from the surcharge.

In Wendell, the average home value is \$169,412 so a 3% surcharge would cost an average homeowner \$37, or just over \$3 a month, to create annual town funds for CPC funds of \$23,389.

In a small town like Wendell the state would match that amount 100%, creating an annual fund of \$46,778. At least ten percent of the money must be spent on affordable housing within the community, at least 10% on historic preservation, at least 10% for open space, and the remaining 70% can be spent on any project within the law's guidelines.

Charles Smith said this funding could have paid for the preservation of Wendell's historic documents, for example, if it had been in place when the town began that project. Money could be used on the restoration of the

meetinghouse, or to replace the town hall windows, to create a ball field, for habitat restoration, to help low and moderate income seniors with accessibility projects and other improvements to keep them in their homes, or saved for a future project. Any spending from the fund must be approved by town voters.

If the town accepts the CPA it must stay enrolled for five years, but it can change its surcharge rate at any time.

Selectboard member Jeffrey Poozer asked how difficult it is to get the funds from the state, given the state's inconsistent record of payments in lieu of taxes and other payments to Wendell.

Planning board chair Nan Riebschlaeger said in 2010 the state matched \$25.9 million to local community preservation funds. In 2007, before real estate collapsed, the state gave out \$68 million in matching funds under the law.

The law guarantees a 5% match, but actual returns have been higher, and as a small town Wendell is still likely to receive a 100% annual match.

Sundell said Wendell's former administrative assistant Margie McGinnis, who now works in Leverett, could speak about Leverett's experience in the projects they have funded with CPA money, including the ongoing restoration of the Leverett town hall, and the earlier restoration of an historic sawmill on North Leverett Road.

The conservation commission, and the open space committee both favor accepting the law.

Selectboard chair

Christine Heard said she thought CPA money was just for buying open space, which is plentiful in Wendell. She said she favored putting the option before Wendell's voters.

Dan Keller continued his report from prior meetings about Seaboard, the company interested in renting a lot of five acres or more for a solar installation in town.

The town owns a lot behind the former Maple Valley School, abutting private open land with road access, close to a temporary substation built by National Grid.

Any large scale solar installation in town will require a special permit, and a \$500 fee, so the company wants a secure agreement on any site before trying for a special permit. Their offer is to rent land from an owner at \$1000 per acre per year, and to sell electricity back to the town at 90% of the retail rate. After 20 years, the solar panels will still be producing 80% of their original output and the town, or other owner, has an option to buy the installation or continue the rental arrangement.

Jonathan von Ranson cautioned against the "feel good public relations" of solar power, saying the actual energy return for energy invested for solar panels is low. He said there is a need for further study. Leaving a site forested rather than clear cutting it for solar panels might be more effective if the goal is to combat the accumulation of carbon dioxide in the atmosphere, von Ranson argued.

Keller said the time frame for siting a solar see WENDELL pg 13

**NOTES FROM THE GILL-MONTAGUE REGIONAL SCHOOL COMMITTEE****Another Plan for the District?**

BY ELLEN BLANCHETTE

TURNERS FALLS - It was standing room only as school committee chair Michael Langknecht gavelled the meeting open. One by one, members of the district teaching staff came up to speak during the public comment portion of the meeting.

At issue was a decision by the school committee to move forward with a long term plan for the district based on a paper written by committee member Jeffrey Singleton. Singleton, from Montague, was one of the authors of the five year fiscal plan for district financial sustainability approved by the towns and the school district last year.

This time around, Singleton presented a plan

to build enrollment by making the school district more 'user friendly' as a companion piece to the fiscal compact, as the district works to emerge from Level 4 (needs improvement) status.

Titled the "Draft Long Term Plan for a Viable School District," Singleton first presented his plan to the committee in June as a means of starting a dialogue to set goals for the school committee and the district.

In their meeting on November 22nd, the school committee voted, with minor changes in wording, to use the first item on Singleton's ten point plan as their rationale for a plan going forward: "Establish a district focus on stabilizing and increasing enrollment

by creating an internal district culture that is innovative, open to criticism, learns from mistakes, builds confidence among its constituents, values strong leadership, and promotes high achievement, as well as enthusiasm for learning. This would be a 'customer friendly' culture that draws on the experience of school districts with expanding enrollment, successful businesses in the service industry and charter schools."

In statements to the school committee, members of the district teaching staff expressed concern over the introduction of yet another plan while they are spending so much time and energy working with interim superintendent Nadine see SCHOOL pg 9

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NOTES FROM THE MONTAGUE SELECTBOARD

Railroad Salvage Falling Down

BY JANEL NOCKLEBY In sharp contrast to the manner in which it was built, the Railroad Salvage building on Power Street in the South End of Turners Falls (aka Rockdale's Department Store, the Kendall Cotton Mill, the Griswold Cotton Mill) is falling apart slowly, and with little human intervention.

Turners Falls enterprise.") But the story of the factory's demise is painfully slow. It is almost as if the property exists in its own alternate dimension, at the northern end of the Patch. Modern ideas about demolition do not apply.

Whatever any town employees, lawyers, land court judges, Patch residents, property owners, or environmental regulators involved in the case might want to occur at the property, so far Nature is the only player that appears to have a reality-based demolition schedule.

There was "another partial wall collapse" at the old mill recently, reported building inspector David Jensen, as he described "a disappointing summer" at Railroad Salvage to the selectboard on December 12th.

Jensen made plans on four different occasions to meet with the owner of the property, James Bent, but Bent, a salvage contractor from upstate New York, never showed.

Jensen said the asbestos at the site has been cleaned up, but the company tasked with doing that work (Abide, Inc.) has not filed the proper paper work stating so.

There is a financial disagreement between Bent and Abide, Inc., said Jensen. The asbestos must be removed before further demolition can take place at the site, and a court order has stipulated that Bent must complete the asbestos cleanup at the old mill.

Selectboard member Chris Boutwell asked if Bent has been paying his taxes to the town.

Jensen reported the property tax bill is past due, but the property is not yet in tax title.

"The building is a hazard," continued Jensen, and "the fence is the only real security available." A gaping hole now exists in at least one area where the main floor once protected intruders from a dangerous drop to the basement level; evidence of people entering see MONTAGUE pg 10

NOTES FROM THE LEVERETT SELECTBOARD

Leverett Waits to Hear on Green Community Designation

BY DAVID DETMOLD The town is expecting to hear from the Massachusetts Department of Energy Resources by as soon as the end of this week whether Leverett has been designated a Green Community under the terms of the state's 2008 Green Communities Act.

Designation would put Leverett in line for an energy efficiency grant from the Mass DOER. Those grants have averaged around \$130,000, town administrator Margie McGinnis told the selectboard on Tuesday.

At least 74 Massachusetts cities and towns have already gained Green Community status, according to the DOER website, by enacting such measures as "by right" siting and expedited permitting for alternative energy generation, research and development, or manufacturing. To be eligible, towns must also pass measures such as the stretch energy code, providing for enhanced and verifiable energy savings for new buildings and remodeling, and adopt a fuel efficient vehicle purchasing policy for any non-exempt town vehicles. Most police, fire, and highway vehicles are exempt.

Finally, a town must approve a plan for reducing municipal energy use by 20% over five years.

As of November 15th, the town of Leverett has adopted or approved all of these measures.

McGinnis authored the plan for 20% municipal energy reduction, with the help of the town energy committee, relying in part for a baseline measure of Leverett's current energy use on figures from the recent municipal energy audit conducted by Siemens Building Technologies.

The plan calls for Leverett, under the energy performance contract with Siemens, to complete lighting upgrades at the elementary school and the boiler replacement project at the town hall, and under the Green Repair program to move forward with insulating the attic of the older section of the elementary school, and the window replacement project at that building. After that work is complete, the town plans to undertake lighting efficiency upgrades, with utility rebates if applicable, at the town hall, library and safety complex. The town hopes to have photovoltaic panels installed on town buildings or properties such as the closed landfill. The town will commit to replacing the two non-exempt town vehicles - the pickups driven by the fire chief and highway super - with fuel efficient vehicles.

The plan notes that the Leverett Elementary School currently uses about 71% of municipal energy use - but that building's energy profile should decline substantially in the coming year as energy upgrades there are completed.

Leverett will also ask Western Mass Electric Company to turn off any of the 31 street lights within town borders that might be deemed non-essential.

McGinnis said if Leverett's application for Green Community status is successful, the town will need to prepare a grant application to the DOER (funded through the state's participation in the Regional Greenhouse Gas Initiative, a cap and trade program for large power plants in the ten-state Northeast region) by January 20th.

McGinnis said that grant money, if it is received, would be used to further the town's 20% energy reduction plan.

Hoping for good news on the town's designation, the selectboard asked McGinnis to set up a meeting with the town energy committee to prepare for that grant application in early January.

In other news, the town hall siding renovation project and exterior painting is nearing completion, blessed by cooperative weather. On the other hand, the balky factory-direct Adams furnaces are still producing pools of condensate on the basement floor at town hall. Baffled, the project supervisor for Siemens installed a lock on the basement door last week, to make sure no town hall employee or frequent visitor to the building was pouring water around the furnaces to give the energy performance contract a bad name.

**Broadband** Selectboard member Peter d'Errico said the town's broadband committee had received four bids for a consultant to work with the town toward implementing last mile residential internet hook-ups, once middle mile cable rolls out in town, courtesy of the Massachusetts Broadband Initiative (MBI). The consultant will also be hired with a \$40,000 implementation grant from MBI.

D'Errico said two of the applicants for the job were "excellent," and the committee hopes to conduct interviews with them in time for the selectboard to award the bid at their December 20th meeting.

No word on whether MBI is working quite as fast on rolling out their part see LEVERETT page 14

Joseph Griswold and his Turners Falls enterprise

From the Gazette & Courier - July 6th, 1874

TURNERS FALLS - It is not necessary for us to inform our readers who Joseph Griswold is. Commencing more than 40 years ago the manufacture of some small wares, he built cotton mills at Griswoldville and Coleraine. The general break-up of business in 1835 bankrupted him, with thousands of other manufacturers. But being a man of the greatest energy, no business panic could keep him down, and he soon recommenced business; and although floods have time and again taken away his dams and damaged his mills - the last

great flood of 1839 damaging his mill property to the extent of \$100,000 - he had last season recovered from them all, got his mills in good running order, his water power all improved, and no further chance of an extension of his business on his present location.

So, leaving his mills in charge of his boys, although 70 years old, he began to look around for a location for a larger and better mill than he had yet erected.

The capitalists of Fall River wanted he should come there, but he found the population such that he did not want to invest a half million of capital there. He found all, foreign and native, anxious

to have him come; Holyoke offered him great inducements, but he did not find all to his mind there. Finally he visited Turners Falls, made inquiries in regard to its population, and the desirableness of locating there. After looking the ground over thoroughly, he secured three mill sites, just south of the suspension bridge, and late last season commenced laying the foundation of what is to be one of the largest and best cotton mills in New England.

It will also be one of the cheapest built. The material, with the exception of the lumber, is all on the ground.

see GRISWOLD pg 12

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# A Citizen's Arrest at VY Corporate Headquarters



Members of the Shut it Down Affinity Group read a Citizens' Arrest Warrant at Vermont Yankee corporate headquarters on Monday. Left to right, Frances Crowe, Susan Lantz, Paki Wieland, Hattie Nestel, and Nina Swaim.

## PERSPECTIVE

**BY CATE WOOLNER BRATTLEBORO** – Members of the Shut it Down Affinity Group entered the corporate headquarters of Entergy Vermont Yankee in north Brattleboro on Monday, December 12th and attempted to make a citizens' arrest of the board and officers of Entergy, operator of the Vermont Yankee

nuclear power plant in Vernon. Eleven women were arrested: Paki Wieland, Susan Lantz and Frances Crowe, of Northampton; Anneke Corbett of Florence; Jean Grossholtz of South Hadley; Ellen Graves of West Springfield; Hattie Nestel and Marcia Gagliardi, of Athol; Sandra Boston, of Greenfield; and Nina Swaim, of Sharon, VT.

I was the eleventh woman arrested. I live in Northfield, about five miles from the

Vernon reactor as the radiation flies. This was my first time participating in an action with Shut it Down, whose members have been arrested at civil disobedience demonstrations at Vermont Yankee 15 times since 2005.

Our plan was to try to get in the main door and, once inside, to read out loud a citizens' arrest for a long list of crimes, including crimes against the environment, the state of Vermont, the safety of neighbors, the crime of

creating tons of radioactive waste with no viable long-term storage plan, the crime of toxic leaks and corporate lies.

We also planned to wrap the building in crime scene tape and plant signs saying "Crime Scene."

But when we arrived at Entergy's corporate headquarters, there was already a sheriff's car at the scene and caution tape wrapping the main entrance. Weird!

We soon realized construction was in progress and the main entrance was not in use. Still, the door was open, so we walked inside, after some of our group spray painted the driveway in yellow paint with the words, "Citizen's Arrest," and wrapped crime scene tape across the driveway entrance.

The construction workers told us we couldn't use the entrance, but by then we were all inside. No one was around but the construction workers.

We noticed the press room, went in, wrapped the tables and chairs in crime scene tape and read our citizens' arrest in Occupy-style.

For those not familiar with this method of public address, one person reads a line out loud and the group repeats it. This means of broadcasting a message is used in the Occupy actions in place of a megaphone or mic. No doubt everyone in the building heard us.

We posted our banner, stark white on black, Vermont Yankee = Fukushima. Men in suits with cell phones walked by the room, which had glass windows on the interior hall, and soon a cadre of Brattleboro police and Windham County sheriffs arrived.

They told us we had to leave

and we said we would leave once we were able to talk to someone in upper management.

Larry Smith, Entergy public relations spokesperson, hovered outside the press room looking worried. A police officer said if we went outside, management would talk to us. We declined those terms.

The average age in the Shut it Down affinity group is probably around 74, and we were acting non-violently. It was clear we weren't going to leave when asked to politely. The police officer gave the expected warning: "If you do not leave, you will be under arrest for trespassing." No one moved.

One by one, the police placed us under arrest. We passed out copies of our citizen's arrest proclamation. We were all given citations and court dates in January and an order not to return. The local newspaper and radio stations were there, and we issued them our press release.

I was willing to risk whatever consequences might come as a result of my actions. Looking to the near future, I think the actions that may be on the horizon at Vermont Yankee, that might involve much larger groups of folks and a much larger media presence, will have a more significant impact in the struggle to shut down this aged and accident plagued reactor for good.

I will be training folks who want to join affinity groups to be part of future actions in this campaign of nonviolent direct action to close Vermont Yankee. Go to the SAGE Alliance website for more information: [www.sagealliance.net](http://www.sagealliance.net)

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MARA WASKIEWICZ PHOTO

# Leverett Shows off a New Fire Truck

BY MARA WASKIEWICZ -

On Saturday, December 9th, I interviewed John Moruzzi, the Leverett fire chief, about our town's new fire truck.

The truck is a 2009 Rosenbauer that came from South Dakota. It had been a demo truck for Rosenbauer, so the town got it for a good price: \$375,000. It was never used by a fire department

before.

Leverett's new fire truck is 32 feet long and can hold five fire fighters.

The truck has three ladders attached to it. One is a 24-foot long extension ladder, the second is a 14-foot roof ladder, and the last is a 10-foot attic ladder. They can reach two stories high.

Our new fire truck

holds 1,000 gallons of water (4.17 tons) and also can draft water from places like the Leverett Pond. It also holds foam to help put out car and structure fires. The hose can spray water over 100 feet.

And of course, the truck is fire engine red.

*Mara Waskiewicz is a fourth grader from Leverett.*

**SCHOOL** from page 6  
Ekstrom on implementing the Accelerated Improvement Plan (AIP), mandated by the Department of Elementary and Secondary Education (DESE) to get out of Level 4 status. Teachers also expressed strong support for Ekstrom, along with hopes that she will be kept on past her current term.

After several teachers had spoken, Langknecht declared the public participation portion of the meeting concluded and moved ahead with the agenda.

Student council representative Sam Danford spoke on the subject of hats in school (he brought a petition to allow hats to be worn in the cafeteria and hallways and in the classroom at the teacher's discretion), as well as the Winter Concert at the high school, to be held December 20th at 7:00 p.m.

Next on the agenda was the report from the subcommittee on the long term plan.

In an apparent misunderstanding, Langknecht said he thought the teachers who had wanted to speak on the topic of the long term plan had already done so. The teachers thought that they had been asked to wait until later in the meeting. So when Sandra Brown, chair of the subcommittee, began to offer her report and one of the teachers asked to speak, Langknecht expressed surprise, and attempted to move on with the agenda, saying the time

for public comment was over.

But members of the school committee said they would like to hear from the teachers. With some discussion, the committee overcame the reluctance of the chair, and a motion to set aside the agenda and allow a free discussion among staff and school committee members was approved.

Some staff chose to make statements and others raised questions and challenged the position of the school committee in bringing forward yet another plan. One said she would like to remain focused on student education, and have the staff remain focused on following Ekstrom's AIP plan.

Several voiced the concern of being spread too thin, and worried about the effect on their health and well being as they strove to accomplish all that is being asked of them.

Brad Dana, history teacher at Turners High, said the district does not have unlimited resources, that the teachers are asked to do more and more with less and less. He also took issue with the term "customer friendly," saying in his experience this often means the customer is always right. He said in working for the state department and other positions he has held before coming to the district, he encountered many situations where the customer was wrong. "The customer

is not always right," Dana said, adding, "Sometimes they need to be told what is right." He said the teachers are professionals with a great deal of experience and training and should be trusted to know what are best practices for teaching their students.

Susan Pelis, a second grade teacher at Montague Elementary, said she had worked for multiple principals and superintendents in her time at the district, resulting in inconsistent leadership. She said she appreciates the consistency of Ekstrom's leadership.

Pelis described how teams of teachers met in the fall and have worked diligently and collaboratively to meet the goals of the AIP. She said until now no superintendent has ever attended a team leadership meeting, but Ekstrom comes to all of them.

Bob Pearlman said part of the state's determination of Level IV status for the district was due to the lack of good governance on the school committee. He said the school committee should focus on governance.

Jane Oakes, member from Gill, agreed the committee should concentrate on its present responsibilities.

Emily Monosson, member from Montague, said she felt the schools in the district are very good, and her two children are getting an excellent education in district schools. She expressed support for the staff and adminis-

tration and said she did not think the plan the committee was discussing was in any way meant to interfere or show lack of support for what teachers and staff were doing. She pointed out the first goal of the plan was support for the AIP.

Marge Levenson, of Montague, said the plan was intended for the school committee, and the committee's focus is different from the teachers' and the administration's. She said it was not the school committee's intention to make the teachers' job harder.

Ekstrom said the school committee is also part of the AIP, in that the committee is required to participate in professional development on district governance.

Teacher's union president Karl Dziura, addressing the school committee, said, "Thanks to poor leaders, it all falls on the teachers."

He asked Singleton why he chose to focus on the "service industry and charter schools" in his statement. Dziura wanted to know why Singleton preferred those examples for educators to follow instead of well-researched and tested best practices.

Singleton acknowledged he was a supporter of charter schools and added he was open to discussing other language for the plan. He emphasized this was only a draft, meant to provide a basis for discussion and debate.

Singleton's plan includes ten action steps, nearly all of which focus on the school committee itself, although the seventh step calls for the committee to focus on revisiting the collective bargaining process: "in the context of the fiscal plan and the need to expand enrollment," by establishing "a new process for negotiating wage and benefit increases consistent with projected revenues," and implementing "new state teacher evaluation regulations in collaboration with the GMEA."

In her report to the committee, Ekstrom informed members that in a meeting with Joan Connelly of the DESE on December 8th, she was told school committee governance would need to be included in the AIP in order to complete a section on accountability. Brown responded that this was just another example of the state "moving the goal post."

Bart Bales of Bales Energy Associates gave the school committee an update on plans to improve the hot water and ventilation system for the pool room. The plan includes the purchase a new, efficient boiler to replace the current hot water heater. Rebates should be available to defray some of the costs, and Bales said there is a good chance the district could receive a 50% reduction in the cost of a new boiler from the gas company.



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**MONTAGUE** from page 7 the mill has not been uncommon over the years demolition has dragged on.

Jensen promised to keep trying to contact Bent. He noted the weather is good right now, and work could move forward before the real cold arrives.

Boutwell speculated the problem of securing and demolishing the mill may be headed back to the courts.

In other news, the Gill-Montague bridge will be closed to truck traffic from December 21st through January 2nd, due to some delicate gusset work on the Gill approach. Happy Holidays.

Expect new septage rates in the near future, as water pollution control facility superintendent Bob Trombley plans to propose new rates at a public hearing this Monday, December 19th, at 7 p.m. at town hall.

Septage, for those wondering, is the material in septic tanks that needs to be pumped out from time to time and processed. Trombley explained that in order for the new rotary press to work at an optimum rate

posing a flexible rate of between 7.5 and 9.5 cents per gallon of septage. Currently, the rate is 9 cents per gallon for Montague residents and 9.5 cents per gallon for non-residents.

If the selectboard approves the new flexible rate, after the public hearing, Trombley will then have the ability to set a new rate in that range, to try to attract more customers to the Montague facility for their septage disposal needs. Trombley and his team promise to "closely monitor any odor issues."

Town administrator Frank Abbondanzio reported the town has saved \$163,747.65 since 2000, after treasurer Patti Dion and town accountant Carolyn Olsen recommended a change from Social Security to OBRA for part time town workers. "If they hadn't taken the initiative to suggest the change, the savings wouldn't have been realized," Abbondanzio said.

Selectboard member Pat Allen commented that the town hall's financial team, "like Bob Trombley's staff, were always thinking ahead, trying to figure out new ways to save."

taken for failure to pay back taxes. The contract is for \$3800 for all four buildings at the site.

Interviews will be held for the new staff sergeant and the interim sergeant positions in the police department on Monday, December 19th. The interviews are open to the public and will take place at 5 p.m. at town hall. The positions have opened up due to the hiring of former staff sergeant Chris Williams as interim police chief, after the recent retirement of chief Ray Zukowski.

The Shea Theater requested and received approval for a liquor license for their Annual New Year's Eve comedy show. The show is at 8 p.m. and reservations are recommended.

In other Shea news, February will bring the New Renaissance Player's production of Treasure Island to the theater, in time for school vacation week. There is also a dinner mystery theater performance in the works, Shakespeare will be back, and more music events are in the offing for the theater also.

A Montague Business Association request for a

**GOALS** from page 1

Much publicity about the new system has focused on the fact that students' standardized test scores, including MCAS, will play a role in the new teacher evaluation system. Materials on the education department's website (www.doe.mass.edu/eval) stress the need for effective teachers to promote "student achievement" and reduce "achievement gaps," with achievement widely viewed as jargon for higher test scores.

Baehr, however, stressed the flexibility of the evaluation framework and the fact that teachers, individually and with their peers, set their own goals with their evaluators.

The process she described begins with a "self assessment," where teachers evaluate their own work and set goals for the coming year. The regulations mandate one goal will focus on student learning and the other on improvement in the teacher's own practice. At the next stage, the teacher works with an "evaluator" to confirm the goals and develop a coherent implementation plan. According to Baehr, the new state regulations encourage teacher collaboration ("team goal setting") in this phase.

Step three begins the implementation stage - teaching, collecting data, participating in "professional development." The fourth phase, called "formative assessment," is a "check-in" at mid-cycle, Baehr said, to rate the teacher's performance against goals and performance standards.

In the final phase, "summative assessment," the educator is rated by the evaluator against the standards of professional practice contained in state regulations and attainment of the teacher's goals established at the outset.

The rating system includes four categories - exemplary, proficient, needs improvement and unsatisfactory, with an improvement or "directed growth plan" mandated for each rating.

A separate rating will be made by the evaluator on the educator's "impact on student learning, growth, and achievement." This rating is to be based on at least two statewide or district determined measures that are comparable across grades and subjects in the district.

The MCAS Student Growth percentile (SGP) must be used when available as one of these

measures. However, MCAS growth percentiles are only available for a small percentage of the state's teachers (under 20%), so the use of additional district-determined measures will be necessary for this second rating.

These two ratings (summative and impact on learning) will be used to determine the type and duration of the improvement plan for the educator.

Although Baehr tried to de-emphasize the role of test scores in this process, a good deal of time at the forum was spent explaining the SGP. This is a measure of student progress that compares a student's growth over a year with all students with the same score in the initial year.

For example, if Student A received a 230 on a fifth grade English language arts test in 2010, he or she would be compared in 2011 with all other students receiving the same 2010 score. If half of them perform better than student A and half worse in 2011, student A's SGP would be 50. If 60% of students with similar grades in 2010 perform better in 2011, Student A's SGP would be 40.

Average growth percentiles can also be created for whole classes, which is presumably how this measure would be used in teacher evaluations.

Since the SGP would apply to a minority of teachers, districts must determine additional measures and report them to the state by September 2013. The state will issue guidance to districts regarding such measures on or before July 2012.

Student feedback on their teachers and teacher feedback on the performance of administrators are also mandated by the new regulations, with state guidelines and tools for collecting and analyzing this data forthcoming.

Needless to say, there were numerous questions about the new evaluation framework, including the validity of the SGP measure, how to pay for evaluators and professional development, and the role of collective bargaining in the process.

Dunphy described a potential ballot initiative mandating a new teacher evaluation system. He was rather critical of the initiative for forcing "one size fits all" policies on local districts. Law argued too little is known about the SGP yet to make it a part of a teacher's evaluation.



The Railroad Salvage building, as it appeared in 2007

of efficiency, having more septage processed at the facility, from septic tanks both in and outside of Montague, is a good thing, as is the additional revenue.

So, Trombley plans on pro-

Environmental and construction consultants, Weston and Sampson, will provide an environmental site assessment for three downtown Millers Falls properties (at 30-34 East Main Street) the town has recently

Christmas tree in the Peskeompskut Park bandshell was approved, from December 9th through December 30th, but no longer, as there is a 21 day limit for items placed in the park.



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**MUSIC** from page 1

ences in musical and vocal performance, and how to produce and teach them.

Damon finished college with a Bachelor of Music from UMass Lowell and a Master of Music from UConn Storrs, and then began teaching music to K - 5 students in the Greenfield schools. Next he taught music K - 7, and gave instrumental lessons to students in grades 3 - 8 in the Holyoke schools. He was also the oboe studio director at NMH in Gill. At the same time, he obtained teaching certificates (preK - 12) and did some post-graduate studies, including a "project in visualizing foreign arts terms," where he created cards that showed the word "sing" in letters and scripts from 32 world languages.

In his teaching career, Damon

never forgot his roots. He has stayed involved with conducting the Shelburne Falls Military Band, with its two dozen performances each year. He plays music and mentors student conductors from local elementary schools and regional colleges. Damon is active in the Gill agricultural commission and the state board for agriculture. He helped found the "Gill Cheese Night" which expanded with the inclusion of local ice cream into Gill Dairy Night this year. He hopes to add local yogurt to the bill of fare next fall. He also helps with "Veggies to Vets," which supplies free local vegetables to the homes of Gill veterans.

Damon said he felt extremely comfortable with his life, living in Gill with his wife Joyana, a music teacher in Vermont, and their seven-year-old, Isaac.

Then, with a suddenness that came like a thunderclap, he lost his job of the last three years teaching preK - 6 music classes and instrumental instruction for fifth and sixth grade students in the Gill-Montague schools, a casualty of budget cuts that are laying waste to art and music programs across the country in these tough times. Damon continued to offer concerts in senior centers in the tri-state region, and kept up with conducting, mentoring students, writing articles, and presenting clinics at music education conferences. But he missed the central aspect of his career in music: teaching children.

Recently, Damon decided to develop a music school of his own, focused on the non-traditional teaching opportunities presented by the 480 families in Franklin County who home-

school their children. According to state law, these parents have to meet the same standards as public schools by providing 30 minutes of music education a week for their home schoolers, along with documentation of the child's learning in musical instruments, knowledge, and theory.

So with a main campus in the First Congregation Church in Gill and satellite studios in the planning stages, Damon launched A Natural Music School this year, offering private instrumental lessons on woodwinds, brass, and percussion. His classes are not just geared for children. Damon said adults can take lessons too, and learn to play instruments, or just learn to appreciate music by exploring Stravinsky's "The Firebird," Holtz's "the Planets," Beethoven's symphonies, or even a forensic exam-

ination of who or what killed Mozart, along with lessons in folk music and dance.

To Damon, music is and always has been a natural thing. The Earth produces pleasant vibrations as it moves through space. You don't need a stethoscope to hear the euphony of a heartbeat. Music can unify and bring people together, Damon believes. "Music is how you can express yourself, and everyone, whether child or adult, smiles when they begin to make music. It's innate," he said.

To find out more about Damon's music lessons, contact [anaturalmusicschool@yahoo.com](mailto:anaturalmusicschool@yahoo.com). The rates are reasonable, and combined with the low cost of renting instruments at music stores; music could become a family affair in your home



**DREAM** from page 1

Building committee member Jacquie Boyden said, "This is a senior center and a community center and we want you all to visit and support it throughout the year."

Sharp praised the "dedicated group of seniors who wrote letters and worked for ten years to get the selectboard to support this project. We're celebrating more than a building. We're celebrating a program: that we can improve seniors' lives."

"This is all paid for," added selectboard chair Andrew Goodwin, who said the building committee would soon be turning a six figure sum back to the town, from the money originally appropriated but not needed to build the 7000 square foot building.

Sharp said later the project would likely return \$200,000 to the town, from the \$2.4 million appropriated by annual town meeting in May of 2010, from a combination of \$1.25 million in free cash, \$600,000 in unspent funds from other projects, with the balance raised from taxation.

He said the selectboard is working on a plan to purchase a back-up generator to run the building in the event of a power failure, so the new center could also be used as a warming shelter in emergencies.

Sharp added the town is considering three options for how to dispose of the former senior center space on the first floor of

the former elementary school on Pleasant Street. Either the town will sell the building (the second floor is rented on a year by year lease to the administrative offices of school Union-28), or allow the parks and recreation to find a permanent home on the first floor, with room for indoor activities for young people, or allow the public library, crowded in its current quarters on Moore Street, to move into the space, with help from state funds to renovate it for that purpose.

At the new senior center, architect John Caitlin, of Quincy, predicated the town would save between 40 - 60% on energy bills for the new senior center, due to the town's decision to go with a geothermal heat exchanger to help heat and cool the building. Caitlin said the photovoltaic lights, paint that featured no volatile organic compounds, floor tiles made of clay and linseed oil with an environmentally friendly adhesive, and numerous other features combined to make the building an investment the town could be proud of.

"You seniors raised us," said state representative Denise Andrews (D-Orange). "You taught us our values. You're a model on the way you fought for the new senior center, and the spirit you continue to show our community."

Andrews called the new building a product of compassion and responsibility, and called on the town to next build

senior housing on land behind the center, so "seniors can remain in the community with the friends they love."

Kiely just seemed glad to have the ribbon cutting behind her, and the doors finally open on the new building, which takes the place of the cramped senior center she has directed out of the first floor of a former elementary school for the last many years. Kiely said congregate meals

would begin at the new senior center this week, with the FRTA offering free rides on a demand response basis to Erving seniors to and from the new building for meals or programming (call 423-3308 for more info).

On Friday, a Christmas concert featuring Music Is Love and a roast pork supper will take place there, starting at 11:30 a.m.

"We're going to have lots of

grand times here, today and into the future," Kiely said.

Lenny Zarcone crooned classic songs from the 40s and 50s for the seniors to help set the mood, and he was gradually upstaged by the 5th and 6th grade chorus from the elementary school, as the crowd toured the new building, marveling at what a town that values its seniors can do.





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**GRISWOLD** from pg 7

The stone is quarried and slid from the derrick right to the place wanted in the foundation walls. The brick are kilned and burnt so near the walls that they can be taken on to the hods direct from the kiln and carried up the walls of the building. The sand for the brick is all around the yard, and the clay is drawn from a bank on Avenue A, not 15 rods distant and on a down grade.

About half of the foundation walls were laid last season, and this season the workmen were employed on them until about the middle of June, when they left the walls and commenced making brick. A portion of the brick were made last season and it is expected that four kilns will be made and burnt this season by the 1st of September, which will furnish enough for the mill and 32 tenement houses. After the brick are made, the foundations will be completed.

Last winter the time was employed in getting out the lumber on Mr. Griswold's land in Coleraine. There were 1,000,000 feet got out, and sawed, planed, and jointed, ready to be used on the factory and tenement houses. There are wanted 100,000 feet more, which will be got out the coming winter.

Next spring the laying of brick will be commenced, and 3,000,000 are to be laid during the season. It is expected that three years from that time will be required to put up the walls, finish up the factory and get the mill ready for operation.

The mill is to be 130 feet long, with a capacity for 800 looms.

The only transportation of material is the lumber from

Coleraine. No contractors are employed on any part of this immense work. Mr. Griswold has his foreman, but is there every day in the week during working hours, from Monday morning until Saturday night, around among the workmen, with his coat off and ready to give a word of advice, or lend a helping hand.

He is at present employing about 30 men and three or four teams. No mill in New England will have been built so thoroughly or so cheaply as this when completed.

Mr. Griswold is probably better posted in all that is necessary in buildings of this kind than most any man in the state, and his great executive ability and excellent judgment are of great service to him in such an undertaking at his advanced age. Mr. Griswold was led to the selection of Turners Falls or some other similar water power from the frequency of the giving away of dams and reservoirs on our smaller streams.

He does not believe any dam or reservoir can be made absolutely safe, and says a man has a right to place his factory where their breaking away might destroy it, but has no right to plant a dwelling in the path of the flood and thus peril human life. There are but a few of our towns on these smaller streams where dwellings can be placed out of the reach of floods, while in such places as Turners Falls they are beyond the reach of all such calamities.

Mr. Griswold expresses great regret that he did not locate at Turners Falls at the completion of the dam, as he is certain he should have been vastly better off, monetarily, if he had done so.

**BYLAW** from page 1

entertainment license and wondered whether they would need to apply for another license under the bylaw.

Planning board chair William Morris said he was not a lawyer and couldn't answer the question about whether the bylaw would apply to the Sembs' business.

One citizen said, "How can we vote if we don't have answers?" Another called out, "You're asking us to vote on a bylaw you can't explain to us."

As part of the quest for information, moderator Rich Peabody was called on to read aloud the definition for "nudity" in the Massachusetts General Laws: "uncovered or less than opaquely covered human genitals, pubic areas, the human female breast below a point immediately above the top of the areola, or the covered male genitals in a discernibly turgid state. For purposes of this definition, a female breast is considered uncovered if the nipple or areola only are covered."

Planning board member Jacqueline Boyden told the meeting that the planning board had to

adhere to legal deadlines, and if the bylaw was not approved by January 28th, 2012, the planning board would not be able to bring up the bylaw again for two years, leaving open an unregulated window for adult entertainment businesses to peep through and perhaps set up shop in Erving.

Asked about enforcement of the bylaw, Morris said that the Franklin County Inspection Program would be responsible for that.

Fire chief Bud Meattey asked why adult entertainment was allowed only in the central village district, rather than in all zoning districts, which appeared to Meattey to be an attempt at "spot zoning."

Boyden denied this charge and said the planning board had restricted the locations for adult entertainment in order to protect rural residential zones.

Selectboard chair Andrew Goodwin said he thought the bylaw left room for interpretation and, in his opinion, could have an effect on local businesses. He added that enforcement by the county building inspector would leave the bylaw's interpretation

up to someone from outside of town.

Goodwin supported suspending the meeting until town counsel could be consulted and more information presented to the town. Morris noted the text of the bylaw has been available to townspeople since July 28th, and recommended moving forward with a vote on the bylaw.

The meeting voted 18 to 13 to suspend proceedings until January 9th at 7:00 p.m. at the town hall.

In other actions, the meeting approved articles authorizing payment of bills of prior years totaling \$564.61 and passed over articles asking for approval of and educational reimbursement, authorization of a revolving fund for the Council on Aging to receive facility use payments for use of the new senior center by outside groups, and transferring \$750 from the Water Enterprise Fund to provide a containment system for stored sodium hydroxide at the well pump house. The Council on Aging revolving fund will be considered at the annual town meeting.



**HIGHLIGHTS FROM THE MONTAGUE POLICE LOG**

**Vandalism, Assault, Fight, Kidnapping**

**Tuesday, 12/6**

6:56 p.m. Disorderly conduct on Avenue A. Peace restored.

11:36 p.m. Arrest of [redacted] and [redacted] for vandalism, damage, or defacement of property at Montague Center School on School Street.

**Wednesday, 12/7**  
3:43 p.m. Assault on Green Pond Road. Report taken.

9:34 p.m. Threatening, harassment on Third Street. Advised of options.

**Thursday, 12/8**  
9:20 a.m. Threatening,

harassment at Franklin County Technical School on Industrial Boulevard. Services rendered.

**Friday, 12/9**  
1:20 a.m. Domestic disturbance on Fourth Street. Services rendered.

2:39 a.m. Arrest of [redacted] for domestic assault and battery, resisting arrest, disorderly conduct, and assault and battery on a police officer on Fifth Street.

11:05 a.m. Drug, narcotics violation at Franklin County Technical School on Industrial Boulevard. Report taken.

3:18 p.m. Threatening, harassment on Wendell Road. Advised of options.

7:54 p.m. Neighbor disturbance on Third Street. Services rendered.

**Saturday, 12/10**  
1:00 a.m. Arrest of [redacted] for domestic assault and battery, and vandalism, damage, or defacement of property on East Main Street.

5:30 a.m. Arrest of [redacted] on a default warrant.

8:10 p.m. Arrest of [redacted] for domestic assault and battery on Fourth Street.

11:14 p.m. Hit and run accident at Montague Elks Lodge

on Elks Avenue. Investigated. **Sunday, 12/11**

2:45 a.m. Runaway reported on Eighth Street. Returned to home or family.

3:57 p.m. Arrest of [redacted] for assault and battery with a dangerous weapon, on Fourth Street.

7:41 p.m. Fight at Fourth Street alley. Services rendered.

**Tuesday, 12/13**  
12:06 p.m. Arrest of [redacted] for domestic assault and battery, assault and battery with a dangerous weapon (phone), kidnapping, intimidating a witness, and wanton destruction of property over \$250 on Second Street.

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JESSICA LARKIN ILLUSTRATION

**THE HEALTHY GEEZER:**

**Removing Undesirable Ear Wax**

**BY FRED CICETTI**

**LEONIA, NJ** - *Q. I've been getting lots of ear wax lately. Please tell me this has nothing to do with getting older.*

I wish I could. Ear wax problems are just one more indignity seniors have to deal with. I sympathize with your annoyance.

As you age, your eardrums often thicken and the bones of the middle ear and other structures are affected. Hearing sharpness may decline because

of changes in the auditory nerve. Impacted ear wax is another cause of trouble in hearing and is more common with increasing age.

Ear wax ("cerumen") is made by glands in the external ear canal. This wax protects the skin of the ear from water and infection. The amount and consistency of ear wax varies.

Most of the time the ear canals are self-cleaning. There is a slow migration of earwax from the eardrum to the ear opening. Old earwax is constantly being transported, assisted by chewing and jaw motion, from the ear canal to the ear opening where it usually dries, flakes, and falls out.

There are two basic types of inherited ear wax - wet and dry. Dry wax is common in Asia, while wet wax is common in

Western Europe. There's more fat in wet wax.

A moderate amount of ear wax is desirable. Both too little and too much ear wax increase the risk of infection.

If you have impacted ear wax, it can be eliminated with drops, water irrigation, and instruments used by doctors, audiologists, or trained technicians. Removal by a professional is the best method of getting troublesome wax out.

Over-the-counter drops work well for small amounts of wax. These drops are solutions of oil and peroxide. However, there are a couple of studies that found water to be as effective as OTC products.

Syringing with water is a standard method of wax removal. Water jet devices, such as those used for dental care,

Do-it-yourself ear wax vacuum kits are available over-the-counter. A study comparing these vacuums to syringing found that the ear vacs did not remove wax.

When syringing, use body-temperature water. Cooler or warmer water may cause brief dizziness or vertigo. With your head upright, straighten the ear canal by holding the outside ear and gently pulling upward. Use a syringe to gently direct a small stream of water against the ear canal wall next to the wax plug. Tip your head to allow the water to drain. You may need to repeat irrigation several times.

Never irrigate the ear if the eardrum may not be intact. Go to a healthcare provider if your ears are blocked with wax and you are unable to remove it.

Don't use cotton-tipped

swabs such as Q-tips. These swabs can push wax deeper into your ear. They also can break an ear drum and increase the risk of bacterial infection of the external canal, commonly called "swimmer's ear."

Never use ear candles to remove wax because they can cause serious injury. These are hollow, cone-shaped candles typically made of wax-impregnated cloth. These are inserted into the ear canal. The exposed end is lighted. Common injuries are burns and obstruction of the ear canal with candle wax.

To maintain the proper amount of ear wax, you can put baby oil or olive oil into each ear. It doesn't hurt to put a few drops of clean oil into each ear every day. Swimmers often do this. This should not be done if you have an eardrum perforation. Another method is to have your ears cleaned out by your doctor on a regular basis.

*If you have questions, write to fred@healthygeezzer.com.*

**WENDELL** from page 6 installation is a long one, and will involve a stop at town meeting, so there is plenty for the town to consider the pros and cons.

Pooser said, "Now that we have an electric lighting plant we can build our own [photovoltaic installation]." He referred to the recent town meeting votes establishing a municipal electric lighting plant to assist the town in delivery of high speed internet access.

Treasurer Carolyn Manley told the board that accountant Brian Morton wants to put a method in place for collecting fees and distributing the collected money. Massachusetts general laws are "all over the place" on this topic, and offer no guidance, she said. The tax collector keeps demand fees, and ignores others. Town clerk

Gretchen Smith turns fees she collects into the general fund, and gets compensated for those, but it might be cleaner if she kept those fees for her own department.

Keller suggested that process be made the official one, with the understanding that the town will continue to look at the process and establish a long term, consistent method. A list of fees will be readied for the next special town meeting.

Town coordinator Nancy Aldrich read from an insurance inspection report, beginning with the preface, "They had to find something (needing correction)". In the police station they found paint in the furnace room, and stained ceiling tiles. (Police Chief Ed Chase said the stains are cosmetic; the new roof does not leak.) The town office building has rolls of

flooring in the furnace room (but there is no other place to store them). At the highway garage and fire station a door to the furnace room is blocked with bags of speedy dry; there should be a fire extinguisher by the fuel area. Electric outlets in the library should be covered with plastic protectors if they are not in use; the book drop should be separate from the building in case someone drops in inflammatory literature (like Fahrenheit 451?).

Keller said the building inspector approved the library book drop as it is.

Dog officer Maggie Houghton sent in a letter responding to the proposal from the Franklin County sheriff's department to establish a cooperative kenneling program in the county, with a central kennel in Turners Falls and some

daytime assistance from the sheriff's department with dog complaints.

Houghton wrote the hours offered are not really useful to Wendell, and the proposed \$700 annual fee to join the program might be better spent improving housing for the dogs she has to keep and shelter. The selectboard took no action on the sheriff's offer.

Wendell's winter parking ban allows no on street parking except in marked spaces. Otherwise, a parked car's closest wheels must be at least four feet from the pavement. This ban will become more important in the next several months of snow. During the October snowstorm, cars were parked all around the common, in the way of clean-up work.

The selectboard appointed New Salem's tax collector,

Kathryn Soule-Regine, as Wendell's assistant tax collector. She will have some hours available during week days.



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**FALL INTO SOME SAVINGS!**

# Ferry Meadow Farm - part XIX

Turners Falls, MA 2017

**BY ELOISE MICHAEL** - A couple months later Jason shows up in the middle of the night. I am not surprised to hear him knocking on my door. I have known that sooner or later he would want me to do the job he set me up to do. And I figure that in person is the safest way to talk about it.

Before I open the door I ask who it is, just to make sure.

"Me, Rese," he whispers from the other side.

I unlock the door and swing it open. He slides in quickly.

"Hey," he says, grinning at me.

"Hey," I say back. I hug him tentatively, and he doesn't let go.

Then he looks in my eyes, his hands still on my shoulders.

"How's the new job?" he asks.

"Fine, I guess."

"Do you think you're ready to go to California?" he asks.

"Uh, sure," I say. "When do I go?"

"Day after tomorrow."

"You guys get things done fast," I say.

"Mmm," he says, not really answering. "You can't fly, of course," he continues.

# A Knock on the Door

"Of course," I answer sarcastically.

He gives me a look that says I should be taking this more seriously and goes on, "because no one can know that you're there."

"So how am I getting to California?"

"I'll drive you."

Road trip with Jason.

"OK," I say, happy with the plan so far.

"I'll drive at night, so the doppelganger can sleep while you're awake, here."

"OK."

"You'll drive some, too, while you're awake - you know, the one in the car."

"OK," I say again. "That's

fine."

"Then we should get there in less than three days."

"Right." I count in my head. "Monday."

"Monday," he agrees. "I have a place for us to stay."

"OK. Then what?"

"You have a meeting here - in Boston - at 9:00 a.m. Everyone will see you there and know that you are on the East Coast. That's 5:00 in the morning in California."

He looks at me to be sure I am following along. When I don't say anything, he adds, "It'll be easy to sneak into the building at that time."

"Easy?"

"Easier. Don't worry, Resa,

there will be plenty of people to help. They'll deal with the hard parts. Mainly we just need you to access that machine and get the software onto it."

"If you have so many other operatives at CP, why can't they just do it?"

"Because no one else can be two places at once. Also, we don't call them operatives."

"Whatever. Diana can be two places at once, and she works for CP," I point out.

"I trusted you more."

I know I should not feel as flattered as I do. After all, Jason is trying to convince me to break the law for him.

- Continued Next Issue

## LEVERETT from pg 7

of the fiber network in Leverett, but the estimate of middle mile access by 2013 has not changed.

Having hoped to spend just \$17,000 to insulate the attic of the older section of the elementary school, the selectboard decided to award a contract for \$26,671 to ZeroDraft, from Syracuse, NY, instead. ZeroDraft was the sole bidder on the job. McGinnis assured the board there would be sufficient funds left over in the Green Repair section of the ongoing school renovations, due to lower than expected bids for the upcoming roof repairs and window replacement.

McGinnis said the insulating at the school should be accomplished during the month of January, on the "second shift."

### Bull Hill Road

Selectboard chair Rich Brazeau has been working overtime to prepare for flood reduction measures in the Bull Hill Road area of town.

A second "beaver deceiver" has been installed at the beaver pond upstream of the flood prone section of Long Plain Brook. The Leverett Friends Meeting has agreed to pay for the installation of that device, and the Friends youth group may help with lowering the level of the dam, in an effort to reduce the beaver pond's impact on the water table.

Brazeau met with a representative of the Mass Department of Transportation earlier this week, and walked the flood plain. Brazeau hopes Mass DOT will

not only clean out a culvert beneath Route 63 that tends to aggravate the flooding in that area, but also install an added length of drainage pipe along the side of Route 63, at state expense, from near the culvert by the Archers' field down to a spot opposite Telega's sugar house, to help move excess water away from Depot and Bull Hill Roads after heavy rains.

Meanwhile, Brazeau has worked with Chuck Dauchy, a hydrologist from the board of health, to map the wetlands, and measure the flood stains on trees, the height of water under culverts following last week's heavy rains, and also to locate private wells, all in advance of this week's survey work by Holmberg and Howe, Inc. of Easthampton. That survey will clear the way for the town to apply for permits from the Department of Environmental Protection, and the state's endangered species program, in order to install a large capacity box cul-

vert next spring, to speed the flow of Long Plain Brook under Bull Hill Road.

D'Errico said the channel of that brook was still clogged along a section of land owned by the Zak family, north of Bull Hill Road, and that choke point would still need to be addressed for any comprehensive solution to the perennial flooding problem to homes along that stretch.

### School Budget

The board discussed the proposed FY'13 budget for the Leverett Elementary School, which projects a 5.63% (\$96,311) increase, without teacher cost of living increases still subject to negotiation.

The board decided to write another letter to the Union-28 central office, calling again for a 0% increase in the central office budget (which would save about \$6,800 for Leverett in FY'13, according to an off-the-cuff estimate by U-28 business manager Michael Kociela). Kociela told the Leverett school committee

last week the central office would only be able to achieve a level funded budget this year by cutting personnel.

The board also called for the Leverett school committee to include a line item in their budget to pay money back into the town's stabilization fund from savings gained each year due to the town's investments in energy improvements to the elementary school's building envelope and lighting.

The board pointed out that the energy performance contract, which helped pay for the lighting upgrades at the elementary school, was sold to town meeting on the basis of annual payback to the stabilization fund from energy savings. Siemens, in pitching the contract to the town, stated their guaranteed energy saving estimates for each building retrofitted would be conservative, and that extra savings could be confidently anticipated each year, beyond the amount the guarantee was based on.

## New Year's Eve Comedy at the Shea



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## TAX CLASSIFICATION HEARING

The Gill Selectboard and Assessors will meet Monday, December 19th at 5:45 p.m. in the Town Hall to determine the percentages of the local tax levy for each class of real estate and personal property for Fiscal Year 2012, as defined in Section 2-A of Chapter fifty-nine of the Massachusetts General Laws. Time will be set aside at the public hearing for residents to present oral or written testimony.

- Gill Board of Assessors

### HIGHLIGHTS FROM THE ERVING POLICE LOG

#### Larceny, Accident, Obstructive Train

|   |  |  |   |
|---|--|--|---|
| <b>Tuesday, 12/6</b><br>10 a.m. Report of past larceny at River Street residence. Under investigation.      | <b>Wednesday, 12/7</b><br>1:30 a.m. Assisted Montague police with alarm at Bridge Street.  | <b>Thursday, 12/8</b><br>9:44 p.m. Request to assist state police with traffic stop on Route 2 in Farley for a warrant arrest.                 | <b>Friday, 12/9</b><br>10:00 p.m. Assisted disabled motor vehicle at French King Bridge. Vehicle gone upon arrival. |
| <b>Saturday, 12/10</b><br>1:00 a.m. Assisted Montague police with a domestic situation at East Main Street. | <b>Sunday, 12/11</b><br>3:35 p.m. Parking complaint on Lester Street. Vehicle moved along. | <b>Monday, 12/12</b><br>8:20 p.m. Report of train blocking Moore Street for over an hour. Arrived on scene. Train gone. Will contact railroad. | <b>Tuesday, 12/13</b><br>5:08 p.m. Report of suspicious vehicle on Route 63 near Lillian's Way with a tire change.  |

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# ARTS & ENTERTAINMENT



JACK COUGHLIN ILLUSTRATION

Wendell Free Library: Wendell COA Film Series: *Bell, Book and Candle* (1958). 7 p.m.

David Kaynor calling, with Montague Center Band, 7:30 p.m.

**THURSDAY, DECEMBER 29th**  
Deja Brew, Wendell: Larry Kopp, country blues, 8 p.m.

Rendezvous, Turners Falls: Patty Carpenter sings solo.

**FRIDAY, DECEMBER 30th**  
Rendezvous, Turners Falls: *Shag of Sunshine*, Span of Sunshine vs. Shag, 9:30 p.m. Free.

Route 63 Roadhouse, Millers Falls: *Burn Town*, 9:30 p.m.

**SATURDAY, DECEMBER 31st**  
Village Common, Montague Center: *Sawmill River run*, 10 a.m. start, 9 a.m. registration begins.

Rendezvous, Turners Falls: *Voo Year's Eve Prohibition Speakeasy*, dinner specials, *Drew Paton* croonin' 7 - 9 p.m., *Nobody's Fat* at 9:30 p.m., \$15 after 9 p.m., champagne toast at midnight, free after midnight, 80s-to-today dance party after 12 a.m., open until 2 a.m.

Route 63 Roadhouse, Millers Falls: *New Year's Eve with Ruby's Complaint*, 7:30 p.m.

Deja Brew, Wendell: *New Year's Eve Party with John Sheldon & Friends*, 10 p.m. - 1 a.m.

Shea Theater, Turners Falls: *New Year's Eve Comedy at the Shea with Joe Wong and Rick Canavan*, reservations strongly suggested, alcohol available, 8 p.m.

**SUNDAY, JANUARY 1st**  
Mocha Maya's, Shelburne Falls: *M.R. Pouloupoulos & John Rice*, 3 p.m.

**THURSDAY, JANUARY 5th**  
Deja Brew, Wendell: *The Relics*, Brian Mallet and Lefty Cullen playing all your favorite oldies from the 50's & 60's, 8 - 10 p.m.

**FRIDAY, JANUARY 6th**  
Deja Brew, Wendell: *The Equalites*, reggae fantastic, 9 - 11 p.m.

**SATURDAY, JANUARY 7th**  
Montague Grange: *Square Dance*, Craig Edwards will call, and Virginia reels to live old-time music by *Ainley's Melody Makers*. 7 - 10 p.m.

Deja Brew, Wendell: *Dedicated to Delilah*, 60s - 80s cover tunes, 9 - 12 p.m.

**SUNDAY, JANUARY 8th**  
Leverett Congregational Church: *Songs for a Winter's Day*: the winter concert of the *Leverett Community Chorus*. 4 p.m.

**FRIDAY, JANUARY 13th**  
Great Falls Discovery Center, Turners Falls: *Coffeehouse featuring Ray Mason*, 7 - 9 p.m.

Friends, Original Guitar Music, 8-10 p.m.

**FRIDAY, DECEMBER 16th and SATURDAY, DECEMBER 17th**  
Shea Theater, Turners Falls: *It's a Wonderful Life, A Tribute to a Simpler Time*. 7 p.m. Matinee on Sunday, Dec. 18th at 2 p.m.

**FRIDAY, DECEMBER 16**  
Rendezvous, Turners Falls: *Kurtyka Kills Christmas*, holiday shock opera, 9:30 p.m.

Element Brewery, Millers Falls: *Second Anniversary Party*, 6 p.m.

Route 63 Roadhouse, Millers Falls: *Reprobates*, 9:30 p.m.

Mocha Maya's, Shelburne Falls: *Show of Cards with Dan Blakeslee*, 7:30 p.m.

Deja Brew, Wendell: *Josh Levangie & The Mud, Blood & Beer Band*, 9-11 p.m.

**SATURDAY, DECEMBER 17th**  
Montague Grange: *Yule Concert with Kelliana and Friends*, 6 - 9:30 p.m.

Greenfield High School: *Family Holiday Concert, Pioneer Valley Symphony Chorus with Greenfield High School Chorus*. 7 - 9 p.m.

Roundhouse, Colrain: *30th Annual Winter Solstice Song and Story Celebration*. A benefit for the Food Bank of Western Massachusetts and Partners in Health, 6:30 p.m.

Route 63 Roadhouse, Millers Falls: *Heroes in Trouble*, 9:30 p.m.

Rendezvous, Turners Falls: *Rockit Queer (with DJ Bex)*. 9:30 p.m.

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

Leverett Town Hall: *Echo Lake Coffeehouse, John Sheldon*, 7:30 p.m.

**SUNDAY, DECEMBER 18th**

**MONDAY, DECEMBER 19th**  
Rendezvous, Turners Falls: *Bingo*, 8 p.m. Free.

**WEDNESDAY, DECEMBER 21st**  
Rendezvous, Turners Falls: *Quiz Nite* with the debut of *QuizMaster Alex*, 8 p.m.



*Al Ross on New Year's Day in 2006, in the Sawmill River Run. Join the fray this year on December 31st at the Montague Center common. Registration at 9 a.m. Race starts at 10 a.m.*

Photo by Lisa Davol.

Deja Brew, Wendell: *Guberman & Paradis*, classic rock duo, 8 - 10 p.m.

**FRIDAY, DECEMBER 23rd**  
Deja Brew, Wendell: *Rhythm Inc.*, reggae, 9 - 11 p.m.

Route 63 Roadhouse, Millers Falls: *The Miles Band*, 9:30 p.m.

**SATURDAY, DECEMBER 24th**  
Route 63 Roadhouse, Millers Falls: *Second Annual Christmas Eve Get Together*, 5 - 8 p.m.

**MONDAY, DECEMBER 26th**  
Deja Brew, Wendell: *All Small Caps*, a night of spoken word, 7 - 10 p.m.

**WEDNESDAY, DECEMBER 28th**  
The Grille, Greenfield: *Pat & Tex LaMountain* & their band celebrate the release of their new CD, *Sweet Chabango*, 7 - 10 p.m.

Montague Grange: *Contra Dance*,

**EVERY TUESDAY**  
Rendezvous, Turners Falls: *Craft Night*, 7 p.m.

**EVERY THURSDAY**  
Thrive Project, Turners Falls: *Ping Pong*, 7 - 9 p.m.

Between the Uprights, Turners Falls: *Acoustic open mic*, with Dan, Kip and Shultzzy from *Curly Fingers DuPree* host. 8:30 - 11:30 p.m.

**EVERY FRIDAY & SATURDAY NIGHT**  
Montague Inn: *TNT Karaoke*.

**NOW until JANUARY 29th**  
Great Falls Discovery Center, Turners Falls: *Artwork by Leonore Alaniz*.

**NOW until January 31st**  
Ursa Major Gallery, Shelburne Falls: *Paintings by Michael Katz*. Reception Friday, December 16th at 7 p.m.

**All of DECEMBER**  
Leverett Library: Original collage illustrations by *Judith Inglese*, from the *See the Sun* children's book series.

**THURSDAY, DECEMBER 15th**  
Rendezvous, Turners Falls: *Third Annual Holiday Spectacular*, 7 p.m. Free.

Leverett Library: Mark Vonnegut, *Just Like Someone Without Mental Illness Only More So*, book reading. 7 p.m.

Deja Brew, Wendell: *Tommy Filiault &*

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**SATURDAY, JANUARY 14th**  
Wendell Town Hall: *Wendell Full Moon Coffeehouse*, featuring *Trailer Park*, 7:30 p.m.

**SATURDAYS, JANUARY 14th & 21st**  
The Dance Studio, Orange: Auditions for *Lincoln: The Musical*, directed by Genevieve Fraser, 2 - 5 p.m.

**The Brick House**  
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Sunday, 12/18, 8:00 p.m. \$6.  
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*Baby, it's cold outside!*  
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*Community Holiday Song Night!*  
(come join in!)  
**FRI 12/16 9:30 \$3**  
*KURTYKA KILLS CHRISTMAS*  
(holiday shock opera)  
**SAT 12/17 9:30 \$3**  
*ROCKIT QUEER w. DJ BEX*  
**SUN 12/18 4pm FREE**  
*PATS-BRONCOS - BIG SCREEN*  
**MON 12/19 8pm FREE**  
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THE GARDENER'S COMPANION

Solstice in the Garden



MARY AZARIAN WOODBLOCK

BY LESLIE BROWN
MONTAGUE CITY - Last spring, with great excitement, I observed a small flock of bluebirds in my neighborhood.

I rushed to buy and hang a proper bird house. After a few days of flirting, the pair disappeared for the summer.

I learned later from birding friends that this was very typical behavior for this shy bird, and the fact that I didn't see them didn't mean they were gone.

At the end of the summer I saw a pair and then the small flock again. They went off as a group in early fall and I assumed they were gone for the season.

But on one recent morning, I was interrupted by a sharp tapping on the dining room window. Perched there on the frame was a male bluebird, backed up in the nearby lilac by his mate, a pair of Carolina wrens and a handful of purple finches, all creating a loud, avian symphony.

Afraid of the consequences if he took up flying into the window, I rapped on the glass. He retreated to the lilac bush, shook himself and puffed up his feathers to twice his size.

This game was repeated two more times. I pulled the curtain over the glass and the tapping ceased. I assumed he was pecking at his own reflection, imagining a male rival, but also began to worry about what the bluebirds could eat if they remained till snowfall.

Quick research on the internet revealed that these brightly colored birds, like robins, travel south, but not too far. The Carolinas are the furthest extent

of their range. They may more likely travel no further south than New Jersey.

I have seen robins all winter some years. I guess our extended mild season has led some birds to remain longer than they might if we had a good blanket of snow. I can only state with certainty that it was a lift to the heart to see the bright blue against a gray pre-winter sky.

Winter's official start will come with the winter solstice on December 22nd, the shortest day and longest night of the year. Derived from the Latin, sol (sun) and sitere (to stand still), the solstice marks the sun's stop in its apparent path south in the winter sky and north in summer.

The shortest day of the year has been an event celebrated for centuries with fires, drink and celebration. This year's "Welcome Yule" production at the Shea set the stage for us with its stories of the dark and light, of good triumphing over evil.

The dark, short nights and the cold, barren winter have long been the stuff of story and song. Darkness has always been paired with fear and discomfort and mitigated by re-creation of the light through fires and candles, up to the electrical displays of our modern times.

the promise of renewal. Good cause for celebration.

While the garden soil grows hard and shows little sign of life, there are seeds just waiting for warmth and light to begin to grow. It's the season to bring in some green. Tagging and cutting a Christmas tree, or even better growing your own, provides much more pleasure than merely driving to a lot of cut trees and taking one home.

The earliest recording of the cutting of Christmas trees involved a pagan festival in the 15th and 16th centuries. A tree was cut and set up in a public place, decorated and given pride of place as the setting for song and dance. The evergreen tree played a role in the medieval mystery plays, but in these re-enacted Biblical stories, the tree symbolized the tree of paradise, which as we know from the story, led to the fall of man from grace.

It wasn't until the 17th century that Christmas trees began to show up in the homes of wealthy families. This custom did not become the common, popular one of today until the 19th century.

The cutting of an evergreen brings fresh color and scent into your home in a season which is too often cold and grey.

Whatever your beliefs, the coming season is one of magic and mystery, of hope and music, and most of all of ritual, a great comfort in the time of darkness and uncertainty.

When I was small, we always listened to a reading of "The Night Before Christmas" before we were tucked into our beds. Certain we wouldn't sleep for all of the excitement, we awoke next morning to a lumpy stocking of small gifts on

our beds.

We hope you have rituals to share with those you love, whether they are of music or special cooking or ceremony. Be sure to celebrate this time of year in some small but special way with children and friends. Visit your elders who can share much wisdom of holidays past with the younger generation.

Celebrate the growing light, the warmth of the fire, the music of the season. Be glad for what you have, for friends and lovers and families. Raise a toast and Welcome Yule!

Wendell Country Store advertisement with logo, address, and hours.

The Montague Reporter T's advertisement featuring a photo of a t-shirt and promotional text.

Rendezvous Empire advertisement for a New Year's Eve event with Drew Paton and Nobody's Fat.

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