



POETRY PAGES

Poems from your neighbors
Pages 8 and 9

HAPPY HOLIDAYS!

No paper next week



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The Montague Reporter

YEAR 6 - NO. 12

also serving Gill, Erving and Wendell

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THE VOICE OF THE VILLAGES

DECEMBER 20, 2007

Access to Farley Ledges Supported

BY NICHOLE CLAYTON

ERVING - Jeff Squire, of South Hadley, president of the Western Massachusetts

Climbers Coalition, came to the selectboard with two other members of his group, seeking the board's support in an effort to conserve and protect seven acres of land, including trails leading to the Farley Ledges. The Coalition purchased the land just over a year ago. The group plans to put in a parking area on the property, which is on the north side of Route 2, between the intersection of Maple Avenue and Old State Road, to allow access to the hiking trails. In hopes of defraying the cost of the purchase, the coalition has subdivided the property, and offered for sale a house and two acres of the nine originally purchased.

Squire asked the board to write a letter of support to accompany a \$30,000 recreational trails grant application the group is submitting to the Department of Conservation and Recreation. The Coalition paid \$80,000 to purchase the property originally.

"We are a non-profit organization with a small yearly budget of around \$2,000 in a normal year, so the purchase of this property was a huge undertaking for us. However, it was an opportunity we felt could not be passed up," Squire said.

The group is also pursuing fundraising to support the land purchase, and see **FARLEY** pg 10

Hillside Plastics Plans to Expand

BY DAVID DETMOLD

TURNERS FALLS - One of Montague's major employers is planning for expansion.

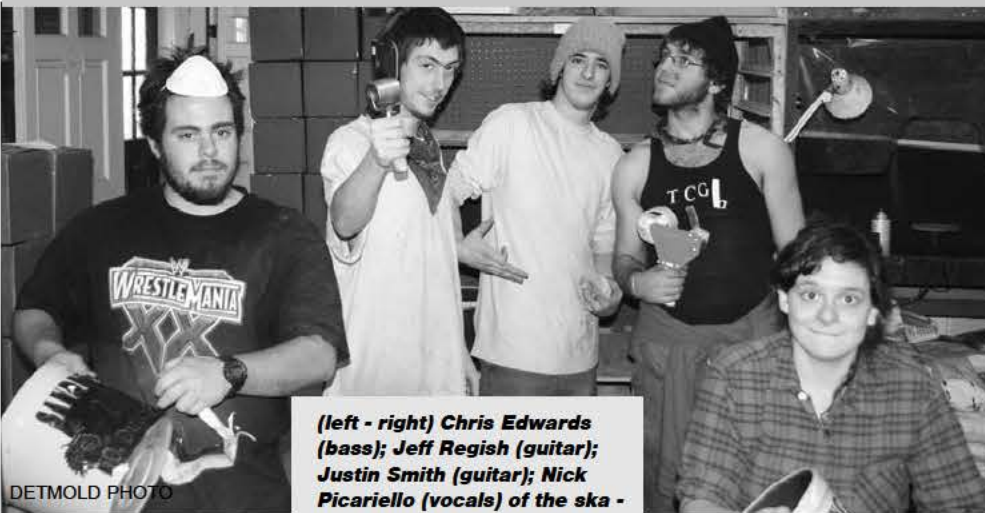
Hillside Plastics, on Millers Falls Road, is seeking approval from the planning board and conservation commission to build a 30,000 square foot expansion to its present 40,000 square foot factory. Additionally, Hillside hopes to expand an unpaved parking lot in the rear of the facility, to "potentially double" the fleet of trailers parked there as mobile storage units for the company's line of hard plastic containers, according to company vice president Greg Haas. Haas said Hillside currently has 80 trailers parked in the rear of the plant.

The company's expansion plans were held up by "a few years" of negotiations with the Massachusetts Natural Heritage and Endangered Species program, as the acreage under consideration for expansion of the plant and parking lot is designated 'priority habitat' for Eastern box turtles, a 'species of special concern' in Massachusetts. Those negotiations are now concluded, Haas said, with an agreement on Hillside Plastic's part to deed ten acres of their 35½-acre parcel over to Massachusetts Fish and Wildlife, to become part of MFW's 1500-acre wildlife preserve on the Montague Plains.

"We've been working to create an expansion plan sensitive to their needs," said Haas. He said a final survey found no nesting site for the box turtles, and "minimal use." Asked what he meant by

see **EXPAND** pg 10

LOCAL BAND GETS A JOB!



DETMOLD PHOTO

BY DAVID DETMOLD

TURNERS FALLS - Back in November, the selectboard was wrestling with a request from a local business owner to remove a bench from Avenue A, near 3rd Street, where young people were hanging out, and, according to Richard Mascavage, owner of

(left - right) Chris Edwards (bass); Jeff Regish (guitar); Justin Smith (guitar); Nick Picariello (vocals) of the ska-punk band OFC, with Abbey Banks, formerly of Vomit Dichotomy, have pitched in with others to get Carriage House Designs through the Holiday Crunch.

Pipione's Sport Shop at 101 Avenue A, intimidating his clientele. They decided not to remove that bench; in fact they voted to install another one, closer to the

Avenue A Café, where for a while the congregating youth gravitated. But even before the onset of really cold weather in December, the daylight crowds chillin' on the Avenue had dispersed. Where had they gone?

see **BAND** pg 12

Frederick Oakes, Renaissance Man

BY JOE KWIECINSKI

GILL - Imagine the world that awaited Frederick Oakes, well-known former teacher in the Montague public school system, on the date of his birth - June 23rd, 1913 - in Lunenburg, a small town east of Fitchburg. There were no radios, no television sets, no highways. The First World War, the first stock market crash, the Great Depression, Prohibition, and New Deal were all in the future.

"My childhood was almost a 19th century boyhood," Oakes remarked, in a recent interview at his home by the Connecticut River in Gill. His family had none of the conveniences that would soon become common in American society. Travel was

still conducted by horse and a b u g g y , although those conveyances were surpassed by automobiles within the decade.

"I remember learning of President Harding's death in 1923," Oakes recalled. "I was feeding the chickens when my mother told me," of the president's death by



JUDY OAKES PHOTO

Frederick Oakes and his wife Jane at his 93rd birthday party, summer of 2006, at their home in Gill.

heart attack in San Francisco, and the passing of the mantle of national leadership to vice pres-

ident Calvin Coolidge, the former mayor of Northampton, Massachusetts.

O a k e s recalled his early love of reading and writing. "We used to walk to the library every week," he noted, "and find out what the latest book was."

Today, at the age of 94, Frederick Oakes is the last surviving member of the Class of 1931 at Turners Falls High

School. He went to Tufts University, where he graduated with straight A's, as an English major. His sister Elsie followed him to Tufts, where both brother and sister contracted and overcame polio, a dangerous disease in those days. [Elsie went on to teach English in California, and to author five novels under her married name, Elsie Oakes Baker, including *Jenny Angel*, on which *Angel Baby*, Burt Reynold's breakout film, was based in 1961.]

Immediately following his graduation, Oakes began working in the office at Kendall Cotton Mill in Turners Falls. But armed with a college degree and a passion for learn-

see **OAKES** pg 11

PET OF THE WEEK**One and Only****Beulah**

My name is Beulah and I'm a 2-1/2-year-old female Bassett mix in need of a good home. I'm about the size and build of a Bassett Hound, but I have a very unique face. I don't have the long droopy hound ears, but I do love having my ears scratched. I'd like to play fetch outside or hang out with you on a cold day, snuggled up on the couch. I like people a lot, and I hope I can be your only pet so I can have all your love! Dogs- no, cats- no, kids- 10+. For more information on adoption please contact the Dakin Pioneer Valley Humane Society at 413-548-9898 or via email at levrett@dpvhs.org.

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

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MONTAGUE LIBRARIES NEWS**Holiday Week Happenings**

BY LINDA HICKMAN

The Montague Public Libraries will be closed on Christmas Eve, Christmas, and New Year's Day. The Carnegie Library and Montague Center Library will close at 5 p.m. on New Year's Eve. Preschool Story Hour will be held on Wednesday, December 26th with a theme of snow stories, at 10:15 a.m. Music and

Movement will be held at the Montague Center Library, on Thursday, December 27th, at 10 a.m. with Michael Nix and Linda Hickman. Music and Movement will move to the Carnegie Library for January and February on Thursdays, at 10 a.m. with Tom Carroll and Laurie Davidson. For more information, call 863-3214.

WENDELL LIBRARY NEWS**New Groups Starting**

Sun., January 6th - Mostly Yoga, 10-11 a.m.

Bring yoga mat, blanket, towel. Suggested donation \$1.00 or more. No scents or perfumes.

Wed., January 9th - Parent & Newborn to Pre-schooler Playgroup, 11- noon. Free

New Library Hours beginning January 5th: Tuesday 3-6, Wednesday 11 - 8, Saturday 9:30 - 3:30

Holiday Schedule - Closed Dec. 25th & 26th, January 1st Open Dec. 29th regular hours

Habitat for Humanity Seeks Families

Pioneer Valley Habitat for Humanity is looking for families interested in purchasing a simple decent affordable home.

An information session will be held to introduce people to the Habitat for Humanity program and tell them how to qualify to become a partner family. That meeting will be held on January 6th at 3:00 p.m. in First Baptist Church Parish House, 116 Federal Street, Greenfield. Applications are now being received for a home in Turners Falls.

All interested persons must attend an information session before receiving an application form. Applications for this home must be postmarked by January 14, 2008.

Habitat for Humanity selects partner families on the following criteria:

- Need, which means that pre-

sent housing is not adequate and the family is unable to obtain adequate housing through conventional means.

- Ability to pay, which means a family will be making affordable payments on a no-interest mortgage to purchase their home. Applicants must meet the guidelines of having income between 30% and 50% of the median income for the area.

- Willingness to partner with Habitat, which means putting in many hours of "sweat equity" in helping to build the house and working with the organization in other ways.

Habitat for Humanity is an equal housing opportunity organization. Those interested in further information can call the Habitat office at 413/586-5430 or visit the website at www.pioneervalleyhabitat.org .

SENIOR CENTER ACTIVITIES Dec. 24th-Jan. 4th

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

Monday, 24th
10 a.m. Senior Aerobics
11 a.m. Easy Aerobics
Tuesday, 25th
Closed for Christmas
Wednesday, 25th
10 a.m. Senior Aerobics
12:45 p.m. Bingo
Thursday, 26th
9:30 a.m. T'ai Chi
Friday, 27th
10 a.m. Senior Aerobics
11 a.m. Easy Aerobics

Monday, 31st
10 a.m. Senior Aerobics
11 a.m. Easy Aerobics
Tuesday, 1st
Closed for New Year's Day
Wednesday, 2nd
10 a.m. Senior Aerobics
12:45 p.m. Bingo
Thursday, 3rd
9:30 a.m. T'ai Chi
Friday, 4th
10 a.m. Senior Aerobics
11 a.m. Easy Aerobics

ERVING Senior Center, 18 Pleasant St., Erving (Old Center School, 1st Floor), is open Monday through Thursday from 9 a.m. to 2 p.m. for activities and congregate meals. For information and reservations call Polly Kiely, Senior Center director at 413 423-3308. Lunch daily at 11:30 a.m. with reservations a day in advance by 11:00 a.m. Transportation can be provided for meals, Thursday shopping, or medical necessity by calling Dana Moore at 978 544-3898.

Monday, 24th

FACES & PLACES

DETMOLD PHOTO

Piles of Paper Await Shipping at Strathmore Mill
The town of Montague is considering giving former mill owner Jerry Jones a deadline by which to remove 20 to 40 tractor trailer loads of recycled paper from the mill. As of Monday, no paper had been removed in months.

Holiday Hours in Gill

All meetings regularly scheduled for Monday evenings December 24th and 31st are cancelled or postponed in observance of the holidays. The selectboard will meet Friday, December 21st, at 9:30 a.m. The town hall will be closed December 24th. The

collector/treasurer's office, selectboard's office, and assessors' office will be open on December 31st, but the town clerk's office will be closed. Trash and recycling collection will be delayed to Saturday both the week of Christmas and New Years.

MONTAGUE TRASH & RECYCLING SCHEDULE

Due to Christmas and New Year holidays, the trash and recycling schedule will change as follows for the next two weeks: Tuesday will be picked up on Wednesday; Wednesday will be picked up on Thursday; Thursday will be picked up on Friday.

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Six Women Arrested at Vermont Yankee

VERNON, VT - Vermont state and local police arrested six women of the Shut It Down Affinity Group on Tuesday, December 18th, as they implored Vermont Yankee nuclear power plant officers to allow them to present safety concerns to newly-appointed safety officer Ricardo

phant dung labeled "nuclear waste." The six women arrested Tuesday were Julia Bonafine, 39, of Shrewsbury, Vermont; Paki Wieland, 64, and Frances Crowe, 88, of Northampton, Massachusetts; Ellen Graves, 67, of West Springfield, Massachusetts; Hattie Nestel,

sion of radiation from the facility, stop the flow of hot water from the plant into the Connecticut River, stop misleading advertising about nuclear energy, stop storing nuclear waste on the power plant site, and stop the transportation of hazardous nuclear waste from the plant through



In snow, from left, at gates of Vermont Yankee nuclear power plant in Vernon, VT, Frances Crowe, 88, of Northampton, Massachusetts; Julia Bonafine, 39, of Shrewsbury, Vermont; Hattie Nestel, 68, of Athol, Massachusetts; Ellen Graves, 67, of West Springfield, Massachusetts; Marcia Gagliardi, 60, of Athol, Massachusetts. Vernon police chief Kevin Turnley, rear.

Fernandes and his counterpart Beth Siemel.

The Vermont Yankee nuclear reactor is operated by the Entergy Corporation and is scheduled for decommissioning in 2012. Entergy is seeking a 20-year extension on the plant's operating license. The August collapse of a cooling tower at Vermont Yankee, followed a week later by an unscheduled emergency shutdown prompted Vermont's Republican governor, Jim Douglas, and the Vermont State Nuclear Advisory Panel, to join a growing list of legislators and government bodies in calling for an independent safety assessment of the 34-year-old reactor.

When security guards, Vermont state troopers, and the Vernon police chief Kevin Turnley told the women to leave the gated area at the power plant or face arrest, they read their list of hazards aloud. They carried two oil-painted banners of white elephants representing the aging nuclear power plant with a pile of ele-

phant dung labeled "nuclear waste."

Originally, the women arrived at what has consistently been designated Entergy headquarters on Old Ferry Road in Brattleboro and used a telephone in the vestibule to contact Entergy officials in order to deliver their list of concerns to Fernandes and Siemel. An Entergy employee who would identify herself only as Nancy told them that the executives' offices had moved from the Old Ferry Road site to the power plant.

When the women arrived at the power plant, the Vernon police chief and Entergy security guards and other officials barred them from the gate and asked them to leave. They were arrested about a half hour later, booked at the Vernon police station, charged with unlawful trespass, and ordered to appear in Windham County District Court to answer the charges on February 19th, 2008.

The women asked that the safety officers stop the emis-

sion of radiation from the facility, stop the flow of hot water from the plant into the Connecticut River, stop misleading advertising about nuclear energy, stop storing nuclear waste on the power plant site, and stop the transportation of hazardous nuclear waste from the plant through

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NMH Christmas Eve Service

MOUNT HERMON - Northfield Mount Hermon School's chaplain Michael Corrigan will host a Christmas Eve service at the school's Memorial Chapel December

24th at 4:30 p.m. The service is open to all, and will feature readings and carols. For directions, call the chaplain's office at 498-3338 or visit www.nmh-school.org.

Iraq Peace March in Greenfield



BY ERIC WASILESKI
 MONTAGUE CENTER - On Friday, December 21st, local folks who believe in peace will be gathering for a candlelight demonstration in downtown Greenfield, at 4 p.m., in support of the a national movement for an Iraq Moratorium. The Iraq Moratorium is a decentralized call for peace movement activities on the third Friday of each month, centered on the popular belief that the war in Iraq should end. On behalf of the Western Massachusetts Iraq Moratorium Committee, the local chapter of Veterans for Peace (95) has obtained a permit to gather behind Green Fields Market, proceed up the north side of the Main Street sidewalk, and proceed down the south side sidewalk to hold a peace vigil and speakout on the town common. All voices will be welcome.

that day. Please consider coming and bringing a friend, candle and a sign (we will have candles and signs, if you just bring yourself). For more information, contact Eric Wasileski by email at meeckman@wild-mail.com. Go to www.Iraqmoratorium.org to learn about events around the nation.

The procession will be led by local clergy, and backed up by local veterans. Veterans for Peace invites all who hold the vision of a peaceful world to join with us, and join with people across the country who are participating in similar events


The Bolt Hole
 by local author
Lyn Clark
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"The Voice of the Villages"

Founded by
Harry Brandt David Detmold
August, 2002

Photography
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Yuletide Cheer

It is the dead of winter, and the soles of our boots crunch through once familiar paths with a teeth-gritting, cornstarch sound. The walls of buildings grow closer to the street in skirts of snow, footsteps echo in the drifted alleyways where strays huddle, yearning for an elusive pool of pale sun. It is dark by four.

People greet one another with best wishes of the season. Every act is an act of courtesy. Pushing cars stuck deep in snow, deposited at our door by caffeinated plow drivers in the rumbling passes of the night. Offering a hand, sanding the sidewalk, finding a place for the dog to go, and absconding with the evidence.

Baked goods appear in the foyer where none appeared before. The best oatmeal cookies, warm with raisins. Christmas stolen baked to last the trip down wind sculpted baked Alaska streets. Christmas cards and New Years wishes, evergreen and bitter-sweet.

Every religion in these northern climes celebrates a holy day as the world tilts back towards the sustaining sun, after teetering to the apogee of its tether. Call it the miracle of the light, call it Christmas, call it Yule, we all welcome the child of hope back into our hearts at this time of year, and

light the candle to the returning warmth, and life, and Spring.

It is a time for giving gifts, for remembering the joy we take in one another's company, for the blessing of family, friends, and community without which our lives would be empty.

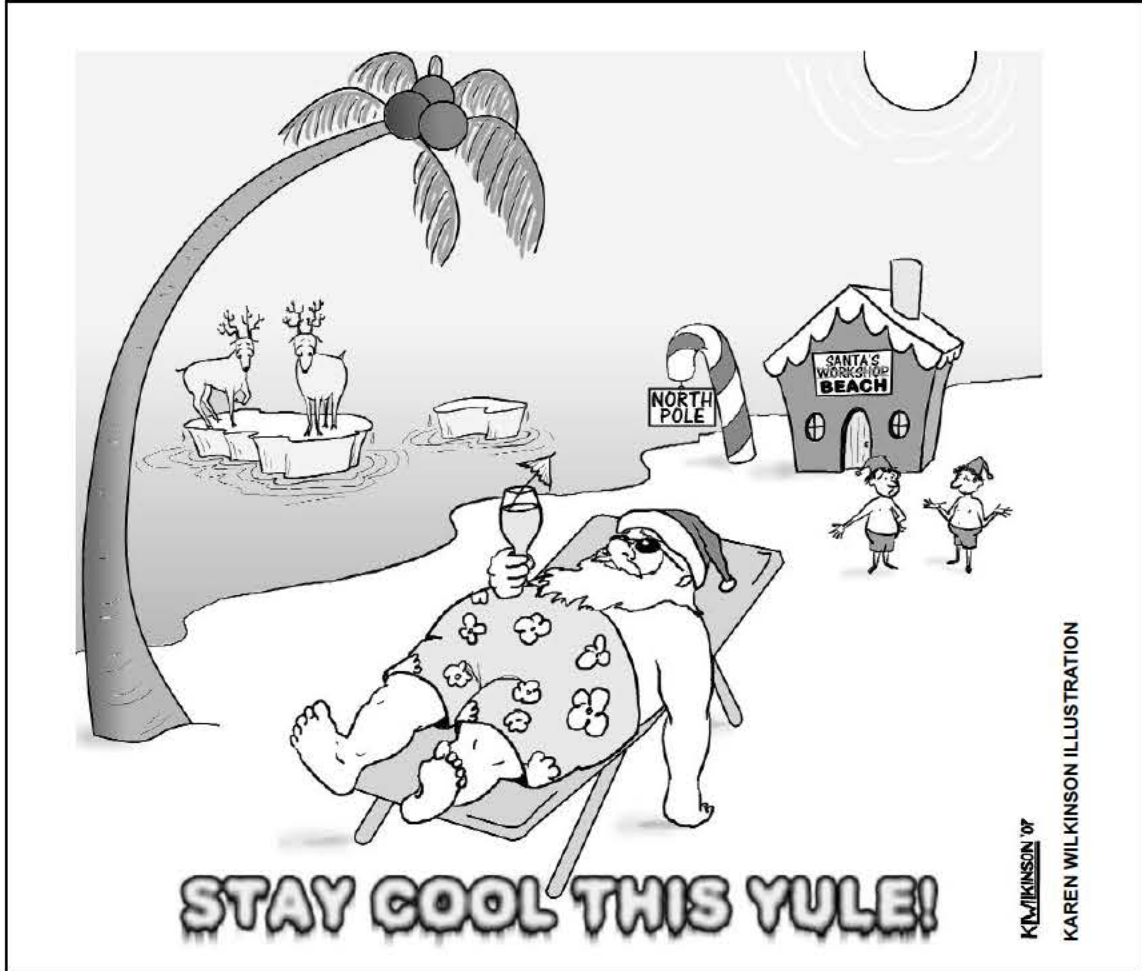
Perhaps too, it is a time for reflecting on the shadow cast on those less fortunate, of whose plight our bounty is the causal force. It is a time for charity, and humility, the reckoning of debts and the righting of balances.

Above all, it is a time of Peace, as we gather in houses of worship to pray, and, many of us, to celebrate the birth of an avatar of non-violence and love for humanity, and to take the lesson of an exemplary life into our own.

What can we do to bring an end to war? What can we do to lend a hand to those around us who are hungry, homeless, or in pain? Whatever we can do towards these ends, now, in the dark of winter and the nadir of our country's soul, is the perfect time to reflect upon, resolve, and, indeed, to do.

In New England, we have a time-honored tradition of helping neighbors through the long hard winter, and cheering them with word and deed. We also have a tradition of acting as the conscience of our nation, and

expanding the circle of who those neighbors are. On this breathing orb, now topped with clinquant snow, that circle is as large as the moon, the evaporating atmosphere, the foray to Iraq and back, the nearest prison cell and warming grate, the blue hemlock berry and the last wild salmon run. We all share this neighborhood, and the responsibility of caring for it.



KAREN WILKINSON ILLUSTRATION

LETTERS TO THE EDITOR

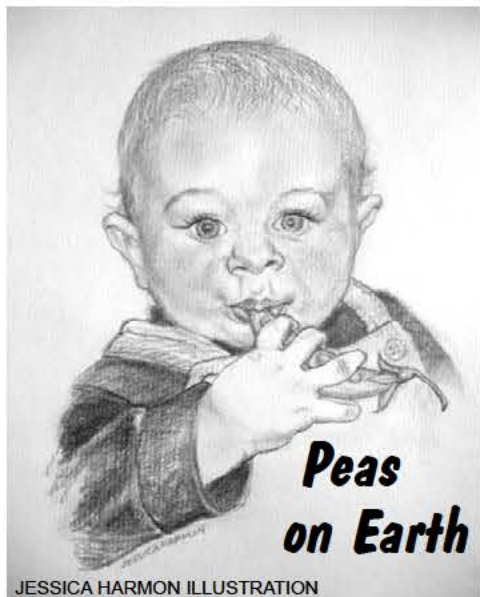
Conflicting Concerns

As a member of the Montague selectboard, I would like to point out that the remarks of Dr. Ross at the December 3rd selectboard meeting were not representative of any concern I have for a potential conflict of interest on the part of Lisa Davol, Montague's cultural coordinator. Dr. Ross's remarks were solely his point of view. I hope he will read the RiverCulture economic survey and learn how much the combined

efforts of RiverCulture and its partners have contributed to the town's economic livelihood, as well as cultural liveliness these past two years. These efforts involve the commitment, energy, and funds of many Montague and Franklin County businesses and individuals. That all of this fruitful effort and accomplishment should suddenly be deemed insignificant because the town needs to find new sources of funds doesn't make sense to

me. I'm not sure if that was what Dr. Ross meant. I hope not.

- Patricia Pruitt
Turners Falls



JESSICA HARMON ILLUSTRATION

Give a Gift from Home this Season

As we think of our friends and family and make out our lists, each year we ask ourselves, "What Can We Give Them?" The *Montague Reporter* has answered that question in a most timely way. How easy it is to sign our name to a gift subscription for the people who have moved away or have become our new neighbors - and - at a savings, just when some of us can appreciate it!

A few folks that I have mentioned this to say they have missed the notice in the last few issues. I urge

everyone who can take advantage of this great offer, to use the handy form on this same page, buy a gift subscription for a friend or two, and help the *Montague Reporter* reach their goal of 800 subscribers in the year 2008.

It's not too late to buy a gift now, for any celebration in the near future: Solstice, Christmas or New Years, or even Groundhogs Day!

Don't forget the *Montague Reporter* when making out your gift lists this year.

- Pat Carlisle
Turners Falls

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for **MCTV** schedules from December 21st through January 3rd, go to the montaguema.net cork-board and click on "MCTV."

American Dead in Iraq and Afghanistan as of 12/19/07

US FORCES	Casualties in Iraq as of this date	3,895
Afghanistan		473
Wounded in Action		28,629

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

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NOTES FROM THE MONTAGUE SELECTBOARD

Beer and Wine Sales Proposed for Exxon Convenience Store

BY DAVID DETMOLD - A hearing on a proposal by F. L. Roberts Company to sell beer and wine at their convenience store at the Exxon station at 132 3rd Street in Turners Falls was postponed until Monday, January 7th at 7 p.m. At the December 17th meeting of the Montague selectboard, with abutter Jon Dobosz in attendance to comment on the proposal, but no one from Robert's company in attendance, the board decided to move the hearing ahead three weeks.

Board member Allen Ross asked, "How many liquor licenses of this category (wine and malt beverages, package store) do we have left?" The answer to that, as it turns out, (according to selectboard secre-

tary Wendy Bogusz) is: "That's the last one." Bogusz said Montague has three remaining beer and wine licenses for on premises consumption (restaurants), and no all alcohol licenses left for restaurants or package stores. In the past, the board has inquired about asking the legislature to approve more liquor licenses for the town, to allow for new business expansion. A special all alcohol license that had been granted by the legislature to the VFW hall on Avenue A will return to Boston, and not be transferred to that property's new owner, Bogusz said.

Ross also asked who at F. L. Roberts would manage the sale of beer and wine, and whether the employees there would receive special training to sell

beer and wine. The application listed Bradford Manson as the manager at the Exxon convenience store.

Montague police chief Ray Zukowski, asked about F. L. Roberts' application to sell beer and wine at the 132 3rd Street location, said the Montague police "would not support that for the following reasons. There are a lot of kids that hang out there. The employees have trouble maintaining order with the kids. They are kids supervising kids. Our department is called in too many times to that location as it is. Adding beer and wine sales would add shoplifting concerns: only now they'd be shoplifting a jug of wine. It's not like this would be a convenience for downtown. You can go 200

yards one way and buy beer and wine, 400 yards in the other direction and buy beer and wine."

Zukowski added, "The trouble with Turners Falls used to be there were too many places to buy alcohol, now we've kind of narrowed that down. I don't think we need another place to buy beer and wine in downtown Turners Falls."

In other news, the selectboard approved a request by town clerk Deb Bourbeau to move the polling station in Montague Center from the public library to the fire station on Old Sunderland Road, for a trial period of one year. Bourbeau said the poll workers were too crowded at the library, now that a new, state mandated electronic

voting machine had been installed. When town elections fall on Mondays, a day when the library is open, "It's even more disruptive," Bourbeau said.

A number of commentators on the www.montaguema.net website reacted to the move by saying they were often reminded to vote by passing the centrally located polling station to or from their way to work, and might not so easily notice the new location, away from the village center. Center Street resident Jeff Singleton was at the selectboard meeting on the 17th, and also made that point, which the board and Bourbeau acknowledged. The board asked for reports from the town clerk after each of the four elections

see MONTAGUE pg 6



JESSICA HARMON ILLUSTRATION

Montague Briefs

JESSICA HARMON ILLUSTRATION

TAX BILLS DUE

A reminder to all Montague taxpayers that the first half of the Fiscal 2008 Real Estate and Fire District taxes are due by Friday, December 28th, 2007. Payments received after that date are subject to 14 per cent interest. To receive a receipted bill, enclose a self-addressed stamped envelope and both copies of your bill with your

payment. The tax office is open Monday through Friday from 8:30 a.m. to 4:30 p.m. Real estate abatement and exemption applications are available from the assessors' office. Abatement applications must be filed on or before December 28th, 2007.

- Patti Dion, Tax Collector

SNOW REMOVAL

T's is the season when we all

need to work together regarding snow removal. Please remember the sidewalks in front of your house or business must be cleared within 24 hours of a snowstorm, according to town bylaw. If at all possible, some sand and salt would be an additional bonus for those of us that walk. We would also like to take a minute to remind Montague residents to keep the fire hydrants in your neighborhood cleared for any possible emergencies that may arise, (remember the fire in Shelburne Falls!) Let's all do our part to keep safe this winter. Happy Holidays from all of us at Town Hall!

- Deb Bourbeau, Town Clerk

ELKS HOOP SHOOT

The Montague Elks held their annual Hoop Shoot Competition at the Turners Falls High School on Saturday, December 8th. Twenty-seven boys and girls showed up to take on the challenge and see how many free throws they could make.

The winner in the girls 8 to 9-year-old division was Jenna Putala.

The winners in the 8 to 9-year-old boys division: 1st place went to Trevor Mankowsky, 2nd place went to Dylan Mailloux, and 3rd place went to Jimmy Vaughn.

The winners in the 10 to 11-year-old boys division: 1st place went to Liam Ellis, 2nd place

went to Zachary Wright, and 3rd place went to Zachary Demars.

The winner in the girls 12 to 13-year-old division went to Amanda Sicard.

The winners in the boys 12 to 13-year-old division: 1st place went to Wyatt Bourbeau, 2nd place went to Jeremy Mankowsky, and 3rd place went to Ryan Wilder.

Congratulations to all, and good luck to the first place winners, who will go on to the West Central District shoot on January 27th at Greenfield High School. Registration for that event will take place at 8:00 a.m.; the shoot starts at 9:00 a.m. Participants will need birth certificates to compete.

- Joe St. Peter, Turners Falls

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MONTAGUE from 5

now scheduled for 2008, to help them determine whether a drop in voter turnout would be noticeable in Precinct 1. Bourbeau said it was possible, if a wheelchair accessible ramp were to be installed at the Montague Grange hall, across the town common from the library, that polling could move back to the center of the village to that location, where voting took place in the past.

Bourbeau said a letter would be sent to all Precinct 1 residents informing them of the change of polling location. Signs would also be put up at the library on voting days, directing residents to the new location. The fire station is wheelchair accessible, and Bourbeau said voting in the meeting room would not interfere with the station's ability to respond to a fire, and vice

versa. Ross mentioned that Ohio, a swing state in the last two presidential elections, has now recalled its electronic voting machines, which had been manufactured by a major contributor to the Republican party.

As a weary highway superintendent approached the board, chair Pat Allen praised him for his department's response to two recent winter storms, on Thursday and Sunday of last week. "We have a limited number of folks; they were out in force," said Allen, who noted each village had a six-wheeler deployed to plow, along with loaders and other vehicles, and the 13 DPW workers had been putting in 16-hour shifts.

Tom Bergeron accepted the praise on behalf of his department. "They did a wonderful job on these two storms."

The board approved Bergeron's request to be allowed to join his workers plowing snow during storms, at the rate of \$25 an hour, with the proviso that any plowing he does shall not interfere with his supervisory duties.

"From 7 a.m. to 3 p.m., I'm department superintendent," said Bergeron. When I'm plowing, I'm still there." Due to union rules, Bergeron said he is not allowed to sand, only plow.

On another topic, Bergeron said he has noticed "a consistent increase in non-recyclables" showing up in sidewalk recycling bins since the town instituted a 50 cent a bag increase in pay per

throw trash stickers a few months ago. (A list of what is and is not acceptable for curbside recycling is reprinted below.)

The board approved a request by Bergeron to charge neighboring towns \$120 an hour to use of Montague's vactor truck in sewer emergencies. The price includes the services of Montague personnel to operate it.

The board approved a request to designate the members of certain boards as 'special municipal employees,' allowing them to engage in contracts where they stand to gain financially with other departments of the town. Montague, due to its size (under

10,000 population) is allowed by state law to designate special municipal employees, so as not to discourage people from serving on volunteer boards. Members of boards so designated must still disclose their financial stake in contracts with other departments to the state ethics commission.

The selectboard designated zoning board members, finance committee members, police station building committee, and planning board members as special municipal employees. Members of the selectboard automatically receive the designation, in Massachusetts towns of less than 10,000.

HIGHLIGHTS FROM THE ERVING POLICE LOG

Out of Control

Wednesday 12-12
4:00 p.m. Harassing phone calls Old State Road. Report taken.
7:40 p.m. Out of control juvenile West Main Street. Subject transported to FMC.
9:20 p.m. Report of a disabled motor vehicle blocking traffic on Route 63. Stood by until tow company arrived.

Thursday 12-13
1:55 p.m. Accident car vs tractor trailer in area of Erving Paper Mill. State Police handled, assisted.

Friday 12-14
5:40 p.m. Medical emergency Warner Street. Assisted Erving EMTs and BHA ambulance.
8:55 p.m. Report of 2 snowmobiles speeding up Swamp Road. Caller advises 1 with a small child on the back. Stationary on Swamp Road, snow mobiles did not return.
12:15 p.m. Larceny from High Street residence.
1:20 p.m. Assisted stuck tractor trailer unit in Box Car parking lot.
3:10 p.m. Accident Old State Road. Report taken, no injuries.
5:40 p.m. Criminal complaint issued to [redacted] for passing violation, marked lanes violation, operating with a suspended license, and speeding.
6:45 p.m. Disturbance Old State Road, out of control male. Arrived at scene, subject fled area. Unable to make contact.

Monday 12-17
1:25 p.m. Assisted Northfield Police with serious motor vehicle accident with injuries at Gulf Road.
Tuesday 12-18
1:05 p.m. Medical S&R site Route 2. Construction worker hit by piece of concrete. Assisted EMTs, BHA transported to FMC.

HIGHLIGHTS OF THE MONTAGUE POLICE LOG

Vandalism at St. Kaz

Thursday 12-13
9:52 a.m. Report of breaking and entering at a 13th Street address. Caller stated that his girlfriend's car had been broken into, a cell phone and prescription medication were missing. Report taken.
9:31 p.m. Request for an officer from a J Street address. Caller and his girlfriend were feuding. Male party left for the night. Peace restored.

Friday 12-14
9:34 a.m. Report of larceny from a Swamp Road address. Caller reports that a contractor stole trees. Advised to file charges at court house.
8:54 p.m. Report of a fight at a G Street address. Caller states that her father and brothers were fighting. Officer found 2 brothers were arguing. One left to cool off.

Saturday 12-15
12:43 a.m. Report of vandalism from St Kazimierz on Avenue A. [redacted] was arrested and charged with vandalizing property (store window), possession of a class D drug, and disorderly conduct.
[redacted] was arrested and charged with vandalizing property (store window), vandalizing property (car window), and disorderly conduct.
1:13 a.m. [redacted] was arrested at St Kazimierz on 2 default warrants.
8:39 p.m. Request for an officer from Thomas Memorial Country Club. [redacted] was arrested and charged with child endangerment while under the influence and operating a motor vehicle under the influence of liquor (2nd offense).

Sunday 12-16
1:50 p.m. Report of larceny from a Dell Street address. Caller states a check may be missing from the mailbox. Advised to call issuing agency.

Monday 12-17
9:36 a.m. [redacted] was arrested on a straight warrant.
3:28 p.m. Walk-in to station reported larceny at Montague Mini Mart. A check was written from a closed account. A message was left for the check writer to pay it.

Tuesday 12-18
12:24 p.m. While investigating a complaint of threatening on Ave A, a 14 year old juvenile male was arrested on a straight warrant.

The Recycling Scoop ...

Please *do not* put containers (aluminum and steel cans, plastic and glass bottles, milk or juice cartons) in plastic bags. Recyclable paper *can* be placed in paper bags, separately from containers. But avoid using paper bags in wet weather.

The Yes and No of What Can Go In the Recycling Bins:

<p>YES</p> <p>Aluminum <i>Empty and rinse cans</i></p> <p>Steel (tin) cans <i>Empty and rinse. Labels do not need to be removed.</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Food and beverage cans • Pet food cans <p>Glass <i>Empty and rinse. Discard lids in trash. Labels do not need to be removed.</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Food and beverage bottles and jars <p>Plastics <i>ONLY containers smaller than two gallons are recyclable. Empty and rinse. Discard caps in trash.</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Food containers: • Beverage bottles and jugs • Detergent bottles • Personal care bottles <p>Cartons <i>Empty, rinse and flatten. Recycle with containers, not paper.</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Milk and juice cartons • Soy milk and drink boxes <p>Paper <i>Clean paper only. Flatten boxes. "Windows" in envelopes are ok; staples ok.</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Newspaper, inserts, magazines, junk mail • White and colored paper • Corrugated cardboard • Boxboard (for example cereal boxes) 	<p>NO</p> <p>Steel (tin) cans Scrap metal, aerosol spray cans, paint cans, car parts, appliances, toys, pipes, pots and pans, fuel tanks</p> <p>Glass Ceramics, baking dishes, dishware, drinking glasses, medicine bottles, plate glass, light bulbs, mirrors, windows</p> <p>Plastics Styrofoam (take out food containers), plastic wrap/sheeting, meat trays, egg cartons, medicine and pill bottles, "packing" peanuts, foam packing, flower pots, bottles that contained motor oil, anti-freeze, pesticides, pool chemicals or other hazardous substances</p> <p>Paper Soda, beer cartons, pizza boxes, butter, margarine boxes, paper towels, tissues, Tyvek or padded envelopes, books, blueprints, dirtied paper (pet waste, paint), copy paper packaging</p>
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HIGHLIGHTS FROM THE GILL POLICE LOG

Shots Fired

Wednesday 12-12
2:10 p.m. Alarm sounding at French King Highway location checked, all secure.

Thursday 12-13
1:50 p.m. Vehicle off of roadway on French King Highway, due to weather conditions.
3:20 p.m. Vehicle off of roadway on Main Road, due to weather conditions.

Friday 12-14
6:58 a.m. Medical assistance at Main Road residence, EMS all set on scene prior to arrival.

Saturday 12-15
10:05 a.m. Assisted fire department with carbon monoxide alarm at Center Road residence.
2:01 p.m. Vehicle off of roadway into fence on French King Highway. Report taken.
2:40 p.m. Report of subject shooting a weapon from vehicle on West Gill Road.

Sunday 12-16
2:01 p.m. Vehicle off of roadway into fence on French King Highway. Report taken.

Monday 12-17
5:03 p.m. Welfare check requested for West Gill Road resident. Spoke with subject, all o.k.

Tuesday 12-18
4:02 p.m. Report of gun shots close to residence on Mountain Road. Checked area, unable to locate.

Wednesday 12-19
7:05 p.m. Assisted Erving police with unwanted subject.

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NOTES FROM THE WENDELL SELECTBOARD

School Regionalization on the Agenda

BY JOSH HEINEMANN - Jim Slavas and Michael Idoine, who together constitute the Wendell finance committee, (which is short of members; residents interested in serving on the committee please contact town hall or one of the above mentioned gentlemen) met with the selectboard at its December 12th meeting, seeking guidance in their dealings with the K through 12 Mahar regionalization discussions they have been attending.

Slavas said the most recent townwide decision strongly opposed allowing Swift River School to enter a K through 12 district with Orange and Petersham, but that forces outside Wendell and New Salem are pushing in that direction, and in order to remain part of negotiations at all, Wendell representatives must allow the subject to be discussed.

Town coordinator Nancy Aldrich said that Orange and Petersham want to regionalize K through 12 education so much, they will paint an inordinately rosy picture of how regionalization will benefit Wendell students. Linda Overing, New Salem's representative, quit the discussions because she felt the committee was acting beyond its authority.

The Patrick administration is pushing to have larger school districts, with 2,500 students or more, to save administrative costs. Slavas said the subcommittee for regionalization was formed with no particular process, that people on the Mahar school committee interested in creating the new regional district just started meeting as a subcommittee.

Selectboard member Christine Heard asked if the subcommittee kept minutes, and Slavas answered, "Brief... The only official action recorded is approving the minutes (of prior meetings)."

Swift River School is in Union 28, along with Leverett,

Shutesbury, and Erving. The four elementary schools send students to three regional high schools: Amherst, Mahar, and Turners Falls, which may contribute to administrative overlap that could be streamlined.

Heard brought up declining enrollment at Swift River School. Slavas said the process of closing a school is difficult, requiring a two-thirds vote at town meeting.

Article 8 on the warrant for special town meeting on Wednesday December 19th would allow representatives to discuss a K through 12 region in the continuing meetings of the regionalization subcommittee, but passage of the article would not necessarily imply town support for regionalization.

Water Tank Replacement

Idoine brought up another Swift River School item. The state DEP has ordered replacement of the school's water tank. The DEP has known about the tank for some time, but gave the order for replacement too late for an article to be included on the special town meeting warrant. Engineering estimates are \$5,000; the difficulty is that the tank is in the middle of the building, and walls must be removed for it to be replaced. Idoine was not sure what the town could do, and suggested a call to the town accountant to see if there is a legitimate way Wendell can come up with its share of the money in time for the repair.

Heard mentioned that Swift River School is open from 6:30 a.m. to 7:45 a.m., for residents who want to walk indoors in the winter.

Slavas said the finance committee would like to be part of the conversation when the pay raises for town employees are discussed, to see how Wendell compares with other towns in Franklin County, and to see how health care costs are counted in cost of living allowances.

Good Neighbors

Slavas asked why a special

town meeting warrant article would transfer money from the senior center renovation account to the town hall maintenance account. Selectboard member Dan Keller told him that problems with relocating the Good Neighbors food pantry to the senior center had snowballed, starting with a basement ceiling too low for code, traffic management, parking, and stairs without adequate head clearance. Slavas thought more use of the town hall might lead to better upkeep of that building.

Selectboard member Dan Keller gave a short building update. He and Morgan Mead moved all items for which town departments have expressed interest out of the recycling center (WRATS) storage trailer and into the library cellar. The trailer can go, saving the town \$75 a month. Keller showed the other board members floor plans for the old library, drawn by architect Margo Jones, as it will be converted to a senior center. Selectboard chair Ted Lewis commented that the original wiring was minimal, and electric consumption in the building was low before computers were installed.

Aldrich had a letter from Kaymarion Raymond detailing work needed for Good Neighbors to function in the town hall, along with estimates for the work. A two-piece Dutch door into the storage room would cost \$200, and allow patrons to be given food but not to walk into the room. A counter in the kitchen would cost \$400, and repairs to the floor joists under the storage room would cost \$400. Keller said those floor joists are unattached at one side, and that replacement of their support beam could legitimately come from the town hall maintenance account.

Lewis wondered if a Dutch door was necessary, and if Good Neighbors could simply use a table like the Full Moon Coffee House does. Heard said someone should talk with people from

Good Neighbors about any changes made to the plans they submitted.

Custodial News

Heard said town custodian Larry Ramsdell has been on the job about six months, so it is time to check on how many hours he has been working. Aldrich will check with town treasurer Carolyn Manley. The floor of the new town office building can get slippery with all the foot traffic in and out, and Ramsdell suggested a 20 foot long by 3 foot wide rug that will reach from the front door to the mailboxes. He was approached by librarian Rose Heidkamp about also doing some work at the new library, and wanted direction from the selectboard before responding.

The Franklin County Council of Governments requested that the selectboard sign a letter of support regarding their Solid Waste Management Grant Program application. The program would require three trainings that the manager of the WRATS, highway superintendent Dan Bacigalupo, would attend. Keller suggested that if he attended those trainings, perhaps he would get some rest during the time he was there.

Roof replacement on the town hall and police station were not completed by the contract's

scheduled date, Saturday December 8th, largely because of this year's early snow. Rather than force the contractor, Tom Chaisson, to finish now when work on a roof is dangerous and shingles brittle, the board members agreed that he should address leaks as he can, and return to the project in April, with a completion date of May 31st.

Neal Feltman has found a potential buyer for five acres of a Chapter 61 parcel, whose sale did not go through five years ago. At that time, the town wrote a letter for him giving up its right of first refusal. Now the new buyer's title search company wants the original letter, and no one in the room was exactly sure where to find it now. There have been three selectboard offices in those five years.

Good Timing

The state Department of Public Works has given towns new trench work guidelines, to be implemented after January 2009. Any trench over three feet deep, and less than 15 feet wide must be attended full time, fenced, covered with a 3/4" steel plate, backfilled or boxed. The town needs to designate a permitting authority, and a permit must be taken out before work begins.

Keller said, "I'm glad we got the water line in when we did."

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the poetry page

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

- William Carlos Williams

Poetry Page edited by
Christopher Sawyer-Laucanno,
Janel Nockleby and Jamie Berger

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

design by Boysen Hodgson

Postcard from a Wedding We Won't be Attending

Not their cars on the streets of this village,
not the evergreen hedge to make us think twice.
Not the invitation received by registered mail,
not the curtains hung lightly for such an occasion.

Not the smoked trout laid out like a corpse,
not this man, not this woman, none of their friends.
Not this time, not the next, not ever as far as we know.
And not the road we walk on, gravel uneven below.

--Wyn Cooper
Halifax, VT



The Language Butchers

With cruelty which masquerades as sanitized morality,
The language butchers seek a world engulfed in bleak banality;
To satisfy their power grab, they'll amputate your heart and soul,
Until the essence of your life has seeped into their man-made hole

As words can be a gateway to a world of possibility,
So also may they be a cage of cancerous servility;
The more it spreads, and creativity exhales its final breath,
The plague is normalized, while experts mollify this grisly death

Omission is an ugly sin whose progeny is ignorance,
Anaesthetized complacency and vacuous indifference;
A philistine amusement park with clinical bureaucracy
Designed to blur the fiendish face of fascist ideology

The passing of The Patriot Act, an acronymic tome from Hell,
Has cast a dark, hypnotic cloud on those befuddled by its spell;
But stripped of its accoutrements, and seen as just a game of words,
The legalese is whittled down into a pile of hardened turds

To those for whom control of life has stripped them of humanity,
Who make the rules and peddle their pathology as sanity,
The vicious paradox is that the more controlled, the more destroyed;
It's best I be a patriot, and bring to light your verbal void

--Kevin Smith
Turners Falls

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

Anonymous, Klondike Sound, Carlin
Barton, Montague Dental Arts, Dr. Robert
Koolkin, Harry Brandt, Green Fields
Market, Michael Farrick, and Michael Muller.

So Do It

There are women in this world
They are beaten in this world
By some losers and some fools
By the system and its rules
By the soldier with a gun
By the drunkard just for fun
In the alley
In the car
In the bedroom
In the bar

There are women in this world
They are beaten in this world
Like a flower and she's shot
He's so frightened of what she's got
She gives him everything she can
Makes him happy
That's my man
And he sucks it all inside
Bloats his ego warp his pride

There are children in this world
They are beaten in this world
Just for trying to explore
Test, express and laugh and roar
Runnin, jumpin, screamin and stuff
No dialogue daddy shows baby how rough
Life can be for a defenseless child
Caught and controlled in a corner
He smiled

There are soldiers in this world
They are beaten in this world
By religion and the right
By tradition without sight
By the wealthy mansion man
By the Reagan-Bush fire fan
By the hookie pookie snoozer
By the territorial boozer

There are problems in this world
For every boy and every girl
For all the left and all the right
For every breathing soul in sight
For the cyanide silicone stranger
For the artist there is danger
And there's something you can do
So do it

--Michael Phillips
Greenfield

Goliath Rising

lookit that fresh-faced American kid
get a load of that dangerous beauty
playing backyard baseball
with a hand grenade
doing 'round the world and
walk the dog with a yo-yo shaped like
Planet Earth
whirr and snap whirr and snap
grinning that winning American grin
playing deadly games on a grand scale
daring the volcano
dead convinced nothing really bad
ever happens to anyone
in our family

--Elizabeth Nash
Turners Falls



Return

Lavender November nights,
When even days are twilight,
When trees stretch out unburdened branches with a sigh,
When evening wraps a shawl of stars
Across the shoulders of the darkening land.

Our shoulders, also, ache from hauling logs -
But smelling wood smoke draws out memories,
Like winter blankets from the cedar box,
Needed again to warm us into dreams.

Rising from wool, rosemary recalls so poignantly
Those sunny days we laid the blankets by,
Caring ahead for autumn's coming cold.

As vision dims, sensations swell and burst -
Sip the grape-rich wine; it lingers on the tongue.

Savour the Fall.

--M.L. Magrath
Montague



CONTRIBUTOR'S NOTES:

Kevin Smith is 51 years old resident of Turners Falls who has been writing poetry since he was a child. He is also a tuba player and therapist.

Tatjana Mileski immigrated to the United States in 1997 from Riga, Latvia. A student at Greenfield Community College, her current goal

is to become a professional journalist and publish a book of poetry.

Gini Brown, a Berkeley artist, is the daughter of Woody Brown (1927-2006). Woody was a savant, raconteur, great generous spirit, and first president of The Montague Reporter Board of Directors.

M.L. Magrath has worked as a teacher, a botanist, and a bookkeeper. She has lived on Dry Hill Road for nearly 40 years.

Elizabeth Nash thinks Dominic, dog hero of children's writer William Steig, got it absolutely right: "Wow," said Dominic. "Wow, wow, wow, wow."

Elizabeth resides in Turners Falls.

Lilian T. Chong is a Chemistry professor at the University of Pittsburgh. She began this poem 10 years ago while an undergraduate at MIT but only recently realized how to finish it.

Wyn Cooper lives in Halifax, VT, helps organize the Brattleboro Literary Festival, and is the author of The Country of Here Below, The Way Back, as well as a chapbook and poems published in numerous literary journals. This poem is from Postcards from the Interior (BOA Editions, Ltd.). A poem from his first book, "Fun," was

turned into Sheryl Crow's Grammy-winning song "All I Wanna Do."

Michael Phillips was an astronaut at first and then worked with Green Peace for 10 years, and now he's an Internet Strategist. The most important part is the astronaut part; it's the only true thing.

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PERSONAL INJURY, WILLS & ESTATES, WORKER'S COMP

the poetry page

To My Father

1

On days when the sun blazed happily
 And the lawnmowers roared off in the distance
 You used to open the windows in my room:
 Get up. Go out and play.
 I rooted to the floor like a two-year-old,
 Smart with the newfound power of No.
 Then, after you left,
 I slammed the windows shut - always.
 But you didn't give up,
 Opening the windows
 When I wasn't around.
 It was your way of helping me
 Escape from a long line
 Of women with lotus feet,
 Of arranged marriages,
 Of frightened child brides,
 Of stuck-with-your-fate palm readings,
 Of swallowing one's bitterness towards it all.

2

There was a ghost in my room, Baba.
 I could see her in the wood grain
 Of my closet door,
 Watching me through her sharply-lined
 Peking opera eyes.
 Her body was as faint as the threads
 Of a spider's web.
 Once, I saw her hands,
 Her coiled, foot-long fingernails
 Reaching towards my neck:
 Remember
 Who I am. I am Boji,
 The woman who didn't run away
 When the house caught fire -
 Because women
 Did not go out alone



And I was alone.

I gave my life to virtue.
 She whispered
 When I closed the window
 You opened.

3

Mama is relieved that I have small feet.
 You will not have to swallow as much bitterness
 As women with large, coarse-looking feet.
 I flex my feet in wonder,
 Running my fingers along the ticklish bottoms.
 My feet will never ache
 Like the feet of my great-grandmothers,
 Crippled since the day
 When they could walk,
 When their mothers entered their rooms,
 Holding the elf-like shoes, boxes of binding,
 scissors,
 And then returning with tubs
 Filled with the fresh, warm urine of a horse.
 Soak your feet my love,
 And you will feel no pain,
 Their mothers told them,
 As they placed the tubs of urine
 Beneath their feet.
 Think of chestnuts and rice dumplings
 And you will have even lovelier feet than I.
 The flesh of their feet
 Softened and shriveled like the
 Dried, salted prunes they sucked
 Until the meat dissolved and
 Fell from the seed -
 Their bones softened, too,
 In the rankness of the urine.
 Then, their mothers wiped their feet dry
 And, with scissors, slivered away
 The bone-white crescents of their toenails
 Down to the very last toe.

4

With quick, cold hands,
 Their mothers pulled out long silk cloths
 From the boxes of binding
 And began the ritual
 Of wrapping their daughters' feet,
 Twice around the insteps,
 Then several times around the toes and heels,
 Pulling tighter and tighter,
 Until the toes pointed
 Inwards, towards the soles -
 Feet clenched into fists.
 Get up and walk, their mothers ordered,
 Pulling them to their feet
 Before they could comprehend the
 Crunch of toes beneath their weight.
 Blood soaked the bindings.
 They shrieked, tears streaming down
 As their mothers held them standing like puppets,
 Barely balancing at the ends of strings.

5

Grandmother's father never let her pierce her ears,
 Because he thought her ears were fine.
 My Baba was very modern in his thinking.
 She would say as she showed me, one by one,
 Her precious box of earrings,
 Screw-on and clip-on.
 Perhaps there were men before my great-grandfather's
 generation
 Who thought the same way.
 Perhaps there were men who believed
 That their daughters were perfect
 And stood between mothers and daughters
 In their foot-binding rituals.
 If you lived in those times, Baba,
 You would have been one of those men -
 You would have told me to run.

Lillian T. Chong
 -Pittsburgh



MILESKI PHOTO

My Poems

My poems are wounded coyotes
 My words mean that I am a truthful person from a land
 of palm trees and sea.
 Before I die I want to share these poems of my soul.
 My poems have soft green.
 My poems are flaming charisma!
 My poems are wounded coyotes seeking
 refuge in a forest.

I want to share my faith with
 All the poor people of this earth.

--Tatjana Mileski
 Turners Falls

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FARLEY from 1

may seek to expand its land holdings in the area to acquire permanent access to nearby trails.

Andy Tessier, selectboard chair, expressed apprehension about lending support to the project. He stated, "I fear that drawing attention to the Ledges may cause more people to attempt to climb them, resulting in injury and potential cost to the town, as rescues would need to be conducted."

Squire and the other Coalition members maintained their proposal would not result in any cost to the town. The property they own is all woods; it contains no ledges. Moreover, Massachusetts law (Chapter 21 17C) prohibits recreational users from suing landowners that allow access to hiking trails in the event a hiker or climber is injured in pursuit of private recreational activity.

Laura Hebert, a member of Erving's conservation commission, attended the meeting to express her board's support of the plan. "We want local people to be able to enjoy the area's resources, by all means," she said after the meeting. Hebert said Squire's group planned to place a conservation restriction on the land, protecting it from future development and preserving habitat, goals the conservation commission supports.

The selectboard also voted to support the Coalition's application. Administrative coordinator Tom Sharp said the parking area would not be directly visible from Route 2, would not feature signage on Route 2, but would contain an informational kiosk directing people to the nearby

trails, which connect to the Metacomet-Mondanock Trail. Sharp said the current parking area climbers use to access the M&M Trail in Erving is located closer to the main trail, relies on the permission of a private landowner on Wells Street, but is limited to only three or four cars.

In other news, the selectboard held a joint meeting with the school board, to appoint a new member to finish out the remainder of Julie Wonkka's term. The new appointee will have to run for re-election in May. Jarod Boissonneault of Mountain Road was the only applicant.

Boissonneault said, "I have a three-year-old and a two-year-old, and I have a deep fondness and memory for the Erving Elementary School, as I attended the school myself. I feel it is time to give back."

The two boards appointed Boissonneault as the new school committee member, and he was sworn in at the town hall immediately following the meeting.

The two boards went on to discuss shared employees, which raised strong opinions on both sides. Union 28 superintendent Joan Wickman sought the board's support to use shared employees to cover part-time positions at the Erving Elementary School. This would allow teachers to work in other school districts, in order to attain full time hours and receive benefits.

Selectboard chair Andy Tessier disagreed vehemently with this proposal. "This has potential to cost the town large amounts of money that we just don't have. As the law is written

in this case, whichever town uses the employee for the larger portion of time is the town responsible for the full benefit package, as well as retirement. With Erving being the larger community, they would more than likely shoulder the cost."

Wickman argued in favor of "drawing up an agreement with the other towns, so the cost would be split according to percentages, in contrast to the 32-B law currently in place."

Tessier said, "I cannot support this, as it is not a legally binding contract, as it is written in contrast to the current law. If or when you can get 32-B changed or amended, then we can talk." The rest of the selectboard agreed with Tessier, and voted to oppose the idea of using shared school employees at this time.

Progress, or lack thereof, at the Usher Mill, was also briefly discussed. The derelict mill was severely damaged in a July 30th arson fire, and the property's new owner, Patriots Environmental, of Worcester, is under orders by county building inspector Jim Hawkins to tear almost all the remaining structures down. Company president Ron Bussiere promised to complete the demolition when he closed on the property in early August, but that work has not been accomplished yet. The board is considering ordering Bussiere to hire a 24-hour security guard until the property is cleared off.

The meeting adjourned with holiday wishes of good cheer and a reminder the selectboard will not meet again until January 7th, 2008.

EXPAND from 1

minimal use, Haas said the survey found "one box turtle on the property for two weeks, and one on the perimeter for one day."

Haas said Hillside Plastics presently employs "in the neighborhood of 100" workers. The company moved to Montague from Sunderland in 1993, where it had employed up to 30 workers in "an old tobacco and potato storage building." Since its inception in 1980, the company has seen sales of its product line

the expansion doesn't "impact the roadway or the natural resources" of the area. The creation of additional unpaved parking in the rear of the factory, of unspecified dimension, will be looked at to ascertain the impact of "cut and fill of a hillside area on the stability of slopes, and what the impacts are to the storm water system," Laroche said.

Planning board chair Doug Stephens said there was nothing specific in the town's zoning bylaws to guide his board on the



"multiply five times," Haas said.

Hillside makes high density polyethylene containers, buying the resin and blow molding the containers. "One quarter of our business is the pure maple syrup market," said Haas, "a wonderful old traditional New England agricultural market."

Due to the size of the plant's expansion, town planner Dan Laroche said Hillside's proposal has triggered an environmental impact survey and site plan review, which the conservation commission and the planning board will undertake jointly by hiring a consultant to review the company's engineering plans and calculations. The consultant's review will be paid for by the applicant, and Haas said his company will be happy to do so.

"This is a long term plan. We know it's a long term process."

Laroche said the boards would be looking to ensure that

issue of large numbers of mobile storage containers parked on an exterior lot.

Haas said his company's current and planned use of tractor trailers to store product prior to shipping actually reduced the plant's overall environmental impact. "Plastic bottles take up a lot of space, and this is the most energy efficient way to store them. If we put up a warehouse, it would require lights, heat, and water, and all kinds of resources."

Haas added, "We are proud to have been able to steadily grow and maintain jobs in Montague, because of the high quality of the workforce here."

In 2004, Hillside Plastics was the recipient of a Franklin-Hampshire Regional Employment Board "Workforce Leader" award, for its workforce development practices.

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OAKES from pg 1

ing, Oakes soon began a long career teaching in the Montague public school system.

"I remember those days fondly," said Oakes. "Mr. Arthur Burke was the superintendent in those years, and Mr. George Wrightson was the principal."

Burke took him on as a teacher at the old Montague Center School, where he taught 7th and 8th grades until the school burned down over Christmas vacation. For the next two years, Oakes served as principal at the Highland School in Millers Falls, where the Montague Center students moved while their school was being rebuilt. Once that reconstruction was complete, Oakes returned to Montague Center, where he served as both principal and teacher in the upper grades. In the early 50s, when the 7th and 8th grades moved from Montague Center to Turners Falls High School on Crocker Avenue, Oakes followed. He taught English at the high school level for many years.

During his tenure at TFHS, Oakes earned a reputation as a Renaissance man. One former student, David Brule, remembers him nattily attired in tweed jackets and turtleneck sweaters, sporting horn-rimmed glasses and a small moustache. Oakes made the material of English class accessible to his students. Thanks to his wit and understated style, the literary greats lived again in his classrooms.

"I even smoked a pipe briefly," recalled Oakes, smiling at the thought, "but I really did-

n't like it."

Among Oakes' happiest recollections are his memories of students who would themselves go on to become teachers, Brule among them. He also warmly recalled his duties as guidance counselor at the high school, head of the English department, advisor for the 'teen page' in the Greenfield newspaper, year-book photographer, and mentor for *NETOP*, the high school's literary magazine. All of these varied endeavors helped solidify his standing as a man of many talents and interests.

Frederick Oakes retired from Turners Falls High School in 1982, after 40 years as an elementary or secondary school teacher in Montague. As a lifelong learner, he has kept his eye on education as time has passed. There are things that disappoint him about the modern classroom.

"The main theme today is to test the students," Oakes observed. "Teaching is done to prepare the youngsters to pass the MCAS."

Oakes acknowledged the MCAS test is an important measure of student competency, but feels the comprehensive exam "doesn't leave much time for true learning." For example, he noted that appreciation of literature takes a commitment of time to enable a student to develop strong reading and analytical skills.

In his retirement, Oakes has

maintained his pursuit of many avocations. He has traveled to every state in the union except Washington and Oregon. He built his own house, requiring help only with the roof. In addition, Oakes has built up an impressive rock collection, raised fancy poultry, and acquired a wide selection of music, ranging from opera to country and western.

And his love of learning still shines brightly. Although he has trouble reading, Oakes is able to enjoy educational video and audiotapes on varied subjects, art history and the Egyptian pharaohs among them.

"Right now, I'm studying the English novel," he confided. "I recommend learning tapes. They're wonderful."

Throughout his life, Shakespeare has always been a favorite companion, and he has been reacquainting himself with the master in his retirement, and memorizing the Bard's sonnets. Here is one Oakes is particularly fond of, *Sonnet 73*:

*That time of year thou mayst
in me behold
When yellow leaves, or
none, or few, do hang
Upon those boughs which
shake against the cold,
Bare ruin'd choirs, where
late the sweet birds sang.
In me thou seest the twilight
of such day
As after sunset fadeth in the
west,*

*Which by and by black night
doth take away,
Death's second self, that
seals up all in rest.
In me thou see'st the glowing
of such fire
That on the ashes of his
youth doth lie,
As the death-bed whereon it
must expire
Consumed with that which it
was nourish'd by.
This thou perceivest, which
makes thy love more
strong,*

*To love that well which thou
must leave ere long.*

Oakes' second wife, Jane, teaches pre-kindergarten through second grade in Turners Falls. Oakes keeps his hand in with a bit of early childhood education in his own right. He has two sons by his first marriage, Frederick and Robert, eight grandchildren, four great grandchildren, and one great-great grandchild.



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Holiday Recycling Guidelines

BY AMY DONOVAN

GREENFIELD - Between Thanksgiving and New Year's Day, Americans throw away one million extra tons of trash per week. The average American family throws away up to ten additional bags of trash during the holidays. In today's Pay-as-you-Throw world, those ten town trash bags would cost \$15 - \$30, depending on the town. A large portion of this trash is generated from gift-wrap, boxes, tissue, packing materials, packaging and shopping bags.

The Springfield Materials Recycling Facility, which accepts recyclables from 78 communities in Western Massachusetts, asks residents to keep the following recycling guidelines in mind.

Gift-wrap is recyclable, but only if it does not contain foil, metallic inks, or glitter. Also recyclable are greeting cards (except those with foil, wire or glitter), envelopes (plastic windows OK), catalogs, corrugated cardboard boxes, paper shopping bags, and paperboard gift boxes. When opening

or wrapping presents, keep a paper grocery or shopping bag handy to collect mixed paper recyclables.

Please do not include the following items in your recycling mix: ribbons, bows, tinsel, packing peanuts, bubble wrap, and polystyrene (Styrofoam). Most UPS stores accept clean, dry packing peanuts, bubble wrap and cardboard boxes for reuse.

Help close the loop. Buying products made from recycled content creates a demand for paper collected in recycling programs and reduces the need for cutting down trees (a major source of global warming). You can find colorful (non-holiday) gift-wrap and holiday cards made from recycled paper at World Eye Book



J. HARMON ILLUSTRATION

Shop in Greenfield. Ask at the counter for Fish Lips gift-wrap; it's made from 100% post-consumer recycled paper and uses soy-based inks. Whole Foods in Hadley carries Jillson & Roberts holiday gift-wrap and gift bags, made from at least 50% recycled paper with 10% post-consumer content.

Between Thanksgiving and New Year's Day, Americans throw away one million extra tons of trash per week.

You can reduce waste by wrapping gifts in reusable decorative tins, cloth or paper gift bags, Christmas stockings, canvas shopping bags and baskets. Make the wrapping part of the gift; use a

kitchen towel or oven mitt to hold kitchen utensils or gadgets, or a bath towel to hold bath accessories.

Reuse! Before you purchase more gift wrap, check if you have any of these items which can be used to wrap gifts in a creative and inexpensive way: reused or

leftover wrapping paper, last year's beautiful calendar pictures (perfect size for CDs), sheet music, fabric, scarves, maps or travel brochures from favorite vacations or places, old posters or wallpaper scraps, outdated telephone book pages with the recipient's name circled, or kids' art work.

If each American family reused two feet of ribbon, we could save 38,000 miles of ribbon, which could tie a bow around the entire planet! Reusable cloth ribbons or yarn, renewable hemp twine or raffia can be used instead of synthetic bows and ribbons. To adorn packages in an earth-friendly way, use pine or cedar sprigs, greenery, pinecones, neckties, lace, shells or buttons. For gift tags, use portions of last year's holiday cards, pieces of wrapping paper, and cutouts from holiday catalogs or magazines. One of the most important steps is unwrapping gifts carefully (savor them!) and reusing gift-wrap, gift boxes, ribbons, bows and gift bags next year.

When the holidays are over, check with your town about Christmas tree recycling. Your tree may be recycled as mulch this spring!

For more information, contact Franklin County Solid Waste District at 413-772-2438, or email info@franklincountywastedistrict.org.

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

BAND from pg 1

A trip to a small workshop one block closer to the canal revealed the answer. Here, at 65 Canal Street, Jack Nelson and Eileen Dowd's Carriage House Design studio is in full swing, preparing personalized two-gallon crocks to fill holiday catalogue orders. In recent weeks, as the pace of production picked up, and a subcontractor in Athol folded under the pressure of increased demand, Nelson said he and Dowd, "made a major decision, and took back that 40% of our business" they had subcontracted in Athol. But with no time to reorganize production before Christmas, and a backlog of over 2000 orders, Nelson and Dowd suddenly found themselves in need of willing workers.

They turned to their main employees, Jeremy Latch and Daryl Ballou, and asked them if they knew anyone who wanted a job. Ballou works specified hours at Carriage House, because he continues to pursue his passion for fine woodworking on his off hours. Latch, on the other hand, practically lives in the workshop, sometimes practicing there with one or another of his bands when he isn't sandblasting crockery.

Nelson said, "Jeremy had good connections with the kids," who used to hang out on the Avenue in front of the old VFW building. "Eileen would ask, 'Who's reliable?'" Jeremy said they all were.

"We started hauling them in."

For the last month or so, Carriage House has boosted its employee count to ten, with a good prospect for continued employment past New Years for many of them. Some of the new workers are artists, others are members of local bands, which seem to have fluid, interchangeable line-ups, including the pop band Moon Eye, based in Brattleboro, and the ska-punk band OFC, based in Turners. Latch said, "Four out of five members of OFC" got hired during the holiday crush at Carriage House.

Latch confirmed, "They are part of the hooligan population," who used to frequent the Avenue. But he added, "These folks aren't dangerous. If people took the time to talk to them, they're all sweet, sweet people."

Abby Banks, of Brattleboro, began working at Carriage House Designs just last week. She was working on "weeding out the stenciled letters" whose outlines sometimes do not peel off perfectly from the computer templates. Banks appeared to be keeping up with orders for the pet tombstone side of Carriage House's business. Piled on her desk were messages including, Max, Loyal Friend; and Happy, 1987 - 2005. (Sometimes the loss of a pet is too painful to be memorialized immediately.)

Banks, who just scored an interview with the *New York Times* for a book she authored see **BAND** pg 13



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THE HEALTHY GEEZER

Afflictions of the Hand



JESSICA HARMON ILLUSTRATION

BY FRED CICETTI

LEONIA, NJ - *Q: I have Dupuytren's Contracture. It runs in my family. I think you should write a column about this because it affects older people.*

Thank you for this suggestion. It got me researching hand disorders, a subject that has many colorful names for some nasty afflictions. Here are some of them:

Dupuytren's Contracture

At its worst, Dupuytren's Contracture can turn a hand into a claw because the fascia - the connective bands of tissue inside the palms - shrink and make the fingers curl inward. The condition, in its milder form, creates small lumps or bands. Dupuytren's Contracture isn't usually painful.

Dupuytren's is more common in older adults, men and whites from northern European background. The late president Ronald Reagan and former British prime minister Margaret Thatcher both suffered from Dupuytren's.

This condition is hereditary. And it may be linked to alcoholism, diabetes, epilepsy and smoking.

It's rare for Dupuytren's to affect the thumb and forefinger. Usually, it strikes the ring finger and pinky, sometimes the middle finger too. Dupuytren's Contracture often affects both hands, but usually not equally.

Ganglia

Ganglia (ganglion cysts) are benign, gelatinous lumps that usually are found on the back of the wrist. However, they also appear on the front of the wrist and on the backs of fingers. Ganglia are the most common masses found on hands. Women are three times more likely than

men to get ganglia.

These cysts usually are painless. If they do act up, the fluid can be removed with a needle. You may have heard of a folk remedy for crushing ganglia by putting your hand on a table and hitting the cyst with a heavy book. This is not a good idea; you may hurt yourself and it's unreliable. Besides some ganglia disappear without treatment.

Carpal Tunnel Syndrome

The median nerve runs from the forearm into the hand through an area at the wrist called the carpal tunnel. If this nerve is compressed by swollen tissue, you may feel pain, weakness or numbness in the hand and wrist. This common condition is Carpal Tunnel Syndrome.

This syndrome is suffered by workers who make repetitive movements with the wrist extended. So, carpenters using screwdrivers and people who do a lot of work on computer keyboards are more likely to suffer

from this condition.

DeQuervain's Tendinitis

DeQuervain's Tendinitis is an irritation and swelling of the sheath that surrounds the thumb tendons as they pass from the wrist to the thumb. A tendon is a cord or band of inelastic tissue connecting a muscle with its bony attachment. The swelling can cause pain along the thumb side of the wrist.

The pain is usually intense when grabbing objects or twisting the wrist. In diagnosing DeQuervain's, a doctor may perform a Finkelstein test in which the patient makes a fist and then bends the wrist away from the thumb.

Heberden Nodes and Bouchard's Nodules

Osteoarthritis can create bumps at the end joints of your fingers and thumbs. These are Heberden Nodes. Overgrowths of bones over the middle joints of the fingers are Bouchard's

Nodules.

As joints wear down, small bone spurs develop and make the joints appear bumpy. A bone spur is just extra bone that is usually smooth, not spur-like. You can get these growths on other places in your body such as the shoulders, hips and feet. Usually, no treatment is necessary for these nodes because they aren't painful and don't impede your fingers.

In addition to the above are hand deformities with descriptive names such as Trigger Finger, Swan Neck, Duck Bill and Boutonniere.

If you have a question, please send an email to fred@healthygeezer.com.

BAND from pg 12

on the crash pads of punk rock bands nationwide, called *Punk House, Interiors in Anarchy*, (Abrams Image, 2007) is a past member of the band Vomit Dichotomy. She said she found out about Carriage House's need for helpers from her boyfriend, Sam. You can read her interview in the *New York Times*, December 27th issue.

Wandering through the workshop's interior, which appears at first glance to be a clutter of packing materials, cardboard, clay pots, tattooed workers wearing face masks and metal, and a couple of dogs ("both herders," said Nelson), a method to the mad dash to fill the waiting orders emerges.

Each time an order for a personalized crock (or pet memorial) comes into the office, the particulars are entered into a computer, including the wording, font style, and color choice. These particulars are then transferred to a plotter, a cutting machine that incises the design into a piece of thick vinyl. Then the stencil is "weeded," removing any imperfections in the outline, and transferred to the crock or memorial stone, with proper registration, and taped down to the item. With the crocks, a bonnet made from an inner tube is applied to protect the glazed surface and interior; the stenciled area is sandblasted to remove the glazing and etch the design into the clay. With the negative vinyl stencil still in place, the crock goes next to a spray booth, where the proper color is applied. The paint dry, the bonnet is removed, the vinyl peeled off, and the personalized crock is ready for packing and shipping. This is a major part of

the operation, consuming large amounts of cardboard, and styrofoam cladding. A table saw in the far room (once Nelson's studio, which has now been moved upstairs) is coated in an arctic spray of blue styrofoam powder, with a spot of blood where Nelson nearly trimmed his thumbnail off last week in his haste to cut more strips for shipping. The goal is to ship about 200 of these crocks a day.

Chris Edwards, who grew up in Greenfield and now lives on 4th Street in Turners, was handling the shipping end of the operation one day last week, although the new workers at Carriage House say they frequently rotate tasks to keep the job more interesting. Edwards said he's been working about nine hours a day doing "pretty much everything," involved in the production. When he's not working, he still finds time to practice or perform with OFC, the ska-punk band that co-workers Nick Picariello, Justin Smith and Jeff Regish, of Turners Falls also belong to. No word on whether they'll be adding "Pet Cemetery" to their repertoire, after their stint at Carriage House.

Edwards said Nelson and Dowd "are good employers. Very fair."

Cleaning up the crocks after they emerged from the paint booth the other day was Banks' boyfriend, Sam Phillips, another Brattleboro denizen. Phillips plans to scale back his work at Carriage House after the holiday crush, to avoid a recurrence of the repetitive stress syndrome that occasionally gives him tendonitis in the wrists. He said the seasonal work has been good. "Everybody's friendly. It feels

like there's a task to complete, and we all just get it done." Phillips recently returned from an extended US tour, from Athens, GA to Chicago with Latch, and their side project, the pop band Moon Eye.


Looking over the teeming workshop, Nelson, who looks a bit elfin as Yuletide approaches, said, "It's always been my intention to support the artists, or anyone who wants to work. These

kids are all in bands. They're really trying to accomplish something."

For now, they're trying to accomplish an elves and cobbler routine, helping Nelson and Dowd catch up on back orders for 2000 crocks, not to mention an untold number of pet tombstones, as the Christmas rush continues. By New Year's, they'll probably need another bench.

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

Income eligible applicants who qualify for a full-deferred payment loan will be able to borrow up to \$35,000.00. This is a 0% interest, deferred payment loan, the loan is secured by a lien placed on your property, and the loan is due when you sell or transfer the property.

Homeowners and any tenant families must have an annual gross income equal to or less than the following amounts:

# In Household	Gross Annual Income
1	\$40,150.00
2	\$45,900.00
3	\$51,600.00
4	\$57,350.00
5	\$61,950.00
6	\$66,550.00
7	\$71,100.00
8	\$75,700.00

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

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

FUN AT THE PARK

BY JOSEPH A. PARZYCH GILL - With Ma working at her WPA sewing job and the

family getting surplus food from the government, Pa was in a better mood. One Sunday he took us all to the public park playground in Turners Falls to

play on the slides and swings. Ordinarily, it would have been a rare treat, but this day I was sick with some sort of stomach upset. Pa coaxed me to come along.

"Playing in the fresh air would make you feel better."

He parked near the park, next to a café, and sent us off to play. Every few minutes I'd make a trip from the park to the bathroom at the cafe. One man sat at a table with his head - face down - on his folded arms.

"What's the matter with him?" I asked.

"He's sick."

I hoped he didn't have what I had, and would be too sick to make a trip to the bathroom if the need arose. Worse than that, I hoped he wouldn't be using the bathroom when I needed it.

After a half dozen trips, Pa told me to use the toilet in the park maintenance building, because I was not only embarrassing him, but stinking up the place as well. Besides, people would get the idea I was sick or something, and it wouldn't look right.

By then it was getting late in the day, I hadn't eaten much and I was getting weak, so I sat on the toilet in the shed, resting, for a fair spell, and making sure I wouldn't have another eruption.

When I got back to the swings, it was quiet. No kids hollering, nor any squeaking of swings. The place was deserted. I looked around and called out for my brother and

sisters. There was no answer. I was all alone.

I hurried over to the café. The Essex was gone. I went inside to see if anyone was waiting for me. Neither Ma nor Pa were there.

The bartender came out from behind the bar with a piece of rubber hose. He smacked the hose on the table where the sick man sat resting his head. The man hardly moved. He began poking the man with the hose.

"Closing time! Wake up. Get out. Goddem bum. Get out." He hit him over the head and shoulders, as he pushed the man toward the door. The man staggered out, waving one arm for balance, and holding the other over his head, trying to ward off blows.

The bartender scared me half to death. I was afraid to ask him about Ma and Pa, afraid he might figure I was sick too, and let me have it with the hose.

I went out into the street.

Continued Next Week

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Special Offer for Montague Reporter Subscribers!

Any paid subscriber to the Montague Reporter may have one free classified ad in 2008, up to 20 words. Contact us at 863-8666 or reporter@Montaguema.net (Pay for a second week, you get a third week free!)

GREAT STOCKING STUFFER!

New Year's Eve Comedy at the Shea

DECEMBER 31ST 8 P.M. \$18



Joe Wong



Bill Campbell



Jennifer Myszkowski



Myq Kaplan

Tickets available at the World Eye Bookstore, Greenfield at the Shea Box Office, or at: www.sheacomedy.com

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ARTS & ENTERTAINMENT



JACK COUGHLIN ILLUSTRATION

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

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

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

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

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

Deja Brew, Wendell: **Blame It On
Tina** - folk rock, no cover. 9 - 11.
p.m.

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

WEDNESDAY, DECEMBER 26TH
at the Rendezvous, Turners Falls:
Game Night, Bring your own or
play one of ours! Fabulous prizes.

THURSDAY, DECEMBER 27TH
Deja Brew, Wendell: **Free Range** -
folk/rock, no cover. 8 to 10 .p.m.

Mocha Maya's Coffee House,
Shelburne Falls: Susan Souza.
Free, 7 p.m. Musician info
www.womenskiss.org

FRIDAY, DECEMBER 28TH
Rt. 63 Roadhouse, Millers Falls:
Love Bomb - rock, come to
dance! 9:30 p.m.

Deja Brew, Wendell: **Art
Steele** - blues, no cover.
9 to 11 p.m.

**SATURDAY,
DECEMBER 29TH**
The National Spiritual
Alliance: Psychic Fair
from 11 to 4 p.m. at
Thompson Temple,
across the street from
the Lake Pleasant Post
Office. Readings and
healings \$25/ 20 min.
www.thenationalspiritu-
alallianceinc.org.

Rt. 63 Roadhouse,
Millers Falls: **Strange
Brew** - rock, come to
dance! 9 p.m.

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

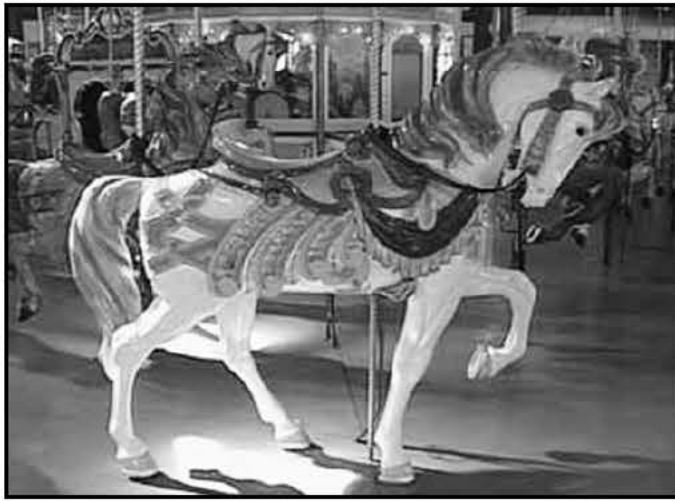
SUNDAY, DECEMBER 30TH
Family Dance, Montague Grange,
Montague Center. Simple dances
for little feet. Each last Sunday of
the month, through April '08. 4 to 6
p.m., \$4/ person, or families \$7 -
\$12 sliding scale, snack included.

Feng Shui Workshop sponsored by
the National Spiritual Alliance 3 to 5
p.m. at Thompson Temple, Lake
Pleasant. Facilitator Katherine
Mayfield. www.thenationalspiritu-
alallianceinc.org.

Contra Dance, at the Montague
Grange, 7 to 10 p.m. Featuring the
all-comers band which welcomes
musicians of all levels. Both experi-
enced and inexperienced callers .
All proceeds from this event fund
maintenance and repairs to the
Montague Grange Hall.

The Dead of Winter Film Series at
The Montague Bookmill, Montague
Center: **Nashville** (1975) Robert
Altman's country music epic.
Screenplay by Joan Tewkesbury.
Free Films for the Frozen, 7 p.m.

MONDAY, DECEMBER 31ST
Starry Starry Night in Orange, all
day event! New Year's Eve cele-
bration in downtown Orange.
Music, food & more! Info. (978)
544-2821.



The Holyoke Merry-Go-Round will hold holiday hours, noon to 4 p.m. December 26th to 30th. All rides are \$1. Closed on New Year's Day. All who bring in a warm hat, scarf or mittens to pin on the Holyoke Merry-Go-Round's mitten tree will receive a free ride on the antique carousel through December 31st.

Winter merry-go-round hours are Saturday and Sunday, noon to 4 p.m. Holyoke Heritage State Park is located on 221 Appleton Street in Holyoke. (413) 538-9838 or www.holyokemerrygoround.org

Happy New Year's Dinner presented
by Our Lady of Peace Church.
Ring in the New Year with a lovely
meal (prime rib) prepared by Chef
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ment, door prizes and raffles. Held
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p.m. Reservations: 863-2585.

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

at the Rendezvous, Turners Falls:
New Year's Eve Dance Concert
Bash with DJ Tommy TBA, Wood
Green Empire (gypsy jazz), Hors
d'oeuvres, Champagne Toast,
Open 'til 2 a.m. \$10.

Deja Brew New Years Party with
Gangly Heart! 9:30 p.m. to 1a.m.

FRIDAY, JANUARY 4TH
Moonlight & Morning Star at
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hippo.com, 6:30 - 8:30 p.m.

Open Swim at the Turners Falls
High School Pool. Family Swim
6:30 to 7:30 p.m., Adult Lap Swim
7:30 - 8:30 p.m. Fees: Residents:

*Youth - \$1.25; Adults (18+) -
\$2.50; Senior Citizens (65+) -
\$1.25. Non Residents: *Youth -
\$2.50; Adults (18+) - \$3.50; Senior
Citizens (65+) - \$2.50. *Youths
under 12 must be accompanied by
a parent/guardian. If school is can-
celled due to inclement weather,
open swim will be re-scheduled.

SUNDAY, JANUARY 6TH
The Dead of Winter Film Series at
The Montague Bookmill, Montague
Center: **The
Wicker Man**
(1973) The
original pagan
musical-mys-
tery! Singing,
sacrifice, and
Britt Ekland's
butt. Free Films
for the Frozen, 7
p.m.

**MONDAY, JAN-
UARY 7TH**
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Di Paolo,
Turners Falls,
**John
Waynelovich
Duo**, John
Waynelovich-
piano & Mark
Dunlap-bass,
6:30 - 9:30 p.m.

**FRIDAY,
JANUARY
11TH**
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Discovery Center Coffee House:

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SATURDAY, JANUARY 12TH.
Knights of Columbus Free Throw
Contest - Youth ages 10 - 14 com-
pete separately to make as many
free throws as possible.
Competition is also separated by
age category. Winners advance to
regional competition. Participation
is FREE! The Montague Parks &
Recreation Department at 56 First
St./Unity Park Fieldhouse.
Mondays - Fridays; 8:30 a.m. 4:30
p.m.; www.montague.net; 863-
3216

SUNDAY, JANUARY 13TH
Route 63 Roadhouse: Second
Sunday Comedy Show, 7 to 8:30
p.m. 3 Comics for \$5. More info:
www.LaughAtDave.com/Second
Sunday.html

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12/25 Movie times
1. THE WATER HORSE: LEG-
END OF THE DEEP PG
DAILY 12:00 3:00 6:30 9:00
2. NATIONAL TREASURE: BOOK
OF SECRETS PG in DTS sound
DAILY 12:00 3:00 6:30 9:00
3. ALVIN AND THE CHIPMUNKS
DAILY 12:00 3:00 6:30 9:00 PG
4. CHARLIE WILSON'S WAR R
DAILY 12:15 3:15 6:45 9:15
5. WALK HARD: THE DEWEY
COX STORY R
DAILY 12:15 3:15 6:45 9:15
6. ALIEN VS PREDATOR -
REQUIEM.....R in DTS
DAILY 12:30 3:15 7:00 9:30 sound
7. I AM LEGEND PG13
DAILY 12:30 3 P.M. 7:00 9:30

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Winter hours open: 10 a.m. to 4 p.m. Friday & Saturday and by special arrangement (413) 863-3221
FRIDAY, DECEMBER 21ST
Winter Moon - Full Moon. Stories about the Full Moon. Figure out with refuge staff how it seems to change each night. Learn how animals change their behavior in the winter moonlight. 3 to 3:30 p.m.
THURSDAY TO SATURDAY, DECEMBER 27TH TO 29TH
Discover the Discovery Center Join Refuge staff on this exhibit tour, story time & craft activity. Visitors' choice at 11 a.m., 1 p.m. or 2 p.m.
FRIDAY, January 4th
Story Time, 10:30 to 11 a.m. Come hear and share stories about animals in winter. This is for visitors of all ages.
SATURDAY JANUARY 5TH
Winter Birds: Join refuge staff on this adventure along the river and canal as we look for winter birds. Field guides and binoculars will be provided. Dress for the weather. Meet inside the main door of the Discovery Center, 9 to 10 a.m.

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BY LESLIE BROWN

MONTAGUE CITY - As I write, Sunday's Nor'easter is winding down. After I shoveled this latest storm's snow and sleet, the level of the yard's white blanket measured seventeen inches.

Since last Thursday, when the snow fell literally at a rate of an inch or more an hour, I have kept the bird feeder topped off, and a dusting of seed on the ground as well. The birds have hovered in chattering clubs. The purple finches are the greediest; they sit on the feeder and eat, holding their seats until a brave chickadee or titmouse dares to push them aside. There is even one acrobatic squirrel who has fig-

THE GARDENER'S COMPANION: Season of Dark and Light

ured out how to hang from the porch roof and drape itself down the tube of the feeder. If he isn't shooed away, he could empty the feeder singlehandedly in a short space of time.

During last Thursday's storm there was a sudden silence at the feeder. A small hawk - likely a sparrow hawk - dropped from the sky and snatched a Junco from the snow. She sat and devoured her catch right under the bird feeder. Needless to say, the rest of the birds were nowhere to be seen.

The hawk was beautiful, with brown chest markings and a lovely red-brown color. Still, I regret the junco and my futile efforts to take care of these ground-feeding birds.

In this last storm, the lady cardinal has been so bold as to sit at the feeder herself, perhaps out of hunger or perhaps for a sense of safety.

Now the Solstice nears. This year the winter solstice occurs on

December 22nd, marking the shortest day and the longest night of the year. The winter festivals over the ages come from our desire to fend off the increasing dark and our longing for the return of the light.

Many of today's Christmas traditions began with ancient midwinter festivities that celebrated the return of the sun and the escape from bitter cold and darkness. In the pre-Christian era, fire was a symbol of hope, and boughs of greenery were gathered to symbolize the eternal cycle of creation.

The ancient Mesopotamians celebrated the New Year, hoping that their chief god, Marduk, would be successful in battling the monsters of Chaos who brought the dark season.

In extreme northern climates like Scandinavia, the sun disappears for great lengths of time. In that ancient land, scouts were sent to the mountaintops to await the return of the light. When they

returned home with the news of the first sighting of the sun, the villagers celebrated with feasting and bonfires.

After the solstice, the days begin to lengthen, ever so slowly, and the period of darkness shortens, likewise.

In these days of electricity, of television, of the computer and the heat-providing furnace, we are far from the early reliance on wood fires, oil lamps and candlelight to keep the cold and dark away. Still, we hang onto the dread of cold and darkness, even to extent of altering the clock to extend our waking periods of daylight.

One local Solstice gathering will be held at the Sunwheel at UMass, Amherst on December 21st and 22nd at both sunrise (7 a.m.) and sunset (3:30 p.m.). The Sunwheel is located south of Alumni Stadium, just off of Rocky Hill Road. A \$3 donation is requested for the maintenance of the stone path, and for future

expansion. For further information, contact Dr. Judith Young at young@astro.umass.edu, or at 413-549-5139.

The Sunwheel is modeled after ancient stone circles like Stonehenge. It is a solar calendar and observatory whose standing stones line up with the locations on the horizon of the rising and setting sun, at the times of the solstice and equinox.

The winter dark and cold is rigorous, but the banks of snow shield shrubs and plants against the killing frost. The season provides rest for rejuvenation for the growing season to come. And the mailman is already bringing the bright and glossy catalogues full of the treasures for the next season's garden.

So hang a balsam wreath, cut and drape swags of green, light a candle, a fireplace log or the wood stove, and sip a warming toast to the season of darkness and the return of the light.



ILLUSTRATION BY ANJA SCHUTZ

THIS WILD PLACE:

BY KARL MEYER

GREENFIELD - *I've always thought, during the extremes of the year, the longest day, the shortest, the hottest, coldest, rainiest, "Wouldn't it be neat to bottle up some of this and bring it out to enjoy at the other side of the year when we're missing it the most?" So, this year I've done it. Here, at the winter solstice, is a story that took place at exactly the lushest time of year; this summer's solstice, June 21st, 2007. I hope you enjoy it.*

You can see a lot, if you listen. Yogi Berra didn't say that; I did. But we think alike.

This occurred to me after I saw the bobcat. I'm not sure how they are connected. I'd already been listening hard that morning, cataloguing bird songs and sightings as part of Massachusetts Audubon's Breeding Bird survey, their first statewide census of breeding birds in a quarter centu-

ry. From 6 - 7:30 a.m. I'd checked off thrushes and cuckoos, ravens and a Carolina wren. Traveling by bicycle, the south end of my route took me near Shelburne Falls. I headed into town for a scone.

This was summer's first day. The sun was high when I cycled back along Route 112, and the North River in Colrain. It's a narrow road, often with just the river on one side and woods on the other. I was still thinking about birds when a cacophony of crows arose just inside the forest. Noisy crows always know something - we just don't always know what it is. These smart critters might be harassing an interloping owl or hawk, or a snake winding through their turf. Sometimes they're just being crows.

I pulled over and stopped; my rear wheel hanging in the oncoming lane. The crows were teetering, agitated, perched maybe twenty feet up, hailing their displeasure down on something not

one hundred feet from where I stood. I followed their sight line down to the intruder: a bobcat, big as life, and perched upright, in full side-view on an old stone wall.

I was amazed. The cat, figuring out that something else had entered the equation, turned and looked at me. It was wild, gorgeous, and beset enough by those harassing crows that it did not pay me any more attention than required. We stared at one another, the cat now aware it could no longer move about these woods unfettered.

Its eyes were big, with that wise cat look. The drooping ruffs below its cheeks were pointed like in a photo. Truly, at 100 feet, I couldn't have gotten a better look if I were at the zoo. It was mostly gray; the tawny red-browns *Lynx rufus* is known for were largely absent at this season. It was lithe and healthy. Black spots dotted the area above the long hind legs, and its short, bobbed tail was

mostly unfurled, curving up and over with a visible black tip.

A car was coming. I shuffled in tighter to the embankment. I assumed this would send the wild cat scampering. It didn't.

I scooted forward, still straddling the bike, for a better sight line to the cat who remained quietly perplexed by all the hubbub. I still had binoculars across my shoulder and risked moving once more, slowly un-slipping them. When I peered through them, the bobcat was looking my way, teed up like a trophy on Oscar night. We sized each other up, the cat alert but clearly un-spooked. The fur on its shoulders wasn't raised a hair. This was a full-grown bobcat, perhaps a yearling. If it was a breeding animal its young would be about six weeks old at this time.


I'd only seen one bobcat before, a decade back on an Easter Sunday. That one had a hapless woodchuck clenched in its jaws.

But that was it. I never thought I'd glimpse one again in person.

A truck was coming; I nudged in tighter to the woods. With that the cat became more attentive. It gave me another look, glanced up at the screaming crows, and decided to call it a day. The wild cat stepped off the stone wall and into the forest. Guessing, I'd say it was just shy of a yard long. Using that standard for the rudimentary calculus concocted on my ride home, I figured if I'd have picked that bobcat up it would have weighed 20 - 25 pounds. That's how Yogi and I do it, anyway. We measure it, to see how much it weighs.

Cooling thought: The greatest gift we could offer the planet is the cessation of the white hot, round the clock, flights and flames of war. Peace.

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