



UNDEFYED

Friday, at the TFHS

Page 3



STRATHMORE MILL

Discussed

Page 6

LAKE PLEASANT MILLERS FALLS MONTAGUE CENTER MONTAGUE CITY TURNERS FALLS

The Montague Reporter

YEAR 7 - NO. 12

also serving Gill, Erving and Wendell

50¢

REPORTER@MONTAGUEMA.NET

THE VOICE OF THE VILLAGES

DECEMBER 18, 2008

Native Ceremonial Site at Airport Eligible for National Register

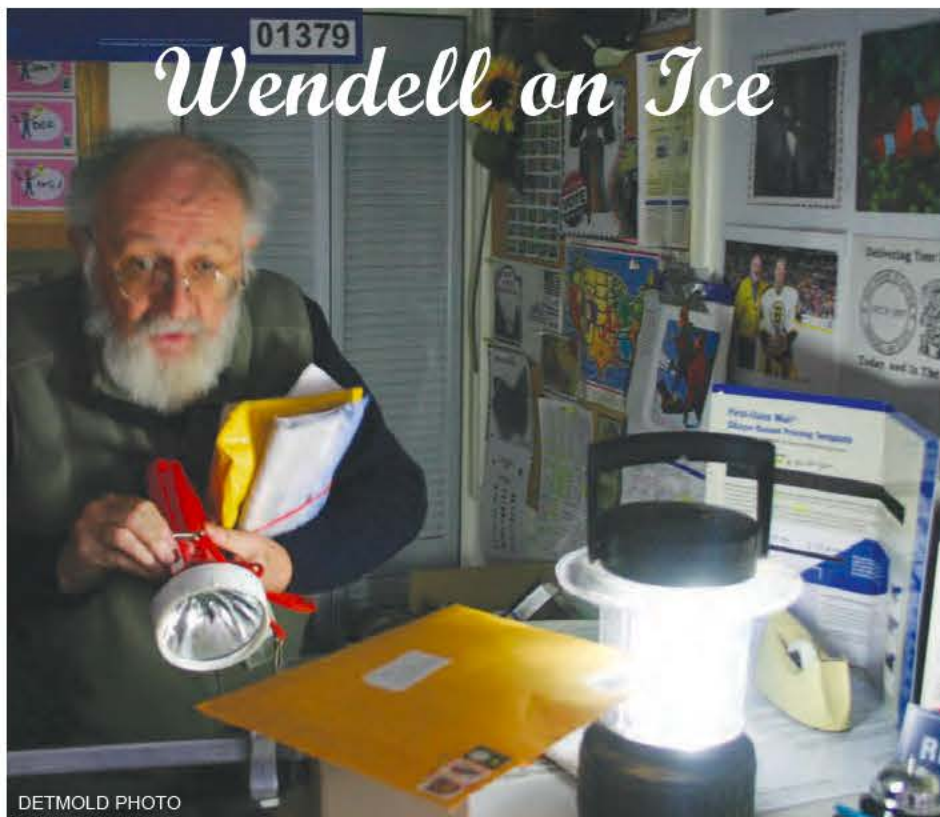
BY DAVID DETMOLD

GREAT FALLS - Paul Loether, Chief of the National Register of National Historic Landmarks confirmed this morning that a stone formation on the top of a small hill to the northeast of the runway at the Turners Falls Airport has been determined to be eligible for inclusion in the National Register of Historic Places.

"This makes the Federal Aviation Administration, which had requested a determination, treat the site as if it were listed in the National Register," said Loether.

George 'Chuckie' Green, a member of the Mashpee selectboard and assistant director of the tribal council's natural resources and environment program, faxed a copy of the National Register's Determination of Eligibility Notification to the Montague Reporter office on Wednesday. The cover page, dated December 11th, notes "the Secretary of the Interior has determined that this property is Eligible," in reference to "the Turners Falls Sacred Ceremonial Hill Site (formerly, the Airport Improvement Project - Turners Falls Municipal Airport)."

see NATIVE pg 5



DETMOLD PHOTO

Wendell on Ice

Wendell postmaster Charlie O'Dowd worked by lantern light to weigh and sort mail on Saturday, in the aftermath of a massive ice storm that knocked out phone and powerlines throughout the region.

BY DAVID DETMOLD - Lorraine Chapin almost saved the day on Saturday, when word went out that another 100 feet of power cord could restore phone service to most of the homes in the center of Wendell.

It was 2:15 p.m. on Saturday, and most residents had not been able to make a phone call, much less turn on a house

lamp, start their oil burners, or power up their home computers since freezing rain brought overhanging limbs and trees crashing down on utility lines, plunging practically the entire town (except for Mormon Hollow Road) into darkness early Friday morning.

"I got the first call at 1:25 a.m., on my

see ICE pg 8

Montague Will Fund the Commissioner's School Budget

BY DAVID DETMOLD - On Tuesday, Montague came to terms with the '09 school budget imposed on the town by Commissioner of the Department of Elementary and Secondary Education Mitchell Chester, and agreed to fully fund operations at the Gill-Montague Regional School District for the present school year. The DESE took control of the GMRSD's finances and budget in the beginning of December, when the school district and the towns of Gill and Montague failed to agree on a budget, after repeated attempts at town and district meetings.

Chester set a \$16,625,875 operating budget for the schools, a 2.75% increase over last year's figure.

Article One of Tuesday's meeting called for the town to spend an additional \$188,000 from reserve funds, to supplement the amount Montague approved to fund the GMRSD at annual town meeting in June: \$7,002,683.

Precinct 1 town meeting member Les Cromack, an imposing figure and the chair of the capital improvements committee, rose to address the meeting, as the

see BUDGET pg 7

Seeking a Permanent Home for the Sk8 Park



CLAUDIA WELLS PHOTO

Ramps at the skate park lie under a blanket of snow, as supporters seek a permanent home for the popular facility

BY DAVID DETMOLD

TURNERS FALLS - Skaters, their parents, and supporters crowded into the selectboard meeting room for a discussion on the future of the Turners Falls Sk8 Park on Monday, December 15th.

"I don't think there is any

interest in having a skate park in Unity Park," said Fred Cassidy, of 88 First Street, whose home borders the park, near the old Red Bridge abutments.

Director of the Montague parks and recreation department Jon Dobosz said the space in

Unity Park that skaters and their supporters have been eyeing as a possible site for relocating the skate park, on the opposite side of the playing fields from the Cassidy residence, is also under consideration by the parks and recreation commission for needed

expansion of parking for overflow events.

"Just because it looks like there would be space, doesn't mean it's the right space," said Dobosz, referring to the open lawn by the intersection of Williams Way and First Street.

He said his understaffed department has had to contend with "discipline, vandalism, and cleanliness issues," at the current skate park location next to Unity Park, behind the former Chick's Garage.

Dobosz said the skate park was under the supervision of the parks and rec department until 2005.

The skate park, which was constructed in 1998, was closed and locked in 2003, due to deterioration of plywood ramp surfaces and some vandalism, causing unsafe conditions.

The park remained locked for four years, while work parties organized by the Brick House's Hot Spot Teen Center gathered funds and materials to repair and

reopen the park this April.

In the next seven months, use of the park by skaters, BMX bikers, and younger children with scooters grew rapidly. However, the skate park's ten year lease with a private landowner expired at the end of October, and its future location is now at issue.

Mitchell MacConnell, age 16, said, "I love to go down to the skate park and spend the day there skateboarding. Now, without a skate park, I come to Main Street and skate on the rails by the raised gardens. I get yelled at by the business owners. The skate park keeps us out of trouble. It's a good place for kids to go without hanging out on the street."

Jessica Harmon, a mother of two young sons who lives on X Street, said her five year old has a scooter and is ready to become a skate park user.

"It just makes sense to me to have an appropriate place for young people, to have a space designated for them. It allows young people to feel they have a

see SKATE pg 10

PET OF THE WEEK

Let's Play



Meowme

My name is Meowme and I'm a two-year-old female shorthair cat in need of a good home. Don't you love my sleek, soft buff and white fur? I love to be petted, and would love to cuddle with you and purr.

I'm still a young girl who enjoys playing with yarn balls and catnip mice. I'm a little wary when I first meet you and I'm especially cautious with children.

For more information on adopting me please contact the Dakin Pioneer Valley Humane Society at 413-548-9898 or via email: leverett@dpvhs.org.

NANCY L. DOLE BOOKS & EPHEMERA

Buying and selling used books

32 BRIDGE STREET, 2ND FLOOR
SHELburnE FALLS, MA

413-625-9850
ndole@crocker.com closed Mondays

Feel Like a Brand New Person!

With a Haircut at Ed's Barber Shop

115 Avenue A • 863-2085
Ed, Denise & KarriAnn

"54 Years on the Ave"

The Montague Reporter

Published weekly on Thursday, (Every other week in July and August. Wednesday paper fourth week of November. No paper last week of December.)

PHONE (413) 863-8666
FAX (413) 863-3050
reporter@montaguema.net
Postmaster: Send address changes to
The Montague Reporter
58 4th Street
Turners Falls, MA 01376

Advertising and copy deadline is Tuesday at NOON.

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

Local Subscription Rates:
\$20 for 6 months

MONTAGUE LIBRARY NEWS

Music & Movement Supported



MONTAGUE - Above, Marcia Zutaatas of Turners Falls won a quilt made by Sue SanSoucie, in the Friends of the Montague Public Libraries raffle on Wednesday, December 10th.



LINDA HICKMAN PHOTOS

Above, Susan Mailer of Montague Center, (right), won the cat quilt made by Mary Melonis, left. The raffle raised \$534 for the Music and Movement program.

Elks Hoop Shoot

BY JOE ST. PETER

TURNERS FALLS - The Montague Elks held its annual Hoop Shoot contest on Saturday, December 13th at the Turners Falls High School gymnasium. The winners of this Lodge Hoop Shoot advance to the West Central District competition on January 10th, 2009 at Auburn High School in Auburn, MA.

The winner for the girls, eight to nine-year-old category: Tessa Burt.

Ten to eleven year olds: Jena Putala, who also had the most baskets out of 25 (with 18,) among all competitors, both boys and girls. Congratulations,

Jena!

Twelve to thirteen-year-olds: Courtney Benoni, who won in a tie breaker.

For the boys, the winner in the eight to nine-year-old category: Tyler Hastings.

Ten to eleven-year-olds: Bradley Hastings, who won in a tie breaker.

The winner in the twelve to thirteen-year-olds: Terrance "Lee" Doiron.

Congratulations to all the winners, and good luck in January.

WENDELL HOLIDAY FAIR RESCHEDULED FOR DEC 20th & 21st

BY BARBARA CARUSO - Due to the ice storm, the Wendell Holiday Fair and Swift River School music department fundraiser has been rescheduled to this Saturday, December 20th (10 a.m. - 5 p.m.) and Sunday, December 21st (11 a.m. - 3 p.m.) at Wendell Town Hall, on Wendell Common. Free admission. Free parking. Please come join us.

There you will find sweet music, a gourmet luncheon on Saturday catered by Diemand Farm, many precious gifts, all your neighbors, and a raffle that gives you a chance to win prizes or gift cards from places like Greenfield Farmer's Coop /Agway, Richardson Excavating, Klondike Sound,

Whole Foods, Diemand Farm, Wendell Country Store, Ristorante DiPaolo, the Rendezvous, Seth and Eva's Music Store, Orange House of Wax, Green Fields Market, Leverett Village Coop, Myron's Fine Foods, Dean's Beans, the New Salem Country store, Orange Oil, Whittier Plumbing, Lorenz Honda, Brown Motors, Adams Donuts, Stop n Shop, Miller's Pub, BJ's and more.

Please join us all to celebrate our community, our children, and their music program. Everyone deserves a Solstice party after last week's storm. Perhaps we can soothe Old Man Winter a bit.

For more info, call 978-544-9970.

Psychic Fair

The National Spiritual Alliance will sponsor a Psychic Fair Saturday, December 27th from 11 a.m. to 4 p.m. at Thompson Temple across from the Post Office in Lake Pleasant. Divination methods include Astrology, I-Ching, Hand Reading, Vibration Connection, and Tarot Cards.

Consultation is with a medium of choice. Reiki and spiritual healing services will also be available.

For more information, contact the TNSA internet website: www.thenationalspiritualallianceinc.org.

SENIOR CENTER ACTIVITIES -- Dec. 22nd to Jan. 2nd

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

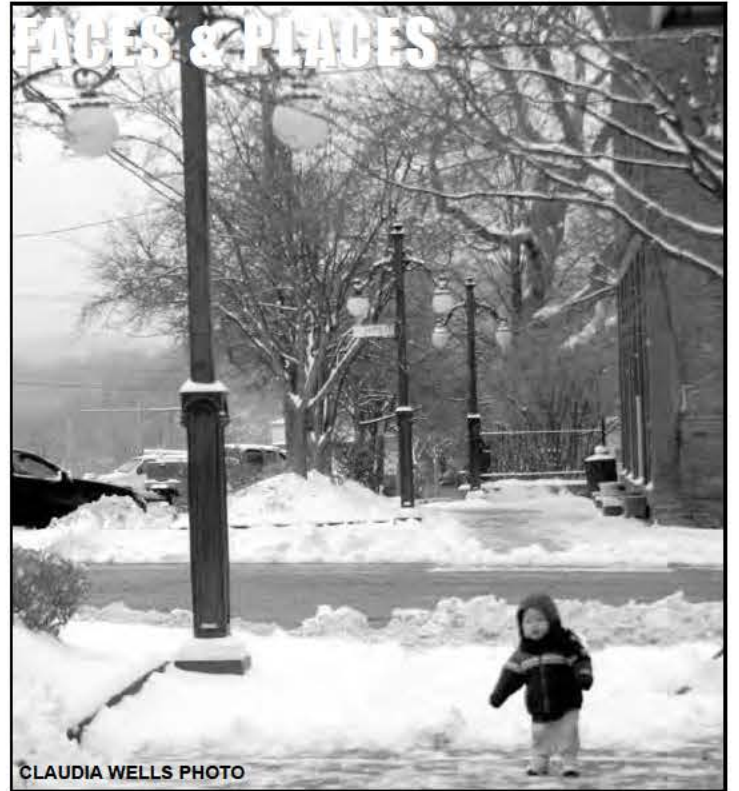
Monday, 22nd
10 a.m. Senior Aerobics.
11 a.m. Easy Aerobics
Tuesday, 23rd
9 a.m. Walking Group.
Wednesday, 24th

10 a.m. Senior Aerobics
Thursday, 25th
Senior Center closed for Christmas
Friday, 26th
10 a.m. Senior Aerobics
11 a.m. Easy Aerobics
Only Aerobics Classes are scheduled for the week between Christmas and New Year's

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

422-2584.
Monday, 22nd
9:00 a.m. Exercise
12 Noon Pitch
Tuesday, 23rd
9 a.m. Aerobics
12:30 p.m. Painting
Wednesday, 24th
8:45 a.m. Line Dancing
12 Noon Bingo
Thursday, 25th
Senior Center closed for Christmas
Friday, 26th
9 a.m. Walking Club
12:30 p.m. Lunch:
12:30 p.m. Embroidery

WENDELL Senior Center, located in the former public library on Lockes Village Road. Call Kathy Swaim at (978) 544-2020 for info, schedule of events or to coordinate transportation.



CLAUDIA WELLS PHOTO

Allen Lin, child of Dexiong and Ying Ying Lin, admires the snow in front of Chinatown Restaurant on Wednesday

GREAT FALLS MIDDLE SCHOOL STUDENTS OF THE WEEK

Grade 6:
Andrew Renaud

Grade 7:
Jessica Fuller & Jonathan Rawls

Grade 8:
Danny Rivera

Gill Holiday Hours for Town Hall

GILL - The Gill town hall will close Christmas Eve at noon, and reopen on Monday, December 29th at 9 a.m. The town hall will be open all day, 9:00 a.m. - 4:30 p.m., on New Year's Eve, but closed New Year's Day.

Correction:

There has been a change of venue for the Montague Business Association's Thirsty Thursday event this Thursday, December 18th, 5-7 p.m. The event will take place at the Lady Killigrew Cafe in Montague Center. Door prize donated by MBA member Jaye Pope (Good Dirt Pottery). Come find out what the MBA has been doing, meet members, and learn about what they hope to do in 2009. All are welcome.

LIVE IN MONTAGUE?

EST. 1754

www.MontagueMA.net
local gossip, news & business listings

THE SHADY GLEN

BREAKFAST, LUNCH & DINNER

Lunch Specials from 11:00 a.m.
Mon: American Chop Suey • Tues. Chicken Fricassie • Wed: Chicken Souvlaki, Rice • Thurs: Corn Beef & Cabbage • Fri: Fried Scallops
Sat: Yankee Pot Roast

Open Sundays 7-2
863-9636

DIAL/SELF YOUTH AND COMMUNITY SERVICES BRINGS CONNECTICUT BAND TO TURNERS SCHOOLS FOR FREE SHOW

BY PHIL RINGWOOD - Connecticut's number one pop-punk band, Undeified, will perform in Turners Falls Schools this Friday, December 19th.

Ashley Brooks, AmeriCorps member serving in the RISE program at Great Falls Middle School and Turners Falls High School has partnered with local music producer David Westbrook to arrange a concert for the students. Westbrook, the

booking agent for the band Undeified and a former Greenfield school committee member, worked with Brooks to arrange for the band to do a free performance for each of the schools.

The Hartford, CT based band played in the Warped Tour this past summer in Boston and have an upcoming show at the Greenfield Community Youth Center on January 3rd. One of

the band members, Dana Graves, is from Greenfield and has been an avid supporter of bringing music into local schools. Graves and Westbrook worked with the RISE program in Greenfield in 2006 to offer a free performance at the middle school.

RISE (Resources Invested for Student Excellence) is a school-community partnership program managed by DIAL/SELF Youth

and Community Services. The program operates in several public schools throughout Franklin and Hampshire Counties and the North Quabbin. RISE brings vol-

unteers, social services, and other community resources directly into schools in order to



Undeified to play for middle school and high school students in Turners on December 19th

address unmet needs and enhance the educational programming of the school.

Montague Grange Completes Project in Energy Conservation



CHRIS WISE PHOTO

Strong, handsome men install energy conservation frames in the windows of the historic Montague Grange. Chris Mason, left, Tim van Egmond, right

BY CONOR POWER - The Montague Grange is at it again, this time with the completion of window energy conservation measures at the Grange hall in Montague Center. As explained by Chris Mason "With the Grange running the Montague Clean Energy Campaign to increase support for renewable energy and raise money for the Town of Montague to spend on clean energy projects, it's only natural that the Grange show the way with our own conservation project at the historic Grange Hall." Mason, a Montague resident and Grange member, is also the Energy Officer for the town of Northampton, is a member of Montague's newly formed Energy Committee, and is an

advisor for the current work. Other members of the energy-saving work at the Grange are Tim Van Egmond, Chris Wise and Conor Power.

The Montague Grange's latest energy saving project involved the installation of inexpensive plastic sheeting frames on existing windows. The new frames were fabricated and installed by Grange members: Tim van Egmond, Chris Wise, and Conor Power.

"The Grange is a beautiful, historic structure built at a time when energy issues were not a top priority. The same is true of many houses in Montague. We calculate that our small cost for supplies will be paid back in energy savings in less than two months. After that, we can use

our savings to help perform necessary repairs on the Grange structure," said van Egmond.

"Many community groups and individuals use the Grange for events such as dances, village meetings, seed exchanges, lectures and parties. The Grange serves as a gathering place when town-wide celebrations and events are planned. The rental fees for the Grange are small, and we want to keep it that way. By completing this project, we can keep our costs of operation down in order to benefit the community," said Wise.

The Grange is running the Montague Clean Energy Campaign to increase support for renewable energy and raise money for the town of Montague to spend on municipal clean energy projects. This winter, the Grange will launch an accelerated program to enlist donors to the Energy Campaign. Each donation given will be matched by the Massachusetts Technology Collaborative, twice: 100% to help fund a renewable energy project in our town, and 100% matched again for clean energy projects to benefit low-income residents in the Commonwealth.

To find out more about how to sign up for the Montague Clean Energy Campaign, go to: www.montaguema.net and click on the Clean Energy Campaign logo.

Elder Protective Services

BY ANNA VIADERO

TURNERS FALLS - Do you know an elder (age 60 and over) who is neglected, abused or unable to care for themselves? Not sure where to turn? Franklin County Home Care's Elder Protective Service Program is here to help. We investigate reports of

- Physical abuse
- Emotional abuse (harassments, threats, verbal abuse)
- Sexual abuse
- Financial exploitation
- Caregiver neglect
- Self neglect

Anyone may report suspected cases of abuse. The identity of the reporter is confidential.

For more information or to make a report, please call the Protective Services Programs at 800-732-4636, or 413-773-5555, or 978-544-2259, or TDD 413-772-6566, Monday through

Friday from 9 a.m. to 5 p.m.

The Elder Abuse Hotline is open 24 hours, seven days a week, at 1-800-922-2275.

A Protective Services representative can come and talk to your business or community group. Read about us at www.fchcc.org.

For more than 30 years, Franklin County Home Care has been providing support services, information and referral to elders, caregivers and persons with disabilities in Franklin County and the four North Quabbin towns of Royalston, Phillipston, Petersham and Athol.

With more than 30 programs and services, Franklin County Home Care Corp., an Area Agency on Aging, gives elders, caregivers and persons with disabilities choices in how and where they live their lives.

WE HAVE IT ALL FOR YOU
TRACTORS FOR FARM, HOME & CONSTRUCTION

We Carry John Deere and Kubota Tractors, Stihl Chain Saws, Blowers, Tractor Mowers, Ariens Snow Blowers.

Also: ● Wood Chippers ● Log Splitters ● Winches
 ● Fire Proof Safes ● Materials Handling Equipment



SIRUM EQUIPMENT COMPANY, INC.
310 FEDERAL STREET RTE. 63 MONTAGUE
SERVING THE AREA FOR OVER 46 YEARS
413-367-2481

Great Rates, Fully Insured!



Greenfield Co-operative Bank
A Great Financial Partner

BestLocalBank.com
Reach All Locations 772-0293
Greenfield • Northfield • Sunderland

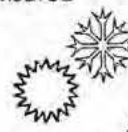
MontagueWebWorks.com



build | manage | create | 413.522.4808

Montague, MA 01351

Patrick Smith
HIC #134741
Insured



EASTERN WEATHERIZATION
Specializing in Cellulose Insulation
Infrared Quality Assurance Guaranteed

Toll Free 866-262-5361 413-367-2228
FAX 413-367-2212

SINCE 1888



A.H. Rist
INSURANCE AGENCY, INC.

159 Avenue A
Turners Falls, MA
01376

email: tracey@ahrist.com
web: www.ahrist.com

Tracey Kuklewicz **863-4373**
Vice President

B. RUBIN & SONS INC.



COMPLETE AUTO REPAIRS
Shocks • Tires • Batteries • Starters
Struts • Tune-ups • Brakes • Oil Change

194 MILLERS FALLS RD. • **413-863-2236**
10% SENIOR DISCOUNT **FREE ESTIMATES**
MASS INSPECTION STATION: NO. 13051



A Custom Touch
Interior / Exterior Painting & Home Repairs

Anthony C. Tucker: 863-4833
70 Oakman Street, Turners Falls

The Montague Reporter

58 4th Street, Turners Falls, Mass. 01376

Editor

David Detmold

Assistant Editor

Kathleen Litchfield

Editorial Assistants

Hugh Corr
David Brule

Circulation

Suzette Snow Cobb
Don Clegg

Layout & Design

Claudia Wells
Boysen Hodgson
Karen Hoyden
Karen Wilkinson
Suzette Snow Cobb

"The Voice of the Villages"

Photography

Joe Parzych
Shawn Woolsey

Technical Administrators

Michael Muller
Michael Farrick

Founded by
Harry Brandt, David Detmold
August, 2002

Arthur Evans

Ready to Recreate Public Education?

— *Si, Se Puede* —

BY MICHAEL PHILLIPS

GREENFIELD - I am a parent with two young girls in the Greenfield public school system. I decided last year to get involved with public education only after significant budget overrun issues became apparent in our district.

I was outraged and demanded answers from those in charge. I also wanted to do something to help the reputation of our schools, a reputation that had been seriously damaged by bad publicity and by political bantering in town politics.

I founded ChangeGreenfield.com and, with Pam Kinsmith and others, set out to focus attention on all the great things going on in our district. We had an excellent start . . . but then the realities of a death match budget battle set in. Everything seemed to spin out of control. The administration ended up cutting 65+ teachers and closing a school.

It was absolutely terrifying for anyone with kids who was paying attention. Class sizes threatened to crack 35. Every district around us filled up with students "choicing-out" of Greenfield.

Over the summer Greenfield hired a competent and experienced superintendent who was able to pull together a plan to open the doors in September, and somehow the teachers and administrators have managed to

create some stability and build back programs.

I don't ever want to go through that insanity again.

Currently, Greenfield and the Gill-Montague school districts have been pressured by the state to consolidate, regionalize, and otherwise work together to save money. The state department of elementary and secondary education recently directed Greenfield to begin working with Gill-Montague, establishing this collaboration as a precondition for \$250K in previously promised and desperately needed 'Pothole' funds.

Governor Patrick talked about the potential of regionalization to create efficiencies that would in turn create opportunities for education reform under his Readiness Project. The pressure on Greenfield to move towards regionalization was the first real initiative by the state under the governor's Readiness Project, which includes bold initiatives to provide universal pre-K, extended learning days and two free years of community college for every high school graduate in the Commonwealth.

Great ideas right? The problem, and one reason for the "pressure" on Franklin County today, is that the governor has no idea how to pay for these absolutely wonderful ideas. Now, Governor Patrick is saying that school spending may be cut by 10% next year! There are clearly changes coming to public education in Massachusetts. And the spotlight is clearly on this county, on Greenfield, Gill and Montague.

The Readiness Project is marketed as a grassroots initiative. It is not. I know this because I am the official Readiness Project coordinator for this area, and I know that this means I will get an email every Friday afternoon telling me about the governor's week. That's it. The Readiness Project is a top down initiative intended to bring about positive

SHOOED OUT OF BAGHDAD

DECEMBER 14, 2008



KAREN WILKINSON ILLUSTRATION

Tech School Feeds Line Repair Crews

BY JOHN CAREY

TURNERS FALLS - The call for "Warm food!" came early on Wednesday from the Western Mass Electric Company, and chef Ben Pike from the culinary arts program at the Franklin County Technical School did not hesitate.

"I'm glad they called," said

Pike. "We all owe those men and women a lot right now."

The cafeteria manager, Linda Clark, felt exactly the same way. She was able to donate baked goods and macaroni and cheese, along with the culinary arts' contribution of 15 gallons of hot soup and fresh cookies, utensils, bowls, napkins, and

trash bags.

"It really is the least we could do," Clark said.

A bit stunned, WMECO employee Dave Courchesne summed it up. "After six days of this, the cold sandwiches and such was getting old. I'm so impressed. These people are professionals."

changes in public education.

I'm not writing to trash the governor. I am writing because I believe in perfect storms of opportunity and because I see all the pieces coming together here in Franklin County around public education. I believe we have an opportunity to reinvent public education and to stabilize and strengthen our communities. I believe we can do these things and still buy into the ideas of the Readiness Project enough to garner support from the state (financial and otherwise) and make our governor a winner as well.

This is how I see it:

- The state does not know how to pay for reform. Our elected officials are desperate for funding ideas beyond the usual unsupported considerations of consolidation.

- The state does not want to tell us what to do. They don't know the answers and they don't want to risk forcing the wrong answers on us. I believe the recent prodding toward regionalization was nothing more than a kick in our communal pants intended to stir up concern and to initiate and engage true grassroots initiatives

around education reform. The state wants us to solve our own problems.

- The state is not attached to the idea of 'regionalization'. There are too many clear examples of regionalization *not* working to believe the state sees any real potential there. Maine, New York, Maryland... savings from regionalization equal zero.

So, if the state has no real grassroots base to support its education reform initiatives and no ideas about how to fund those initiatives, how is anything going to change for the better and who is going to make this happen?

Believe it or not, I'm optimistic.

What's missing I believe are the collective imaginations of Franklin County residents like you. There is an opportunity to accept the challenge in front of us and to pound it into a platform to communicate exactly what we want for our kids and our communities.

Franklin County should not shy away from being in the spotlight of the Readiness Project. This is our chance to put forth our vision and let the state tell us why it won't work, or tell us they

will support it. We should expect our representatives to work with us and fight for us.

The governor needs this project to succeed, and like it or not "we the people" will determine whether that happens. We need to rise to this opportunity because it's unlikely we will ever see anything like it again in our lifetimes. The state is giving us a chance to reinvent what public education looks like, or even how it is defined. If we can put aside our suspicions about forced regionalization or other top down changes, if we can for a minute forget about fiscal limitations and focus on what we know is right for our kids, if we can come together and create our own imaginative solutions, we can create a win for our schools and communities, a win for our governor and most importantly a win for our kids. This isn't a battle of us vs. them. It's a struggle to find elegant solutions so we can all win.

Can we do this? What would Obama say?

It's time for the people of Franklin County to come together and discover ways to recreate and reinvent education. That's how I see it, and that's what I'll be working towards.

American Dead in Iraq and Afghanistan as of 12/10/08



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

Give the gift of community!

\$15 for 26 issues. Send a gift subscription to the person listed below

Check here to include a gift card with your name:

YOUR NAME: _____

the Montague Reporter

58 4th Street, Turners Falls, MA 01376

Name _____

Address _____

Town _____ State _____ Zip _____



Deer Readers,
Help us Reach our Goal ...

800 Subscribers for 2008!

With your help, we can do it.

Subscriptions to the *Montague Reporter* make great holiday gifts for friends and relatives near and far. Take advantage of holiday rates.

Buy a Gift Subscription for \$5 off the regular price, now through January 1st, 2008

We Welcome
Your Letters!

Montague Reporter

58 4th St Turners Falls, MA 01376

FAX (413) 863-3050

reporter@montaguema.net



Don Hanley at the new artesian well in Montague Center, circa 1991.

Don Hanley, Turners Falls Water Superintendent, Remembered

BY NANCY HOLMES

TURNERS FALLS - The Turners Falls Water Department is sad to announce the recent passing of former water superintendent Don Hanley. He passed away after an extended illness on November 2nd, 2008 at the age of 78.

Hanley, a resident of Carlisle

Avenue in Turners Falls, was a longtime friend and committed proponent of the waterworks industry. He worked for 48 years at the Turners Falls Water Department in all capacities, from laborer to superintendent, until his retirement in 2000. Hanley worked tirelessly to establish the department's practices and standard of excellence

that continue to this day. His proactive purchase and conservation of watershed properties have ensured that the town of Montague's water resources will be protected and viable for generations to come.

Hanley was ahead of his time in his attention to detail in building and maintaining the water department's infrastruc-

ture. He treasured the system he was responsible for. He will truly be missed by his co-workers, friends in the industry, and everyone who knew him.

Don Hanley clearly left his mark on the water department and his community. His legacy will remain for all to enjoy - each time they turn on a water tap - for years to come.

NATIVE from pg 1

[A phone call seeking comment on this story from the Federal Aviation Administration was not returned by press time.]

Narragansett deputy tribal historic preservation officer Doug Harris said the tribes had received verbal assurance from the Federal Aviation Administration that, "They will not move forward with any impacts to the hill," at the airport, as a result of the successful determination of eligibility application. "They have concurred with the determination of the National Register," he said.

A five million dollar runway extension project at the Turners Falls Airport, funded by the Massachusetts Aeronautics Commission and the Federal Aviation Administration, has been held up for the last two years while the question of the cultural significance of the stone formation on the hilltop site was deliberated by the FAA, the National Register, and the three federally recognized tribes who are interested parties to the dispute.

If the runway extension plan had gone forward as planned, the stone formation and the hill beneath it would have been excavated and removed and used as fill in the course of constructing a 1200 foot extension to the airport's existing 3000

foot runway.

Turners Falls Airport manager Michael Sweeney, reached by phone on Wednesday afternoon and informed of the National Register's determination about the airport site, said, "This has always been an issue that has resided with the Mashpee Wampanoags, the Wampanoag Tribe of Gayhead (Aquinnah), the Narragansetts, and the FAA. We will abide by the determination of the interested parties.

"The good news is, a decision has been made, apparently. And it will give us all the parameters to move forward. I'm happy to have a resolution."

Tribal representatives hailed the decision by the National Register to list the Turners Falls Sacred Hill as unprecedented in the region known as New England.

Bettina Washington, tribal historic preservation officer for the Wampanoag Tribe of Gayhead, (Aquinnah), called the decision, "History making." She credited her predecessor, tribal historic preservation officer Cheryl Andrews Maltais for initiating the process of having the site listed in the National Register, along with Harris, from the Narragansetts.

"This has not happened in the Northeast. We have these places in all other parts of the country. It validates what we have always said. We have an

oral history that tells us what these places are, their importance. Somehow, because it's not written into the dominant culture's view, it is not taken seriously. This validates what we've always known."

Washington said when her father, tribal chief Donald Malonson, heard that the federal government had finally determined in 1987 to grant recognition to the Wampanoag Tribe of Gayhead (Aquinnah), he remarked, "How much money did they spend to find out what we've always known?"

Similarly, she said, "We have to have a decision like this one, in order to say, 'Yes, you were right all along.'"

She added, "Now we have a base from which we can really start looking at different places," in the region that may deserve similar federal recognition and protection for their cultural significance.

The United Southern and Eastern Tribes, a group made up of 25 federally recognized tribes, issued a declaration on February 15th, 2007 regarding the existence of sacred stone formations east of the Mississippi. It states, in part, "For thousands of years before immigration by Europeans, the medicine people of the USET tribal ancestors used these

sacred landscapes to sustain the people's reliance on Mother Earth and the spirit energies of balance and harmony, and... whether these stone structures are massive or small structures, stacked, stone rows or effigies, these prayers in stone are often mistaken by archaeologists and state historic preservation officers as the efforts of farmers clearing stones for agricultural or wall building purposes."

In fact, the state of

"The ceremonies that were put in place were put in place to be part of the living landscape. The medicine that is put in place is not a short-lived medicine. It is there to put things in balance."

- Doug Harris
Narragansett Indian Tribe
speaking of the Ceremonial Hill at the
Turners Falls Airport

impact of the runway project on what archeologists have long agreed is a native campsite dating back 12,000 years, called the Hannemann site, which is also located on airport property.

Harris said he found the stone formation on the hilltop after examining signs in the fire pit of the Hannemann site indicating to him that a ceremonial site would be close at hand. At the time, he said, "The ceremonies that were put in place

were put in place to be part of the living landscape. The medicine that is put in place is not a short-lived medicine. It is there to put things in balance."

In addition to determining that the Turners Falls Ceremonial Hill is eligible for listing, the National Register also "made reference to a number of stone

Massachusetts Historic Preservation Office recommended against including the Turners Falls Airport hill in the National Register. In April of this year, Ed Bell, staff archaeologist for Mass Historic, called the stone formation on the hill at the airport, "the remains of an abandoned stone wall."

Harris, of the Narragansett, has claimed otherwise since he first walked the site in 2006, in connection with a review of the

sites within a 16-mile radius" of the airport site, Harris said. The standing stones at the top of Burnt Hill, in Heath, are at the outside of that perimeter, with other stone formations found in Leverett and Wendell. Harris said these sites are now considered to be in relation to the airport site in the eligibility notification from the National Register.

"What now has to happen is see NATIVE pg 7

PLACE YOUR BUSINESS CARD HERE FOR ONLY \$8.00 PER WEEK (12 WEEK MINIMUM). CALL 863-8666

A sumptuous array of silk, heirloom whites, velveteen, rayon, wool & Japanese printed cottons. Vintage-inspired buttons, jewelry & scarves.

Delectable Mountain Cloth
125 Main Street, Brattleboro, VT 05301
www.delectablemountain.com
please visit our website or the store for even more
(802) 257-4456

Office Hours By Appointment

DANIEL COHEN, D.M.D.

4 Dell St.
Turners Falls, MA 01376
Telephone: (413) 863-9656

NOW ACCEPTING NEW PATIENTS

**CARSENSE
AUTOMOTIVE**

Your Automotive Answer

Check Engine Light on? We Can Help!

TELE: (413) 772-8862 -- CELL: (413) 512-0413
409 DEERFIELD STREET • GREENFIELD

Locally owned since 1941

Full service market
Fresh Fish from the Boston market
Beer & Wine

70 Allen Street Greenfield, MA 413-773-1100
FAX 413-773-1105

Animal Crackers
Aquarium & Pet Supplies

Fun Stuff for Pets... and Their People!

44 Deerfield St./Rte. 5 & 10, Greenfield 774-7346
Pet Grooming by Appointment

AJ's CYCLE

274 Rt. 2, Gill

- gloves
- boots
- accessories
- gift certificates

(413) 863-9543
Allan • David
email: AJCYC@CROCKER.COM
WWW.AJCYCLE.COM

Executive Session Held on Strathmore



PETER CLARK PHOTO

BY DAVID DETMOLD
TURNERS FALLS - The Montague selectboard went into executive session during a special meeting of the board on Wednesday afternoon, dealing with the Strathmore Mill. Present in the room were John Anctil, the Lowell entrepreneur who bought the 244,482 square foot mill complex on April 29th, 2008, for the sum of \$50,000 from James Bent (who had purchased it one month earlier from Jerry Jones for \$1), and members of his Swift River Group, LLC, along with

building inspector David Jensen and town planner Dan Laroche.

Ross said the meeting was closed to the public so the board could discuss "real estate and possible negotiations."

One of the issues hanging overhead is undoubtedly the schedule by which Anctil and company plan to pay the back taxes owed on the property. Tax collector Patti Dion was unavailable for comment on Wednesday, but when Anctil purchased the property in April the tax bill to the town equalled roughly \$180,000, and has

been accumulating with interest since. There is also the matter of the approximately \$300,000 the town invested to secure the property, re-roof two buildings following a devastating arson fire on May 26th, 2007, and convert the sprinklers to a pressurized dry release system that does not require the mill to be heated in winter in order to function.

Jensen said the town had arranged a payment plan with Anctil requiring the first installment of the back taxes owed - \$125,000 - to be paid on January 1st of 2009.

After the meeting on Wednesday, board member Patricia Pruitt said, "To date, there have been no taxes paid on the Strathmore."

Ross said, "Unfortunately, the Strathmore is going to be another big, hair-raising saga, to all the participants involved."

Referring to Anctil's vision for establishing a film and video school and production facility in the 1871 vintage mill, Ross said, "It will be great if even a part of it comes to pass."

Stay tuned.

Mesa Verde

Eat In or Take Out!

**BURRITOS,
BOWLS,
SOFT TACOS,
QUESADILLAS**

*Now serving
People's Pint Beer
on tap!*

(413) 772-2531
 10 Fiske Ave - downtown Greenfield
 Hours: Mon - Sat 11:30 am - 9 pm

Wendell Holiday Fair
December 20th & 21st

Sat. 10 a.m. - 5 p.m.
Sun. 11 a.m. - 3 p.m.

Wendell Town Hall
Free Admission & Parking

**Come Holiday
Shop with
Local Crafters,
Artists
& Farmers!**

**Gourmet Lunch
by Diemand Farm**
 Daily 11:30 a.m. - 2 p.m.
 All profits will be donated
 to the Swift River Music
 Department to benefit
 Students of New Salem
 & Wendell

HIGHLIGHTS FROM THE ERVING POLICE LOG

Removing Trees, Drivers Off Road

Tuesday, 12/9

5:25 p.m. Assisted Orange police with a reported stabbing. Male party fled on foot. Requested to patrol Route 2 area in Orange.

Wednesday, 12/10

11:40 a.m. Report of an injured dog in the area of Forest Street and Route 2. Contacted owner who responded and took animal.

Thursday, 12/11

8:05 a.m. Report of accident on Route 2, no personal injuries.

10:50 a.m. Report of confused elderly driver eastbound on Route 2. Unable to locate. Advised Massachusetts state police.

1:00 p.m. Report of fire at Erving Paper Mill. Fire put out by employee, cleared by

fire chief.

Friday, 12/12

8:00 a.m. Multiple trees and wires down on Upper Mountain Road due to weather conditions.

8:30 a.m. Tree down on Mountain Road. Cleared one lane.

12:30 p.m. Established emergency shelter at Senior Center for those without power.

4:40 p.m. Assisted Gill police with traffic stop near Wagon Wheel Restaurant for traffic stop resulting in arrest.

Saturday, 12/13

11:20 p.m. Arrested [redacted] for operating a motor vehicle under the influence of liquor and operating a motor vehicle without lights.

Sunday, 12/14

1:30 p.m. Alarm sounding at a Dorsey Road address. Checked same, all secure.

3:30 p.m. Citation issued to [redacted] Greenfield for operating a motor vehicle after suspension of license and license not in possession.

10:35 p.m. Report of roll over accident on Route 2 at Orange side of Orange town line. Assisted Massachusetts state police and Orange police.

Monday, 12/15

10:35 a.m. Tree and branch on power lines on Mountain Road, National Grid advised.

1:40 p.m. Assisted National Grid with traffic on Mountain Road for removal of tree from power lines.

Your clear choice for

**QUALITY VINYL
REPLACEMENT
WINDOWS**

SUNRISE

(413) 498-4318

Fully Insured
 Free Estimates
 Honest Work
 Honest Prices!

Mass. Contractor Reg. #107141
 Mass. License #059565

JOE GRAVELINE

COUTURE BROS.
 Since 1910
**Professional Painting & Decorating
Contractor - Retailer**

CALIFORNIA BRAND PAINTS - INDUSTRIAL COATINGS
 PAINTS - STAINS - SUNDRIES - WALLPAPER - BRUSHES & ROLLERS
 COMPUTER COLOR MATCHING - SANDBLASTING MEDIA - GLASS
 ARTIST SUPPLIES - CUSTOM PICTURE FRAMING/MATTING & MORE

187 Avenue A Turners Falls, MA • 413-863-4346

Celebrating our 98th Anniversary!

LAPINE MULTIMEDIA

MOVIES, SLIDES, VIDEOS
 & MORE!
 CONVERTED TO DVD,
 VHS & OTHER FORMATS!

Bill & Kathy White
413-773-7747

COUNTRY OIL
 SINCE 1988
 HEATING - COOLING - PLUMBING

Annual Heating System Cleaning
 Plumbing Repairs
 LICENSED TECHNICIANS

540 Northfield Rd., Bernardston 1-800-327-9992
 www.countryoil.com 413-648-9912 #M10588 (MA)

T.L.C.
URNS LAWN CARE
Specializing in all aspects of Lawn and Property Maintenance.

Located in the Heart of Montague Center.
 "Now accepting calls for fall clean-up and new clients for snow removal within 12 miles of Montague Center"

Residential & Commercial - Fully Insured

45 Main Street, PO Box 926, Montague, MA 01351
 Gary Turn, Owner Phone: 367-0230 Cell: 522-2563

Simply Computing
 computer set-up
 training
 QuickBooks

Debbe Dugan
774-5451
 Your Pace at Your Place

EDWARDS TREE SERVICE

Storm Damage Prevention & Restoration
 Cabling & Bracing
 Shade Tree Maintenance
 Tree Removal

**Matthew Edwards
Certified Arborist**

Owner
 Climber
 Insured

Wendell • 978-544-7452
 www.mattedwardstree.com

NATIVE from pg 5

we have to identify the bounds of that district," which Harris called a Pau Wau (or Medicine) district. "The National Register has accepted that."

Green, from the Mashpee Wampanoags, said, "Our people did have knowledge of things celestial. They did use stone formations to mark those dates, those occurrences. This is the first determination in New England to acknowledge the history of Native American spiritual activity here. This is a big step."

Referring to the sacred hill in Turners Falls, John Brown, tribal historic preservation officer for the Narragansetts said, "The first time I walked on the site," [the airport land], "I knew it was up there. We have never been separated from the land, though there have been many attempts

to extricate us from our stomping grounds, the homelands of our people."

Brown said, "It was called that because there was a specific dance that was done: the stomping grounds were the places we held those dances. The memory of these places, and our shadow on the land, cannot be erased. We are integrally involved in these ancient places."

Brown said, "To get this simple thing, this acknowledgement from the federal government, we had to stay the course as a people. The venture was one of a shared history, shared ancestry, with tribes in that area. We have proven much of the knowledge we once had has persisted. The information is there. It can have the ability from time to time to enlighten a pathway otherwise darkened to understanding. This

was a win not just for the tribes, but for everyone."

Harris said the eligibility notification for the Turners Falls Sacred Hill will provide "the essential platform" for bringing the federal support to the concept the tribes have been discussing with the town of Montague to make the area around the Great Falls a center for "preservation tourism."

He said, "We are thankful for the spirit of partnership that has evolved from

the ceremony that we call 'burying the hatchet,' which the town of Montague called a 'reconciliation ceremony' [held between the town of Montague and the Narragansetts in 2005],

that hopefully will bear fruit now in a mutual support for historic preservation and economic development."

Harris called the designation of the Turners Falls Ceremonial Hill "a breakthrough" in the Southern and Eastern tribes effort to gain recognition from the archaeological community of the significance of sacred stone landscapes east of the Mississippi.



John Brown, historic preservation officer for the Narragansett Indian Tribe

Holiday Collection Schedule

For Montague Residents
 Tuesday & Wednesday (12/23 & 12/24) pick-up remains the same.
 Thursday's (12/25) recycling will be picked up on Monday, December 22nd
 Thursday's trash pick-up will be done on Friday, December 26th.

MCTV PROGRAM SCHEDULE 12/19 - 12/25

HAVE A VERY MERRY CHRISTMAS
Friday, December 19th
 8:00 AM Swedish Christmas Part One
 9:00 AM Special Town Meeting 12/16/08
 1:00 PM Dodging The Bow
 3:00 PM Independent Voices
 3:30 PM Into the Way of Peace
 4:30 PM Keep Warm Keep Safe
 5:00 PM Martha and Clarkson Edwards
 6:00 PM Swedish Christmas Part One
 7:00 PM GMRSD 12_9_08
 11:00 PM An Inside Look into Iran
Saturday, December 20th
 8:00 AM TWB Urinary incontinence
 9:30 AM Underground Railway Concert 07
 11:00 AM Valley Idol Semi Finals 2008
 1:30 PM Valley Idol Finals 2008
 4:00 PM White House Chronicles
 5:00 PM The HIV Test
 6:00 PM Discovery Center Fossil Tracks
 7:00 PM Sculpture Fest "08" Firedance
 8:00 PM Exploring New Worlds in New England
 8:30 PM Falls Table Michaelangelo "Gnoccki with Shrimp"
 9:30 PM Grouse Attack
 10:00 PM Living Along The River
 1:00 AM Swedish Christmas Part One
Sunday, December 21st
 8:00 AM The Katie Clarke Band
 10:00 AM Friends present Fall town string band
 12:00 PM Bech Interview
 1:00 PM Living Along The River
 3:00 PM On The Ridge Deer Huntin
 4:00 PM Physician Focus Atrial Fibrillation_title2
 5:00 PM Power Canal Draw Down

5:30 PM Prevailing Winds in Denmark
 6:00 PM Dodging The Bow
 8:00 PM Carlos Anderson In the World of It
 8:30 PM Child and Family: Children's Mental Health
 9:00 PM Coffee House Series Ferne Bork, Dan Tinen, Bruce Kahn Trio
 10:00 PM Discovery Center Birds of Prey.
Monday, December 22nd
 8:00 AM Discovery Center Pop Rockets
 9:30 AM EatonDoRyu Juni
 10:30 AM Enjoy The Ride Share the Road
 11:30 AM Exploring New Worlds in New England
 12:00 PM Falls Table Michaelangelo
 1:00 PM Fate of the Stallion
 1:30 PM Franklin County Matters Cogeneration
 2:30 PM Girls Softball08
 5:00 PM Grouse Attack
 5:30 PM Independent Voices
 6:00 PM Special Town Meeting 12/16/08
 10:30 PM Chronicles Volume 33
Tuesday, December 23rd
 8:00 AM Over the Falls Jenny Goodspeed and Leo Baldwin
 9:00 AM Peoples Harvest1
 10:30 AM Positive Profiles in Courage
 11:30 AM Power Canal Draw Down
 12:00 PM Prevailing Winds in Denmark
 12:30 PM Red Cross Prevent Home Fires
 1:00 PM Refusal 15
 1:30 PM Living Along The River
 3:30 PM The Looming Crisis in Oil Depletion
 5:30 PM Women Girls & HIV:Services
 6:00 PM Over The Falls The Eddie in

Eddie's Wheels
 7:00 PM GMRSD 12_9_08
 8:30 PM GMRSD 12/9/08 #2
 10:02 PM GMRSD 12/9/08 #3
 11:00 PM Michael Nix
Wednesday, December 24th
 8:00 AM Falls Table Michaelangelo
 9:00 AM Fabulous Maurice 5_19_08
 10:30 AM Falls Table Margaret Fitzpatrick
 11:00 AM FCHC Estate Planning
 12:30 PM Exploring New Worlds in New England
 1:00 PM Special Town Meeting 12/16/08
 5:00 PM Swedish Christmas Part One
 6:00 PM Friends present Fall town string band
 8:00 PM An Inside Look into Iran
 10:00 PM Exploring New Worlds in New England
 10:30 PM Encore Body Art #9
 11:00 PM Encore Body Art #5
Thursday, December 25th
 8:00 AM Exploring New Worlds in New England
 8:30 AM An Inside Look into Iran
 10:00 AM Swedish Christmas Part One
 11:00 AM Amandla
 12:30 PM Cal Ripken Baseball
 2:00 PM Changing Face of Turners Falls
 4:00 PM Common Man Stephanie Marshal
 5:30 PM Discovery Center Emus
 6:30 PM Exploring New Worlds in New England
 7:00 PM Select Board 12/15/08
 9:00 PM Falls Table Michaelangelo "Gnoccki with Shrimp"
 10:00 PM Swedish Christmas Part One
 11:00 PM Fate of the Stallion

BUDGET from pg 1

DESE's representative, assistant commissioner Jeff Wulfson, listened from the front row.

"We're being held hostage," he said. "I don't think there's any question about that. The overwhelming sentiment of this town is to vote this down and let things fall where they may."

Cromack continued, "The school committee has an insatiable appetite for money. We've been put in a position by this school committee and by the state. It's out of our control."

He referred to a quote from Chester's recent letter to the GMRSD, which read: "I recognize that this budget will require the use of reserves by both the district and its members, a practice which is clearly not sustainable in the long term."

"It's not sustainable right now," said Cromack.

Wulfson said if the town voted down the commissioner's budget, the DESE was prepared to take the town to court, if necessary. Town attorney Rich Bowen said the state had the statutory authority to withhold funds from local aid to the town sufficient to make up the difference between the town's current appropriation for the GMRSD and the assessment set by Commissioner Chester.

In response to a question from Precinct 1 town meeting member

Robin Sherman, town accountant Carolyn Olsen noted that the town had already committed about \$1 million from reserves to fund the omnibus budget so far this year. Estimates of funds remaining in the town's various reserve funds total somewhere in the neighborhood of \$1.5 million.

Town administrator Frank Abbondanzio said information available from the state in the last few days forecasts a growing likelihood of mid-year cuts in state aid to localities and schools, and an even stronger likelihood of a 10% reduction in local aid in Fiscal '10.

In response, Precinct 5 town meeting member Jay Dipucchio evoked the memory of former Montague state representative Moses Harvey, who in 1787 was sentenced to stand on the gallows in Northampton with a noose around his neck from one hour for his role protesting onerous state levies during Shay's Rebellion. Dipucchio called on the town meeting to pass a consensus motion: "As the state-defined FY2009 school assessment is unsustainable, we believe any increase in Montague's assessment next year is fiscally irresponsible. Therefore we, the town meeting members of Montague, recognizing the serious budget constraints the town, state and nation are under presently and shall be for the foreseeable future, can

see BUDGET pg 13

CopyCat PRINT SHOP
 We Specialize in Impossible Deadlines!
 22 Years of Making Copies and Still the Original!
 up-to-the-minute technology • old-fashioned personal service
 180 Main Street, Greenfield • 413-774-3500 • greenfield@copycatprintshop.com

- ♦ full color offset printing
- ♦ digital copies
- ♦ oversize copies
- ♦ files accepted via email

EDL Dealer in Used Home Furnishings
 SMALL FURNITURE • COLLECTABLES • DECORATIVES
 374 Deerfield Street • Greenfield
 featuring: Lamps Mirrors Chairs Baskets
 Cookery Figurines End Tables
 I Make Lamps Lite! Open 7 Days a Week
GOOD USED USABLES

Sokolosky Realty
 56 4TH STREET • TURNERS FALLS, MASS. 01376
 OFFICE (413) 863-4393
 HOME (413) 367-9970
 FAX (413) 863-4949
 Craig Dalrymple
 Sales Associate

Crescent Moon Firearms
 TAKING ORDERS FOR ALL YOUR FIREARM & AMMUNITION NEEDS
 Alan Lambert 413.863.2964
 413.834.1692

DOLAN & DOLAN
 ATTORNEYS AT LAW
 174 AVENUE A
 TURNERS FALLS MASSACHUSETTS 01376
 413-863-3133
 PERSONAL INJURY, WILLS & ESTATES, WORKER'S COMP

J&M HOME IMPROVEMENT
VINYL SIDING - VINYL WINDOWS
 JIMMY
 (413) 592 0169
 CELL: (413) 636 3071
 LIC# 153335

Grange Craft Fair

BY MICHAEL MULLER
MONTAGUE CENTER - On a wintry Saturday, December the 13th, local children and their parents gathered at the Montague Grange for a "Make it Yourself Craft Fair". Children purchased tickets for \$1 each and, for a fee of between one and five tickets, made some very special gifts for their very special loved ones.



CHRIS WISE PHOTO

Susan Sweitzer making beeswax candles with youngsters at the Grange Craft Fair.

The crafts included lavender filled sachets, glass painted ornaments, decorated boxes and frames, bracelets, earrings, rolled beeswax candles, fleece accessories, candle holders, and gnomes. The children were very proud of their creations, and it was a joy seeing them so absorbed in the process of making the gifts with a recipient in mind.

Lunch of chili, soup, baked potatoes, corn bread and homemade muffins and cookies was also available to purchase.

The craft fair was a fundraiser for the Community Involved in Sustaining Agriculture senior farm share program and the Montague Grange building fund, and raised a total of \$875 in craft and food sales. All food and supplies were donated by the volunteers who ran the tables. Both CISA and the Montague Grange are still accepting donations. Please visit MontagueMA.net/Montague_Grange for more information.

ICE from page 1

cell phone," said fire chief Everett Ricketts, who was taking a five minute break at the fire station on Saturday. "I've been out straight ever since."

Ricketts said the first call identifying a power failure came from Morse Village Road, but by the time he drove over there, "I could hear snapping trees everywhere."

He had to back out to Lockes Village Road, and barricade it off. "Farley Road called next."

The road crew — down to just acting road boss Dave Bock and John Hadley since Dan Bacigalupo died two months ago — were out all night clearing the roads, and had been working pretty much around the clock since. Wendell Recycling and Transfer Station (WRATS) employees Matt Bordeaux and Alex Lankowski helped out. Seemed like every resident in town who owns a chain saw pitched in and helped out too.

Now, 36 hours later, as a diesel generator kept power and heat on at the highway garage and fire station, Ricketts and Bock were examining the breakers on the electrical service to try to figure out why the fuel pump had suddenly stopped working. If the fuel pump wouldn't work, Bock's crew couldn't fuel their trucks to keep clearing debris off the roads.

There were reports of more trees down, on Depot Road, Rush Road, New Salem Road and elsewhere.

Selectboard member Christine Heard dropped by to find out if Ricketts knew when the power company thought power would be

restored in town. He didn't.

Bock cursed the breaker panel. Ricketts suggested they check the On/Off switch by the side door that controls the fuel pump. They walked over to that side of the building together. The switch had been turned off. Problem solved.

If only it were that easy to turn power on for the rest of the town!

Minutes later, Bock and Hadley were off



DETMOLD PHOTO

Tree in the in the wires, Wendell Depot Road, Saturday noon

again, determined to cut back as many of the ice coated overhanging trees and branches along town roads as they could get to.

"Some people said wait 'til it warms up, and the ice melts, the trees will stand upright again," said Ricketts. "But then they'll just snap in the next storm; might as well clear them out now."

Just then, Pedro Alvarez, Verizon lineman, pulled into the lot. With 200 feet of power cord, he could hook up the telephone company's main circuit box, standing among a wreckage of downed tree limbs by the side of Depot Road, to the fire station's generator and restore phone service at least to the center of town.

Wendell Depot had phone service, extending up the hill as far as Stone Road. But it ended there, and people had been driving down the hill to use the phone at the Depot post office, or trying to borrow cell phones from the few people in town who could get reception, for the last two days.

Ricketts tried to find enough extra power cord to stretch from the fire station down to the telephone company's circuit box, but it looked like he would run short by about 100 feet. When word of this reached the Country Store, where customers huddled around tables in the cold, exchanging news of the storm, Lorraine Chapin immediately went next door

continued next page

99% of us think it's important to make clear family rules about teen drinking.

From the 2008 survey of Turners Falls High School and Great Falls Middle School parents.

With 206 parents responding!



Look How Much We Care!

Brought to you by the Gill-Montague Community School Partnership.

PLACE YOUR BUSINESS CARD HERE FOR ONLY \$12.00 PER WEEK. (12 WEEK MINIMUM) CALL 863-8666

Baker Office Supply

(413)774-2345 | 310 MAIN ST., GREENFIELD | WWW.BAKEROFFICESUPPLY.COM

Jack Nelson

- Clay/Stone Sculpture
- Pottery
- Fine Art Drawings and Paintings

BY CHANCE OR APPOINTMENT.

TELEPHONE 413.863.9299
 email: carriagehouse@signedinstone.com

65 CANAL STREET • TURNERS FALLS, MA 01376

GO GREEN : SAVE GREEN

Announcing the Energy-Efficient Mortgage (EEM) allows you to borrow for energy improvements when buying a home such as: New Furnace, Windows, Insulation, Solar, Wind and more!

SAVE MONEY, CONSERVE ENERGY, LIVE COMFORTABLY

National City Mortgage

CALL NOW! **TIM PREVOST**
 413-773-8984
 TIM.PREVOST@NCMC.COM

and found an extra 100 foot extension cord.

But it didn't work. "The ground fault in their box kept tripping," said Ricketts later. "They had to get the Verizon electrician out to work on it the next day," and then phone and internet service came back all over the center of town, Sunday afternoon.

The trick of hooking up the phone company's main box to a power generator had worked better in New Salem, where Alvarez had been jury rigging lines earlier on Saturday. Ricketts said after clearing the roads in that community, a contingent of seven National Guard were heading over to help clear New Salem Road in Wendell. At about a quarter past two on Saturday, a line of utility trucks from National Grid were parked in front of the Meeting House, and stretched out down Morse Village Road as far as you could see from Lockes Village Road, waiting for instructions to deploy. Power lines were snapped and lying frozen in the middle of the roads all over town, trees were hanging on the wires, branches had smashed cars and trucks and windows in homes. The clean-up task seemed enormous. The temperature hovered at 24 degrees.

Alvarez looked like he could use a cup of coffee, or at least a place to warm his hands.

They had coffee at the general store, at least. Patti Scutari had just brought a thermos up Mormon Hollow Road from the Diemand Farm, where power had only gone out for an hour or so on Friday morning.

Scutari had to close the Deja Brew on Thursday and Friday nights, due to the storm, and was considering opening up for acoustic music by candlelight on Saturday night. On Friday, Jenny Gross brought three students from the Maple Valley School to help Scutari take all her perishables and dairy goods down to the school's cooler, to keep the food from spoiling.

Bottled water, purchased down at the Dollar Store in Turners Falls, was stacked on a nearby table.

Donna Horn was helping customers, by the light from the front window, using a calculator to add up purchases, since the scales and cash register weren't functioning. It was 'Buy now, pay later.' Horn kept a tally of the customer's names, and the amounts they owed, in a spiral bound notebook.

Next door, at the post office, Charlie O'Dowd was working by the light of day and a couple of battery powered lanterns that illuminated not much, but gave off a cheery old-fashioned glow. O'Dowd had dug out the old balance beam, wisely store for just such a weekend of weather, and he used it to determine the weight of letters and cards destined for someone's Yuletide hearth or table.

"The mail truck was unable to make it up the mountain from the Depot on Friday morning," he said. "The driver encountered severe ice and trees down, and had to turn back."

O'Dowd made it into work after encountering Peter Zera parked in the middle of Lockes Village Road, with trees down and Zera working with his chain saw to clear the way at ten of seven in the a.m. O'Dowd backed up and detoured down West Street, where Lonnie Ricketts allowed him to circle through his horseshoe drive to get around another tree in the road. On Montague Road, he ran into town EMT Asa Deroode making rounds to survey the damage around town. Deroode told him he could get through to the Center. But, "It was a slalom course of trees down and branches down," O'Dowd said.

He got to work at 7:15, having driven through the dark and dawn from West Hatfield. O'Dowd opened the window at 7:45 as usual, after raising the window quilts Eileen Sauvageau and Steve Broll had installed on the front windows

see ICE pg 10

Three Days 'Off the Grid' on Lockes Village Road



View from Linda Hickman's back door

HICKMAN PHOTO

BY LINDA HICKMAN -

WENDELL - Last Thursday, we knew a storm was coming, and so we prepared. Or so we thought! I filled up a few five gallon buckets, thinking of how many times I've done that without actually needing to. I made sure flashlights were in their proper places. My husband Joe put out some candles. I didn't start any laundry, much as I wanted to. We went to bed.

At 2 a.m., Joe was woken by the sound of an explosion. It was probably an electrical transformer. We had no heat, no electricity, and no water. He started up the woodstove.

Early the next morning he drove up to the town center to call our respective employers with his cell phone, which doesn't get a signal at our house. He said Lockes Village Road was an amazing obstacle course of downed trees, branches, and electrical and phone lines.

At 9 a.m., I started out to make calls. I picked up my neighbors along the way, who needed to call their employers and see about getting help from the fire department for their flooded basement.

Driving under hanging branches and around fallen trees and branches, chunks of ice hit the windshield, sounding like shots. I kept expecting my windshield to break, or a tree to fall on us.

The fire department referred us to the police chief, who has generators to loan out for emergencies. I couldn't believe our

postmaster, Charlie O'Dowd, had made it in to work from West Hatfield. He said he tried various routes, until he ended up following a town truck with a chain saw crew. He said he had to drive up onto the soft parts of some lawns to get around fallen trees.

The post office was lit with electric lanterns, but there was no mail delivery that day. The Country Store was also open, with items located by a cashier with a headlamp.

On Friday, we kept hearing branches and trees falling all day long around our house. We collected rainwater off the roof, and set up bins of water in our bathrooms for flushing toilets. I practiced guitar and banjo, and filled out 30 Christmas cards.

We kept putting more wood in the woodstove, and feeling so grateful we had that option. At first it was almost fun. Friday night I headed down the hill to Greenfield and Turners. I took a shower at a friend's, and joined the line of people at Food City buying, of all things, ice.

The ride up and down Montague Road was frightening. So many trees and branches were down, or lying across the wires. Wires were down in various spots. A blue ranch house in Millers Falls had a big tree lying on it.

The weirdest thing was the effect of elevation. Near the bottom of the hill was almost an abrupt ice line. There was nothing on the trees,

compared to the thick ice coating all the trees on the hill.

On Saturday, as temperatures plummeted, life started to become more challenging. We worried about our pipes in the basement. Our hot tub began to freeze, and we drained it, not knowing how much damage would be caused once the remaining water in the pipes froze.

On Sunday morning, my bearded dragon lizard looked dead. I cradled his chilled body between my hands for fifteen minutes, and then set him up next to the woodstove. We have a small farm, and I had a lot of food put away in freezers; now it was starting to thaw.

We went up to Brattleboro for the afternoon, for sanity's sake. Around three o'clock we got a call from a friend who told us we might have power. I called my house and yipped for joy when the answering machine kicked on.

Although the experience of living 'off the grid' for three days was challenging, we were very lucky. We had a woodstove and wood. We had water, and friends, and good neighbors. We live on Lockes Village Road, so we got power back before many other houses.

Sunday night, I was so thrilled to run the dishwasher and washing machine. But the biggest thrill was being able to easily wash my hands again. We take so many things for granted. An experience like this reminds us of what life was like for ancestors, and still for so many people around the world.

PLACE YOUR BUSINESS CARD HERE FOR ONLY \$8.00 PER WEEK (12 WEEK MINIMUM). CALL 863-8666

GREENFIELD CENTER SCHOOL
Knowing Children since 1931

- * K-8th Grades
- * Social Justice Focus
- * 2 Teachers per classroom
- * Individualized approach
- * Project-based

Greenfield, MA | 413-773-1700 www.centerschool.net

Mary Lou Emond
Certified Residential Specialist

COHN & COMPANY
Real Estate Agency
117 Main Street • PO Box 638
Greenfield, MA 01302-0638

413-773-1149 x142 • HOME: 413-863-4568
EMAIL: MARYLOU@COHNANDCOMPANY.COM

MONTAGUE THE BOOKMILL
413-367-0309

KEENE
89 1/2 MAIN ST
603-358-6833

TURN IT UP!
ALWAYS BUYING
CDs LPs & DVDs

MUSIC & MORE
BRATTLEBORO
2 ELLIOT ST
802-251-6015

NORTHAMPTON
5 PLEASANT ST
413-282-0022

EASTHAMPTON
116 PLEASANT ST
413-582-1885

website: TURNITUP.COM

Patty Smythe
Licensed Massage Therapist

Myofascial Release
Deep Tissue
Mind/Body Integration

50 Chapman St. Suite 1
Greenfield MA 01301
413-774-0517
pattysmythe@hotmail.com

Psychotherapy

Ronald Sigmund Meck MA, CAGS, LMHC
30 years in practice

- Traditional Talk Therapy
- Expressive Arts • Body Psychology
- Adults, Teens, Children, Couples & Families

bigsigmund@aol.com
413-367-9763 413-695-9743

HOPE & OLIVE

HOURS: LUNCH TUES - FRI, 11:30 - 2:30 • DINNER TUES - SAT, 5 - 9 • SUNDAY BRUNCH 10 - 2, DINNER 5 - 8

GIFT CERTIFICATES AVAILABLE

Reserving NOW! New Year's Eve Dinner Party
Check out the Menu on our Website

PHONE 413 774 3150
44 HOPE STREET, GREENFIELD
WWW.HOPEANDOLIVE.COM

SKATE from page 1

safe space to hang out that is theirs. It keeps me living here, the skate park and the schools."

Micah Snow-Cobb, 15, said, "I really want the skate park to keep on going. During the fall, I pretty much went there every day. It wasn't just a skating place. It was also a meeting place. We all got together there. It was really, really fun."

"There aren't a lot of other places where you can go, hang out, skate, and play hacky-sack without getting yelled at," he added. "You can quote me on that."

Ruth Nervig, Americorps volunteer for the Brick House, said a nine member skate park steering committee had been formed, made up of youth and parents "interested in developing and sustaining a skate park. We are requesting a piece of land in Unity Park," or seeing if the town could provide some other piece of town owned land where the park could be relocated.

The idea of the town buying the land where the skate park is presently located and adding it to Unity Park was brought up, and building inspector David Jensen mentioned the possibility of the town swapping an equivalent piece of land it owns near the Williams Garage for the 6,000 square foot parcel where the skate park is currently located.

Other possible short or long term locations for the park were

mentioned, including an area of land owned by Jim Capen at the intersection of 11th Street and Avenue A, the former Dubois Garage property, and the parking lot behind town hall, where a storage building for the highway department is presently situated.

But a number of audience members zeroed in on the advantage of tying into the use of Community Development Block Grant funds in tandem with the renovation of Unity Park, now in the planning stages, as the best chance to design and build a quality skate park, with concrete ramps that would be impervious to the rapid deterioration that has been an ongoing problem with the wooden ramps.

Town administrator Frank Abbondanzio said, "We have an immediate issue. With respect to CDBG funds, the master planning process has already started. The architect has a tight deadline. If you're not part of that master plan... that needs to happen right now, to get it started."

Skate park steering committee member Christine Bates, a town meeting member from downtown Turners, said the land for Unity Park had originally been donated to town by the Unitarian Society for use by the entire community.

She said, "The town needs to hold close the young people of the community, not on a Brownfield or a lot down the

road. Make them a part of Unity Park."

Patricia Pruitt, recalling the board's vote of December 8th to spend program income funds to develop the master plan for a redesign of Unity Park and to ask the architect to look at the possibility of including a skate park in that plan, said, "That is still a preferred option, if it can be included."

Dobosz said the parks and recreation commission will be meeting with the architect on the Unity Park redesign plans on December 18th at 3:00 p.m. at the field house in Unity Park. Members of the skate park steering committee planned to attend that meeting.

A public hearing on the redesign of Unity Park will be held at town hall in early January.

In other selectboard news

Abbondanzio said a recent report from the Massachusetts Taxpayers Association forecasted a \$2.3 billion drop in state revenues, and mid-year cuts in state aid to schools and local governments now appears to be a realistic possibility.

"This is potentially going to be a very different next few years," said board chair Allen Ross.

Kosudaville Update

Jensen provided an update on the status of the Railroad Salvage building, in the Patch.

Massachusetts Land Court judge Dina Fein has assigned attorney Mark Draper, of Springfield, to act as receiver for the property, which has been in a progressive state of collapse for several years, causing the town to close Power Street, one of only two access roads to the densely populated neighborhood.

When owner Gary Kosuda, of Ft. Lauderdale, FL, failed to meet court orders to abate health and safety hazards posed by the crumbling building, Fein ordered him to provide Draper \$90,000 by November 10th, to enable Draper to make needed repairs or demolish the parts of the building that are threatening public health and safety. Kosuda defaulted on that order, as well.

Last week, Fein handed down another order, empowering Draper to take actions necessary to abate the threat to public health and safety posed by the property, including selling or mortgaging the property to raise the money needed to bring the property into compliance with court orders.

Jensen said he had forwarded several "serious" offers to purchase the property to Draper's attention. He said there were no outstanding liens on the property, and little owed in taxes.

Ross expressed frustration that there was still no deadline for the property to be secured or demolished.

Jensen said he has a standing

joke, every time he leaves Fein's courtroom. "I always say, 'We won.'"

Abbondanzio said the town has already spent \$21,000 on legal bills dealing with Kosuda's property, with no end in sight.

Ross said Jensen should bear in mind, "In fact, there is a part of town with only one access road," as a result of the building's partial collapse two years ago.

Jensen said Draper is responsible to get value out of the property for Kosuda's holding corporation for the property, Kosudaville LLC, but he is also responsible to the town to remove the threat to public health and safety, and responsible to the court to meet the orders issued by Fein. Jensen called Draper, "a responsible party... in place to cure the public health issues."

Hazelton to be Honored

The selectboard received a letter from the Mechanics Lodge of Montague City, requesting a meeting to discuss the siting of a proposed memorial bench in honor of Charles Hazelton, one of the prime movers of the development of Turners Falls in the 19th century. The bench would be located near a wetlands by the bike trail on land owned by the Mechanics Lodge. The lodge would provide educational signage about the history and ecology of the spot.

**ICE** from page 9

years ago, to bring in a little light. The quilts had the advantage of holding in some radiant heat over night, and the solar porch prevented the violet petunias from freezing, and helped to bring in some warmth on the sunny days that followed the storm.

O'Dowd keeps the famous postal slogan, adopted from Herodotus, pinned to the bulletin board by the front door, and he obviously takes it to heart: "Neither snow nor rain nor heat of sun, nor gloom of night stays these couriers from the swift completion of their appointed rounds."

O'Dowd was the only post master of many towns affected by the ice storm who, when the mail truck failed to make it up the mountain again that afternoon, packed the large amount of Christmas mail that had accumulated during the ice bound day into his car and drove it down to Springfield.

"I got there about 8 p.m.," he

said. "About the same time the mail truck would have gotten there."

On Saturday, O'Dowd worked with Lisa Meuse and Gwendolyn Smith to sort the mail in the frigid office, listening to All Things Considered on a battery powered radio.

"It took us four hours, what normally takes two," said O'Dowd. "We got four times the mail in, for Christmas," and although there was no mail delivery to routes around town, they got the mail into the post boxes at the office at about the right time, and "about 90 people," came in to pick up their letters and packages, despite the difficulty some had getting out of their driveways.

Carol Setterlund said she had trees down in her driveway on Old Stage Road, but her son-in-law had come over with a chain saw to help her get out.

"No T.V. is driving me insane," said Setterlund, who added that even when the power was restored to most of the

town, her home would still be in the dark because the falling trees had pulled the electric wire right out of her house from the nearest utility pole.

"I'm going to watch the Patriots game, no matter where I have to go to watch it!" Setterlund said.

"Thank goodness for son-in-laws," she added.

Setterlund had come to the post office to pick up a package with a toy guitar for her granddaughter's Christmas present. O'Dowd had it waiting for her.

"This post office is aces, as far as I'm concerned," said Setterlund.

O'Dowd said he was only trying to "keep the legacy of previous postmasters alive. They were Wendell residents. They would devote their lives to their neighbors. That added to expectations of basic postal regulations."

Outside, the trees were coated in a glittering sheath of ice, bent halfway to the ground, forming an icy channel through

which cars traveled on their way to warmer climes, seeking running water, flush toilets, showers, or a meal in a lighted restaurant. People who did not have wood stoves had moved in for the weekend with friends or neighbors who did. People who knew each other only in passing stopped to ask each other how they were getting by in the emergency, which had the odd benefit of bringing everyone in town closer together even as they struggled to keep their water pipes from freezing, and their plants, and their pets.

Ricketts said he had brought the fire truck to four houses already, to wire up their sump pumps to the truck's generators, and pump their flooded cellars out before the water level reached their furnace motors.

Two deer hunters who stopped into the Country Store for some lukewarm coffee said the conditions in the woods were equally challenging. But, "The sunlight on the ice on the birch trees.... It's like seeing God!" said one of the orange

vested, bearded men, who gave his name only as Adam.

"It's the most beautiful ice storm I've ever seen."

By Wednesday afternoon, power was back on all over town, except for two houses at the end of Morse Village Road, said Ricketts, who had spent the last two nights sleeping at the fire house, after staying with family on West Street the nights before. His son has a wood stove, his brother had a generator, but Ricketts' own house was cold, and power was only restored to his home Tuesday night.

Ricketts said the highway crew had been out plowing again, with the return of bad weather Tuesday night, and had done "a good job" clearing the storm debris and ice felled trees and branches around town.

With all the activity, Ricketts still hadn't had a chance to get down to the general store to return Chapin's 100 foot power cord.

"I plan on doing that this afternoon," he said.



PLACE YOUR BUSINESS CARD HERE FOR ONLY \$8.00 PER WEEK (12 WEEK MINIMUM). CALL 863-8666

Pam Veith Real Estate

75 Main Street
Northfield, MA 01360
Office: 413-498-0207
Ofc. Fax: 413-498-0208
Home Phone: 413-863-9166
Home Fax: 413-863-0218
Email: bedson1@comcast.net

Barbara A. Edson-Greenwald
ABR, CRS, e-PRO, GRI, SRES, CBR
REALTOR

"My Office is Always Open to You!"

Renaissance Builders

Stephen Greenwald

PO Box 272
Turners Falls, MA 01376
413/863-8316
Fax 413/863-9712
www.rebuild.net

SALON 107

\$7.00 cuts

To all Disabled Veterans and Senior Citizens!
We are willing to travel to the homes of
Elderly who can no longer get out much.
(Now hiring Massage Therapists
& Yoga / Aerobic Instructors)

11+ Wells Street
Greenfield, MA 01301
772-0284

Debra Mathey - Owner



BY BRIDGET SWEET
TURNERS FALLS - A haircut, a great mug of coffee, and decorating the first annual village tree - what better way to usher in the holiday season? It's enough to convert the most dedicated Scrooge. (Not that there's anything wrong with that.) Jennifer Letourneau and Jackie Snow have been friends for 25 years, since they attended hairdressing school. Today, they own the new Karma Salon, located at 131 Avenue A. That long friendship creates a friendly atmosphere for their clients. A

grand opening is planned for January 2nd. "A wash, cut, blow dry is a flat \$25.00. For a man or a woman. That's the law," Letourneau said this week. Clients, she added, like their night hours, Tuesdays to Fridays. If the lights are on, pedestrians can make walk-in appointments. Asked how they came up with name, Letourneau said, "The name was a right fit. Turners has a good feeling to it." Twenty-five years? Still friends? Hard to believe. Must be all that good karma! Letourneau or Snow can be reached at 413-863-2533 to schedule an appointment. In the meantime, Evelyn Daly is maintaining the good karma at the Avenue A Café, for-

merly known as Cup O' Joe's. For now, anyway. "I'm selling the café this Friday, [December 19th]," she said, adding that she will stay on for a smooth transition and believes the menu will stay the same. She preferred not to disclose the name of the new owner. As they say (or should say), nothing is certain but death and coffee. Daly does not know what the future holds for her, but hinted that, as a former cemetery worker in Orange, she may return to the death and dying field. The coffee will remain great on the Ave no matter what! And talking about karma, (yes, we are still talking about karma . . .) the First Annual Tree Decorating Event at Peskeomskut Park on December 13th generated enough good energy to see us through what-

ever challenges await us. And it is our tree. All of ours. "Come and decorate the tree whether [you] celebrate Christmas, Hanukkah or Kwanzaa. It's our tree. Come all week even," proclaimed Linda Ackerman of the Montague Business Association. MBA members Jen Audley, Gary Howe, Kriste Joy, Pam Kostanski, Mik Muller, along with Lisa Davol and Stephan Smith, were on hand for Saturday's event. So were Santa and Mrs. Claus, even after the hot chocolate ran out. The Gobeil family attended after four-year old Matthew came home from school with an advertisement and asked, "Mom, are we going to this?" The newly decorated plush evergreen was donated from Emerson Christmas Tree Farm of Greenfield. Bernie Gonyer

sang and played festive songs, and kept up the chord changes on his guitar frets despite the frigid weather. Welcome Yule cast members dropped by for some old English caroling and Molly dancing. It was a pleasure to see the youngsters of some recently arrived Hispanic families joining in with their imitations of the traditional English folk dances, as their parents gathered around the fire in a portable pot-bellied stove in front of the bandshell. In other holiday news, HallKeen Management held a 25th anniversary celebration of Power Town Apartments on December 13th, including a dinner for their residents; catered by the Wagon Wheel Restaurant. Pretty good karma, I'd say! See you on the Ave!

Woodworker for the Community: Tony Mathews

BY JOE KWIECINSKI
GILL - Tony Mathews remembers the first time he came to New England. He said he fell immediately in love with Franklin County's natural beauty in the fall of 1984, and his life has never been the same. "I grew up in Los Angeles," he said in the kitchen of the graceful house he and his wife built in Gill, "and there is just no comparison between L.A. and this area. Here we're more self-governing, and, it seems, more committed to our neighbors and our community." A woodworker in more ways than one, Mathews recently crafted and donated four beautiful tables (2 side, 2 end tables) to the raise money for the Gill Elementary School's Parent Teacher Organization. One table has been sold, and another scheduled to be raffled off, with all proceeds going to the Gill PTO.

"This is a very tough time for the schools," said Mathews, "with their lean budgets. I just wanted to show my support for the schools and the fine work they continue to do." Mathews originally bought the land surrounding 8 Boyle Road, almost a quarter of a century ago. He built that house from "scratch," taking a full year to finish it. "One of the first things I tried to do was to start improving the nearby forest," he said, "by taking the junk out, thinning the junk trees and 'limbing' the pine trees. Then, over time, the new trees grew up clear around the cuts with no knots. Now, all these years later, I'm harvesting clear lumber, though I still have to thin the woods so that clear lumber can be produced." Mathews has been logging since 1970. "It's a tough way to make a full-time living," he

stressed. "I still do some logging on my own land. I have 9,000 board feet of white pine today." The transplanted Californian is proud that, "Our heat is from a wood stove. I can trim trees and get firewood, but also I get that wood from the tops of the trees." A soft-spoken fellow, the 58-year-old Mathews feels too much is made of the politics and language of environmental efforts. "I don't happen to like the current buzz words that are in fashion. Nature has been around for a mighty long time, and people have long been able to cooperate with it in a fundamentally healthy way." Mathews' work, it seems, is always in demand. As we sat in his kitchen, he got a call for a job to make a wooden box for \$50. Truly, no job is too big or small for Mathews. "I take lots of different types of projects," he pointed out,

"ranging from an hour or two to complete to months and months to finish the job." Mathews even had a hand in helping restore Gill's general store, now a tavern and restaurant. He built the new bar, working with plans he had designed with Alden Booth and Lissa Greenough, who co-own the People's Pint in Greenfield. Mathews says the new Gill tavern is jokingly referred to as "the Half Pint." All the lumber for the bar came from Gill. Dick French crafted the ash for the top of the bar, while Mathews worked the white pine for the sides. Mathews has served on the Gill conservation commission almost as long as he's lived in town. He has served as the board's chair for years. "We just lost a gentleman who did a wonderful job for the conservation commission," said

Mathews. "Ed Pagoda was 88 years old, a veteran of the Battle of the Bulge in Belgium. Ed had to have his niece drive him to his next-to-last meeting, the month before he died." Has the troubled economy impacted Mathews' work? "Well," he answered, "it's slowed down a little bit. But I can remember things were pretty tough back in the 1990s, and I made it through." Mathews has maintained a construction supervisor's license since 1987. "In fact," he said, "the next big project I have is to rebuild a house originally built in 1830. I'm delighted that my son Cory, who's 22, will be working with me, and that we're working for a very nice young family. A lot of my friends do high-end work for wealthy people, which is great, but, you know, there's a lot of work to be

see **WOOD** page 12

PLACE YOUR BUSINESS CARD HERE FOR ONLY \$8.00 PER WEEK (12 WEEK MINIMUM). CALL 863-8666

Rau's Auto
 COMPLETE AUTO REPAIR
(413) 367-2475
 531 Turners Falls Rd. Montague
 24 hour emergency towing
 Best service licensed Mechanics

Diemand Farm Mormon Hollow Road, Wendell

Happy Holidays!
Peace and Joy to All
 Farmstand Hours: 7am-6pm
 Mon-Sat 6 a.m. - 6 p.m.
 Sunday 6 a.m. - 2 p.m.
 Call: 978-544-3806

Gerri Johnson
 CRB, CRS, GRI
 Seniors Real Estate Support

 Gerri Johnson & Associates REALTORS
 66 French King Highway
 Gill, MA 01376
 (413) 863-9736
 Fax (413) 863-9739
 EQUAL OPPORTUNITY
 REALTOR
 MLS


Carol's Beauty Nook
 29 G Street, Turners Falls
 Open Tue, Thurs, Fri
 Ann Bagnell & Carol Demers
 Gift Certificates Available **413-863-2888**

Good Dirt Pottery Studio
 Clay is Good Dirt
 38 Main Street, Montague
 413-367-0155
 www.gooddirtpottery.com


PETER WATERS
 HOUSE PAINTING
 Interior Exterior **978-544-6534** Wendell MA



MARY AZARIAN WOODBLOCK

BY LESLIE BROWN
MONTAGUE CITY -

*In the bleak midwinter
Frosty wind made moan,
Earth stood hard as iron
Water like a stone,
Snow had fallen, snow on snow
Snow on snow,
In the bleak midwinter
Long ago.*

- Christina Rossetti

When last week's ice storm pulled away, the frigid Canadian air poured down with Friday's full Cold Moon. Despite full sun afterwards, the next day's temperatures never left the twenties. For days many of us were left in the cold and the dark.

We don't need the calendar to tell us that the days continue to shorten. The end of day bird frenzy at the feeder finishes before four o'clock; the tiny chickadees, titmice, juncos and the occasional goldfinch

disappear into the warmth of the evergreen boughs. Only the cardinal is still here. He is the late-comer. The brilliance of his feather coat makes him leery of an audience. He and his mate stop briefly for a pre-slumber snack. Then they too disappear.

The shortest day, the Winter Solstice falls on December 21st. After that, the days lengthen as the sun gets higher in the sky. It's hard to feel this lengthening. This is the season of the long nights, the dark, and the cold. It is a season of mystery and superstition. The winter festivals over the ages grew out of the regret for the increasing cold and darkness and the human longing for the return of the light.

Such archeological sites as Stonehenge and Avebury in England and the Newgrange Passage Tomb in Ireland are oriented towards the solstice light. These incredible structures which represent unfathomable feats of construction in an age of few tools are now thought to be burial sites, the time of the body's darkest hour. The Newgrange Passage Tomb is lit

only by a single roof box over the entrance. The inside is illuminated for seventeen minutes on the morning of the winter solstice.

Many nations mark this season with a festival of light, celebrating a variety of religious and cultural connections all of which represent the New Year to come and the rebirth of the sun. The lighting of candles, torches and bonfires to encourage and welcome the new light come to us from traditions thousands of years old.

Long before our Christmas traditions, the Greeks and Romans brought evergreen boughs indoors in the bleak days of the winter. These trees which remained green through the cold of the winter were thought to have supernatural powers which would bring on the return of spring and the new verdant colors of the countryside.

You can bring the garden in this season with trimmings from evergreens or even a live tree to be replanted after the holiday season. Poinsettias in dark red, pink or white can bring the garden bloom indoors. Forcing some narcissus bulbs is easy. Place a few in a bowl either buried halfway up in dirt

or in small stones. Water and place in a bright and sunny spot. In a few weeks, they will sprout with tiny, intensely fragrant white blooms which will bring the spring with them. These hardy flowers will hold their fragrant beauty in a cool room out of the direct sunlight.

Locally the solstice sunrise and sunset will be observed at the UMASS, Amherst sunwheel at 7 am and 3:45 pm on December 21 and December 22. The sunwheel is located south of Alumni Stadium, just off Rocky Hill Rd.

For more information, call 413-545-4311 or look online at www.umass.edu/sunwheel.

The First Congregational Church on Silver Street is offering a solstice concert of life affirmation on Sunday, December 21st at 7pm.

Gather friends and family for caroling and the lighting of your tree. Enjoy the light of many candles or have a bonfire in the snow. Listen for the call of the owls. Watch for the

evening rise of the beauty of Venus in the sunset sky. Enjoy the hearty foods of the winter garden: root vegetables, soups of squash or potato and fresh or aged cider with strong local cheese. Hold the light against the darkness, warm yourself with love and watch for signs of spring.

Roasted Winter Vegetables

- Cut into small chunks: winter squash, onion, potato, carrot, Brussels sprouts. (Add red pepper and eggplant if desired).
 - Toss the vegetables with whole peeled cloves of garlic, fresh thyme and rosemary with some olive oil until all are coated.
 - Sprinkle with a couple of tablespoons of balsamic vinegar.
 - Place in an oiled pan and roast at 450 degrees, stirring frequently, until the vegetables are golden.
- Enjoy!

Acceptable Holiday Recycling Expands

BY AMY GOODWIN
GREENFIELD - During the holidays, the average American family throws away up to ten additional bags of trash. In today's 'pay-as-you-throw' world, those ten town trash bags would cost \$15 - \$30, as prices fluctuate by town. A large portion of this trash is generated from gift-wrap, boxes, tissue, packing materials, packaging and shopping bags.

This year, save money on town trash bags, save money for your town, and be kinder to the Earth by recycling and reducing your holiday waste.

The Springfield Materials Recycling Facility, which accepts recyclables from 78 communities in western Massachusetts, asks residents to keep the following recycling guidelines in mind. Gift-wrap is recyclable, but only if it does not contain foil, metallic inks, or glitter. Tissue paper of all colors is now acceptable as long as it does not contain glitter or metallic inks. Gift bags are recyclable, if they are made of

paper and they are free from glitter, wire, or metallic inks. Also recyclable are greeting cards (except those with foil, wire, glitter), envelopes (plastic windows OK), catalogs, paper shopping bags, corrugated cardboard boxes, and paperboard gift boxes.

When opening or wrapping presents, keep a paper grocery bag or recycling bin handy to collect mixed paper recyclables.

Please do not include the following items in your recycling mix: ribbons, bows, tinsel, bubble wrap, packing peanuts, polystyrene (Styrofoam), and plastic "blister pack" packaging. Clean, dry packing peanuts and bubble wrap are accepted for reuse at the UPS Store, 21 Mohawk Trail, Greenfield and at Simon's Stamps, 138 Main Street, Greenfield.

For more information, please contact: Franklin County Solid Waste District: (413) 772-2438, or via email: info@franklincountywastedistrict.org.

WOOD from page 11
done right here in Gill."

Over the years, Mathews has appreciated the benefit of working with his wife, Sue Kramer, and their daughter Phoebe, 28. "For one thing, my wife is a much better gardener than I am," laughed Mathews. "Trust me."

Despite his optimistic nature, Mathews is concerned about the future of local homebuilding. "Prefabricated modular homes and those built on speculation, rather than speculation, have taken over a lot of the market in Franklin County.

"Back in the 1980s there was a lot of housing built on speculation. Somebody would buy land, put a house on it, and sell it. Now that simply doesn't happen so much."



CLAUDIA WELLS PHOTO

Tony Mathews of Gill with one of the handcrafted tables he donated as a raffle prize to benefit the Gill Elementary School's Parent Teacher Organization. To purchase tickets and for more information contact the Gill School at 863-3255.

PLACE YOUR BUSINESS CARD HERE FOR ONLY \$8.00 PER WEEK (12 WEEK MINIMUM). CALL 863-8666

COMMITMENT TO EXCELLENCE

KUSTOM AUTOBODY
MA Reg #RS2066

48 Randall Road
Montague
Phone/413-863-3780

Mike Fuller, Owner

LOGOS & BRANDING
GRAPHIC DESIGN
ILLUSTRATION
WEB SITES
COPY WRITING
BUSINESS STRATEGY
INTERNET MARKETING
MISSION & VISION

H₂O
BOYSEN HODGSON

413 303 9193
www.h2-om.com

Antique Clocks
Bought & Sold

BOB PACY
WILL TRAVEL

(781) 438-8489
(508) 633-2552

NAWCC No. 0101315
STONEHAM, MA 02180



JESSICA HARMON ILLUSTRATION

BY FRED CICETTI
LEONIA, NJ - *Q. I have to go into the hospital for surgery soon. I'm more afraid of a staph infection than I am about the operation. Should I be concerned?*

Unfortunately, you should be very concerned, especially because of an antibiotic-resistant strain of staph that is on the rise. This version is called methicillin-resistant Staphylococcus aureus (MRSA).

Those who are at the highest risk are older adults and people with weakened immune systems. MRSA can be fatal.

The Centers for Disease Control reports that, in 1974, MRSA infections represented two percent of staph infections. In 1995, the percentage was up to 22. In 2004, 63 percent of staph infections were from MRSA.

A 2007 report from the Association for Professionals in Infection Control and Epidemiology estimated that 46 out of every 1,000 people hospitalized get MRSA.

Staph skin infections, including MRSA, usually begin with red bumps that look like pimples or insect bites. These can degenerate into deep, painful abscesses that require surgical draining. Sometimes the bacteria can also penetrate into the bones, surgical wounds, the bloodstream, heart valves and lungs.

Staph is found on the skin or

in the nose of about one-third of the population. If you have staph without illness, you are "colonized." You can spread staff to others if you're colonized. Staph bacteria are usually harmless unless they enter the body through a wound.

There are two categories of this infection: healthcare-associated MRSA (HA-MRSA), and community-associated MRSA (CA-MRSA). Most MRSA infections are healthcare-associated; they occur in facilities such as hospitals, nursing homes and dialysis centers. CA-MRSA skin infections spread where there is skin-to-skin contact and when personal items are shared. CA-MRSA became known in the 1990s.

A bit of history.

The bacterium known as staph was discovered in the 1880s. In the 1940s, antibiotics

such as penicillin were treating staph successfully. Misuse of antibiotics then helped staph to resist penicillin, so methicillin was introduced to counter the stronger staph.

In 1961, the first strains of MRSA were identified. MRSA is resistant to an entire class of penicillin-like antibiotics that includes penicillin, amoxicillin, oxacillin, methicillin, and others.

Staph has continued to evolve. In 2002, physicians documented the first staph resistant to the antibiotic vancomycin, which had been one of a handful of antibiotics of last resort for use against staph.

While antibiotics are a major weapon against staph, many infections can be treated by draining an abscess without prescribing medication.

To diagnose staph, a sample

is obtained from the infection site and sent to a laboratory for testing. It takes about 48 hours to get results. Newer tests can detect staph DNA in a matter of hours.

So, how can you protect yourself in the hospital? Here are some pointers:

- Ask all hospital staff to wash their hands or use an alcohol-based hand sanitizer before touching you.

- Wash your own hands frequently.

- Make sure that intravenous tubes and catheters are inserted under sterile conditions. The healthcare professional inserting tubes or catheters should wear a gown, gloves and mask. And, your skin should be sterilized beforehand.

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

BUDGET from pg 7

not and will not support a 2010 school assessment that is greater than the level set by the state this year, less any reduction in local or education aid in FY2010."

That motion passed with one vote in opposition, from Marje Levenson of the finance committee.

On the main article, moderator Ray Godin declared a two thirds majority of elected town meeting members had voted in the affirmative, after more than an hour of speechifying and passionate declamations.

Prior to the vote, Wulfson said, "The commissioner does

not feel this budget is sustainable. We will look for ways the district can reduce expenses and look at ways to collaborate with other districts. The governor has established a blue ribbon commission to look at the way our needs in education are outstripping the available resources. But we need to get through this school year."

In other matters, the meeting approved a series of articles presented by director of assessing Barbara Miller updating and liberalizing procedures for the elderly, widows, widowers, and children of deceased parents to access property tax deferments, rebated by the state.

Members also approved a plan presented by Miller and tax collector Patti Dion to enable the town to issue preliminary property tax bills to taxpayers on July 1st of each year. The bills will be "trued up" with the second bill, issued after the tax rate is set, usually in December. (For more information, call the tax collector's office at 863-3200 x 202.)

Finally, town meeting approved a motion allowing the selectboard to negotiate the sale of a small parcel of land near the Sawmill River in Montague Center to the Massachusetts Department of Fish and Game, but the members turned back a motion to give the selectboard

the power to negotiate the sale to Fish and Game of a 174 acre, landlocked parcel on Dry Hill, formerly owned by the Clapp family.

In exchange for the sale of the Clapp property, town meeting sought a written agreement with the Department of Fish and Game, and their Natural Heritage and Endangered Species Program, that these agencies would permit the town to develop an industrial park on the 100 acres of land on Millers Falls Road the town is seeking to buy from Western Mass Electric Company.

Town planner Dan Laroche said the habitat for species of

concern on the Millers Falls Road parcel was not the same as the habitat on Dry Hill, so Natural Heritage would not be likely to directly tie mitigation of the industrial park land to the sale of land on Dry Hill. "It's more nuanced than that," said Laroche. He said there were a number of moving pieces to the deal, including the fact the town does not presently own the Millers Falls Road parcel, and Natural Heritage can only negotiate habitat with an actual landowner.

Town meeting turned down the motion, 27 in favor, 41 against.



PLACE YOUR BUSINESS CARD HERE FOR ONLY \$8.00 PER WEEK (12 WEEK MINIMUM). CALL 863-8666

RISTORANTE Di Paolo
 FINE ITALIAN DINING
 Denise DiPaolo, *Owner*
 Hilton Dottin, *Chef*
 TEL 413-863-4441
 FAX 413-863-4421
 166 Avenue A
 Turners Falls, MA 01376
 WWW.RISTORANTEDIPAULO.COM

GREENFIELD IMPORTED CAR SALES
 Formerly LaBelle & Leitner
 AUDI • VW • VOLVO • BMW
 Large selection of diesel and all-wheel drive vehicles
 Locally Owned for 27 Years
 413-774-5517
 335 High St., Greenfield
 LALautosales.com

Negus & Taylor, Inc. Monuments
 People often come to see us because their parents and their grandparents did. We're proud to have that kind of loyalty, and we work hard to keep it.
 - Gary and Nancy Melen
 "The perfect remembrance"
 We engrave memories that last forever
 MAIN OFFICE 773-9552
 10 Mill Street, Greenfield, MA

RENAISSANCE PAINTING
 LICENSED, INSURED
 INTERIOR/EXTERIOR PAINTING, ALL PHASES • POWER WASHING
 BRIAN McCUE, PRESIDENT
 240 GREENFIELD ROAD • MONTAGUE, MA
 PHONE & FAX: 413-367-9896

The Gill Store & Tavern
 Now Serving
 Lunch and Dinner
 Wed - Sat 11 - 11
 Sunday Brunch
 9 a.m. - 2 p.m.
 Lunch and Dinner Specials Daily
 Seafood - Vegetarian - Local Beef
 Individual Grilled Pizzas and More!
 Full Bar with People's Pint Beer on Tap
 Bottled Beers, Complete Wine List,
 Daily Drink Specials
 Main Road Gill Center
 413-863-9006

PARTRIDGE-ZSCHAU, Incorporated Insurance
 25 Millers Falls Road, P.O. Box 312
 Turners Falls, MA 01376
 Tel. (413) 863-4331 (413) 773-5673
 www.pzinc.com

Renaissance Excavating
 COMPLETE SITE WORK
 • SEPTIC & DRAINAGE SYSTEMS • SAND, GRAVEL & LOAM
 MAIN ROAD, GILL
 DOUGLAS EDSON (413) 863-4462

Overwhelmed by stuff? Try Franklin County's Newest
IN-TOWN SELF STORAGE
 UPPER END OF WELLS STREET, GREENFIELD
 774-7775
 Easy in-town location
 Secure 24-hour access
 VARIETY OF SIZES PLENTY AVAILABLE
 OFFICE AT 50 CHAPMAN STREET, GREENFIELD, MA
 Contractors, Flea Marketers, Tradeshow Vendors and Artists encouraged to inquire

Ann Forslund REALTOR®
Prudential
 Prime Properties
 3.5 East Main Street, Orange, MA 01364
 Bus: 978-544-9000 Fax: 978-544-9099
 Cell: 413-422-8542 www.prudentialorange.com
 serving Franklin County & North Quabbin areas
 Offering A Fresh Start for Home and Life

ARTS & ENTERTAINMENT



JACK COUGHLIN ILLUSTRATION

Love Bomb, dance rock, 9:30 p.m.

At the Rendezvous, Turners Falls: Lonesome Brothers, 9 p.m., \$5 cover.

Deja Brew, Wendell: **Nexus**, harmonic eclectic alternative rock. 9 to 11 p.m.

Stand-up Comedy at Hooker-Dunham Theater & Gallery, Brattleboro, VT: Scamps Comedy Productions presents comedians, Chris Oake and Jon Rineman, 8 p.m. Info: (802) 254-9276 or www.hooker-dunham.org.

FRIDAY, DECEMBER 19th
A Bouquet of Music Healing Arts Concert Series - Holiday Concert with Clinical Notes: Baystate Franklin Medical Center's a cappella women's chorus, performs both holiday and secular music. Free, 12 to 12:45 p.m.

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

Deja Brew, Wendell: **Josh Levangie**, country folk guitar featuring Johnny Cash favorites, 9-11 p.m.

Between The Uprights, 2nd Street, Turners Falls: **Curly Fingers Dupree**, 7 p.m.

SATURDAY, DECEMBER 20th
At the Great Falls Discovery Center, Turners Falls: Create Seasonal Nature Crafts with Rachel Roberts. For all ages! 1 to 2 p.m.

An English and American Christmas Carol Concert with the **All Saints Choirs**, a polished touring ensemble of 40 singers, 7 to 8:30 p.m. in Memorial Hall, Shelburne Falls. www.allsaints.org.

Arcadia Players presents **Monteverdi, Vespers of 1610**. Monteverdi blends the newer baroque practice with the musical styles of the Renaissance to set the Psalms, Litany and Magnificat of the Vesper service, 7:30 p.m. at St. Mary's Catholic Church, 3 Elm Street, Northampton.

Route 63 Roadhouse, Millers Falls: **Reprobates**, rockin/blues dance party Roadhouse Holiday party, 9:30

THE LADY KILLIGREW:
still proudly serving
BROWN RICE SALAD

440 Greenfield Rd, Montague MA
7 Days / 8am - 11pm (at least)
(413)367-9666



The Lonsome Brothers at the Rendezvous Saturday, December 27th at 9 p.m.

p.m.
At the Rendezvous, Turners Falls: **ROCKIT QUEER** (dance party) \$3.

SUNDAY, DECEMBER 21st
Solstice services with **Eventide** choir, an all-volunteer gathering of singers whose sole mission is to provide songs of hope and healing for the terminally ill, their caregivers, and for life-affirming public events. **Eventide** sings at the **Longest Night Service** at 7 p.m. at the First Congregational Church, Greenfield. **Longest Night Service** provides a sacred, reflective space for people living through dark and difficult times, open to all.

At the Rendezvous, Turners Falls: Voo Caroling night! 7 p.m.

MONDAY, DECEMBER 22nd
Evening Sing-A-Long, Montague Center Library. Children's Librarian, Linda Hickman, plays guitar and banjo and performs a variety of children's music. 6:30 p.m. Info: Carnegie Library 863-3214 or Montague Center Library, 367-2852.

TUESDAY, DECEMBER 23rd
Route 63 Roadhouse, Millers Falls: Texas Holdem League, 7:30 p.m.

WEDNESDAY, DECEMBER 24th
Carols & Candles: Christmas Eve Service at First Congregational Church of Montague, Montague Center. Sing the familiar carols and hear the Christmas Story, 7 to 8 p.m.

FRIDAY, DECEMBER 26th
Route 63 Roadhouse, Millers Falls: **Evenspeak**, classic & southern rock, 9:30 p.m.

At the Rendezvous, Turners Falls: Allen Hudson & The Epics, singer-songwriter, rock! No cover.

Deja Brew, Wendell: Celtic Music Night with Kevin Skroupa and Mario Cote, 9 to 11 p.m.

SATURDAY, DECEMBER 27th
Route 63 Roadhouse, Millers Falls:

Great Falls Discovery Center, Turners Falls: **Birdsong and Coffee, A Wake-Up Call**. 1 to 2:30 p.m. Connection between coffee farmers, birds and ourselves? View 50-minute documentary on the issues and concerns facing South American communities regarding the second most traded commodity in the world - Coffee! Discussion follow.ing.

SUNDAY, DECEMBER 28th
New Year's **FAMILY DANCE**, 4-6 p.m. at the Montague Grange, Montague Center. Family-style contra dancing with caller David Kaynor and friends. Simple contras, circle dances, and singing games with easy instruction for beginners. \$4/person or \$10-15/family, includes a light snack. Last Sunday of each month. Info: (413) 367-9608.

At the Rendezvous, Turners Falls: Cabaret de Rendee Voo (open mic) 8 p.m., free.

Deja Brew, Wendell: **Moonstruck**, acoustic duo. 8 to -10 p.m.

MONDAY, DECEMBER 29TH
Deja Brew, Wendell: **All Small Caps**, A Night of Spoken Word. Open mic starts at 7 p.m. Guest Readers at 8 p.m. Special Poetry night menu.

WEDNESDAY, DECEMBER 31st
Route 63 Roadhouse, Millers Falls: New Years Eve Party! **Heroes**, rock & roll, 9 p.m.

At the Rendezvous, Turners Falls: New Years Eve bash with apps, champagne toast. Lisa Davol & Falltown String Band and DJ Tommy Toboggan. 7 p.m. to 2 a.m. \$15.

New Years at St. Kaz: New Year's Dinner, entertainment by Tony Rarus. Presented by Our Lady of Peace Church, held at St. Kaz Hall, Turners Falls. \$17. No tickets at the door. Begins 5:15 p.m. Call for reservations.: (413) 863-2585.

New Year's Eve Comedy at the Shea Theater, Turners Falls. Tickets: \$20, 8 p.m. to 12 a.m. (413) 863-2281.

THROUGH JANUARY 31st
On display in the Great Hall of the Great Falls Discovery Center, Turners Falls: Landscapes and Nature Art exhibit by Thomas L. Stratford. Regular Hours are Friday and Saturday, 10 a.m. - 4 p.m.

BEGINNING SATURDAY, JAN. 17th
Hallmark Museum of Contemporary Photography, Turners Falls. On display in Gallery 85: Colin Finlay. Artist Reception at HMCP, Avenue A, 1 to 5 p.m. Artist Talk in the auditorium at Hallmark Institute of Photography, 27 Industrial Boulevard, 7:30 p.m.

Tickets on sale now!

New Year's Eve Comedy at the Shea

The hilarious Jennifer Myszkowski hosts another evening of great comedy with

Rich Gustus
Sean Sullivan
Chrissy Kelleher
John Rineman

Jennifer Myszkowski

The Shea Theater

71 Avenue A, Turners Falls
Showtime 8 p.m., Doors open at 6:30 p.m.
Beer & Wine sold in the lobby before the show & at intermission

Tickets \$20 at World Eye Bookshop, at the box office on show night (if space is available) or at www.SheaComedy.com

The Brick House Community Center presents three bands

Fashion People
Strizhi of Worcester
The Easter Sundaes
of New York

Saturday, December 19th, 7 p.m.
24 Third Street, Turners Falls

PLUS: A short film by Jon Culliton of Greenfield
Cover charge: \$5. For info call the center at 413-863-9559

GREENFIELD GARDEN CINEMAS
Main St. Greenfield, MA
413-774-4881
www.gardencinemas.net

Showtimes for
Friday, Dec. 19th - Wednesday, Dec. 24th

1. **BOLT**
DAILY 6:30 9:00 PG
MATINEE DAILY 12:00 3:00

2. **THE TALE OF DESPEREAUX**
DAILY 6:30 9:00 G DTS sound
MATINEE DAILY 12:00 3:30

3. **AUSTRALIA**
DAILY 7:10 R
MATINEE DAILY 12:15 3:15

4. **FOUR CHRISTMASSES** PG13
DAILY 6:40 9:20
MATINEE DAILY 12:15 3:15

5. **TWILIGHT**
DAILY 6:40 9:20 PG13
MATINEE DAILY 12:15 3:15

6. **YES MAN** PG13 DTS sound
DAILY 7:00 9:30
MATINEE DAILY 12:30 3:30

7. **DAY THE EARTH STOOD STILL**
DAILY 7:00 9:30 DTS sound
FRI, SAT, SUN 12:30 3:30 PG13

Draft Beer **Great Food**
Fine Wine

Friday, 12/19, 9 - 11 p.m.
Johnny Cash favorites with **Josh Levangie**

Friday, 12/26, 9 - 11 p.m.
Celtic Music Night:
Kevin Skroupa & Mario Cote

Saturday, 12/27, 9 - 11 p.m.
Harmonic Eclectic Rock: **Nexus**

978-544-BREW
57A Lockes Village Road
Next to the Wendell Country Store

The Rendezvous

WE HAVE GIFT CARDS!

GREAT FOOD, 12 HOURS A DAY, 13 ON WEEKENDS!

THURS: 12/18 | 8:00PM | FREE
Lisa Davol and Steve Alves Holiday Song Night

SAT: 12/20 | 10:00 PM | \$3
ROCKIT QUEER (the dance party!)

SUN: 12/21 | 7:00 PM | FREE
Voo Caroling night! Come deck our halls!

----- **WE WILL BE CLOSED 12/24 & 12/25** -----

LUNCH + BRUNCH!!
FREE WiFi - Always!

78 THIRD STREET
TURNERS FALLS, MA
RENDEZVOUSTFMA.COM
TEL: 413-863-2866

PLACE YOUR BUSINESS CARD HERE FOR ONLY \$8.00 PER WEEK (12 WEEK MINIMUM). CALL 863-8666

UPINNGIL

411 Main Road
Gill, MA 01354
413-863-2297

Farm store open daily, 8 - 7.
Fresh milk, farmstead cheeses, eggs, and butter.
Also selling Gill trash stickers and the Montague Reporter.
Pick-your-own fruit and farm stand vegetables seasonally.

HANDYMAN FOR HIRE

Home Repairs & Weatherization

TODD MULLER
978-544-7040
"One Call Does It All!"

Serving the entire
Montague Reporter
readership area

HIC# 149347

CRUISE & TRAVEL COMPANY

30 Montague St.
TURNERS FALLS

413-863-3143 • 888-763-3443
cruise.travel@verizon.net



West Along the River

The Kitchen at Christmastime

BY DAVID BRULE

MILLERS FALLS - When the days get shorter and darker, and the calendar tells you there are just a handful of days left in the year, the kitchen in most houses takes on a special importance. But when, like us, you have chosen to live in your great-grandparents' house, there's more than just cooking that goes on in the kitchen. There's the weight of history and tradition tossed into the bargain.

Three women have been in charge of this kitchen over the past 130 years. There's great-grandmother Elizabeth, and grandmother Hannah, who split the first 100 years between them, and now my own Monique has taken over for the last 35. None of the generations of menfolk, by the way, have ever done much in the way of cooking, and I'm no exception to the tradition. I'm a terrible cook, although I do like to eat! I'm more in charge of the parallel dimension of this homestead kitchen, as you will soon see.

Over the years, the earlier generations of males in the house brought home venison and rabbit, partridge and woodcock, trout and bullheads to the kitchen for the women to fix up. As for me, I bring home the groceries, having no inclination nor need to spend time in the woods and fields blasting away at wild creatures. And that's that.

Our house was new in the 1870s, and it's apparent that it was built up around the kitchen, with function in mind. It's a bright place, facing south, southeast with two walls of windows that bring in both sunlight and moonlight. In December, and especially if there's snow, the Cold Moon lights up the room well enough so that you could read a newspaper by moonlight.

Invariably, guests arriving here have always been channeled into the kitchen by any one of the three doors that lead to the

heart of the house, where the heat and light are, where the aroma of cooking roasts and baking pies lead. One of the other doors leads to the parlor, open now, but which was for most of the house's existence almost always closed except for occasional social gatherings, oftentimes wakes or funerals.

Most deceased family members went from the parlor to the cemetery. Also, there's a small room off the kitchen usually reserved for birthing, being sick, or dying. After the dying part, the next stop was the parlor, and so on. So, of the three rooms, this kitchen has always been the source of heat, light, food and life.

The three women who have run the kitchen over their long reigns have had their challenges, especially at Christmastime. Like trying to keep dishes and platters moving from stove to kitchen table among 20-25 family members busy chatting and drinking.

Grandmother Hannah had her hands full because when she was in charge the family had grown, and all her children had had children and we all went over the river and through the woods for Christmas dinner. There were so many of us that we had to eat in shifts at the kitchen table.

The experiment with putting some of us to eat at a flimsy folding card table in the parlor didn't work out. Imagine dealing with rambunctious and over-excited grandchildren plus their noisy new toys, pop-guns and cap pistols, crying dolls and windup trucks with sirens, plus platters of food eventually winding up on the parlor rug.

In those days, first served were the fathers, mothers, uncles and aunts who had just gotten off work, or who were headed for work. The tool shop and the paper mill didn't shut down

for the 25th. Aunt June had to report to her nurse's duty at the Farren also, so those on shifts had priority.

Of course, the whiskey and beer for chasers were the workingman's drink of choice, before, during and after the meal, so that once the first shift of adults had been served, a sort of lovely fatigue set in that caused the uncles (Johnny and George) to feel a need for some quiet time to recuperate before going back to the factory. They made their way to the room off the kitchen to catch a snooze and digest.

Then it was the youngsters' turn at the table, and our chance to fill up on turkey, stuffing, and cranberry sauce amid the clatter of dishes being washed and refilled for us, our noisy chatter, breaking toys, and the adults' wreaths of cigarette smoke.

The kitchen throughout its most early days had the simplest of facilities: the sink, the stove, the refrigerator. Originally the sink hosted the pump, which drew water up from the well in the cellar. Aunt Pete told many a story of an electrical charge that followed the water line up the pump during a thunderstorm and once reputedly knocked one of the ancestors across the floor!

I stay away from that sink in a storm to this day, even though the hand pump is long gone. The stove and its oven have undergone multiple incarnations. When Lizzie was in charge in the 1880s, it was a wood stove, long since departed from family memory. Later it became a coal stove where my mother and her brothers and sisters warmed their feet after the cold walk home from school. That was replaced by a gas stove.

Mention the gas stove and up pops the image of my uncle Sammy Semaski, driving down our street in his big red Mackin's truck in the swirling snow. Sam delivered gas for the stove and fuel oil to this house, making sure grandparents Abe and Hannah were always well supplied. He was a jovial man, probably the best-natured man in

Millers Falls. He was one of those big round uncles you sometimes have, always a big smile and a gentle laugh that only certain Polish can have. His face creased all over when that smile came on, his eyes crinkled in laughter. It's nice to think of him this Christmastime.

By the way, that gas version of the stove was replaced when we took over. We installed a big electric stove inherited from grand-uncle Doug Smith, the one he had bought built to last in the early 50s. It did indeed make it to the middle 90s, when we once again replaced it with a more modern version, sadly not at all built to last. Or at least it did, until one day over the warrantee.

We twinned the electric stove with a restored Glenwood C wood cook stove, and the cycle from Lizzie to now was complete: we have both electric and wood-burning stoves these days.

So as I was saying, when you inherit an old family house, you get more than just the walls. Stories, histories and spirits of past Christmases crowd into the old kitchen and it's my job to keep track of them.

You never know who's going to turn up from those old Christmases unannounced, maybe cigar-smoking smooth talking Joe Conway turns up, with a good deal on a newer version of a life insurance policy, or maybe fire insurance, or some such.

Maybe Father Mac makes his way to the light, eager to trade jokes with our grandfather Abe, who himself always puts in an appearance on Christmas Eve, his face beaming, glowing and flushed from the Christmas cheer he'd been partaking of at the Tool Shop party. Unnamed Kerry Irish relatives of Hannah show up, on the way back to Ireland and tired of sleeping out in the barn.

Then there's the smiling young man I've only heard about; he was before my time. His name was Rudy, and he came of age just when Gene

Autry began singing about that Red-nosed Reindeer of the same name. The story goes that my mother and her sisters teased him about the nose and the song until he blushed.

He was a young Marine then, at Christmas, soon gone off to fight at faraway Bougainville in the Pacific, never to return except in the memory of an old photograph and of course, that song.

Even Cousin Pat may come down from tending bar at the Red Lantern up the street. He brings hilarious, infectious laughter, with that tragic hint of lonesome Hank Williams honky-tonk hanging in the air around him. It gets crowded when all these people start turning up, as they do, once a year.

Legend has it that at midnight of Christmas Eve, the animals have briefly the power to speak, but I'd say after spending an hour in the chicken coop once or twice with our little boy waiting to hear what Napoleon the rooster had to say, it's more likely that you'll be visited by the memories of old friends and long gone relatives who turn up for their yearly hour of remembrance. So, like me, I suggest you always make room for them, and keep an open mind, because they'll show up for sure. Then again, this is just what I believe, and you can believe what you want.

But to be sure, at Christmas when we all get together, the immediate family and the extended family, we always have a toast to the health of all of us and to the memory of all who came before, and sometimes they're actually there with us, too! It can get crowded in that small room.

You can see what I mean about old houses and Christmas memories. You make room for everyone, you set a place for everyone, because it's once a year, and you never know who's going to show up in the kitchen.

HIGHLIGHTS FROM THE MONTAGUE POLICE LOG

Vandalism On Taylor Hill Road

Wednesday, 12/10

11:26 a.m. Report of unwanted person at a Third Street address. Subject removed to hospital.

3:35 p.m. Report of unwanted person at a Fourth Street address. Services rendered.

Thursday, 12/11

12:05 a.m. Officer observed suspicious vehicle at Old Williams Garage on Second Street. Investigated.

2:05 a.m. Officer observed suspicious vehicle at Hallmark Institute of Photography, Millers Falls Road. Investigated.

8:05 p.m. Report of neighbor disturbance at a Park Street address. Investigated.

Friday, 12/12

12:33 a.m. Report of loud noise disturbance in the alley way behind a Second Street address. Investigated.

Saturday, 12/13

9:33 a.m. Report of vandalism at a Taylor Hill Road address. Investigated.

9:47 a.m. Report of accident with property damage at Scotty's Convenience Store, Unity Street.

4:52 p.m. Report of hit and run accident at a Seventh Street address.

5:26 p.m. Following a traffic stop, arrested [redacted] on a straight warrant.

9:59 p.m. Report of vandalism at a Taylor Hill Road address.

Sunday, 12/14

1:40 a.m. Request for person well being check at a Fifth Street address. Arrested [redacted] on a default warrant.

12:27 p.m. Report of accident with property damage at Avenue A and Third Street. Citation issued.

6:57 p.m. Report of burglary / breaking and entering at a Montague City Road address. Investigated.

11:40 p.m. Report of domestic disturbance at an Avenue A address. Investigated. Peace restored.

Monday, 12/15

12:55 a.m. Following a traffic stop, arrested [redacted]. Charged with unlicensed operation of a motor vehicle, failure to wear a seat belt and no inspection sticker.

MATTIE'S PLACE OF IRVING
GRINDERS, PIZZAS, & A WHOLE LOT MORE

Full menu available | Dine In, Take Out, Free Delivery
(413)423-3032 Full Bar Available

French King Entertainment Center | 55 French King Highway
Sun - Thurs: 10am - 10pm | Fri and Sat: 10am - midnight