



THE GILL TAVERN

Country Style Dining

Page 8



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THE VOICE OF THE VILLAGES

DECEMBER 2, 2010

BY DAVID DETMOLD

TURNERS FALLS - Pigeons dive bombed the consultants from the Urban Land Institute who climbed the handsomely beveled wooden steps to the fifth floor of the Strathmore Mill on Wednesday. Loose panes of glass rattled in decaying sash; tatters of old plastic sheeting blew in the wind in vacant window frames. The visitors stepped around piles of guano, and waste matter left behind by larger intruders.

"You have squatters here?" one man asked, and town officials on the tour admitted that was a possibility.

Sheetrock partitions scrawled with graffiti speak of the era in the late 90s when the mill enjoyed a brief revival, and 36 industrial tenants and artists jockeyed for cheap heated space. Holes gape in some ceilings; piles of specious debris and rotten framing material huddle in random corners; sheets of plywood and yellow warning tape ward passersby from voids that yawn at unexpected intervals in the scarred old hardwood floors.

"Structurally, the buildings are pretty good," said

Northampton architect Tris Metcalfe cheerily.

Metcalfe knows the strength of the mill's massive underpinnings, brick arches, pillared floors, and supporting beams intimately, after working up plans for converting the mill to a video school and production center with myriad associated restaurants and nightclubs for previous mill owner John Ancil.

"Some repairs will be needed here and there," he allowed.

Near the loading dock, a harlequin array of odds and ends of old paper rolls in carnival colors filled one giant storeroom, like the discarded bolts from some far flung Mardi Gras krewe, the last reminders of Strathmore's incarnation under recycled paper magnate and property tax deadbeat Jerry Jones at the beginning of this century.

Asbestos covered pipes hung from the ceilings on one floor. In the old courtyard, the asbestos tainted rubble of Building #10, destroyed by arson fire in 2007, lay soaking in the morning drizzle. Paint, some of it lead-based, flaked and peeled from the brick

see **STRATHMORE** pg 11

A Crash Course in Redeveloping the Strathmore Mill



Brian Connors, deputy director of economic development for the city of Springfield, joined real estate professionals from the Urban Land Institute on Wednesday to offer an overview of marketing strategy for the Strathmore Mill.

Health Board Rejects Request for Non-Electric Apartment

BY KATIE NOLAN

WENDELL - A bid for simple living just got more complicated on Tuesday, when the Wendell board of health voted unanimously not to sign the building permit for Jonathan and Susan von Ranson's proposed non-electric low-carbon-footprint apartment.

Board chair Lonny Ricketts remarked, "It comes down to, we have to go by the regulations."

The von Ransons had originally presented their 'simple living' proposal at the board's July 13th meeting. At the November 9th meeting, county health agent Elizabeth Swedberg provided Code of Massachusetts regulation citations regarding the need for electricity and running water, while the von Ransons presented a letter detailing how they would provide the necessities of potable water, hot water, lighting,

and safe sanitation without electricity.

At the November 9th meeting, Ricketts would not allow any other members of the public to speak, citing the state's open meeting law. Ricketts interpreted the law to mean only those people specifically listed on a posted agenda are allowed to speak at a public meeting.

Before the meeting on November 30th was officially called to order, Ricketts was asked why the meeting agenda was not available at the official posting site at the town office building on Monday or Tuesday, as required. Ricketts said the meeting agenda had been posted and the meeting was being held in accordance with the law. Board clerk Mary Gifford explained she had posted the agenda on Friday, November 26th, see **REJECTS** pg 5

Conservation Development Bylaw Would Allow for Growth, Preserve Working Landscape

BY DAVID DETMOLD

WENDELL - Only three people turned out for a public hearing on a bylaw change that would put the town of Wendell in the forefront of land use planning in the Commonwealth.

On Tuesday, November 16th, three residents appeared at the hearing in front of the planning board for the proposed conservation development bylaw. The residents appeared to favor the proposal, which would allow the town to slow the pace of residential sprawl and encourage the conservation of open land and the working landscape of Wendell.

To accomplish these ends, the bylaw, if approved by a two thirds vote of town meeting within the next six months, would limit the right of residents to subdivide housing lots on acreage with suffi-

cient acreage and road frontage to meet 'approval not required' (ANR) requirements. Residents would be limited to one building permit for a primary dwelling every seven years for such lots. At the same time, the bylaw change would encourage residents seeking to subdivide and create new building lots on their land, to do so by using the conservation development approach, which would allow for more tightly clustered house lots, with the possibility of common driveways, provided that at least 75% of the undivided land is preserved for open space.

The land reserved for open space may be farmed or forested, opened for public recreational use or trails, or may simply preserve the natural or historic features of the acreage, and enhance wildlife corridors see **GROWTH** pg 12

A Job Description for Community Food Reliance

BY DAVID DETMOLD

WENDELL - "Wendell is cold, ledge-y, it has bad soil, it's far from markets," noted Laughing Dog Farm's Daniel Botkin, a former resident who moved to Gill to farm.

"I always thought Wendell was edgy, not ledge-y," countered Nikki Burton, of Petersham's Sweet Water Farm, another of the growers who showed up Monday night to confer with the local food subcommittee of the Wendell energy committee.

At the beginning of October, special town meeting voters narrowly approved spending \$5,000 to fund the first year of a two year pilot program to allow the energy committee to hire a local food coordinator, to help connect growers with consumers and boost the town's food self reliance.

The energy committee argued that Wendell, like virtually all communities in

the Northeast, is vulnerably placed at the end of a long, carbon fuel intensive food pipeline, and it would be in the town's best interest to decrease dependency on food trucked in from far away.

Monday's meeting at the town office building provided the first opportunity for growers and members of the subcommittee on local food to begin sketching out the dimensions of what a local food program in Wendell might look like.

"I keep dreaming of Maple Valley Kitchen," said Nina Keller, who works a family farm on Mormon Hollow Road. Keller was referring to the idle commercial kitchen at the former Maple Valley School on Farley Road, which she envisioned as an ideal place for growers in the community to work together to can, pickle and preserve the excess produce see **RELIANCE** pg 13

PET OF THE WEEK

Cute Lil' Devil



Diabla

I am Diabla, a one-year-old short hair female cat in need of a good home. I have experience with adults and young children. I also lived with another cat and we got along very well. I'm a very vocal, active, and playful girl. Won't you come on out to visit me? I bet we will be a great match! To find out more about adopting me, please contact the Dakin Pioneer Valley Humane Society at 413-548-9898 or via email: info@dpvhs.org.

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\$20 for 1/2 Year

CARNEGIE LIBRARY NEWS

Make Gingerbread Houses

BY LINDA HICKMAN
TURNERS FALLS - On Saturday, December 11th, at 10:30 a.m., children of all ages and their families are invited to come make easy gingerbread

houses at the Carnegie Library with Ruth O'Mara. Candy, graham crackers and icing will be provided for this fun free program. For more information, call 863-3214.

LEVERETT LIBRARY NEWS

Evening Yoga Offered

The Leverett recreation commission offers evening yoga at the Leverett Public Library on Thursdays, January 6th through March 31st, from 6:00 to 7:15

p.m. Some scholarships may be available.

For more details please contact Lisa Enzer at enzer@earthlink.net or call (413) 367-2658.

NEW SALEM LIBRARY NEWS

Solstice Celebration In Story and Crafts

The New Salem Public Library continues its *Library for All Seasons* by celebrating the winter solstice with Storytelling and Crafts on Saturdays at 10:30 a.m. with Laura Rojo MacLeod.

This week's story and craft will feature Rhineland.

Winter Solstice Celebration on is on Tuesday, December 21st at 5:00 p.m.

WENDELL LIBRARY NEWS

Monthly Science Fiction and Horror Film

The Nightmare Before Christmas is showing at the Wendell Free Library on Saturday, December 4th at 7:30 p.m. Free Admission (but seating is limited). Written by Tim Burton, this story follows Jack the Pumpkin King, who is

revered by the ghosts and ghouls of Halloween Town. But Jack is bored with the same old Halloween routine. When he finds a doorway to Christmas Town, Jack hatches a plan to lead Christmas this year, but can he pull it off? Rated PG.

SHINE Presentation at Leverett Town Hall

The Leverett council on aging announces an upcoming SHINE (Serving Health Information Needs of Elders) presentation for people enrolled in Medicare.

Lorraine York-Edberg, program director for the Western Regional SHINE and Daniel Moraski, public affairs specialist from the Social Security Administration, will speak on Friday, December 10th at 1:15 p.m. at the Leverett Town Hall. York-Edberg will discuss updates and important information for people enrolled in Medicare prescription drug plans and current information regarding health care reform.

Moraski will review updated information from the Social Security Administration and the subsidy guidelines for extra help with the Medicare prescription drug program benefit.

Many seniors qualify for and could benefit from extra help through Medicare. York-Edberg and Moraski will be available after the presentation to assist with one-on-one counseling and application assistance if needed.

Please call the council on aging at (413) 548-1022 extension 5, or email coa@levertt.ma.us if you have questions.

Leave your contact information so someone can return your call.

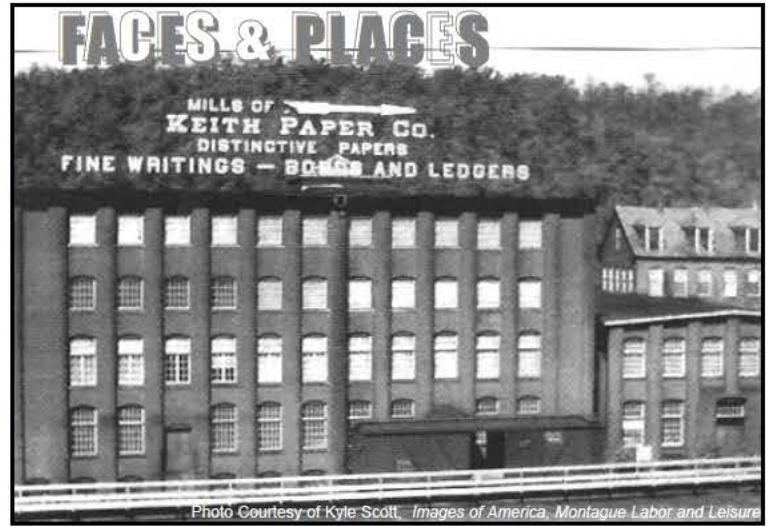
SENIOR CENTER ACTIVITIES – December 6th - December 10th

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

Monday, December 6th
10:00 a.m. Senior Aerobics
10:45 a.m. Chair Exercise
1:00 p.m. Knitting Circle
Tuesday, December 7th
9:00 a.m. Walking Group
10:30 a.m. Yoga
No lunch served today.

1:00 p.m. Canasta
Wednesday, December 8th
9:00 a.m. Foot clinic by appointment
10:00 a.m. Aerobics
11:15 a.m. Friends' Meeting
12:45 p.m. Bingo
Thursday, December 9th
9:00 a.m. Tai Chi
10:00 a.m. Coffee & Conversation
1:00 p.m. Pitch
Friday, December 10th
10:00 a.m. Senior Aerobics
10:45 a.m. Chair Exercise
1:00 p.m. Scrabble
1:00 p.m. Writing Group

ERVING Senior Center, 18 Pleasant St., Ervingside (Old Center School, 1st Floor), is open Monday through Friday from 8:30 a.m. to 2:30 p.m. for activities and congregating meals. For info and reservations, call Polly Kiely, Senior Center Director, at (413) 423-3308. Mealsite Manager is Jim Saracino. Lunch is daily at 11:30 a.m., with reservations 24



Prior to the 1950s, when the Keith Paper Company was purchased by Strathmore, a subsidiary of International Paper Co., the mill featured this sign above Building #11. Building #10, located on the lower right of the photo, was destroyed in an arson fire on Memorial Day weekend, 2007. When the town replaced the roof on Building #1 (right, rear) after that fire, framing for the original dormers was preserved, in case historic reconstruction allows for their replacement in the future.

Historic Bridge Facts

PROVIDED BY ED GREGORY, OF GREENFIELD - from the Gill-Montague Bridge dedication booklet, published for the ribbon cutting ceremonies that took place on Saturday, September 10th, 1938.

- Weight of the paint used on the Gill-Montague Bridge: 1,000,000 pounds.
 - There were 116,237 rivets used to fuse the pre-fabricated steelwork.
- More bridge facts next week!

Blood Drive

The Red Cross will hold a blood drive at the Montague public safety complex community room, 180 Turnpike Road, Turners Falls, on Thursday, December 9th, from 1 to 6 p.m.

To schedule appointments please call (800) 922-4376. Walk-ins welcome.

CORRECTION

Last week in the arts and entertainment calendar, the upcoming Gill-Montague Education Fund's Christmas Concert 'Home for the Holidays' was inadvertently listed on the wrong date. The concert, with 'the Singing Trooper', Sergeant Dan Clark, and his wife Mary Colarusso, joined by TFHS's Rhapsody Blue will take place this Sunday, December 5th at 2:30.

hours in advance. Transportation can be provided for meals, shopping, or medical necessity. Please call the Senior Center at (413) 423-3308 to find out when the next flu clinic will be held.

Monday, December 6th
9:00 a.m. Tai Chi
10:00 a.m. Osteo-Exercise
12:00 p.m. Pitch
Tuesday, December 7th
8:45 a.m. Chair Aerobics
12:30 p.m. Painting
Wednesday, December 8th
8:45 a.m. Line Dancing/Zumba
12:00 p.m. Bingo
Thursday, December 9th
8:45 a.m. Aerobics
Friday, December 10th
9:00 a.m. Bowling
11:30 a.m. Lunch - Call the center for details

WENDELL Senior Center is located at 2 Lockes Village Road. Call Nancy Spittle, 978-544-6760 for hours and upcoming programs. Call the Center if you need a ride.

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JESSICA HARMON ILLUSTRATION

Local Briefs

COMPILED BY DON CLEGG - The Montague Community Band's annual holiday concert will take place on Saturday, December 4th, starting at 7:30 p.m. at the First Congregational Church, 148 L Street, in Turners Falls. After the concert stick around for snacks and conversation in the church's downtown meeting room.

The Greenfield Community College student veterans network has chosen the Marine Toys for Tots foundation as a charitable cause this holiday season. The toys, books and other gifts they will collect must be new and unwrapped. Please feel free to contribute to the Toys for Tots drive through Wednesday, December 15th, at drop off locations at Greenfield Community College, outside the College Store, and at GCC Downtown Center Campus, 270 Main Street, or at the Recover Project, 68 Federal Street, in Greenfield. Toys for Tots can be dropped off at many local post offices.

The St. Nicholas Day Bazaar will be held at Our Lady of Czestochowa Church, at 84 K Street in Turners Falls, on Saturday, December 4th, from 9:00 a.m. to 1:00 p.m. The bazaar will feature arts and crafts, Polish food, religious goods, and a Chinese auction.

The Literacy Project in Greenfield is offering a one-day event to allow people 16 years and older who want to earn their GED a chance to see how they would score. Individuals may take the official practice GED test on Thursday, December 9th at the Literacy Project, 15 Bank Row in Greenfield, between the hours of 1:00 p.m. and 6:00 p.m. Transition counselors will be on hand to discuss payment

options for the actual GED test, tutoring possibilities and next steps.

The third annual Tree Lighting ceremony sponsored by the Montague Business Association will be held at Peskeompskut Park in Turners Falls on Sunday, December 5th, from 3:00 p.m. to 5:00 p.m. Come and enjoy the festivities, snacks and cider, and don't forget to bring a decoration for the tree!

Boy Scout Troop 6 will sell holiday wreaths on Sunday, December 5th, from 9:00 a.m. to 1:00 p.m. at Food City in Turners Falls.

December Soup and Games Night on Monday, December 6th, from 5:00 p.m. to 8:00 p.m. at the Hope and Olive Restaurant, 44 Hope Street in Greenfield will benefit Greenfield's holiday lighting program.

Lisa's Handcrafted Soap, 100 Third Street, in Turners Falls will hold their long-anticipated grand opening on Saturday, December 11th, from 9:00 a.m. until 6:00 p.m. Stop by and enjoy free candle and soap making for children, along with free samples and a basket raffle.

The Baystate Health community blood drive will be on Tuesday, December 7th, from 10 a.m. to 4 p.m. The blood donor mobile will be stationed in Baystate Franklin Medical Center's 48 Sanderson Street parking lot in Greenfield. The holidays are always a time to donate food, clothes and toys, but sometimes the gift of life is just as important, yet often forgotten during this busy season.

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

Uranio 238 Film and Presentation in Northampton

A comprehensive educational program about the devastating ecological and public health effects of the US Military's use of illegal Depleted Uranium will be presented at First Churches, Lyman Hall, 129 Main Street, Northampton, on December 6th, 7:00 p.m.

The program will feature a 30-minute documentary film,

Uranio 238, directed by Pablo Ortega and narrated by Isabel MacDonald (with Spanish subtitles) produced by the Quaker Peace Center of San Jose, Costa Rica.

Following the film, Iraq Veteran from Columbia, South Carolina, Herbert Reed will give testimony to his struggle with the symptoms of Depleted

Uranium poisoning and lack of accurate diagnosis and treatment upon return. Gretel Munroe, of Medford, MA, long time DU activist with the International Coalition to Ban Uranium Weapons (ICBUW-www.banuraniumweapons.org) will discuss health and environmental effects of depleted uranium weapons. Beth Adams, Leverett peace and environmental activist, will provide a brief overview of how the use of Uranium Weapons pollutes the planet. A community discussion and action ideas will follow.

The program is jointly sponsored by: the American Friends Service Committee of Western Massachusetts, Traprock Center for Peace and Justice, the Alliance for Peace and Justice, Western Massachusetts Code Pink and the Nuclear-free Future Coalition of Western Massachusetts, and more.

Vigil Friday for Victims of Domestic Violence

NELCWIT, in partnership with the Moving Forward program, will hold a candlelight vigil in response to Sunday's domestic violence murder-suicide.

Fifty-year old Karen Preston died of multiple gun shot wounds at her Devens Street apartment in Greenfield on Sunday. Her partner, 46-year old Anthony Wallace, died of a single gunshot wound. Police are

considering the incident a murder-suicide.

The vigil is on Friday, December 3rd, 4:30 to 5:30 p.m., Court Square (the intersection of Main and Federal Streets), Greenfield.

Everyone is welcome. The vigil will include an opportunity for those present to share thoughts and feelings. For more information, call NELCWIT, (413) 772-0871.

Transition Town Model - an Approach to Dramatically Changing Times

Transition Towns is a fast growing global movement of communities tackling the triple challenge of peak oil, economic decline, and environmental deterioration with creative local solutions.

On Monday, December 6th, 7:00 p.m. at the Wendell Free Library, join a highly participato-

ry conversation and evening of networking about how to build community resilience in the face of an uncertain future.

National Transition Towns trainer Tina Clarke presents.

For more information visit www.TransitionUS.org, contact Tina at tinaclarke@transitionnetwork.org, or call (413) 658-8165.

Save Energy with Winserts

Approximately one third of home heat is lost through your windows! That heat loss can be cut in half by making custom fitting winserts. A free informational session about this do-it-yourself system will be held Tuesday, December 7th, 5:30 to 6:30 p.m. in the activities room of the Athol Library.

Quick to install and remove, winserts are repairable and can last many years when used with care. Material costs typically pay for themselves in a year.

Learn all about this method of saving money and energy and

being more comfortable in the presentation by Brian Nugent of North Quabbin Energy.

Brian Nugent has been teaching people how to make winserts at free presentations around the region for several years in collaboration with North Quabbin Energy group. He also leads free workshops for groups of volunteers wanting to make whole sets of winserts for any community building of interest.

For more information, visit www.northquabbinenergy.org/winsert-main.html. Sign up by calling the library at (978) 249-9515.

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"The Voice of the Villages"

Hard Work on Budget Compact Just the Beginning

BY JEFF SINGLETON

GILL-MONTAGUE - Thanks to Gill Montague Regional School District superintendent Carl Ladd for his kind words, in a letter to the *Reporter* (MR IX #9). He recognized the work of the so-called "technical committee" in preparing the five year budget compact for the district and member towns. This committee produced the long term fiscal plan supporting the school budget that unanimously passed the recent district meeting. It is important to stress that the work would never have been completed without the support of one key member - Superintendent Ladd himself. For a school district superintendent to encourage a group of finance committee types to do their Excel thing is truly "out of the box."

We must also recognize the crucial roles of the various state officials and their staffs who participated in the process. These included our representatives in the legislature and officials at the Department of Elementary and Secondary Education. They attended numerous meetings, gave us technical advice, forced us to learn the dreaded Chapter 70 "formula" (which it turns out is not so complicated and is not really a formula) and committed to help us make the final plan a reality.

Why did the towns of Gill and Montague unanimously approve a regional school district budget after four years of voting "no?" Press reports, which have focused on the so-called "impasse" between the town and school district, have not explained why the "bickering" suddenly stopped.

The truth is that this has not really been about bickering over particular budgets but about a healthy resistance to voting more money for the district unless there was a game plan

for stabilizing its finances in the long term. We now have such a plan that involves a commitment by the state to work with us in the future. Anyone who is interested in the final product may access it at www.montaguema.net.

The plan, known as "Table B," involves a set of revenue and spending projections for the period FY '11 through FY '15. It focuses on estimating the key revenues (particularly local assessments and state Chapter 70 aid) necessary to make the district viable, as well as a level of annual school expenditures required to live within those revenues. The plan also includes a 'compact,' outlining steps all parties must take in order for the plan to succeed. Perhaps more importantly, the compact establishes a collaborative process for revisiting the plan if our assumptions prove unrealistic.

Several areas of the plan deserve mention. First, the level of state Chapter 70 aid is assumed to increase by approximately 3% once the current state fiscal crisis subsides. This is one of the most important requirements for fiscal stability and one about which many have expressed understandable doubts. The technical committee projected potential levels of state aid using the so-called Chapter 70 formula. We found that if the district stabilizes enrollment and if the state continues to include 'growth aid' (guaranteed aid to districts with significant foundation budget increases) as part of the Chapter 70 calculation, we can probably achieve the required 3%.

Table B assumes that the school district budget can be level funded next year and held to a 2.5% increase in the following years. While this is consistent with recent spending levels, it has hardly been the norm over

see **SCHOOL** pg 5



It's No Picnic at the Beach.

GUEST EDITORIAL

~Green Burial: The Natural Option~

BY JUDITH LOREI

MONTAGUE CENTER - Not long ago, "green" and "burial" were two words rarely used in the same sentence. But lately the concept of "going green" at death is becoming more attractive to the baby boom generation, who now consider the cost to the environment as one important factor when making plans for their final disposition, or for their family members. Committed environmentalists now have options in death care that did not exist even five years ago.

Green burial is interment without embalming, metal or hardwood caskets, cement burial vaults or large granite headstones. An un-embalmed body may be wrapped in a shroud or placed in a biodegradable casket and lowered directly into the earth.

The simple idea behind green burial is to go out naturally and with as little harm as possible to the Earth. A green cemetery is often located in a forest, field or meadow setting. Acres of land are preserved in a way that allow for loved ones to visit their deceased by walking or hiking in a natural setting as opposed to a conventional cemetery set

with symmetrical rows of headstones, neatly trimmed fertilized grass and paved roads. Density of burials is also much lower in a natural cemetery. Typically, a conventional cemetery holds 1,000 to 1,200 bodies per acre whereas the design of a natural burial ground allows for 75-100 per acre.

There are dozens of green cemeteries in the United States, and the number of new natural burial grounds is growing fast. The first green cemetery in the U.S. was opened in 1998 by Dr. Billy Campbell and his wife, Kimberley Campbell. Ramsey Creek Preserve in Westminster, South Carolina was "formed to harness the funeral industry for land protection and restoration, to fund non-profits, education, the arts and scientific research, and to provide a less expensive and more meaningful burial option" according to its website.

While there are a small number of conventional cemeteries in Massachusetts that do allow natural burial, the closest green cemeteries are Cedar Brook Burial Ground in Limington, ME (just outside of Portland), Rainbow's End in Orrington, ME and Greensprings Natural Cemetery Preserve in Newfield, NY (just outside of Ithaca).

People choose green burial for a variety of different reasons. Some people make the decision based on environmental values, others for spiritual or religious reasons. There are those who would like to have more direct involvement with burying their loved one and still others who just believe that simple is the best way to go.

Some people express their wish for quick decomposition that direct contact with the earth provides when buried without a concrete vault or a metal casket. Similar to the home funeral movement, there are those who wish to bring the rituals of caring for the dead back to the family and friends of the deceased, rather than engaging the services of a funeral director to handle all of the arrangements.

Massachusetts does not yet have a green cemetery, but interest is growing steadily. The Green Burial Committee of the Funeral Consumers Alliance of Western Massachusetts is actively working to raise awareness of this issue. Members of the committee come from Montague, as well as other Pioneer Valley towns and cities. They conduct presentations and lead discussions on the topic, and are reaching out to land trusts in Massachusetts to identify appropriate parcels for this use. The committee is working on a website to be launched in early 2011. In the meantime, those who are interested in learning more about green burial in our area, or who want to get involved should contact Carol Coan at cncoan@verizon.net.

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FIRSTLIGHT Employee Named NEEEA Educator of the Year

NORTHFIELD - First-Light Power Resources is pleased to announce that Kim Noyes has been named the New England Environmental Educators Alliance's 'Educator of the Year' at the NEEEA's 44th annual conference.



Kim Noyes

Noyes was recognized as an environmental educator working in a non-formal setting. She is the school program environmental education coordinator at the

Northfield Mountain Recreation and Environmental Center in Northfield.

Noyes is a dedicated environmental educator, having taught programs at all levels for nearly three decades. She annually provides environmental education for over 3,000 pre-kindergarten through 8th grade students in the Pioneer Valley of Massachusetts. She

also trains other staff with respect to area fish ladders. In the past 20 years, these instructors have reached an estimated 340,000 visitors.

For more information on the year-round educational and environmental programs offered at Northfield, visit their web-site at www.firstlightpower.com/northfield.

Forum on the Closure of Vermont Yankee

GREENFIELD - A four-person panel will discuss what will happen when Vermont Yankee reaches its scheduled closing date of March 2012, and what local citizens, elected officials, and town and regional bodies can do to make sure Vermont Yankee is properly dismantled and cleaned up, and radioactive waste safely stored. Questions and answers

and a period of open discussion will follow the panel presentation.

The forum will take place at 7 p.m. on Wednesday, December 8th, at Greenfield Community College's Downtown Center, 270 Main Street, Greenfield.

For more info contact Deb Katz at (413) 339-5781, or email deb@nukebusters.org.

REJECTS from pg 1

but because the key to the glass case protecting the notice board was not available, she had taped the notice to the outside of the glass. On Sunday, Gifford said she noticed the agenda was no longer taped to the glass.

Once Ricketts called the meeting to order, he announced the proceedings would be recorded. However, due to low batteries in the tape recorder, only the first few minutes of the meeting were actually taped. The board also voted unanimously not to accept any public comment at this meeting though no members of the public were in attendance.

County health agent Elizabeth Swedberg had recommended, via emails sent prior to the November 30th meeting to the three board of health members (Ricketts, Martha Senn, and Jenny Fyler) that the meeting be tape recorded and that no member of the public be allowed to speak. Swedberg was not present at the meeting. A printout of the email was provided in the meeting information packet for each member. Asked repeatedly for a copy of the printout, Ricketts was reluctant to provide it to a reporter, but finally did so.

In the email, Swedberg summarized the status of the von Ransons' request and recommended the items that should be voted on by the board. As well as voting not to sign the building permit, the board also

voted not to allow an increase in flows for the current septic system at the von Ranson property. In her email, Swedberg reasoned the proposed barn apartment would add another bedroom to the property and increase flow to the current septic system, although the von Ransons' proposal included relying on a composting toilet and using the septic system only for "gray water" (dishwater or other wastewater not containing human waste).

Swedberg also recommended voting to deny a permit for a new well to provide potable water to the barn apartment. "Von Ransons went ahead with no consultation of the board and asked forgiveness that they didn't do it right. The board of health cannot allow residents to willy nilly put in wells wherever and whenever they want - there are health risks and environmental impacts at stake," she wrote.

The von Ransons had dug the test well to determine whether water was present near enough to the barn, and told the board at the November 9th meeting they had been misinformed about the need for a permit before digging the test well. Because no well permit application was on file, the board members decided they would not vote to deny a permit.

The board decided they would draft a letter informing the von Ransons of their decisions at their next posted meeting.

SCHOOL from 4

the past fifteen years. For the school district to achieve this level of fiscal discipline will be a major challenge, given fixed cost increases for wages and benefits, as well as the need to finance state 'mandates' such as special education, school choice and charter schools. To implement it we will need to continue to address areas where our spending is above state norms.

The plan may also require significant changes in state education funding policy. Usually at this point, liberals like me call for an increase in the state income tax. Yet without broader systemic change this is not necessarily a good (or realistic) option. My

own personal view is that the state needs to revisit all the assumptions of funding policy that have been inherited from the education reform period of the 1990s. In particular, using the so-called 'foundation budget' as the basis for determining Chapter 70 state aid has proven to be problematic, in part because this creates an incentive to tailor the assumptions behind the budget to state fiscal and political realities rather than the realities of local education finance. Taxes should be on the table, but they are only one piece of the puzzle.

Finally, it is entirely possible that the school district as presently constituted is not viable, fiscally or educationally. The 'com-

mittee' commits us to look seriously at all options for regional consolidation that are shown to improve education and help stabilize education finance. Hopefully this radical change will not be necessary, but we should get concrete options on the table sooner rather than later.

All of which is to say, in the words of your standard commencement speech, the unanimous vote of the district meeting is really only a beginning.

Jeff Singleton is a member of the Gill-Montague regional school committee. The views expressed here are his own, and do not necessarily represent those of any other member of the school committee.



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NOTES FROM MONTAGUE SELECTBOARD

Parking Fines are Doubled

BY JANEL NOCKLEBY -

Park overnight on the streets of Montague from now until April 1st and be prepared to pay a fine - a stiff fine.

On November 29th, the chief of police, Ray Zukowski recommended, and the selectboard approved, increasing Montague parking violation fines by 100% for small infractions and 20% for more serious parking infractions. The change from the old rate of \$10 for minor violations - like failing to move your car off the street between 1 a.m. and 5 a.m. during snow removal season - to the new rate of \$20 went into effect December 1st. More serious parking violations will cost you \$50 now, instead of the old rate of \$40.

Zukowski told the selectboard every three to four years his department needs to order new tickets, and currently there are only 100 parking tickets left at the old rates. So, Zukowski proposed taking this opportunity - at the beginning of the annual on street parking ban - to increase the fines and order new tickets. Zukowski said he based his recommendation on what similar towns in the area are charging for parking violations.

This week, police officers left flyers on car windshields in urban areas of Montague villages outlining the on street parking ban. Many residents do not have their own off-street parking places, and must use municipal lots, which feature their own staggered parking bans to allow for snow removal. Failure to comply may

result in an automobile being ticketed and towed.

Other infractions in the \$20 range will now include: overtime parking, parking in prohibited areas, parking to obstruct highway and loading areas, parking on tree belt, parking too near corner, parking left wheels to curb, parking in excess of one foot from curb, park-



ing in tow away zone, among other violations. Infractions in the \$50 range now include: parking on a sidewalk or crosswalk, parking within a fire lane, parking within ten feet of a hydrant, and parking in a handicapped space.

In other news, Robert Trombley, wastewater treatment plant superintendent, reminded residents that while some excessive uses of town water may be excused through the sewer abatement process, allowing toilets to run constantly is not one of them. Seven requests for sewer abatements came before the selectboard on Monday night during part one of this year's abatement process, but one for a leaking toilet on K Street did not get approved. An abatement request from a new owner of a property on North Street also did not get approved, as negotiating who owes which part of a sewer bill needs to be settled between seller and buyer before the sale.

The selectboard accept-

ed, with regret, the resignation of Don Valley from the Montague planning board. Robert Obear of West Chestnut Hill Road was then approved to fill the empty seat on the planning board.

On the energy committee, Cameron Wymar was replaced by Richard Adams. Wymar is moving to Washington D.C.

James Bent, owner of the Railroad Salvage property, let the selectboard know that asbestos removal from the Patch property will likely occur this week, and he is hopeful that a Massachusetts Department of Environmental Protection permit to demolish the building down to the first two stories will be approved, so demolition can proceed after the winter freeze.

Town holiday displays have been approved in two locations. The annual Montague Center Firefighter's Relief Association's manger scene will be on display in the Montague Center commons from December 6th - 26th. On Sunday, December 5th, a tree lighting ceremony in front of the park's band shell will be held from 3 - 5 p.m., including Celtic dance performances, Santa Claus, ornaments and decorating.

The next selectboard meeting will be held on December 6th. There will be no selectboard meeting on December 27th due to the holidays.

NOTES FROM WENDELL SELECTBOARD

Wendell Signs on to Vermont Yankee Concerns

BY JOSH HEINEMANN -

Laurel Facey came to the selectboard meeting on November 24th carrying a letter for selectboard members to review, sign and forward to "those with authority over the Vermont Yankee Nuclear Power Station in Vernon, VT including the Entergy Nuclear Corporation, the Vermont Legislature, and VT Public Service Board, and the U.S. Nuclear Regulatory Commission."

The letter of concern is being circulated among selectboards throughout the tri-state region within 20 miles of the nuclear power plant, which is scheduled to shut down in March of 2012, barring an extension of its original operating license. Each selectboard that votes to approve the letter will be added to the list of signatories.

The letter lists concerns about safety during the remaining 15 months of operating time at Vermont Yankee, the decade long decommissioning process that will follow; calls for preference to be given to present employees for work during site cleanup, and expresses the hope that workers are afforded both monitoring and maximum protection from exposure to radioactive material during decommissioning. The letter also calls on the relevant authorities to notify local residents and officials of nearby towns about any accidents or leaks at the reactor, and to give extra attention to maintenance and repair during this time; and to ensure a thorough and timely cleanup of the site.

The letter also calls for a citizens' advisory board to facilitate two-way communication between Entergy Vermont Yankee and the surrounding communities.

Selectboard member Jeffrey Pooser wondered if the Entergy Corporation is indeed resigned to shutting down the plant in March of 2012, at the expiration of the plant's original operating license.

The Vermont Senate voted last year to deny required state approval for a 20-year extension of Vermont Yankee's operating license, by a vote of 26 - 4. Senator Peter Shumlin (D-Putney), who spearheaded that vote, is now the governor-elect of Vermont.

Selectboard member Dan Keller said it would be hard to call the plant safe and reliable judging by the track record of the past few years of operation, featuring tritium leaks to groundwater and the Connecticut River, dramatic cooling tower collapses, stuck valves, cracked equipment and unscheduled shutdowns.

The two selectboard members present at the Thanksgiving eve meeting voted to sign on to the letter.

A special town meeting is scheduled for the evening of December 15th and town administrative coordinator Nancy Aldrich prepared a draft copy of the warrant for board members to review. The first article - to establish a municipal lighting plant in accordance with Massachusetts statute - will require a paper ballot. If approved, this article

would be the first step for the town of Wendell to establish a municipal department to provide internet access to individual homes, in association with the Wired West network of underserved communities.

Article Two would appropriate \$22,000 for two new furnaces for the highway garage and fire station; Article Three would appropriate \$40,000 for a chipper for the road crew; Article Four would appropriate \$7,700 for new fire department turnout gear and a hydro-test, and new valves for the cascade system, which the fire department uses to refill air packs. Article Five would appropriate \$9,400 to pay for gutters and drainage work to direct runoff from the roofs of the town hall and police station to the drainage system that runs down Morse Village Road. Article Six would appropriate \$1,000 to pay for the completion of the updated open space plan; money the town appropriated but failed to spend before the end of the last fiscal year.

Aldrich said the town received only one estimate for installing new water heaters for the town hall. A six gallon 120-volt electric tank heater for the kitchen sink would cost \$1551, plumbed, with electrical work extra, and a two gallon 120-volt electric tank heater to serve both bathrooms would cost \$1,367, plumbed, electrical work extra. The town hopes to install timed switches so the new water heaters will

see WENDELL pg 11

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NOTES FROM THE GILL SELECTBOARD

Special Town Meeting Warrant Approved

On Wednesday, the selectboard has approved a five article warrant for a special town meeting, to take place on Monday, December 20th at 6:30 p.m. at the town hall.

The board will meet with the finance committee on to review the warrant on Monday, December 12th at 6:30 p.m., and go over the budget process for FY '12.

Here is a rundown of the warrant articles, as provided by town administrative assistant Ray Purington:

Article 1 - asks if voters will amend the amount approved at the annual town meeting for the Gill-Montague Regional School District assessment, and decrease it by \$38,121. Gill appropriated the full amount requested by the school committee in June, but the compromise budget approved at the district-wide meeting on November 18th resulted in Gill's assessment being reduced by \$38,121.

Article 2 - asks if voters will raise and appropriate or otherwise provide \$2,057.13 to pay for veterans' benefits for town residents. As announced at a recent selectboard meeting, beginning in October the responsibility for funding and paying this particular type of veterans' benefit has shifted to the town. This amount represents nine months of payments, until the end of the current fiscal year. While 75% of the expense will eventually be reimbursed by the state, the town needs to appropriate the full amount being paid.

Article 3 - asks if voters will establish and raise and appropriate funds into one or more education stabilization funds. This would allow some or all of the \$38,121 from Article 1 to be set aside to help pay for expected increases in future year school assessments. A two thirds majority vote is required.

Article 4 - asks if voters

will transfer from free cash back to stabilization the amount spent to purchase and install a dump body for the 1990 highway truck. An excellent condition, almost new dump body was purchased for \$4,500; installation is currently in process. Whatever unspent money is left from the \$9,350 appropriated will automatically revert back to stabilization on June 30th, 2011.

Article 5 - asks if the town wants to accept Massachusetts General Law Chapter 138 Section 33B, which would allow the selectboard to consider authorizing the sale of on-premises alcoholic beverages between the hours of 10 a.m. and noon on Sundays. If this statute is accepted by town meeting, on-premises license holders - restaurants and social clubs - would need to apply for a change in hours before the early Sunday sales could take place.

NOTES FROM THE LEVERETT SELECT BOARD

Climbing Ban Debated for Rattlesnake Gutter Property

BY DAVID DETMOLD - Members of the Western Massachusetts Climbers Coalition (WMCC) hiked up to the Leverett selectboard meeting on Tuesday to argue against a permanent ban on rock climbing at the top of Rattlesnake Gutter.

Speaking for the Rattlesnake Gutter Trust, Eva Gibavic and Mary Alice Wilson called for the selectboard to approve a ban on bolts or other rock climbing apparatus (along with other temporary or permanent structures) and a ban "in perpetuity" on rock climbing on the property once known as the Hank Barry parcel, now referred to as Rattlesnake Hill.

This 18.1 acre parcel of land sits at the top of Rattlesnake Gutter, a distinctive rock face with vertical cliffs up to 90 feet high that was once a major attraction for the rock climbing community in Western Massachusetts, before private landowners who own that section of the Gutter forbid the practice.

Even though the town-owned land at the top of the Gutter, "has no climbing resources we're aware of," Jeff Squire, president of the WMCC, urged the selectboard not to include a perpetual ban on rock climbing activity in the conservation restriction on the parcel. "Our concern is it does begin to set a precedent, and limits access to what you can do on the cliffs."

But Wilson, a member of the board of the Rattlesnake Gutter Trust, which will hold the conservation restriction on the parcel, said her board decided to include a ban on rock climbing on the part of

the Gutter the town does control, with the hope of doing just that: setting a precedent and limiting access to what people can do on the cliffs.

"The board put forward the conservation restriction because of the special nature of the site, the peacefulness of the site, the view of Brushy Mountain. If climbing were allowed it would be a very different usage," Wilson said.

Squire's group met with the Rattlesnake Gutter Trust in October, when the process of establishing a conservation restriction on four new parcels of town land was already well under way, to try to negotiate a mutually acceptable accord on rock climbing in and around the Gutter. Squire and other members of the WMCC who were at the selectboard on Tuesday said they had also been talking with the private landowners who have forbidden climbing on the cliffs for the last two decades or so, in an attempt to work out a similar accord with them.

But that accord seemed elusive Tuesday night.

Gibavic said she had traveled to Erving to see the rock climbing trails and routes on Farley Ledge, maintained by the WMCC. "I was very impressed with how well the trails are maintained," she said.

Nonetheless, when she reported back to the Rattlesnake Gutter Trust about the conditions at Farley Ledge, Gibavic said her board decided against allowing rock climbing in the Gutter.

Gibavic said she recalled climbing in the Gutter herself in years

past, when it was a site that drew climbers from around the area. She said the Gutter suffered from trail erosion and graffiti in those days. "The way we know of to protect the top of the cliffs best is to prevent climbers," from using them, she added.

Squire said, "Climbing has changed significantly on a national level," since the days when the Gutter was open for climbers. "To specifically prohibit it is a slap in the face to that valid outdoor recreational group."

David Powicki, chair of the conservation commission, said 62 out of the 102 town residents who responded to the open space survey mailed out to all town residents listed "climbing" as a favored activity.

But selectboard member Julie Shively pointed out that some people might regard climbing as what they do when the hike up a nearby mountain, not what they do when they grapple with a ninety foot cliff face.

Still, Powicki said, "We felt there should be a broader discussion. Placing a conservation restriction that bans climbing doesn't allow that conversation to happen."

Steve Blyn said the WMCC tells its members the Gutter is closed to climbing. "But we are working towards opening it back up, and resolving those issues," with the private landowners.

Squire said issues regarding cliff top vegetation, archeological sites, parking and access could all be effectively managed if climbing were once again see LEVERETT pg 16

HIGHLIGHTS FROM THE ERVING POLICE LOG

Unlawful Drivers, Assistance to Other Police

Wednesday, 11/17

6:20 a.m. Report of malicious destruction of property by West Main Street. Vehicle rear window smashed out. Report taken. 11:40 a.m. Requested assistance for reported disturbance on Main Street in Northfield. All verbal. Stood by until situation calmed.

Saturday, 11/20

11:21 a.m. Criminal application issued to [redacted] in Greenfield, for revoked license and seat belt violation. 11:40 a.m. Criminal application issued to [redacted] in Greenfield, for allowing unlicensed operation, seatbelt and no inspection sticker.

Sunday, 11/21

4:00 p.m. Assisted Bernardston police with domestic distur-

bance.

11:55 p.m. Report of subject sitting on the railing of the French King Bridge. Made contact with subject. He was just taking a break from driving. Moved same along.

Tuesday, 11/23

5:35 p.m. Report of barking dog in the Moore and Forest Street area. Spoke with owner. Will take dog in for the evening. 8:05 p.m. Report of past suspicious activity at Renovators Supply.

Thursday, 11/25

2:45 a.m. Assisted Bernardston police with fight at Bella Notte. Peace restored. 3:29 p.m. Report of suspicious person at Renovators Supply. Checked area. Unfounded.

Friday, 11/26

10 a.m. Criminal application

issued to [redacted] for operating a motor vehicle with a suspended license, subsequent offense.

10:00 a.m. Criminal application issued to [redacted] for allowing unlicensed operation of a motor vehicle and a revoked registration.

Saturday, 11/27

9:20 a.m. Criminal application issued to [redacted] for operating a motor vehicle after revocation and without insurance.

1:05 p.m. Criminal application issued to [redacted] for operating a motor vehicle after revocation and no insurance.

Monday, 11/29

4:23 p.m. Arrested [redacted] on a warrant.

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The Occasional Diner

Gill Tavern Offers Country Style Dining



Gill Tavern manager Laura Carboni (left) and chef Jordan Scott

BY ALLEN YOUNG

GILL - From where I live, it's a 20-mile drive, but the distance has not kept me from enjoying a restaurant with the perfect mix of high-quality food, an emphasis on the locally grown, and an informal country-style atmosphere.

It's the Gill Tavern, 326 Main Road in Gill, and the following words on the home page of its website offer an honest description:

"In the spirit that good food makes good company, the Gill Tavern aims to nourish the dining and gathering needs of Gill and its neighboring towns. The Tavern serves fare made from fresh, locally produced ingredients whenever possible in an atmosphere that fosters friendship, community, and respect

for our environment."

The Tavern opens for business at 5 p.m., Wednesday through Sunday, with an open kitchen (watch Jordan Scott and his assistant do the work), beautiful bar and two dining rooms seating 40-50, plus a small outdoor eating area that will reopen when the weather gets warm.

Longtime Gill resident and artistic carpenter Tony Mathews helped create the space in what was a country store for decades. There are a few beautiful Mathews pieces on display and available for purchase.

Alden Booth, owner of the People's Pint in Greenfield, and his wife Lissa Greenough, had purchased the country store and tried to keep it going, but this effort was derailed by road con-

struction detours. The couple gave up on the store and transformed the building in 2008 into a restaurant serving lunch and dinner, deciding soon thereafter that "dinner only" would be more realistic.

Reservations by phone are recommended: 413-863-9006.

The menu, restaurant's mission and information on special events, such as "trivia night" and "open mic" is available online at the website www.thegilltavern.com.

At the Gill Tavern, you can order a full dinner, as one might in a "fine dining" sort of place, but there are also salads, sandwiches and an array of interesting small plates or appetizers, including pizza and very tasty mussels in broth. Therefore, what you have for dinner can

depend on your mood and your budget, though it doesn't turn costly unless you go whole hog with alcoholic beverages, appetizer, entrée, dessert and after-dinner cordial.

The menu changes with the season. I'm getting used to the new winter menu, and had to say good-bye to the tasty pan-fried trout fillets I enjoyed last summer.

On a recent evening, I ordered the baked haddock, which was perfectly cooked with a light buttery crumb topping, and served with a tasty potato pancake (no, not a Jewish-style latke, but rather a perfectly formed round disc with soft mashed potato inside and a crisp coating). It came with Brussels sprouts, a perfect fall vegetable, though the now

popular under-cooked roasted vegetable format is not my favorite. I prefer them steamed, fully-cooked and buttered, but that's a matter of taste.

To start out, I had a glass of fruity red sangria, assembled by the manager, Gill resident and Italian-born Laura Carboni, who, like the rest of the staff, is friendly and accommodating. There is a large selection of wine and beer, including People's Pint brews, as one would expect.

Salad is not included in the price of entrees, but I usually order a salad anyway, since the prices are so reasonable. In addition to specialty salads, there is a small and large "tavern salad" on the menu, a nice selection of greens dressed lightly with gorgonzola vinaigrette, or lemon tahini.

Roasted lamb shank is a new item on the menu that I recently enjoyed, though this is the only meat the Tavern serves that is not locally grown. The lamb comes from New Zealand because, it was explained to me, local farms are unable to reliably supply the desired cut. Beef, pork and chicken are easier to obtain as needed from Massachusetts and Vermont farms. Most local farm sources are listed on the menu.

Dessert choices are delectable, including fruit crisps made in-house and cakes prepared by master baker Ellen Darabi of Florence.

Chef Jordan Scott is startlingly young but doing a fine job. I presume he was mentored effectively as assistant to the previous chef, Sam Cochan, who departed several months ago to start his own eatery. I'm impressed at how calm the kitchen staff appears to be as they cook and assemble dishes for so many hungry diners.

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Ghosts of Turners Past



First trolley in Turners Falls. It ran from June 23rd, 1895, to July 3rd, 1934. The trolley tracks were removed in 1952. (Photograph by C.H. Scofield; courtesy of Peter Miller and Kyle Scott from Images of Montague)

BY ESTELLE CADE

TURNERS FALLS - Halloween has come and gone - the time of "goblins and ghosties and things that go bump in the

night." But Turners Falls is still full of ghosts. Each time I drive over the White Bridge into town, past the

two paper mills, once proudly named Keith and Esleek, I imagine I can hear the constant hum of the paper making machinery, always running, two

shifts every day. Where today I see one or two men crossing in front of me on their way to work, in my mind's eye I can see generations of working men and women, the men in their grey caps, carrying metal lunch boxes; the women in long skirts, high necked blouses, all walking down to "the mill," to those hard jobs that gave them steady work for so many years.

Turning onto Avenue A, looking around - there's the trolley clanging its bell, people clambering on to travel over the river to wherever the trolley would go.

Music - ah, the music. It's dance night at St. Kaz - the polka bands - trumpets, accordions, piano, blare out a lively tune as dancers fill the floor. Everyone goes. It's intergenerational fun.

Perhaps it's logging time. The river is full of logs to be floated down river. Wise people say, "Lock up your daughters and sisters, the loggers are in town!"

Turners Falls could be a rough place at times. But it was a busy town. There's the butcher shop, the corner grocery store, Hood's Pharmacy. Can you hear the pins drop in the bowling alley? Sounds as though someone must have gotten a strike! And there are the school kids, lining up for the Saturday afternoon movie - five cents for a double feature and a cartoon.

Yes, Turners Falls is full of ghosts. If you take time to stand quietly and listen for a minute, you just might catch a whisper from the past - even if Halloween has come and gone.

Should Teachers be Allowed to 'Friend' their Students?

JONATHAN VON RANSON GILL-MONTAGUE - Because of its freewheeling edge, the website Facebook, used more and more as a way of staying in touch with friends and family, has created a new, gray zone between private and public, and a new worry for the school community.

"There are cases where teachers in other places have posted inappropriate content on social networking sites," superintendent Carl Ladd told the Gill-Montague school committee on November 23rd.

In an effort to avoid those sorts of improprieties at Gill-Montague, Ladd offered a set of guidelines which, among other things, would eliminate social networking sites as a place of acceptable student-teacher interactions.

As proposed, the guidelines would have banned faculty and

staff from 'friending' students on Facebook, or allowing students to 'friend' them as well.

Other guidelines specified no sexual content on teachers' websites. ("You shouldn't even have to say that," Ladd remarked), and no sharing of their "private cell phone numbers" with students. Likewise no home phone numbers "without prior approval of the district."

Kelly Loynd, Erving representative, asked whether the guidelines would cover paraprofessionals and custodians, too.

"Good question," Ladd answered. He said the policies should cover "all staff members, not just classroom teachers."

Teacher Vicky Valley stood up to say her land line is listed. "That's not going to be considered giving

my phone number to students...?" The answer wasn't clear.

The idea, Ladd said, is to protect G-M students from "improper fraternization" with faculty and staff in the new internet, cell phone, texting environment, while also protecting employees from students' unwarranted charges of impropriety. Keeping teachers' private lives separate from their professional lives and from the young people they work Ladd said should be the goal, but committee member Sorrel Hatch

see **TEACHERS** pg 16

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for schedule of events: gcsrumpus.blogspot.com

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GMEF Holiday Show and Grant Awards



Joyce Phillips marching in the Booster Day parade. She says, "It was a fun and excellent way to promote the GMEF and the Annual Christmas Concert. Santa was a great bit!"

BY ELLEN BLANCHETTE
GILL-MONTAGUE - This year's annual Christmas concert, sponsored by the Gill-Montague Education Fund (GMEF) and called 'Home for the Holidays,' will be held in the Turners Falls High School Theater on Sunday, December 5th, at 2:30 p.m.

The concert features Sergeant Dan Clark (the Singing Trooper) and his wife, Mary Colarusso. In addition to the traditional sounds of the holiday season, the performance will include a military tribute for our troops and veterans as Sergeant Clark celebrates in song and video the simple blessings of family and friends at Christmastime.

Joyce Phillips, school committee member from Montague and executive producer of the holiday show, recalling the

GMEF gala from earlier this year, said, "Like the Mummers, seeing them in parades is nothing like seeing them in concert." She encouraged everyone to catch Sergeant Clark and Colarusso at this special live performance. 'Home for the Holidays' will also feature the Turners Falls High School's new a cappella group, Rhapsody Blue, in their first public performance.

Advance tickets and are now on sale at the GMEF website, www.thegmef.org, at the World Eye Bookshop in Greenfield, at Scotty's Convenience Store in Turners Falls, or at the door. Proceeds from the concert will benefit the Gill Montague Education Fund, and their curriculum enhancing grants for students in the school district.

GMEF GRANT AWARDS

In a report to the Gill-Montague school committee earlier this fall, Phillips described the following grants, totaling \$2,512, recently awarded by the G-M Education Fund. A second round of grants will be awarded in February.

To date this year GMEF has awarded more than \$61,360 in enrichment grants.

Continuing Ceramics for Turners Falls High School will allow the art teacher to purchase additional clay and glaze to support an extra three sections of ceramics classes this year for roughly 70 students.

Encounter - Who are we? The Stories Faces Tell - for Montague Elementary School Pre-K - 5, will allow students to spend time learning together

about writing, media, arts, photography and personal artifacts. This is an activity to bridge the two buildings of Montague Elementary School in a year-long process.

Exploring Light will enable Montague Elementary School 4th grade teachers to each make a science kit on the subject of light. The text they currently use is very limited in this study.

Exploring the Slopes of Berkshire East will be available to all TFHS seniors and will give them an opportunity to explore a new activity: Ziplining at a greatly reduced rate.

Field Trip to Harvard Forest for students at Gill Elementary School. This grant will allow Grade 2 to explore Harvard Forest and enrich their learning of forest habitats. For Grade 6,

it will allow them to continue their study of the Eastern Hemlock and the invasive Hemlock Woolly Adelgid.

I can read! I can read! will purchase an iPod and gift card to purchase books to download for students at Montague Elementary. This project will provide timid readers a chance to listen to books on audio. The iPod can be hooked up to a listening center so small groups of children can all listen at one time. This device allows for continuous listening, whereas CD players go back to the beginning each time.

Life Skills Karate Class at TFHS will enable 12-15 students in the Life Skills Class to be part of an athletic group of their own, because of limitations preventing them from

see AWARDS pg 14

GREAT FALLS MIDDLE SCHOOL 1st QUARTER HONOR ROLLS

GRADE 6

First Honors

- Tyler Akey
- Gabrielle Arzuaga
- Tionne Brown
- Nolan Courtemanche
- Savannah Donahue
- William Doyle
- Jordyn Fiske
- Regina Hope
- Tess Hunter
- Nathaniel Hurley
- Madelyn Johnson
- Michelle Leh
- Clarissa Levin
- Ian Moriarty
- Daniela Parpalov
- Haleigh Paulin
- Will Roberge
- Patrick Salls
- Amanda Savinski
- Nicole Thibeault
- Luis Torres
- Mark Waite
- Alysha Wozniak
- Jordan Wyman
- Dimitrios Zantouliadis

Second Honors

- Michael Babcock
- Tommy Bocharnikov
- Nicholas Croteau
- Madison Currier
- Jack Darling
- Holley DeVarney
- Jemma Dickson
- Keara Glenn
- Melissa Hersey
- Jonathan LaClaire

- Dylan Mailloux
- Eric McDonough
- Veronika Sankova
- Clarissa Schotanus
- Hailey Trott
- Wilshka Vega

Third Honors

- Richard Craver
- Calley Hubert
- Alison Hulslander
- Alyson Kilanski
- Kieran Masson
- Nicole Peralta
- Patrick Riggott
- Dillon Rogers
- Trayanna Santiago
- Jacob Wright

GRADE 7

First Honors

- Fallyn Adams
- Rileigh Carlisle
- Allison Cooke
- Tarrah Dempsey
- James Fritz
- Ryan Lenois
- Lindsey Mailloux
- Mitchell Mailloux
- Trevor Mankowsky
- Mackenzie Phillips
- Jenna Putala
- Seth Rider
- Margaret Sroka
- Sydney Upham
- Alexandra Vieira
- Hailey Whipple
- Alexxis Young

Second Honors

- Jarod Brown
- Courtney Crafts
- Ivy Cross
- Akeeva Forcier
- Kamryn Frost
- Seth Leamy
- Alexander Lindgren
- Timothy Momaney
- Riley Palmer
- Tanner Richardson
- Nevan Shattuck
- Rachel Waldron
- Cullen Wozniak

Third Honors

- Jacob Barboza
- Nadia Hasan
- Sadie Pelletier
- Sabrina Petrowicz
- Devan Rivera
- Ciara Staiger

GRADE 8

First Honors

- Haleigh Bassett
- Ryan Bezio
- Hayley Black
- Trenton Bourbeau
- Sara Bradley
- Lisa Callahan
- Amber Caouette
- Danielle Conant
- Aidan Connelly
- Malcolm Crosby
- Zachary Demars
- Cheyenne Edwards
- Liam Ellis
- Alexander Fitzpatrick
- Justin Giguere
- Teagan Glenn

- Lexi Griffin
- Emily Kells
- Ken Leng
- Ian MacPhail
- Alexander Morin
- Mackenzie Salls
- Serena Smith
- Liam Theis
- Alexandra Wing-LaClaire
- Zachary Wright
- Nicholas York
- Charles Zilinski

Second Honors

- Zachary Battistoni
- Mackenzie Emery
- Joshua Gonzalez
- Melanie Howard
- Nicole John
- Andrew LaPenta
- Brittany Miller
- Kelly Rehorka
- Savannah Thornton
- Emmett Turn

Third Honors

- Jamie Bolduc-DeHart
- Samantha Currier
- Thomas Dubay
- Matteson Heath
- Spencer Hubert
- Connor Kelley
- Henry Kilanski
- Angelina Kosloski
- Andrew Renaud
- Stephanie Robertson
- Natalie Torres Velardo

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STRATHMORE from pg 1 walls. The condemned footbridge to Canal Street blocked direct access to the mainland.

The group made its way back to town hall via the recently downgraded 5th Street bridge, after pausing to consider the low headroom (eight feet, four inches) in the tunnel beneath the Southworth paper mill, the only deeded vehicular access to the Strathmore. (The deed stipulates the tunnel shall be maintained to allow right of way for a two-horse wagon.)

"These buildings will need some work," said Jeremy Wilkening, in what may have been the day's major understatement.

Wilkening, director of real estate development for the Somerville Community Corporation, was one of half a dozen economic development, engineering and construction experts who journeyed out to Turners Falls from the Boston area and from Springfield to look over the town's latest tax title acquisition - the 225,000-plus square foot, 1871 vintage paper mill that sits on an island between the power canal and the Connecticut River, a stone's throw away from downtown Turners Falls.

The town became the owner of the Strathmore Mill - asbestos arson pile and all - earlier this year, when Ancil failed to make required security

upgrades or property tax payments on the property.

Now, with the real estate market at the bottom of a trough, and demand for empty mill buildings with difficult access issues at a seeming lull, the town - which has already invested more than \$300,000 in securing the Strathmore, upgrading the sprinkler system, and replacing the fire damaged roof on Building #1 - is searching for the answer to the pressing question of what to do with the old mill now.

Wilkening and his colleagues volunteered to help Montague solve that dilemma through the auspices of a 50-year old professional real estate consulting organization, a worldwide, multi-disciplinary association called the Urban Land Institute (ULI).

Before the day was through, they had toured the site, interviewed abutters, town officials, and local economic development experts including Metcalfe, the architect who has had the most to do with the Strathmore in recent years, and put together a whirlwind strategy for marketing the mill in the current economic climate.

At a closing session in town hall, here's what they suggested:

The town has prepared a request for proposals for developers for the Strathmore. The ULI team recommended holding off on issuing that RFP for a

period of time, as the market gradually improves and the town works to resolve a number of the thorny access and utility issues that would add risk to any prospective developer's assessment of the site.

Transportation consultant Eric Fellingner, from Somerville, said the town should work to totally redesign vehicular access to the island, starting with the bridge at the north end, at the bottom of the access road that runs past the Great Falls Discovery Center.

"Think of the island and power canal as one whole transportation area," counseled Fellingner. At present, "The one access point along the power canal is at the entrance to the Southworth Mill, which controls the site." The one lane canal road that runs from the west end of the 5th Street canal bridge along the canal side of Southworth, Strathmore, and the former Indeck property is not wide enough to provide passenger car access to Strathmore, or for fire apparatus to easily approach the mill. "A second means of access, just from an emergency vehicle standpoint, is very important," said Fellingner. "You've already had one fire at Strathmore."

He suggested the town look into redeveloping the bridge below the Discovery Center, and work with all the relevant state

agencies and First Light Power to gain vehicle access to the island and the canal road from that end. "Upgrade it, or tear it down and build a new bridge," Fellingner suggested, and seek state help to pay for that work.

At the same time, seek state grants to upgrade the footbridge from Canal Street to the Strathmore, and ask the state to do more than simply renovate the 5th Street Canal Bridge.

"The structure of the 5th Street bridge prevents you from executing an easy turning radius," onto the access road to Strathmore, he said. "We think we need a new bridge," at this end of the mill corridor too, said Fellingner, "and here's why. If this is an important piece of land for Montague and Franklin County, you need to improve the infrastructure to it."

The Strathmore is important to the town for many reasons, including historical presence, and to promote the economic vitality of downtown, the consultant said. A brand new bridge at 5th Street would make it possible for cars and trucks to make a right hand turn onto the canal-side access road.

Access is the most important issue regarding the future redevelopment of Strathmore, said Fellingner, and his colleagues agreed.

The ULI folks cautioned the redeveloping the Strathmore

would take many years, even if an RFP locates an interested and qualified developer. "Be prepared for a lengthy process; site maintenance and stabilization of the building will be long term issues for the town."

In the present economic climate, they advised, it would be wise to strengthen public-private partnerships, and engage abutters in solving the access and utility issues, while working to secure funding to clean up the debris pile at the site.

"Is it worth doing?" asked Davis Hobbs, partner in Swift River Hydro, a 950 kilowatt generating plant located in a condominium within the Strathmore complex. "Or is it better to rip it down and get the salvage money out of it?"

Considering the town would have to find something like \$4 million to demolish the mill, by one recent estimate, there was some head shaking in the room at this suggestion.

"If you lose the buildings, you lose it as an economic development site," said Brian Connors, deputy director of economic development for the city of Springfield. He pointed out that historic tax credits would be a key financing component for any developer looking at the mill.

"You can't replicate buildings like this," Connors said.



HIGHLIGHTS FROM THE MONTAGUE POLICE LOG

Break In, Hit and Run, Arson, Assault

Monday, 11/22
9:16 p.m. Burglary, breaking and entering on Greenfield Road. Report taken.

Tuesday, 11/23
12:01 a.m. Suspicious auto at Unity Park. Investigated.

6:26 p.m. Burglary, breaking and entering on Randall Wood Drive. Report taken.

Wednesday, 11/24
6:36 a.m. Hit and run accident at Food City parking lot on Avenue A. Report taken.

9:19 a.m. Vehicle fire at I and 10th streets. Services rendered.

4:22 p.m. Assault on

Third Street. Referred to an officer.

7:01 p.m. Arson on East Mineral Road.

Thursday, 11/25
1:15 a.m. Suspicious auto at Unity Park. Investigated.

1:11 p.m. Suspicious person on the Canal Street White Bridge. Services rendered.

3:21 p.m. Officer wanted under the fish ladder. No such person can be found.

4:53 p.m. Probable cause arrest of [redacted]

[redacted] for an outside agency.

Friday, 11/26
12:28 a.m. Assault and battery on Canal Street. Investigated.

2:09 p.m. Drug, narcotics violation at St. Stanislaus Society on K Street. Referred to an officer.

7:42 p.m. Arrest of [redacted] on a straight warrant.

Sunday, 11/28
3:39 p.m. Burglary, breaking and entering on K Street. Report taken.

Tuesday, 11/30
8:49 a.m. Burglary, breaking and entering on Third Street. Report taken.

WENDELL from pg 6

remain off most of the time, when the town hall is not in use.

Ballparking the electrical work, the total price for the new heaters would likely exceed the \$3,000 authorized at the October 6th special town meeting. Pooser said it seemed like a lot of money, and said he would see if he could get a lower estimate.

Even so, after Aldrich looked up recent town hall electric bills, Keller calculated the payback time for replacing the current 40 gallon electric hot water heater with the two smaller timed units would be about five years.

The library left a request with Aldrich for renting the town hall on Tuesday evenings in January, February and March for the community chorus, and for Sunday, December 12th for a teen cooking experience.

The most pressing need resulting from a DEP inspection of the town water system was a written start up procedure for the furnace in the town office building. Beyond that Aldrich said the report was "a ten page list of projects for (town custodian) Larry (Ramsdell)".

In the early part of the week of November 21st, anonymous fliers making unsubstantiated accusations about a town

employee were posted onto telephone poles around town.

By the November 24th selectboard meeting, many of the fliers had been taken down, but the selectboard members felt they still needed to respond.

Selectboard member Dan Keller prepared a draft letter, read aloud at the meeting, stating the proper method for dealing with personnel concerns is to go first to the board or commission that oversees that employee. If that meeting fails to resolve the concern in a satisfactory manner, then the citizen with the concern should schedule time to meet with the selectboard.



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YOUTH PROGRAMS

INSTRUCTIONAL BASKETBALL - Grades K - 2
January 4 - late February/early March
When: Tuesday evenings, 5:30pm - 6:30pm
Fees: Montague Residents = \$25 Non Residents = \$30

KNIGHTS OF COLUMBUS FREE THROW CONTEST
Saturday, January 15, 1:00pm - 3:00pm
Participation is **FREE!** Registration's are accepted on day of event.
Who: Boys & Girls ages 10 - 14
Where: Sheffield Elementary School Gym

American Red Cross BABYSITTING COURSE
Tues., January 25 & Wed., January 26, 5:30pm - 8:00pm
Who: Youths ages 11 - 15
Fees: Montague Resident = \$40, Non-resident = \$45
Registration Deadline: Friday, January 14

VOLLEYBALL CLINIC!
We're planning a Volleyball Clinic for girls scheduled for March of 2011.
More details to be announced - Keep your eyes open!

FAMILY PROGRAMS

Fabulous February

BROOMBALL - Saturday, February 5,
*Activity status dependent upon ice conditions.

SNOW SCULPTURE CONTEST - Saturday, February 12,
*Activity status dependent upon snow availability.

CARDBOARD SLED DERBY - Saturday, February 19,
Unity Park 1:30p M.- Check-In;
Derby begins at 2:00pm.
*This event is dependent upon snow conditions.

WINTER BREAK POOL PARTIES - Times TBD
- Wednesday, February 23 - Raffles with Prizes
- Thursday, February 24 - Relay Races and Contests

ADULT PROGRAMS

SAWMILL RIVER 10K RUN
Saturday, January 1, 2011 - 10:00am Start. **Montague Center, MA.**
Divisions: YOUTH: 18 yrs. & Under; OPEN: 19 - 39 yrs.; MASTER: 40 - 49 yrs.; SENIOR: 50 - 59 yrs.; SENIOR +: 60 yrs. & Up
Entry Fees: \$25.00 (Paid before Jan. 1); \$30.00 (Day of Race)
A USA Track & Field sanctioned event.
This event benefits MPRD services, including the Sponsor-A-Child Scholarship Program.

TABLE TENNIS LEAGUE - Montague Center Town Hall; Tuesday Evenings; 6:00pm - 8:00pm. MPRD is looking to start a new, adult sports league (18 yrs. +) and is encouraging all interested parties to meet on Tuesday, January 11 @ 6:00pm to discuss the possibility of starting a table tennis league.

OPEN SWIM

Turners Falls High School Pool
Tuesday & Friday Evenings:
January - 4, 7, 11, 14, 18, 21, 25, 28
February - 1, 4, 8, 11, 15, 18, 22, 25
March - 1, 4, 8, 11
Family Swim: 6:30p - 7:30p
Adult Lap Swim: 7:30p - 8:30p
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GROWTH from pg 1 in town.
Land in more than one parcel may be totaled together to achieve the 75% open space threshold, and the parcels do not need to be contiguous, or even owned by the same owner.
The conservation commission, or a land trust, or some other private or public entity would hold a permanent conservation restriction on the preserved open space, which would first be subject to a conservation analysis by the applicant and approval from the planning board to determine the historical, recreational or environmentally important features of the land.
The planning board has been working on the conservation development bylaw for the last four years, and has turned to Jeff Lacy for consultation. Lacy, an environmental planner for the Department of Conservation and Recreation, also advised the town of Shutesbury when it passed a similar, but less far

reaching bylaw (which encouraged the preservation of back lot open space but did not link it to a slowdown of ANR development along roadways). Lacy is working with the town of New Salem on a bylaw similar to the one Wendell is now considering.

Other than these nearby efforts, Wendell's approach could be considered without precedent in the state of Massachusetts.

Lacy was present to answer questions last Tuesday. He said the proposed bylaw has been reviewed by town counsel. "Town counsel is satisfied it will survive challenge," if the voters approve the measure, Lacy said.

As for the configuration of clustered housing allowed under the conservation development bylaw, planning board member Deirdre Cabral said, "We're not going to be unreasonable about it. You will have to have lot lines. But you can use any configuration; you can have common driveways; you can have secondary dwellings. Building setbacks for outside property lines are still present," but are reduced on the sides and backs of the clustered housing.

There are a lot of fine points to the proposed bylaw, including added incentives for creating affordable housing, for preserving more than 75% of the land, and a detailed formula to determine how many units of housing can be created on the unrestricted parcels. The entire proposal may be viewed in draft form - the ninth draft - under the planning board section of the town website.

Among the few residents in attendance, Marianne Sundell said, "When it goes to town

meeting, if it looks like it will reduce your land's value, they will defeat you. Some of us moved up here to do the hippie commune thing. Some of us just want space."


Nancy Reibschlaeger, chair of the planning board, said the ability to build on smaller lots, and therefore less expensive lots, might be viewed as an asset by many in town. Planning board member Patty Smythe echoed that sentiment. "We're trying to make housing more affordable, so young people can stay here."

Michael Idoine said it would be possible to configure housing lots under the conservation development model in such a way that, "You can still have space."

Lacy said, "If someone has ten 'piano key lots' along the road in mind, and they just want to sell them and move to Florida, this may not work for them. But one lot can be immediately subdivided - for plenty of space - and the rest can go this way [with the conservation model]."

Cabral said, "This is not anti-development at all. In the short run, it may lead to more development. But it would be a pattern of development more in keeping with our open space plan and conservation values. People with back acreage will find it easier to put house lots there because common driveways will be allowed."

She added, "If you like Wendell the way it is, maybe you better do something to keep it that way. A huge amount of development could proceed under current bylaws."



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HIGHLIGHTS FROM THE LEVERETT POLICE LOG

Larceny of Snow Blower, Illegal Dumping

Friday, 11/19
1 p.m. Report of a snow blower stolen from a Broad Hill Road residence. Officer sent.
6:21 p.m. Arrest of [redacted] on a straight warrant, probation violation. Transported to the Franklin County House of Correction.

9:15 p.m. Report of a loose horse on North Leverett Road. Owner located and horse secured.
Sunday, 11/21
7:21 p.m. Report of illegal dumping off Jackson Hill Road. Officer checked, contacted Highway Dept. to pick up items.
Monday, 11/22
5:44 p.m. Motor vehicle citation issued to [redacted] for operation of a motor vehicle with a suspended registration.
Friday, 11/26
10:33 a.m. Officer sent to a January Hills residence for a woman who had fallen while walking her dog and struck her head. Disoriented. Transported by Amherst Fire Department Ambulance to Cooley Dickinson Hospital.
5:00 p.m. Female injured knee at Craig Equestrian Center on Long Plain Road. Transported by Amherst Fire Department Ambulance to Cooley Dickinson Hospital.
Sunday, 11/28
4:47 p.m. Richardson Road resident reported gunshots in the area. Area checked, unable to locate.

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THE HEALTHY GEEZER:

How to Cut Back on Salt in Your Diet



JESSICA HARMON ILLUSTRATION

BY FRED CICETTI

LEONIA, NJ – *In my last column, we discussed sodium in our diets. Today's column is devoted to tips about how to reduce our sodium intake.*

High-sodium diets are linked to increased blood pressure and a greater risk for heart disease and stroke. Reducing the amount of sodium you consume can help lower blood pressure or prevent it from developing.

Diet experts recommend a daily consumption of less than 2,400 milligrams (mg), which is the amount of sodium in a teaspoon of table salt. If you have high blood pressure, your doctor may advise limiting yourself to 1,500 mg of sodium a day.

Table salt (sodium chloride) is not the only problem. The main sources of sodium in the average U.S. diet are: 5 percent added while cooking, 6 percent added while eating, 12 percent from natural sources and 77 percent from processed foods.

About 9 out of 10 Americans consume too much sodium. Americans on average consume 3,436 mg sodium daily. How can

you cut down?

When you buy prepared and packaged foods, read the "Nutritional Facts" panel for the amount of sodium. Some products also include sodium terms.

Here's what they mean: "sodium-free," less than 5 mg per serving; "very low-sodium," 35 mg or less per serving; "low-sodium" 140 mg or less per serving; "reduced sodium," 25 percent less sodium than usual; "lite or light in sodium," 50 percent less sodium than the regular version; "unsalted," "no salt added" or "without added salt," contains only the sodium that's a natural part of the food.

The U.S. Food and Drug

Administration says foods that claim to be "healthy" must not exceed 480 mg sodium. "Meal type" products must not exceed 600 mg sodium.

Here are more tips:

- Decrease your use of salt gradually. As you use less salt, your preference for it diminishes;
- Keep the salt shaker off the table;
- Buy fresh, plain frozen, or canned "with no salt added" vegetables;
- Use fresh poultry, fish, and lean meat, rather than canned or processed types;
- Use herbs, spices, and salt-free seasoning blends;
- Cook rice, pasta, and hot

- cereals without salt;
 - Cut back on flavored rice, frozen dinners, pizza, packaged mixes, canned soups and packaged salad dressings;
 - Rinse canned foods, such as tuna, to remove some sodium.
 - Select unsalted nuts or seeds, dried beans, peas and lentils.
 - Limit salty snacks like chips and pretzels.
 - Add fresh lemon juice instead to fish and vegetables.
 - When eating out, ask your server about reducing sodium in your meal.
 - Remove salt from recipes whenever possible.
 - Cut down on sodium-rich condiments such as soy sauce, ketchup, mustard and relish.
- If you have a question, write to fred@healthygeez.com.*

RELIANCE from pg 1
duce of their gardens and farms, similar to the Franklin County Community Development Corporation's food processing center on Wells Street in Greenfield.

While a local food processing center might be a long range goal, the group of 15 growers and advocates focused Monday on more immediate steps, that may include a cooperative farm stand in town, bulk seed ordering, an online marketing forum where consumers can order food from local growers, or even preserving parties, where people get together and spend part of day simmering down tomato sauce or sharing a pressure cooker in someone's kitchen.

Keller mentioned a recent example of pooling resources to provide supportive technology. "A few of us got together and purchased a chicken plucker. It's worked fairly well, although it's hard to tell where it is at any point in time."

She said it would be valuable for growers in town to have access to tools for threshing and winnowing grain, and for pressing oil from crops like sunflowers, corn or black walnuts, and suggested such tools could be purchased cooperatively and shared communally.

Edgy or ledge-y, "We have a lot of small growers," said community garden coordinator Katie Nolan. "There's always a lot of excess."

Nolan pointed out that even at the community garden, food sometimes goes to waste, as this year when she attempted to give away extra basil to anyone who wanted some. "I was making so much pesto; a lot of the basil finally went to frost. Similar things happen in the home garden."

"Growing food seems to be quite easy," said selectboard member Jeff Pooser, himself a grower. "It's what to do with it when it's in excess," that's hard.

Food committee chair Paul Costello talked about an online resource called Mass Local Food, based out of Westminster, which links about 40 local growers to about 250 member consumers who preorder items from grass fed beef to cheese to root vegetables to local crafts. On a given day and time, the growers and crafters deliver their wares – and produce in season – to the pick-up spot (now housed in the former Finnish Farmers Coop in Westminster, or at town halls or other locations in nearby communities) where the members pay for what they've ordered

and take it home.

"It might be possible to set up our own system here in Wendell and include other towns," said Costello. "There'd be work involved in getting it off the ground."

Burton talked about the convenience of working with the Orange-based North Quabbin Food Cooperative, and having the coordinators call her up to see what she had available for distribution each week. The coop organizes drop off and pick up of local food at a storefront in downtown Orange – a model that could be copied in any community.

Botkin said the committee should look at ways of encouraging barter among growers and consumers, and ways to educate community members to grow more of their own food.

"On our small farm, the most valuable thing we have is knowledge," Botkin said. "It outweighs any rutabaga, or anything else we've grown." He said community "hoop house raisings," could be organized to set up low tech greenhouses, using plastic instead of glass, to extend the growing season year round. Botkin also advocated community solutions to providing resources like mulch hay, leaves and compost – items each

family farm or grower may need to expand production and extend the growing season.

Keller suggested speaking to property owners whose land is more favorably situated for agriculture than may be the norm in Wendell, to see if they would be willing to have lawns or back lots converted to gardens or farming, and perhaps matching up people in town who might like to grow food with people in town who might have land suitable for growing.

Heather Reed suggested that Wendell's new food coordinator, once hired, should "start simple," and build from there.

As Jonathan von Ranson said, "There are a lot of hungry people out there going to supermarkets and buying far away food. If we could link them up with local growers..."

That's a big if, even in a town as edgy as Wendell. It will be the food coordinator's task to try to make that happen.



Search Committee Expands

LEVERETT - The Amherst - Pelham regional school committee has responded to protest from the school committees of the member towns of Shutesbury and Leverett by expanding the number of seats on the superintendent search committee to allow for one seat each for representatives from those towns.

On November 16th, the Leverett school committee joined Shutesbury in writing to the region to demand representation on the search committee assigned the task of screening candidates to fill the post of superintendent of schools. That position has been filled on an interim basis by Maria Geryk

since the sudden departure of Alberto Rodriguez in March of this year. Rodriguez was the fourth superintendent to lead the Amherst-Pelham region in the last two years.

On November 23rd, the regional school committee responded by expanding the number of seats on the search committee from eight to ten, and dedicating one seat each for Leverett and Shutesbury.

Residents who may be interested in serving on that committee, or on a soon to be formed education study committee for the town of Leverett, may contact: Kip Fonsh at kfonsh@yahoo.com or Farshid Hajir at hajir@math.umass.edu.

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GO GREEN FAMILY

Episode 35: Greenwashing Clothing

JEANNE WEINTRAUB-MASON
MONTAGUE CENTER – After loading three paper bags of clothes left over from the tag sale into their car, Jane, Nell and little Betty drove to the Salvation Army in Hadley to drop them off. The community tag sale had been a big success, with one notable exception: Betty had fallen head

over heels in love with a Pink Lady Pedal Car, and Nell had broken down and bought it. It didn't matter that they had no space for the hideous plastic thing, or that Betty's feet couldn't reach the pedals. Betty had launched into a full-out tantrum when Jane gently tried to tell Betty she'd need to leave the Pink Lady car behind.


"Think of it as an early Christmas present for Betty," Nell suggested, after she'd bought the toy and Betty had calmed down.

Jane restrained herself from reminding Nell that they'd agreed


not to purchase any gifts for Christmas this year, that they'd agreed to exchange non-monetary gifts instead, like offering to give a massage or cook a gourmet dinner. "Just let it go," she told herself. Betty was sure to get tired of it soon enough, and then she'd make it disappear. Like the EcoSprouts jumpsuit. She turned to her partner.

"Don't tell your mom, Nell, but I've thrown away the EcoSprouts jumpsuit. Betty kept telling me she felt itchy, and when I looked at her arms and legs, she had an awful rash! I took her to see Dr. Hernandez,

Robbins-Levine Family



Jane, 34
Biology Professor



Nell, 32
Fiber Artist

and he said it was from the dye in the fabric."

"Really! So I guess Beverly Bartlett forgot about the dye when she advertised that thing as organic silk and bamboo. We should sue her, Jane! I don't see how that woman can claim her clothing is green when she's using chemicals like that. Isn't there some kind of law?"

"It's called greenwashing, Nell. That's when you lie about how green your product is so you can jack up the price. Companies are doing it all the time now that green is trendy. And politicians too."



Later, while pulling the staples off the price tags on the sweaters, pants and shirts they'd bought at

Salvation Army, Nell turned on the TV.

"I can't believe she actually won the election! Our home-grown Palin girl," exclaimed Jane. Rita Tinker, their fellow GGF contestant, was on the news, saying something about 'developing our natural resources' and clean energy. A half minute in, Nell observed Jane beginning to grit her teeth.

"Put her next to a microphone, and you never know what's going to come out. So let me get this straight — little miss 'Go Green Family' thinks coal and nuclear power are clean energy sources, and biomass is dirty. If she didn't actually represent the good people of Franklin and Hampshire County, I'd think that was a hoot. But this misinformation is too dangerous. We've really got to do something."

"Like what?" Nell wanted to know.

"Like give the facts. I'm calling Sam Lively at WGBJ."

Continued next issue...

PUBLIC MEETING NOTICE

MONTAGUE CONSERVATION COMMISSION

In accordance with the Massachusetts Wetlands Protection Act, M.G.L. Ch. 131, Sec. 40, the Montague Conservation Commission will discuss the following application at 6:45 pm, December 09, 2010 at Town Hall, One Avenue A, Turners Falls: Request for Determination #2010-05 by Justin Fermann and Michelle Spaziani of 48 Randall Wood Drive.

Request for determination as to whether the clearing of 0.5 acres of trees and brush and the installation of up to 1000 square feet of raised-bed vegetable plots for personal cultivation is subject to the Wetlands Protection Act. The proposed plots will lie within the 200' resource area of a stream running along Greenfield Road. The property is located on Greenfield Road, Montague, MA. Identified as Assessors Map 22 Lot 33.

Applications and plans describing the work may be examined in the Planning and Conservation Office, One Avenue A, Turners Falls, during regular working hours.



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AWARDS from pg 10 participating in regular sports programs.

Music of our Hearts: A musical journey around the world for Montague Elementary school provides about 25 English Language Learning students, Pre-K-5, an opportunity to host a multicultural event for the entire school community.

Overnight Book Bags for Montague Elementary School classrooms supplies canvas bags and paint supplies to decorate their bags to approximately 51 first grade students. These bags will be used to carry books home, so the students can practice reading at home before returning the books to school.

Rise Up Cakes for Kids will provide materials for grades 9 – 12 at TFHS to bake birthday cakes for children living in homeless shelters and cupcakes for Griffin's Friends, (an organization providing support for children receiving treatment for cancer at Baystate Medical Center). The students will learn from a guest baker, and with the assistance of the bakers at Second Street Baking Company.

Phillips told the school committee, "These grants demonstrate a means to improve student learning, develop community connections and outreach, engage students and educate the whole child."



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THURSDAY, DECEMBER 9th
Deja Brew, Wendell: *Free Range*, Classic rock and dance music, 8 to 10 p.m.

Rendezvous, Turners Falls: *Lisa D. & Steve A. & Friends' Holiday Spectacular*, 7:30 p.m. Free.

FRIDAY to SATURDAY, DECEMBER 10 to 11th
Shea Theater, Turners Falls: *Welcome Yule: A Midwinter Celebration*. 7:30 p.m. Additional showing Sunday, Dec. 12th at 2 p.m.

FRIDAY, DECEMBER 10th
Deja Brew, Wendell: *Richard Chase Group*, Acoustic driven originals, 9 to 11 p.m.

Route 63 Roadhouse, Millers Falls: *Tracy & Company*, 9:30 p.m.

Rendezvous, Turners Falls: *Smiley Bob* (rock/pop/funny!) Free. 9:30 p.m.

Montague Grange: *Dance of the Snow Queen*: A community solstice puppet show with dancers, actors, musicians and other performers, with a special appearance by belly dancer Attar & her troupe. 6 to 9

pm.
Burrito Rojo, Turners Falls: *Stone Coyotes*, 8 p.m.

SATURDAY, DECEMBER 11th
Deja Brew, Wendell: *Josh Levangie & The Mud, Blood & Beer Band*. Singing all your Johnny Cash favorites and many more. 9 to 11 p.m.

Great Falls Discovery Center, Turners Falls: *Outdoor Skills Workshop Series: Finding Your Way in the Woods*. 1 to 2 p.m. An hour long exploration of compasses. All ages and experience levels are welcome. Pre-Registration is Required. 863-3221.

Rendezvous, Turners Falls: *Kurtyka Kills Christmas*, musical, pageant, Free.

Route 63 Roadhouse, Millers Falls: *Turn It Loose*, 9:30 p.m.

FRIDAY, DECEMBER 3rd
Deja Brew, Wendell: *Simon White & Co*, Reggae, 9 to 1 p.m.

Route 63 Roadhouse, Millers Falls: *JATOBA*, unique and energetic "Groovegrass" sound, 9:30 p.m.

Rendezvous, Turners Falls: *4 toads in a basket*, 9:30 p.m.

Montague Bookmill: *Darlingside w/ Matthew Larsen & the Documents*, 8 p.m.

Burrito Rojo, Turners Falls: *Andy Friedman/ Jazz Demolition Project*, folk, Jazz, experimental, 8 p.m.

SATURDAY, DECEMBER 4th
Great Falls Discovery Center, Turners Falls: *Junior Duck Stamp Exhibit Reception*, 1 to 3 p.m.

Montague Grange New Moon Coffee House, 6 to 9 p.m. A

Winter Solstice Celebration, Pagan Folk Music & Chant.

Montague Community Band holiday concert at the First Congregational Church, Turners Falls, 148 L St., 7:30 p.m. Free.

Deja Brew, Wendell: *Eric Love, 60's & 70's music*. 9 - 11 p.m.
Montague Bookmill: *Group DeVilleville and Fancy Trash*, 8 p.m.



Now in its twenty-sixth year, *Welcome Yule: A Midwinter Celebration* visits Cape Breton Island, recreating a community tavern filled with the joy and mystery of midwinter. At the Shea Theater, Dec. 10th and 11th at 7:30 p.m. and Sunday, Dec. 12th at 2 p.m.

Rendezvous, Turners Falls: *Suzee's Lost and Found Fashion Show* after-party with DJ Greg 2000. Free.

SUNDAY, DECEMBER 5th
Home For The Holidays concert featuring Sgt. Dan Clark (the singing trooper) & Mary Colarusso, and *Rhapsody Blue* in the Turners Fall High School Theater. Benefit for the Gill/Montague Education Fund. 2:30 p.m.

Route 63 Roadhouse, Millers Falls: *Septeto Tipico Tivoli*, traditional Cuban Band, 4 p.m.

The Third-Annual Tree Lighting at Peskeomskut Park, Turners Falls, 3 to 5 p.m. Come and be a part of the festivities. The more the merrier!

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7. WAITING FOR SUPERMAN
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LEVERETT from page 7 allowed at the Gutter, but to prohibit climbing at the top of the cliffs would limit the group's ability to achieve those goals.

"It's rare in Massachusetts to find a vertical cliff that height that has the rock qualities the Gutter has - no loose, friable rock, very distinct features, a very solid face."

A documented paleo-Indian archeological site exists further down Rattlesnake Gutter, though no such sites have been identified on the parcel now known as Rattlesnake Hill.

Selectboard chair Rich Brazeau called Rattlesnake Gutter, and Brushy Mountain, "the heart of Leverett." He added, "I don't like the idea of prohibiting something forever; that's ominous."

Bob Dolan said, "I see those cliffs and I drool." But, he said, "It has ravens' nests. It's extremely pristine. We all have to recognize there are places we just don't belong, doing certain

things. I'll just have to find other places to climb."

Selectboard member Peter D'Errico noted the conservation restriction already contains general language that would allow the town to effectively manage Rattlesnake Hill, without including an explicit prohibition on climbing.

The CR already provides for "non-motorized outdoor recreational activities that do not materially alter the landscape, and do not degrade environmental quality." D'Errico said with that wording, "We have enough management guidelines right there."

Brazeau asked the Rattlesnake Gutter Trust to meet with the conservation commission to try to work out any additional language that could satisfy the needs of all parties, without invoking an explicit ban on climbing, and Wilson said the Trust would attempt to do so. Brazeau said the issue could be brought to town meeting, if need be, to get a

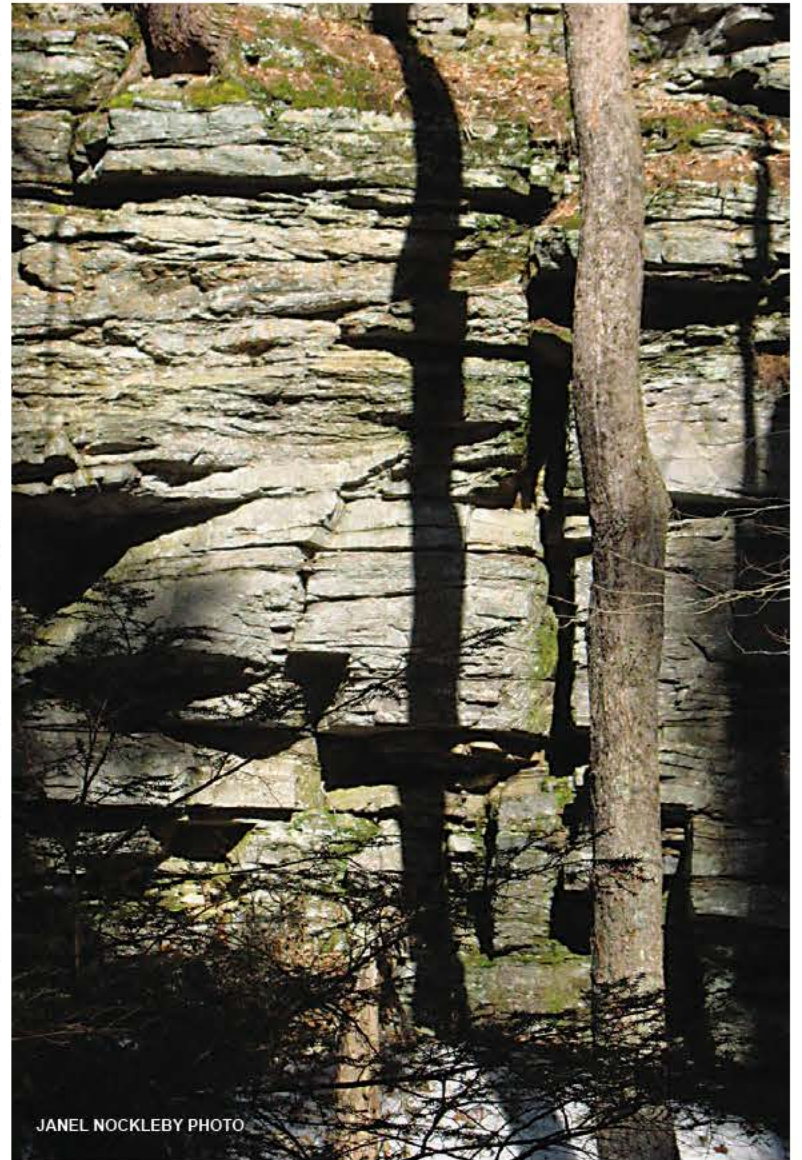
broader sense of opinion.

For their part, Wilson said, the issue becomes "exactly how do we as a Trust meet our responsibilities. The conservation restriction is about protecting the land. A conservation restriction is in perpetuity, which turns out to be a very long time."

In other news, the selectboard will meet at 9:30 in the morning on December 17th, at town hall, with Karen Sunnaborg, an affordable housing consultant from Jamaica Plain who has been working with the selectboard to refine a plan to create affordable housing units in town.

The board gave permission for the Council on Aging to put up a sandwich board sign outside town hall to announce programs like SHINE counseling and flu clinics.

Town administrative assistant Margie McGinnis said the start of the Siemens Building Technology energy perform-



JANEL NOCKLEBY PHOTO

Rattlesnake Gutter Scene



DETMOLD PHOTO

Mary Alice Wilson (left) describes the Rattlesnake Gutter Trust's position on rock climbing on Rattlesnake Hill to members of the Western Massachusetts Climbing Coalition and residents at Tuesday's selectboard meeting.

ance contract for town buildings "has not gone smoothly." CORI checks for subcontractors working to change out old lighting fixtures at the elementary school for new energy saving models have not been completed, though the work is still planned for completion before the end of the year, in order to obtain full utility rebates.

On the plus side, Leverett received notification that the Massachusetts School Building Association has invited Leverett into the state's Green Building program, and will be inspecting the elementary school soon to see if the planned roof and window replacement at that facility qualifies to receive reimbursement from the state.

TEACHERS from page 9 seemed to take issue. She recalled, "A lot of the best teachers I had when I was here I socialized with outside of school hours."

Intergenerational friendship, Hatch added, is important in academia: "Students who go to college are going to find that the only way to get what you want in the academic world is to befriend a professor in your field."

Kelly Loynd said she and her husband, who works for the

district, like to be listed as friends on their children's Facebook site as a way of staying apprised of their activities and associations.

Kristin Boyle, secretary of the school committee, noted, "Some students are not in the ideal household, or in any household at all. We've spoken before of creating a mentoring relationship between - I thought - students and teachers."

She said the proposed policy could interfere "if you're going

to communicate with a student, give a student a ride... if you're going to fulfill that role and try to get these students to stay in school, you have to go [to the communications medium] where they're comfortable, to provide that role."

"We don't yet have that mentoring system in place," responded Ladd. "If it became an issue, we could be notified and respond quickly. You can always use our (school) phone."

Teacher Karl Dziura stood up and told the committee, "When I

call parents from the school, it's much more difficult to get them to answer, because the number doesn't show up on Caller ID. It's much more successful when I call them from home."

The whole discussion lasted for over half an hour as committee members explored the paradox of keeping parts of people's lives separate and other parts engaged fruitfully across the generations, with full energy and connection.

The consensus at the end of the discussion was to ask Ladd

to delete the section containing specifics on the proposed policy - how coaches should communicate with team members, for example - and other items that committee member Hatch called "unenforceable" and attempt instead to more thoroughly define the concept of improper fraternization.

At that point, the committee will take a further look at the policy proposal, and work with the teachers union before bringing the matter to a vote.

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