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- no paper next week

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YEAR 8 - NO. 13

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THE VOICE OF THE VILLAGES

DECEMBER 23, 2009

Three Finalists for Airport Manager Position

BY DAVID DETMOLD

TURNERS FALLS - Three and a half months after receiving the resignation of former Turners Falls airport manager Mike Sweeney, the airport commission is getting close to hiring a new manager.

"We got 12 applicants," said commissioner Rod Herzig, who serves with David Brule and Brian Carroll on the hiring committee, "and we've narrowed the list to three finalists."

They are Ervingside resident Sara Campbell, a civil engineer "with a good background in public service," according to Herzig; Michael Longo, a Greenfield attorney who has taken piloting lessons and seems "well versed in the inner workings of the airport," and Bill Wood, an economist, pilot and former Colrain finance committee member now living in Greenfield.

"We have three well-spoken candidates, highly qualified for the job," said Herzig, who added he was seeking "user-friendliness" as a top attribute for the new manager, after some years of rocky relations between pilots at the Turners Falls Airport and the commission. Herzig said he found that quality in all three of the finalists for the job.

The next step in the hiring process for the 16- to 20-hour-a-week post will be for the full air-see **AIRPORT** pg 14

A Griswold Family Christmas



DETMOLD PHOTO

John and Theresa Kuczek light up the neighborhood at 19 Griswold Street, with their neighbors across the street at #20, Jon and Luann Eggleston. You won't have to wait 12 months for the next display. "Hallowe'en is Huge around here!"

BY DAVID DETMOLD

TURNERS FALLS - "We're not having a friendly rivalry," insisted John Kuczek, of the larger-than-life plastic pop-up holiday ornaments, yards filled with sleighs, elves and reindeer, and eaves decked with endless strings of Christmas lights at numbers 19 and 20 Griswold Street. "We're playing together."

However Theresa and John Kuczek and their neighbors, Jon and Luann Eggleston, look at their holiday decorating extravaganza,

from the standpoint of passersby the Christmas ornament and light show on Griswold Street has just grown bigger and bigger for the last five years.

"We need a traffic cop out there now," said Theresa. "Cars line up in the street and beep if the pop-ups aren't inflated."

The Kuczeks say they leave the pop up ornaments deflated sometimes on windy nights to protect them from blowing away or getting damaged.

Lately, bus tours from nearby

nursing homes, Poet's Seat or Buckley in Greenfield, have been pulling up outside the Kuczek and Eggleston residences to allow their guests to admire the holiday decorations.

"We see cars with out of state license plates, from New York or Vermont, even Canada," Theresa added.

But mostly, she insisted, the audience for whom they go to such lengths in lighting up their homes and lawns is much closer

see **GRISWOLD** pg 7

Opponents Claim Bias in Biomass Study

BY JOSHUA WATSON

HOLYOKE - The Massachusetts Department of Energy Resources (DOER) sponsored a public stakeholder meeting on Thursday at the Holiday Inn in Holyoke, where consultants, enlisted last month by the DOER to produce a biomass "white paper" for the state, gave a brief overview of the methods by which they would determine the sustainability of biomass plants - including the availability of clean wood - and gauge the likely extent and impact of CO2 emissions by the plants.

The state has placed a temporary hold on Renewable Portfolio Standards approval for biomass plants for six months to a year, until the results of the white paper are in.

Consulting firms, including the Manomet Center for Conservation Sciences, the Pinchot Institute for Conservation, the Forest Guild, and the Biomass Energy Resource Center, promised to bring the "best science to bear" in the effort to determine the sustainability and carbon impacts of biomass generation in the state.

About two hundred people attended the meeting, which allowed for "structured and facilitated conversations to gather public input" for the research team's consideration at the end of the meeting.

But opponents of four biomass plants proposed for Western see **BIOMASS** pg 6

Wailin' at Deja Brew



STILES PHOTO

Doug Tanner, Wailin' Dave Robinson, and Tommy Filault

BY TAMI STILES

WENDELL - There is a legend in our corner of the Valley about a long legged blues harp player named David Robinson. Long ago at Christmas time, his uncle gave him a harmonica. Young Dave's first musical influence was the Beatles, particularly their song "Love Me Do." From

that moment on he became Wailin' Dave Robinson, and he has traveled the globe playing with another legend known as B.B. King. I happened to catch a show at Deja Brew Pub in the cozy little village of Wendell last week. The small quarters and packed tables were filled with people celebrating a little holiday cheer among friends. I found the only seat left in the room and made my way to the bar as the band set up. It was comprised of five members: Dave Robinson on lead vocals and harmonica, lead guitarist Tommy Filault, fiddler Doug Tanner, of the Gypsy Wranglers, see **WAILIN'** pg 7

Disagreement over Per-Pupil Spending Threatens Regionalization Drive at Mahar

BY DAVID DETMOLD

ORANGE - The effort by the town of Wendell to get the other three member towns of the Mahar Regional School District to adjust per-pupil costs at Mahar to more equitably reflect the aggregate wealth of the member towns is threatening to derail ongoing plans by the towns of Petersham and Orange to regionalize as a K-12 region.

Town meetings in both Orange and Petersham voted in recent years to regionalize their elementary grades; they already regionalize their upper grades in Mahar. But unanimous consent of all four towns in the Mahar region is required to change the regional agreement and allow Orange and Petersham to form a split, or hybrid, K-12 region within the Mahar district, and Wendell's finance committee and selectboard are opposed.

Jim Slavas, of the Wendell finance committee wrote to the Mahar regionalization planning committee on December 7th say-

ing, "Both the Wendell finance committee and the selectboard are not prepared at this time to recommend to the Wendell town meeting either a four-town K-12 region [to include Wendell and New Salem] or a split/hybrid region. This position is based on a careful weighing of all the impacts, both positive and negative, either approach would have on Wendell's fiscal situation and current educational programs, a comprehensive review of the final reports of the consultants hired by the committee and the full record of committee discussions and decisions."

Responding to Slavas in an email sent December 9th (forwarded to the *Montague Reporter*), state representative Chris Donelan, (D-Orange) a member of the regionalization planning committee, said, "If it is the decision of the Wendell selectboard and the Wendell finance committee to not allow Orange and Petersham to form a K-12 district, perhaps the solution is for see **MAHAR** pg 5

PET OF THE WEEK

Big Marshmallow



Oliver

My name is Oliver and I'm a three-year-old short hair cat in need of a good home. Now when you see me, such a really *big* guy missing the tip of one ear, you might think I'm a tough fellow who gets into fights.

But the truth is I'm just a big, sweet marshmallow who hates to fight and was picked on and beat up on by rough, tough cats. I'm very friendly. I love when you pet me and as you might tell from my size I do like treats, now and again. What I don't like is dogs, they scare me. Any size, any type, it doesn't matter to me, I get frightened.

I'll tell you a secret. I did write a letter to Santa but I did not ask for treats, or toys... I asked to be adopted into a loving, gentle home. I hope you will come down to meet me, see how really charming I am, and grant my wish. For more information on adopting me, please contact the Dakin Pioneer Valley Humane Society at (413) 548-9898 or via email: info@dprvhs.org.

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LEVERETT LIBRARY NEWS

Family Program and a Book Discussion

Family Music and Movement

The Leverett Library offers a free interactive family movement and music program for children, from newborns to five-year-olds, accompanied by parent or caregiver on Wednesday, December 30th, from 10:30 to 11:15 a.m. The program will be presented by Debbie Weyl, director of Music Together for Valley Families.

**MONTAGUE LIBRARY NEWS
Holiday Hours and Programs**

BY LINDA HICKMAN
MONTAGUE – None of the Montague Public Libraries will be open December 24-26 or January 1st due to the holidays. Music and Movement will not be held on December 24th or 31st. Story Hour will be held on Wednesday, December 23rd and 30th at the Carnegie Library at 10:15 a.m. Library Club at the Millers Falls Library will be held on Tuesday, December 22nd and 29th from 3:30 to 4:30 p.m. The Evening Sing-A-Long on Monday, December 28th will not be held. For more information, call the Carnegie Library, 863-3214.

**CARNEGIE LIBRARY NEWS
Music and Movement**

BY LINDA HICKMAN
TURNERS FALLS – The weekly Music and Movement series with Tom Carroll and Laurie Davidson is being held at the Carnegie Library on Thursdays at 10 a.m. during January and February. Young children of all ages and their parents or caregivers are invited to the free programs. Registration is not required. The series is sponsored by the Family Network. For more information, please call 863-3214.

New Years March to Vernon Nuke

BY NINA KELLER
WENDELL – On January 1st, New Years Day at 10 a.m., Massachusetts residents who live downwind of the Vermont Yankee nuclear power plant will hold a walk to the Vermont Yankee Nuclear Reactor, from Route 142 in Gill to the gate of the Vernon nuke, calling for that reactor to be safely decommissioned.

The Meanings of Madness

Leverett author Gail Hornstein will discuss her new book, "Agnes's Jacket: A Psychologist's Search for the Meanings of Madness" at the Leverett Library on Tuesday, January 5th, at 7:00 p.m. Copies will be available to purchase.

A vast gulf exists between the way medicine explains psychiatric illness and the experiences of those who suffer. Hornstein's work helps us bridge that gulf, guiding us through the inner lives of those diagnosed with schizophrenia, bipolar illness, depression and paranoia, and emerging with nothing less than a new model for understanding one another and ourselves.

The Leverett Library is located at 75 Montague Road. For more info, call: (413) 548-9220.

Perhaps no place in any community is so totally democratic as the town library. The only entrance requirement is interest.
– Lady Bird Johnson

**WENDELL LIBRARY NEWS
Holiday Hours**

The Wendell Free Library will be closed on Saturday, December 26th. Mostly Yoga will be held as usual on Sunday, December 27th at 10 a.m., with Arieh Kurinsky teaching. Teens and Tweens Time (TnT) will be held as usual on Sunday, December 27th from 2 to 5:30 p.m. Adults and children are welcome to use the library during TnT Time, but be prepared for noise!

SENIOR CENTER ACTIVITIES – Dec 28th to Jan 1st

GILL / MONTAGUE
Gill/Montague Senior Center, 62 Fifth Street, Turners Falls, is open Monday through Friday from 9:00 a.m. to 2:00 p.m. Congregate meals are served Tuesday through Friday at noon. Meal reservations must be made a day in advance by 11:00 a.m. Messages can be left on our machine when the center is not open. Meal site Manager is Becky Cobb. Council on Aging Director is Roberta Potter. For information or to make meal reservations, call 863-9357. Feel free to call the senior center for information on any programs.

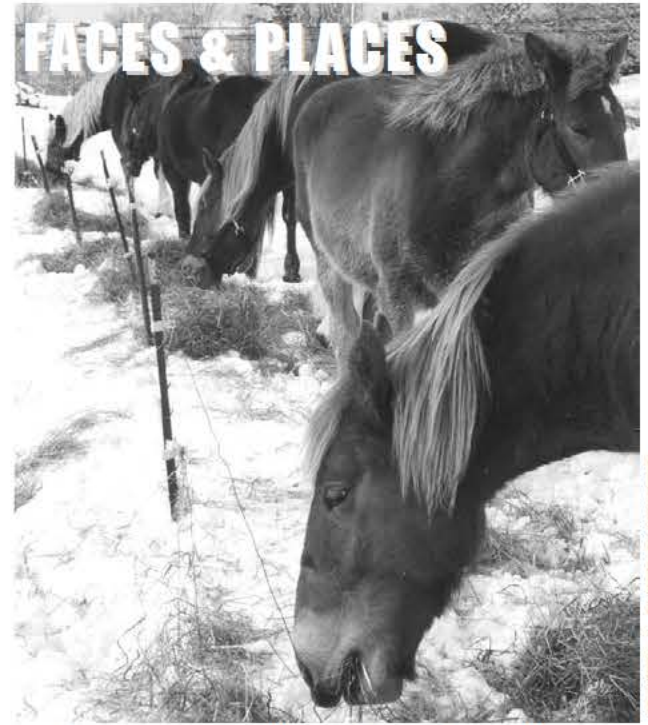
Monday, Dec. 28th
10:00 a.m. Senior Aerobics
10:45 a.m. Easy Aerobics
1:00 p.m. Knitting Circle
Tuesday, Dec. 29th
9:00 a.m. Walking Group

12:00 noon Lunch
1:00 p.m. Canasta
Wednesday, Dec. 30th
10:00 a.m. Senior Aerobics
12:00 noon Lunch
No Bingo
Thursday, Dec. 31st
10:00 a.m. Tai Chi
12:00 noon Lunch
1:00 p.m. Pitch
Friday, Jan. 1st
Senior Center Closed
Happy New Year

ERVING Senior Center, 18 Pleasant St., Erving (Old Center School, 1st Floor), is open Monday through Friday from 9 a.m. to 2 p.m. for activities and congregating meals. For info and reservations, call Polly Kiely, Senior Center Director, at (413) 423-3308. Lunch is daily at 11:30 a.m., with reservations 24 hours in advance. Transportation can be

provided for meals, shopping, or medical necessity. Call the center for information on the Flu Clinic and Pneumonia shots.

Monday, Dec. 28th
9:00 a.m. Exercise
12:00 noon Pitch
Tuesday, Dec. 29th
9:00 a.m. Aerobics
12:30 a.m. Painting
Wednesday, Dec. 30th
8:45 a.m. Line Dancing
12:00 noon Bingo
Thursday, Dec. 31st
8:45 a.m. Aerobics
Friday, Jan. 1st
Senior Center Closed
Happy New Year
WENDELL Senior Center is located at 2 Lockes Village Road. Call Kathy Swaim at (978) 544-2020 for hours and upcoming programs.



JOSEPH A. PARZYCH PHOTO

Horses dining on hay along the fence line at Mount Hermon in Gill

December 30th Last Day to Register for Senate Vote

Wednesday, December 30th, 2009, is the last day to register to vote for the upcoming special state election to fill the Senate seat held for nearly 50 years by the late Edward Kennedy. In Montague, registration will be held at the town clerk's office for all residents who will be 18 years old on or before Tuesday, January 19th, 2009. Office hours will be

held from 8:30 a.m. to 8:00 p.m. The town clerk's office is located at the town hall, 1 Avenue A, in Turners Falls. For more information call 863-3200, ext 203.

Residents of other towns, consult your town clerk about registration hours.

Great Falls Middle School Students of the Week

Grade 6
Kelsey Shafer
Nevan Shattuck

Grade 7
Zachary Wright

Grade 8
Jessica Fuller

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Movement Studio Readies for Opening

BY JOE KWIECINSKI

TURNERS FALLS – Part of the reason children's dance teacher Anna Hendricks can't wait for the doors to open in January at the Movement Studio above the Brick House Community Center at 24 Third Street in Turners Falls is her love of creative movement. But there's another factor in her excitement about the new site.

"I was trained in ballet at North Atlantic Ballet Studio," said Hendricks, a 27-year-old Cambridge native, now living on a farm in Gill. "It was very strict at North Atlantic, and I dislocated my knee four times at the age of 13. So I'm on a lifelong path on how to dance in a way that doesn't reinjure my body."

"I would cry every time I'd go to ballet class. I want the very

opposite for my students at the Movement Studio. I want a safe, nurturing environment. It's my goal that my students leave my class feeling better about themselves. My dance and creative movement protocol will be relaxed and fun. It'll be about letting kids figure out what their own bodies can do, rather than having them follow a narrow, strict format."

The Movement Studio, opening in January, will provide "fun and affordable dance classes for children," said Hendricks, who began teaching classes at the age of 18. There will be a sliding scale for classes at the new studio, ranging from \$5 to \$15. Scholarships will also be available, and registrations are now being accepted.

Classes for children ages 3

and 4 are scheduled for Fridays from 10 to 11 a.m. Ages 5 through 7 meet Wednesdays from 3:30 to 4:30 p.m., while kids 8 through 11 are slated for Mondays, from 3:30 to 4:30 p.m.

The space will also be available for rent by the hour to teachers, movement artists, and members of the community looking for a place to gather, rehearse, teach, or choreograph.

Hendricks looks back fondly at the movement class she taught last fall at Gill Elementary School. "I had 11 students," she said, "three boys and eight girls. It was awesome to have three boys in the group. Boys bring bigger movement into the class. They do huge jumps and bring a great deal of energy. And the way society is, boys don't usual-

see **STUDIO** pg 6



JESSICA HARMON ILLUSTRATION

Local Briefs

COMPILED BY DON

CLEGG – Claire Chang and Mitchell Waldron, from Gill, spent about four hours shoveling the sidewalk on the **Gill-Montague Bridge** after the December 9th snowstorm. The state has not cleared the bridge sidewalk after snowstorms for many years. It was a whole lot of work for Chang and Waldron, but now pedestrians can cross the bridge without walking in the traveling lane. If you live in Gill and you want to use the FRTA bus from the 3rd Street stop in Turners Falls, you know how dangerous that walk can be.

Chang and Waldron suggest that after the next snowstorm those interested in helping to keep the bridge sidewalk clear bring a shovel and start on the Turners Falls side of the bridge. They just might meet you halfway.

The Hillcrest School in Turners Falls had quite the **PJ Night** on Wednesday, December 16th. This night was very successful, with lots of families attending to hear about the importance of reading aloud to children and listening to stories read by their teachers, while snacking on milk and cookies.

Has anyone noticed the

amount of community activity going on with different grade levels at the **Gill Montague school district**? There have been spaghetti dinners, pancake breakfasts with Santa, and food drives to support the local food pantry from the Sheffield School, Great Falls Middle School, and Turners Falls High School. The Reconnecting Youth Class from the high school has also been volunteering at the Gill Montague Senior Center.

Ed Gregory, a local historian, sent in this article from the March 11th, 1872 edition of the *Greenfield Gazette & Courier*:

"Addington D. Welch has issued the prospectus for a new paper to be published about the 1st of June, 1872, to be called the *Turners Falls Reporter and Franklin County Patriot*. He promises a newer, independent sheet. Mr. Welch has the appearance of a wide awake, enterprising man, and we wish him every success in his journalistic venture".

The *Montague Reporter* was founded in 2002, adopting the masthead type of Welch's old broadsheet, which was published for about 50 years on Avenue A.

Send items for local briefs to reporter-local@montaguema.net

DEFERRED PAYMENT LOANS FOR HOME REPAIRS AT 0% INTEREST HOUSING REHABILITATION PROGRAM

The Franklin County Regional Housing and Redevelopment Authority (HRA) is currently applying for funding for the Towns of Ashfield, Buckland, Conway, Leyden, Monroe, Northfield, Sunderland, and specific target areas in Montague and Orange.

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.

The goal of this program is to enable low to moderate-income homeowners to bring their homes into code compliance, handicap accessibility, do needed repairs, and weatherize their homes.

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

Number in Household	Annual Gross Income
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4	\$62,100.00
5	\$67,050.00
6	\$72,050.00
7	\$77,000.00
8	\$81,950.00



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

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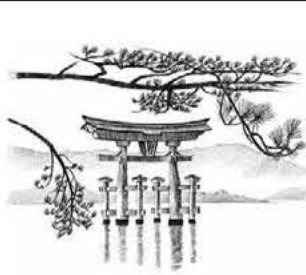
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THE WEATHER OUTSIDE IS FRIGHTFUL

On Sunday night, a small, brave band of carolers wandered the windswept streets of Turners Falls on one of the darkest nights of the year, attempting, with their wavering altos and occasional harmonies, to inject a little cheer into the hearts of local residents.

They first stopped at the Winslow-Wentworth House, congregate housing for seniors on the canal side of Peskeompskut Park. The hour was already well advanced, and many of the residents had turned in for the night, but two elderly ladies joined them in the foyer and requested a number of favorite songs, including "Hark the Herald Angels Sing," and "O Come All Ye Faithful." Not content with this showing, the carolers wandered the halls, singing "Silent Night" in gentle tones upstairs and down, and perhaps the sound of their voices reached beneath the doors and found a few more seniors where they lay, far from family and childhood homes. One of the residents comes from Haiti. Another had not yet made it back from her trip to the emergency room. She missed the carolers this year.

Leaving Winslow-Wentworth, the band of nine singers trudged along the empty sidewalks to a former storefront on the Avenue, now subsidized housing managed by Power Town apartments, where a housebound senior was waiting for them on the first floor landing. She requested "Away in a Manger".

Another tenant walked in while the carolers were singing, and responded with a hymn of her own, in Spanish, honoring the Three Wise Men, who bring gifts to the children of Spanish-speaking countries like her own beloved Puerto Rico on January 6th, *El Dia de los Reyes*. The carolers replied in kind with "We Three Kings of Orient Are," before moving on.

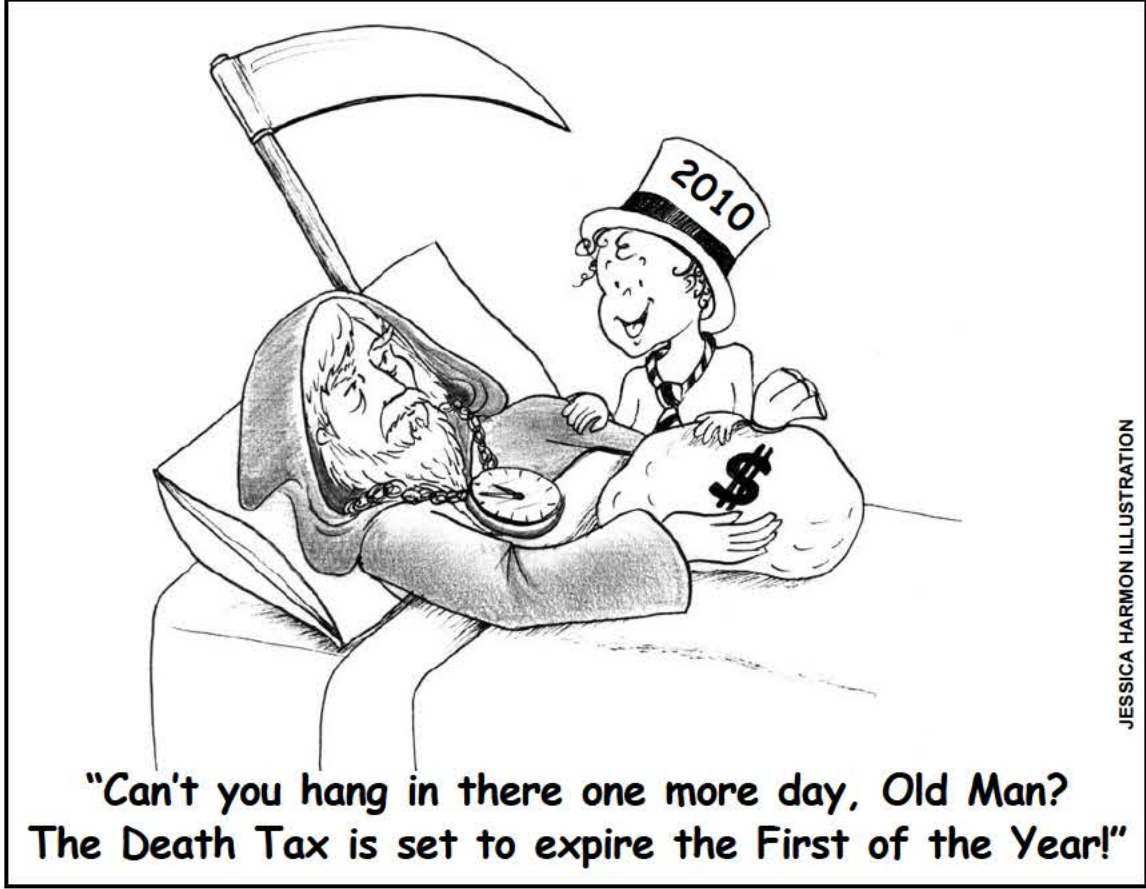
Walking down 4th Street, they sang in front of houses where residents opened their windows to call out thanks, or ran to bring a sip of whiskey to keep away the chill. Tradition has its dues.

At the Exxon on 3rd and L, the night shift seemed pleased to have "Jingle Bell Rock" playing both on the minimart's sound system and playing live in the middle of the store, as the carolers chimed in. They gave them a spirited rendition of "Santa Claus is Coming to Town," for good measure.

Around the corner on 3rd Street, a slim woman with long dark hair and a Spanish accent brought her children out in their night clothes to hear "Jingle Bells," and "Rudolph the Red Nosed Reindeer," under the streetlights. She was effusive with her praise, and told them she had just been released from jail.

This is the time of year when neighbors spontaneously reach out to neighbors with the greetings of the season, sometimes making new friends in the process and healing the hurt of loneliness, at least a little. More than the giving of store bought gifts that has so dominated our understanding of the meaning of the holiday season, the simple gift of a friendly word, or even a song to touch the heart of a stranger, may do more than anything to bring home the spirit of faith, hope and charity that allows the human race to face the dark times, knowing we face them together, and that the light will come again.

If your neighbor needs help shoveling her walk, help starting her car in the winter, or perhaps just someone to check in from time to time to make sure everything is all right, these are the small gestures that make such a huge difference in an indifferent world.



JESSICA HARMON ILLUSTRATION

LETTERS TO THE EDITOR

Gill Writes to the Commissioner

Commissioner Mitchell Chester, Department of Elementary and Secondary Education

Dear Mr. Chester:

This letter is in response to your letter of December 1st, 2009 to the Gill Montague Regional School District (GMRSD) and in particular to that letter's statements that you have assumed fiscal control and oversight of the district that will remain in place until the later of the end of FY10 or community approval of a budget for FY11. In other words, we understand that during this period of FY11 budgeting no action of a fiscal or financial nature can be taken by the district without the direct and express approval of your department.

The towns of Montague and Gill and the GMRSD previously have taken formal action agreeing that a long-term plan for fiscal stability should be in place prior to approval of the district's FY11 budget. This conclusion was driven by the facts that the structural deficit in the FY10

budget is on the order of \$1,000,000, that the current burden of this budget on the towns is beyond their means, that state funding for the towns will be further reduced in FY11, and that over the next two years the district reserves now being used to fill the structural gap will disappear. In short, we are now on the verge of calamity with regard to funding the GMRSD.

We also believe that some stability must be brought to the district budget and its financing before it will be possible either to obtain community agreement to a district budget, thus relieving your department of financial oversight responsibilities, or to resolve the underachieving status of the district. Both of these goals are critical to the health of our schools.

These issues affect the district and the towns equally. Accordingly, in light of the fiscal control and oversight assumed by your department, the undersigned ask that a meeting be convened in your offices in the first two weeks

of January for the purpose of developing jointly a program that will permit your department, the district and the towns to fulfill their fiscal responsibilities with regard to the FY11 district budget, including the development of a path toward long-term fiscal stability. We also understand that not all educational funding problems can be resolved at this time, but it is incumbent upon financial planners to develop current budgets with a view toward subsequent year realities. In this connection, we propose inviting our representatives to the state legislature to participate in at least this first meeting.

We look forward to your acceptance of this proposal and to the offer of one or more dates, preferably in the first two weeks of January, on which the meeting here requested can be convened. Thank you in advance for your assistance in this matter.

Allen Tupper Brown
Chair, Gill Finance Committee
(also signed by the Gill Selectboard)

Budget Advice

In a recent letter to the editor, Montague finance committee chair John Hanold challenges those who wish to advocate for any town service on the chopping block to say how they would balance the budget without cuts to programs they support. I agree. As a former finance committee chair myself, I can say it was always frustrating to have advocates assume it was the finance committee's job, and ours alone, to somehow wave a magic wand and produce the money to pay for the services we all value.

So I will be glad to take John up on his challenge. First, continue the effort (perhaps with a bit more unity and passion) to press the state to work with us on a long-term fiscal plan for the school district that meets core educational goals and is affordable to the town. Second, continue to work with town employees to join the state Group Insurance

Commission, or some other health group that has lower annual health care cost increases.

In the end these measures will do much more to stabilize town financing than eliminating the town planner. Yes we should use the current fiscal crisis to review all services "from the bottom up" to see if they are necessary or can be provided more cheaply. But in the end we will not solve our structural budget problem by cutting off our fingers and toes.

— Jeff Singleton
Montague

Jeff Singleton is a member of the Gill-Montague school committee. The opinions expressed here are his own, and do not necessarily reflect those of other members of the school committee.

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as of this date
4371

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NOTES FROM THE GILL SELECTBOARD

Gill Joins Montague in Pressing for a Meeting with DESE

BY DAVID DETMOLD – In an effort to persuade the state Department of Elementary and Secondary Education to deepen its financial oversight of the Gill-Montague Regional School District by engaging with the towns of Gill and Montague in long-range budget planning, the Gill selectboard agreed to cosign a letter to the DESE with the Gill finance committee on Monday, December 21st. The GMRSD's budget currently contains a structural budget deficit estimated at about \$1 million, and the member towns seek DESE's involvement in addressing that deficit.

[For the full text of the letter, see page 4.]

The letter asks the DESE to set up a budget meeting in its Malden offices between Commissioner Mitchell Chester, representatives of the towns of Gill and Montague, and the state representatives for the two towns in early January. Selectboard chair Ann Banash said senator Stan Rosenberg offered to do what he could to help arrange that meeting.

In other budget news, the selectboard and the finance com-

mittee has agreed to a schedule for developing the town side of the budget. The boards are asking department heads, at least for the highway, fire and police departments, to prepare "level funded, level-5%, and level-10%" budget scenarios by the first week of February. After that, the boards will pose written questions to the department heads, and give them a month to reply. Subsequently, the boards will hold joint interviews with those department heads, along with other selected departments like the library and the recreation department, to go over their proposed budgets sometime in the middle of April, with a view toward putting a preliminary budget in place by May.

Banash said early indications from the state were not bleak enough to warrant a 15% budget cut scenario for local departments. "There will be cuts," she predicted, "but not on the order of 15%."

She also said that early estimates show health insurance premiums for municipal workers will rise at about 7% next year, a forecast Banash called "good news."

The selectboard agreed to hire the low bidder among the various firms competing for a contract to help the town of Gill analyze the size and services provided by its town departments, and the pay scale of town employees. That firm, Human Resources, Inc. out of Andover, MA, in the person of Sandy Stapczynski, was hired for \$8,000 to provide the study, with regular reports to the selectboard on her findings as the budget season progresses, along with a final public hearing around the middle of March.

Banash said, "We see this study as a planning tool. We hope it will play an important role in this year's budget cycle." But, Banash added, if Stapczynski recommends adding staff or services, or cutting staff or services in any major way, her report would be viewed more as a planning document for future budget years.

Earlier, the selectboard met with Bill Travis, operations manager for Baystate Health Ambulance (BHA) of Greenfield. Travis said his company would continue to provide ambulance service, as they have

since 1996, at no cost to the town of Gill, along with "24/7 paramedic coverage, the highest level you can get."

Travis asked the town, for the first time, to sign a three-year contract with BHA, allowing either party to terminate with one year notice. He said his company was continually investing in new training and equipment to better serve the towns in its coverage area (Greenfield, Leyden, Shelburne Center, Bernardston, Ervingside, Montague and Gill), but needed to have the security of a contract now to assure the investments would be warranted.

Banash said, "We are really very fortunate to have Baystate Ambulance. It is not something the town can afford to provide." She said the town would consult with their attorney before signing the contract.

After leaving the meeting, Travis said a proposal under consideration by Montague to pull out of the longstanding arrangement whereby BHA provides free ambulance service to Montague (billing clients directly) in favor of ambulance service to be provided by the Turners Falls Fire

Department might affect the company's ability to continue providing free service to other towns. "That would be a huge decrease in our service base," he said.

The board approved a request by fire chief Gene Beaubien to pay a \$1200 bill for the replacement of a multigas detection meter, which monitors carbon monoxide levels, and other gases, at houses where the fire department is called in to inspect or fight fires. Beaubien warned the board to expect another bill, in the mid-\$400 range, for the recent repair of a dump valve on Engine #3, which had been leaking water. He said that with the completed \$12,000 repair of Engine #2, which needed a major pump overhaul, the department at the moment has three roadworthy engines.

Interim town administrative assistant Ray Purington said the town would be ready to set a tax rate in mid January, and mail out tax bills by the end of the month.

But tax collector Ronnie LaChance said she had already collected more than 94% of the see GILL pg 12

MAHAR from pg 1

Wendell to join another district."

Donelan continued, "You stated at our last meeting that Amherst had found a way to work with its smaller towns on an agreeable budget methodology. Maybe the answer is for Wendell to remain in Union #28 and join Amherst 7-12."

Slavas, along with Wendell finance committee chair Michael Idoine have developed exhaustive documentation that the state funding formula for Mahar penalizes Wendell for having fewer students enrolled in Mahar high school, relative to the other three member towns, by requiring the town of Wendell to pay higher per-student costs than the objectively wealthier towns of New Salem and Petersham. Slavas and Idoine have traveled to Malden in an attempt to persuade the Department of Elementary and Secondary Education of the fundamental unfairness of the state's minimum contribution formula, and have won at least a tacit acknowl-

edgment of that from associate commissioner Jeffrey Wulfson, who, in a letter dated June 10th of this year, told Slavas that state law allows regional school districts "to adopt and use their own formulas in lieu of the state's formula," provided all statutory requirements are met.

In pursuit of this goal, Slavas and Idoine and other members of the Wendell finance committee have traveled to meetings of the Mahar school committee, and to a meeting of the Franklin County school committee caucus, to lay out their plan for modifying Mahar's funding formula to "hold harmless" the town of Orange – by common consent the most financially stressed of the four member towns – and to readjust the minimum contribution of the other three member towns to reflect their relative wealth.

In the present Mahar budget, Wendell's per-pupil costs have risen from \$7,776 in FY '09 to \$8,565, as opposed to the per pupil costs of Petersham, the wealthiest of the four member

towns, which rose from \$7,650 in '09 to \$7,812 in the current year. New Salem, whose aggregate wealth is also greater than Wendell's, saw a decrease in per-pupil costs for Mahar this year, from \$7,458 in '09 to \$7,044, while Orange stayed relatively constant with per-pupil spending for Mahar at \$5,195 and \$5,183 over the past two years.

But Slavas believes Wendell's efforts to make the minimum contribution formula at Mahar more equitable are getting nowhere with the Mahar school committee, where the town of Wendell has only one representative on an 11 member board. Donelan referred to Wendell's efforts to change the formula as "just spinning our wheels," and regionalization planning committee member Dana Keenan, of Petersham, in a separate email, called them "an obstruction of reality."

In a rebuttal to Donelan emailed on December 10th, Slavas said, "It is disturbing at this late date, you and apparently

most others on the committee still have either not read the finance committee's "case study" or have failed to grasp Wendell's proposal with respect to cost apportionment within the Mahar region... The important distinction between our proposal and the current system is that each town is assessed relative to the number of students and its aggregate wealth, rather than solely on its measure of aggregate wealth. The model was designed to hold both the district and the state harmless [as well as the town of Orange]. That is, Mahar sees no diminution of its foundation budget and the state sees no increase in its Chapter 70 obligations."

Slavas pointed out that consultants hired by the regionalization planning committee have estimated a negative fiscal impact to Wendell and New Salem by joining a K-12 region with Mahar, and also said the fair allocation of costs between elementary schools and the high school within a split region would be of concern to Wendell, since Orange

would retain a supermajority on the school committee, which has been resistant to Wendell's efforts to forge a fair minimum contribution agreement.

In a follow-up phone call, Donelan said the DESE had reversed its earlier position against Mahar forming a split K-12 region for Orange and Petersham. "The DESE now believes half a loaf is better than none," in terms of regionalization efforts. And Donelan said Wendell's objections to the state funding formula have nothing to do with Orange and Petersham's wish to regionalize, allowing Petersham's part time superintendent Patricia Martin to retire, as she plans, and perhaps free up funding for classroom teachers.

Donelan said that under the alternative assessment model being pushed by the Wendell finance committee, "somebody's got to pay more. If Wendell, Petersham and New Salem can get together and agree on how to do that, God bless them."



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Tracey Kuklewicz 863-4373
Vice President

STUDIO from page 3

ly get a chance to dance much. My upcoming classes at the Movement Studio will give them a good opportunity to express themselves."

Hendricks is also pleased her groups will be filling a gap created by the economic downturn. "A lot of after-school programs, where a dance class might be offered, are being cancelled due

to budget cuts," she said. "There's a real need for affordable classes in the arts: be they dancing, painting, drama, or what have you."

Another instructor, Tamar Allis, will step into the spotlight Monday, January 11th. She'll be teaching Pilates with a beginner's class set for Mondays (11:30 a.m. to 12:30 p.m.) and a session for people with back, neck, and

shoulder pain scheduled for Wednesdays from 11:30 a.m. to 12:30 p.m.

"I'm very excited," said Allis, "that we have such a nice new facility above the Brick House. It's another indication that things are really happening these days in Turners Falls."

Allis is the former owner of the Peaceful Palm Yoga Studio, which operated on 3rd Street,

across from the new space.

In time, Allis hopes to offer exercise classes for parents and toddlers, as well as prenatal groups for pregnant women.

For more information, or to register for the upcoming children's dance classes, please call Hendricks at 863-9197. To enroll in the Pilates groups, please call Allis at 863-9559.



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BIOMASS from pg 1
 Massachusetts – including a 47 megawatt plant planned by Madera Energy for the Greenfield I-91 Industrial Park – did not wait for the structured and facilitated conversations to make their case. Prior to the meeting, the Concerned Citizens of Russell, the Concerned Citizens of Franklin County, the Stop Spewing Carbon Campaign, and Massachusetts Forest Watch held a press conference in the Holiday Inn parking lot expressing their opposition to the plants. The groups maintain the consultants chosen for the white paper study, including Manomet, Pinchot and the Biomass Energy Resource Center, have already demonstrat-

ed their support for biomass energy technology, and the white paper will prove to be a "white-wash" slanted toward industry.

Chris Matera, of Massachusetts Forest Watch, charged that Roger Milliken Jr., who chairs the advisory board of the Manomet Forest Conservation Program, is the CEO of a commercial timber company with 100,000 acres of Maine timberlands and is the former chairman of the Forest Products Council, the principle lobbying group for the timber industry in Maine. Matera also noted that another member of the panel, Tom Walker, who will co-lead the study for DOER, participated in a biomass "roundtable" on December 4th "that aggressively promoted wood burning biomass energy, exploring how we can sustainably manage our forests while ramping up woody biomass production and harvesting for electricity generation."

forest resource economist on the panel, said that even without local biomass plants, Massachusetts could still be considered a "wood basket" for plants in New Hampshire and Vermont, so issues of sustainability should still be studied.

Walker, a natural resource economist and project manager for the panel, conveyed the complexities of "carbon neutrality," a label generally affixed to biomass plants because the carbon dioxide emitted as the wood is burned is potentially re-sequestered in new forest growth.

This concept of carbon neutrality is challenged by biomass opponents, who point out that trees which take 60 or 70 years to grow will be incinerated in minutes in biomass plants.

Walker pointed to studies that found old growth forests should be left standing, but also showed net carbon emissions were sometimes lower if faster-growing, younger trees were harvested and burned for biomass.

He said the DOER sponsored study would examine the "life cycle footprint of biomass burning" and take into account further CO₂ emissions from gathering and transporting the wood. The study will not look "at biomass in the abstract," Walker said.

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WAILIN' from pg 1

Guy Devito on bass, and rounding out the crew on drums, Sturgis Cunningham.

They started off the set with a K. C. Douglas and Robert Geddings tune, "Mercury Blues," which had a country feel and a rambling blues sound. Dave and the band did what they do best and began to rock and wail, with the vibes flowing through the room just like the fine beers on tap. With sweet slide riffs from Filault, steady supporting rhythms from Devito's bass, and the high lilting voice of fiddler Doug Tanner, you could tell these were musicians who love what they do and have years of experience doing it.

As I observed the musicians, I noticed that Sturgis was playing the drums with one stick, and an unopened Slim Jim. It seems he lost his other drum stick and had to improvise. Who knew that Slim Jims could have another purpose besides indigestion?

During the course of the evening people filtered in and out as the band played on. I got the impression that Wendell is a place where everybody knows

your name, because as people came through it was all smiles, handshakes and hugs. Or maybe it's just the season. Regardless, the pub was filled with warmth and welcome, with delicious food being served. The smells of a rich split pea soup and gorgeous homemade pizzas saturated the air, and my mouth watered, even though I arrived with a full belly.

The music continued with a Bob Dylan's "She Belongs to Me," as the musicians wove the tune together in a moderate tempo. Robinson sang and wailed out the notes on his harmonica, then pulled back to let Tanner take the lead on fiddle, while Filault created a sway of mellow riffs on his guitar.

After that song, they turned it up a notch and got out some old fashioned, good time rock and roll with "Tutti Frutti," with the harmonica blazing. People took a break from their drinks and started to clap along with the music, while Sturgis slapped the Slim Jim in time and Devito ran down the bass line. The window behind them started to steam, and the joint got jumping.

Next they played a Fats

Domino tune, "Josephine," and the dancing began, surprising enough in such a small space. Then the band switched up with "Jingle Bells," but played it more like a dirge, something the Grinch would fully appreciate. After that, they played another up tempo tune in which the crowd responded by snapping fingers and calling out "You've Got to Love Somebody" each time the chorus returned.

They rounded out the set with an original tune, "Sally," an old-style rocker. The last song of the night was "Drunken Sailor," rollicking with cheer for all who filled the pub, drinking, dining and celebrating the season.

Deja Brew is a hub for neighbors, food, and entertainment. It may be off the beaten path for some, but its well worth the trip to check out all Wendell has to offer. You can stop by on every third Thursday of the month to hear Wailin' Dave Robinson, Tommy Filault and Co. With more than a decade playing together, these guys show that age is just a number, and it's the heart and drive to play music for the people that matters.

GRISWOLD from pg 1

to home. The Kuczek and the Egglestons live next door to Hillcrest Elementary School.

"We do it for the kids, and the neighborhood."

She said the bus drivers pull out of the driveway at Hillcrest and come to a stop in front of their houses so the youngsters can get a close look.

John Kuczek, who works as the supervisor of buildings and grounds at Leverett Elementary School, where the town energy committee is hoping to install energy-efficient LED lighting soon, seems unfazed by his

home's glowing seasonal carbon footprint. "It only costs us \$40 or \$50 extra on the electric bill."

What's that compared to the look of joy on a school child's face when they turn on the breakers?

Were the Kuczek or the Egglestons, on Griswold Street, perhaps inspired by Clark Griswold, who risked life and limb stapling strings of Christmas lights to his roof in *National Lampoon's Christmas Vacation* to provide the neighborhood with a truly inspiring "Griswold Family Christmas?"

We didn't ask.



HIGHLIGHTS FROM THE MONTAGUE POLICE LOG
Domestic Assault Charges

Tuesday, 12/15

7:05 p.m. 911 request for an officer wanted at a Turners Falls Road address. Arrested [REDACTED]

[REDACTED] Charged with assault and battery with a dangerous weapon and assault and battery, domestic.

Wednesday, 12/16

9:15 a.m. Report of vandalism at Garbiel Farm on Meadow Road.

Friday, 12/18

5:18 p.m. Report of an assault at a Fairway Avenue address. Arrested [REDACTED]

[REDACTED] Charged with assault and battery, domestic. 8:14 p.m. Officer initiated arrest of [REDACTED]

[REDACTED] on a straight warrant. 11:29 p.m. Following a traffic stop, arrested [REDACTED]

[REDACTED] Charged with failure to stop for a stop sign and operating a motor vehicle while under the influence of liquor, second offense.

Saturday, 12/19

10:06 a.m. Report of an unattended death at an H Street address. Referred to another agency.

Sunday, 12/20

3:37 a.m. Emergency services assistance to Hadley police department, 15 East Street. Report taken.

6:10 a.m. Assisted other police department at an L Street address. Services rendered.

10:00 a.m. Report of a domestic disturbance at an East Main Street address. Arrested [REDACTED]

[REDACTED] on a default warrant.

4:10 p.m. Assistance to other police department at a

Bridge Street address. 6:21 p.m. Report of a domestic disturbance at a Third Street address. Arrested [REDACTED]

[REDACTED] Charged with assault and battery, domestic and two counts of assault and battery with a dangerous weapon.

6:49 p.m. Report of a structure fire at a Grand Avenue address. Services rendered.

10:18 p.m. Report of assault and battery at an Adams Street address. Arrested [REDACTED]

[REDACTED] Charged with assault and battery, domestic.

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Relief Efforts Underway for Families Who Lost All in Millers Fire

BY BILL FRANKLIN – “We don’t think we will ever accurately determine the cause,” said Turners Falls fire chief Ray Godin, speaking of the fire that destroyed 24 Grand Avenue, in Millers Falls, on Sunday night. The cause is still “under investigation,” said Godin. He added the building was a total loss. “There’s not much left there.”

The fire was called in to the station by the homeowner at 6:50 p.m., Godin said. By the time the first of nine fire companies arrived, the barn attached to the rear of the three story building was essentially destroyed – the roof gone, the sides aflame and the contents burning. The fire had also spread to the kitchen area of the main building.

Two families were living in the building, and all nine family members escaped without harm: Jay Watroba, his wife Kimberly, their children Riley, 10; Ivy, 8; and Kolby, 7, along with Janet Dobias, the owner of the home. In the upstairs apartment lived Ron Thompson, his fiancé Becky Vishaway, and their two-year-old son, Landon. At present,



The Dobias - Watroba home on Grand Avenue in Millers Falls was a total loss following a Sunday night fire of unknown origin, that started in the attached barn, at rear.

all are staying with family and friends.

“They worked really hard,” said Godin of the firefighters who fought the blaze, but “the fire was well advanced,” before any of the fire companies arrived on the scene.

The response to the fire was complicated by the layout of the water system on Grand Avenue. According to Godin, the hydrants there are situated on a loop off the main line. When all the fire trucks were

drawing water off this loop, the pressure dropped and firefighters had to begin drawing water from the main line, further away.

Fire chief Gene Beaubien, of Gill, said his crew was situated midway on a line of fire trucks set up to relay water from the main line to the pumpers directly fighting the fire. The Sunderland crew was closest to the main line, Gill between, and South Deerfield relaying water to the pumpers

closest to the scene.

Beaubien said his crew did not return home to Gill until 2 a.m. Monday morning.

The Red Cross was on the scene by 11 p.m., according to Chief Godin, providing assistance to the families. Some of the Christmas presents under the tree were saved by the first firefighters on the scene, but almost everything else was a total loss.

The Reverend Stephen Palso, chaplain for the

Western Massachusetts Fire Ministries, is coordinating a relief effort for the families out of the Montague Center Fire Station.

“It’s going well,” said Palso. At a collection for the families on Monday in Montague Center, he said three SUV loads of clothing and personal items were received. Toys for Tots has also contributed to the effort.

Anyone wishing to help may contact Palso at WesternMassFireMinistries@msn.com or by calling (413) 824-6674. Donations may also be made at any branch of the Greenfield Savings Bank, simply by earmarking the check to “the Millers Falls Fire.”

“We’re not asking for furniture or other large items for now,” said Palso. “We’re just trying to get the basic life necessities.”

Both families are looking for permanent housing. Palso said the families, undaunted by their loss, were having a Christmas present wrapping party on Wednesday evening, with donated gifts.

Palso thanked local residents for their heartfelt donations at a time of need.

NEW YEAR'S EVE COMEDY AT THE SHEA



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Ending the Year on a Positive Note



There will be a 'Blue Moon' on New Year's Eve

BY FRAN HEMOND
MONTAGUE CENTER – On New Year's Eve, a full 'blue moon' will rise on the eastern horizon at 4:15 p.m., just two minutes before the winter sun

sets in the west. Weather permitting, a full night of moonlight will flood the Earth until shortly after 7:00 a.m. on the first day of January, 2010. Then, the reflected sunlight from the moon will be very shortly replaced by the real thing, as the sun rises across the sky in the east. This is truly an unusual blue moon.

The term 'blue moon' is the name given to the second full moon that occasionally occurs in one calendar month. In earlier days, it merely referred to a wholly unexpected event, such as, "My husband hangs up his coat once in a blue moon." But in 1934, the great composer team of Rodgers and Hart wrote, "Blue Moon," the song which surrounded the phenomenon with hope and good fortune.

It was a classic ballad of the great big band era, and is still much loved. And why not? The Blue Moon is credited with rescuing a potential lover from his lonely state with enough mystery to add the hope of good fortune and luck to its unpredictable occurrence.

In reality, blue moons do occur in a pattern that repeats every nineteen years. The almanac gives each year a Golden Number, from one to nineteen, which indicates which

moon pattern is current. The year 2009 is Golden Number 15, and the cycle will complete in 2013, and start anew in 2014.

To check on the infrequency with which a second full moon occurs in a month, I tracked down my old almanacs to 1985. I found that in the 25 years since, this December 31st is only the eighth blue moon. Some years have had no blue moons, and in 1999, the month of February had no full moon. However, the months of January and March had two full moons each that year.

The fact that the average moon cycle is 27.53 days does not make fitting lunar months into the solar calendar an easy matter. But if we think blue moons give new hope to a fractious world, we can note them with delight.

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TALKING PICTURES

Me and Orson Welles



1 eagle = the pits 4 eagles = the heights

BY TODD DETMOLD

CHICAGO – A tender little trifle called *Me and Orson Welles* is whispering its way through theaters this holiday season, and I can't recommend enough that you run out and catch it while you have the chance. Presumably unmarketable despite a couple of marquee names, the picture is being distributed by its own production company after failing to find a buyer on the festival circuit.

Set in a glossy 1937 New York City, the film follows a young boy named Richard Samuels who stumbles into a bit part in Orson Welles' controversial, galvanizing staging of *Julius Caesar*. Or rather, the production is just "CAESAR" – Welles is that rare figure that can slice half of the text out of a Shakespeare play and still make it count.

As Richard enters the fray, the opening has already been delayed several times and Richard's role is available because – and this is

just one of several ego-related problems backstage with the production – Orson keeps firing people. Richard is warned: the last guy gave Orson attitude.

Richard is played by Zac Efron, for whom I will humbly admit a growing affection. He's a uniquely perfect choice for the role. Richard essentially lies his way into getting the part, pretending to be older, more experienced, and more able to play the ukelele than he actually is. Everyone rolls their eyes at the kid, which is pretty much what the artsy intelligentsia like to do at poor Efron in spite of his considerable wit and charm. Richard has a week to learn his lines as well as how to play the "lute" or else his career in the theater will be over before it starts. His part has been recast before, and if it comes down to the wire, Orson can always just cut it.

There are lots of great theater in-jokes – Welles refers to the Lunts as "the dinosaurs on the

cover of Time Magazine" – but there are plenty of lessons to be imparted here, not all having much to do with play acting. It's a very straightforward coming-of-age story, and Richard is going to get a dose of love, heartbreak and adulthood. This is nothing we haven't seen before, but the movie strikes perfectly that rare chord between sentimental and

resemblance to the man. No, McKay imbues the character with a sense of flawed humanity that carries the picture. The Orson Welles as written here hews dangerously close to comic book villain – he's a mentor and a genius, but set off his temper and you can imagine him dropping a skyscraper on you or exploding your head with his eyes.



Christian McKay as Orson Welles and Zac Efron as Richard

saccharine.

The real triumph of the film is the actor Christian McKay, who plays Welles. Orson Welles is more legend than man at this point, and McKay is hardly the first impersonator to come along (my favorite so far has been Vincent D'Onofrio in Tim Burton's underrated *Ed Wood*). But McKay doesn't stop at doing impressions, though he might've gotten away with it given his uncanny physical and vocal

McKay pulls this off without once hamming it up or overacting. His Welles knows full well that he owns a rare and necessary artistic voice, that he can (and will) sleep with any woman in New York, and that if his Fascist Italy-set play is too abrasive or too muddled, his company will be bankrupt and his career in the theater will be done with. This is a complex character raging with torment and self-loathing – a madman torn apart by his own

brilliance. It's thrilling stuff to watch. It also sets a perfect juxtaposition to the simplicity and naivety of Richard and his arc. Richard, who doesn't have enough problems, also decides to pursue the company secretary, who is lusted after by every man in the show. She is played by Claire Danes, who gives Efron his biggest obstacle. (When I watch these two onscreen I'm confounded by anybody who would challenge Efron's charisma when it is so visibly being sucked away by the black hole of Dane's supernova.) Despite Danes, the beats of their relationship play out like a song, and the inevitable ending is made sweet by the presence of a brunette to Danes' blonde for Richard to default to.

Early in the film, Richard flirts with a struggling writer named Gretta. She is doe-eyed and dreamy to match him, and they share a reverie about the exciting promise of being young and creatively inclined in New York City. Played by Zoe Kazan, Gretta is a wonder for what little screen time she has. It's only after their encounter – wherein Richard embarrassingly admits that while identifying as an actor he doesn't actually have any experience acting – that he walks around the block and gets himself a role in *CAESAR*. It's possible, actually, to read the entire film as an elaborate plot to win her hand, and if that's the case, I'm fine with it. Kazan is exactly the kind of girl you set out to impress by risking all your dignity in front of someone like Orson Welles.

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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

design by Boysen Hodgson

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

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Love Blooms on the Bridge of Flowers

Love blooms on the bridge of flowers
spring, summer, winter, fall
flowers inside
outside
beginning
blooming
waiting
I've often thought you smell
like flowers
your hair in my hands
like roses
Is it
my first kiss
first glance
I'm not telling
But I will say
that love blooms on the bridge of flowers

--Annie Hassett
Greenfield, MA

Just Like in a Buster Keaton Movie

We move through each day
keeping our hats on
despite the rock slides
tumbling walls
and various unnatural disasters.
Chasing and being chased across
swollen rivers
we elude dastardly nemeses
only to have them reappear
around the next bend in the road.
And so on to the crumbling rooftops
where we oh so agilely leap
across the yawning distances,
teeter on the edge
stick out our furry tongues
at the black-caped villains.

--Christopher Sawyer-Laucanno
Turners Falls, MA



Deer Orchestrate a Stroll

Let's browse where rabbits throng for evening clover snacks,
or woodchucks may haunch up surprised we're more than one.

This complex camera is harmless as the man,
so we'll nip juicy bits of tender growth on shrubs.

A dog barks frenzied within its deer-proof pen
which can't contain the yelps. We tiptoe past the din.
But try this high wire fence. Rear legs will are you high
to land you on all fours - and you have jumped a fence!

Now fledglings nestle close for drowsy goodnight chirps.
We'll find a fragrant spot and sleep beneath the stars.

--Kathryn Flagg
Allendale, NJ



Incident at Troy

Penthesilea, Queen of the Amazons,
Comes to the Trojan War with her warriors,
Comes with her bow and death-dealing arrows,
Comes with her tall and swift-footed army:
One-breasted maidens, known for their war-cry.

Hector is gone now, slain by Achilles;
Far-ranging Hector, mighty in battle,
Slayer of Patroclus, friend to Achilles.
Sorely-pressed Ilium, reft of her hero,
Eagerly welcomes Penthesilea.

Brave is the Queen and clever in battle.
Many Achaeans are slain by her arrows,
Grieving the Greeks and wrathful Achilles
(Doomed as he is to be slain by an arrow
Sped from the bowstring of Trojan Paris).

Hero and maiden, armed, face each other.
Penthesilea launches her arrow,
Watches it glance from gold-crested helmet,
Watches her doom run swiftly to meet her:
Pitiless sword in the hand of Achilles.

Brave but defenseless, the proud girl awaits him,
Smiles as his sword rips red through her body,
Knowing her beauty stabs him as deeply,
Feeling his anger turn to compassion,
Dying beneath his love-stricken anguish.

--John Hunter Detmold
Leeds, MA

Remembering

Immigrant women cleaning fish
They are Finnish and Norwegian.
They have long straight backs
Their hair is neatly pulled backwards and pinned.
They talk.

They stand close together scraping gills and fins into empty barrels.
Nothing is spared.
The fish will be cured. What is left will become fertilizer.

They look with longing at the boats.
They look with longing at the men who place huge mounds of fish in front of them.

Soon their hands will hurt.
Soon their nostrils fill with the stench of dead fish.

They look at the rubber boots of the men.
With elbow raised they wipe the slime as best as they can from foreheads.

They sing songs and dream of getting married.
They dream of going to America the land of milk and honey.

This is something their mothers did and their mothers before them.
The song belongs to them too.

--Marje Levenson
Lake Pleasant, MA

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Massachusetts Cultural Council, a state agency, and the National Endowment for the Arts.

CONTRIBUTOR'S NOTES:

Marje Levenson has had two goals
in life: to grow to be 5' 1" and to
have central heating. She's still
working on central heating.

Christopher Sawyer-Laucanno
co-edits this poetry page with the
illustrious and industrious Janel
Nockleby.

Don Clegg is a key member of
numerous Montague organizations
including The Survival Center,
MCTV, The Montague Reporter and
The Downtown Turners Falls
Improvement Association.

Kathryn Flagg writes about the
images from a lifetime of sightings
between Western Massachusetts

and Northern New Jersey. She is a
member of Circle of Voices, a poet-
ry group facilitated by the library in
Allendale, NJ.

Annie Hassett writes that this poem
is dedicated to all the wonderful
hands that have ever worked, are
working or will ever work on the
Bridge of Flowers, with much love
and appreciation for all you do.

John Hunter Detmold began to
write poetry in high school, as did
his brother George. They kept trying
to make The New Yorker, but finally,
in 1939, published their work them-
selves, in Jingle Bells. And kept writ-
ing.

Ed Boutwell, aka KB1BNG, was
born at Farren Memorial and has
been a resident of Montague since
1954. He worked at Montague Rod

& Reel Co and still resides on
Poplar Street in Montague City. He
writes poetry for the Amateur Radio
Club of Franklin County.

Doug Turner is a housepainter/poet
grandfather writer, and a trustee of
the New Salem library.

David Mankowsky lives in
Montague Center.

Life is But a Gamble

I've heard that life is but a gamble
For sometimes you don't know from day-to-day
If things are going to work out for you
Or will they go the other way.

If you try to hit a million dollars
By purchasing a ticket for Megabucks
And find out later the ticket did not win
Some people might say that sucks.

There are many forms of gambling
And our Governor is trying for a few
He wants to install casinos
For folks like me and you.

Another form of gambling
Is playing poker with a group
And if the cards aren't just right
You end up in the soup.

Still another form of gambling
Is writing poetry and being called a Bard
There again it's like playing bingo
You can't win without the right card.

Now wasn't it several years ago
NASA gambled and sent men to the moon
I'm surprised they haven't gambled once more
Sending cows to jump over it real soon.

--KB1BNG
Montague City, MA

Alexander
Solzhenitsyn,
Russian gulag
really freaks'm.

Frozen work camps
in Kamchatka,
bring resentment
ever afta.

If his thoughts were
in a poem,
that would help to
get to know'm.

--David Mankowsky
Montague, MA

On the Island of Middle-aged Men

On the island of middle-aged men
The men all stand in the sand
Scratching their calves
With their toes
They wear hats of various shades
Some of them deign to wade.
They stand calmly in the tide
Remarking upon the weather
Which is never
Known to change

Though they rarely speak together
For they often take offense
At habits in demeanor or comments
deemed innocuous
By anyone with common sense

As the tide laps upon their knees
They reach for their bamboo rods
Repeatedly hoisting them
Over their shoulders, though
They've never made a catch
There always is a chance
They might snag the skirt
Of the women that swim
In the off-shore currents
Of the nearby
Isle of fabled bali hai.

After, the men retire to their huts
And feast on beer and nuts.
They may come out at night
If the moon is full
But otherwise they play cards
And talk about the beauties
that got away

Just before the sun comes up
You can find them napping
In their chairs on the wide
Veranda that looks out
Upon the beach

Later they partake of
The buffet
Remarking once again upon
The unchanging weather,
And then a walk
Upon the jetty
To break up the day
Or a fish from the pier

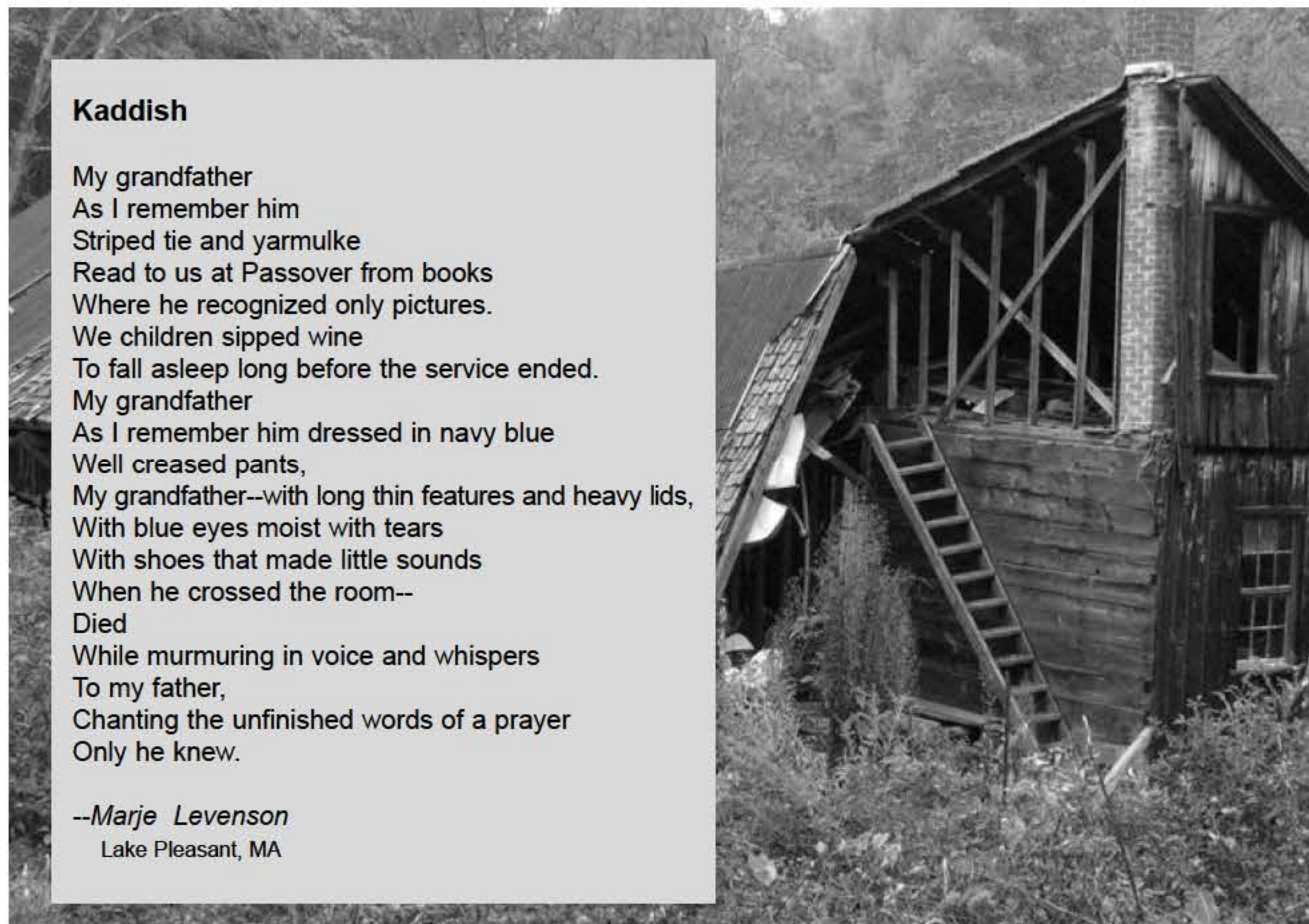
Sometimes they float
As far as can be allowed
But there are no boats
Because they are
Reminded of slips
And there are no sails
Of course...

--Doug Turner
New Salem, MA

You

Sometimes you have to be alone in this world.
Then you can become what you were meant to be?
It is amazing what you learn about yourself
When you let you be seen by you.
Think about that!
It might just be the hardest thing you ever do.
I know.

--Don Clegg
Turners Falls, MA



Kaddish

My grandfather
As I remember him
Striped tie and yarmulke
Read to us at Passover from books
Where he recognized only pictures.
We children sipped wine
To fall asleep long before the service ended.
My grandfather
As I remember him dressed in navy blue
Well creased pants,
My grandfather--with long thin features and heavy lids,
With blue eyes moist with tears
With shoes that made little sounds
When he crossed the room--
Died
While murmuring in voice and whispers
To my father,
Chanting the unfinished words of a prayer
Only he knew.

--Marje Levenson
Lake Pleasant, MA

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BY JOSEPH A PARZYCH

The Perfect Christmas Gift

GILL – When my brother Johnny saw how Ma’s gasoline washing machine eased her workload, he immediately sent off to Sears Roebuck for a gasoline flat iron. Ma looked forward to this next step up in the modern world.

The description in the catalog conjured up the stuff of dreams, promising cool comfort and joy everlasting. It stressed the freedom from building a fire in the wood stove on a hot summer day and waiting for sad irons to heat up. The catalog told how their iron’s temperature was “easily controlled by the simple twist of a knob.”

I’m sure my mother figured that if the iron supplied a fraction of the freedom from drudgery her gasoline washer had given her, it would truly be another miracle.

This was before the advent of permanent press clothing or the fashionable grunge look. Wearing un-ironed clothes, then, was a disgrace of major proportions. Common decency dictated that nearly everything had to be ironed, making ironing an all-day job.

Ma tested each iron as she first took it off the stove by wetting her forefinger and touching it to the bottom. The fierceness of the sizzle gave some indication of the iron’s temperature. If it didn’t sizzle, she put it back on the stove closer to the firebox. If the iron was too hot, she paused to let it cool down for another sizzle test. In the meantime, she moved the rest of the irons away from the firebox.

As the fire died down, she moved them closer. She was moving irons, poking the fire, stoking the stove, and manipulat-

ing dampers, all the while trying to get some ironing done.

A sad iron soon cooled off to the point where it didn’t do much in the way of smoothing wrinkles, and it was time to exchange it for a hot one. She juggled a fair number of irons to keep the process going.

Some irons were small with a point rounded like a ski so as to avoid snagging lace-trimmed items; others had a larger footprint for bigger pieces of laundry. Ma seemed to be spending nearly as much time unhooking and hooking the detachable handle to exchange irons as she did ironing.

“It would be wonderful to be done with all of that,” she said. “And in summer, the house wouldn’t have to be so unbearably hot.”

When the iron arrived, Ma’s eyes shone in anticipation of the joy and leisure this modern marvel would bring. The iron looked a little like a present day electric iron. But of course, it had no cord. Instead, a shiny nickel plated gasoline tank the size and shape of a baseball sat at the rear.

The directions that came with the Sears iron specified white gasoline. The only gasoline D.O. Paul sold at his general store was



The iron on the left is a gasoline iron. The pump was used to pump it up. The other is a six-pound sad iron (“sad” meant “heavy” in olden days). You would have kept a pair of sad irons on the stove. When the iron you were using began to cool, you would exchange it for the hot one.

ed with a little “poof”. Yellow flames flared out of slots on each side, sometimes engulfing the iron.

Ma would step back, fuss with her apron and wring her hands, looking around to see if sparks had ignited anything yet. She worried about losing the house or barn to fire, and this infernal machine spitting fire and flames didn’t soothe her nerves any. Once the flames settled down, a row of jets along each side began to burn blue like the flame of a gas stove. When the iron appeared to be completely done belching and flaring, we’d bring the hissing demon into the house.

Ma would stand at the ironing board holding the iron’s green enameled handle at arm’s length in a white-knuckled grip, sweat beading her brow and her mouth set in a look of grim determination. All the while, the iron hissed like the lighted fuse atop a keg of dynamite in a nail-biting Saturday afternoon movie where the dynamite eventually explodes. Ma looked like she was waiting for the iron to do just that at any moment.

The iron had a tendency to get a bit hotter as time went on. Compounding the problem, Ma had to park the iron flat on a little metal stand when positioning a piece of laundry. There, the iron would usually heat up even more. Ma scorched more than a few pieces of clothing trying to get the hang of it.

Not being terribly mechanically inclined, and more than a bit nervous, she had a tendency to keep fiddling with the adjustment

valve, mistakenly turning it up instead of down and then down too much, making the flame go out with a pop. That pop would seem to lift her off her feet. Her eyes would widen and she’d exclaim, “Matko Bosko” (Holy Mother), and she’d turn as white as the shirt she was ironing. Her hands would be shaking almost uncontrollably by then. And she’d have to sit down while we took the iron outdoors to cool off before relighting.

The instructions strongly cautioned against relighting or refueling a hot iron. There was no need to threaten Ma with consequences any more dire than those she’d already imagined. By that time, you couldn’t have got her to relight the infernal thing any more than you could have gotten her to touch a match to a keg of blasting powder like the one in the movie.

While we waited outside for the iron to cool, she’d begin building a fire in the stove to heat up the sad irons. She’d tell us not to bother relighting it, and finished ironing with her bothersome but familiar – and safe – sad irons.

Ma used the gasoline iron as long as her nerves held out, so as not to offend John. But she seemed to heave a sigh of relief when the jets finally got plugged, with lead from D.O. Paul’s highly advertised gasoline, to the point where the iron worked poorly enough so she could set it aside with a clear conscience.

I don’t know what ever happened to that modern miracle, but I suspect she donated it, as a patriotic gesture of sacrifice, when D.O. Paul came around collecting for a scrap metal drive during World War II.

led. We weren’t sure about using that, but D.O. said, “Why there’s no better gasoline in the world than Socony Hi Test Ethyl – it’s highly advertised.”

Since D.O. had once worked in Washington D. C. as a chauffeur, drove a Buick Roadmaster, subscribed to the *Wall Street Journal*, and sold the finest gasoline known to man, we didn’t doubt his word for a minute.

We could hardly wait to see Ma ironing with “efficiency and ease” as described in the catalog. Hurrying home with the gas can, we filled the shiny cylinder on the iron outdoors, as the directions suggested, so as not to set fire to the house or blow it up, or quite possibly both.

Lighting the iron was a lot like lighting a blow torch. We pumped up the pressure in the cylinder and opened the valve to spray gasoline into the heating chamber before touching a lighted match to it. The gasoline ignit-

from GILL pg 5

taxes that would be owed this fiscal year, in preliminary tax payments. This is the second year the town has been able to collect preliminary tax payments based on last year’s actual tax bills, following town meeting approval of the new method. “People have been great,” LaChance said. “Given the economy, I was really surprised.”

She added, “It’s really been helpful. We haven’t had to borrow money, except for Mariamante.”

The selectboard has received about a dozen applicants for the

post of town administrative assistant, after Tracy Rogers departed to take a similar post in her home town of Northfield earlier this month. The board will narrow the list to a few finalists, and hold interviews during the week of January 11th.

The board appointed 17-year-old Joseph LaFleur, of Mountain Road, to the town energy committee. He wrote, “I’d like to serve the town using the technical skills I’ve acquired,” at the Franklin County Tech School, where he is a junior. He has helped the school with its recent energy improvement upgrades on lighting, heating controls, and

installing a solar greenhouse.” The board called his application, “Exciting!” and “Great News!”

The board was less excited about the new color of paint on the Riverside Municipal Building, which board member Nancy Griswold referred to as “Pistachio.” The Riverside building suffered a boiler breakdown not long ago, necessitating a \$600 repair. Apparently, the heat-sensitive alarm failed to notify anyone in town about the boiler breakdown, until the principal of the Four Rivers School came in to a 40-degree building in the morning. The alarm system is now also under repair.

Dave Lennox
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JESSICA HARMON ILLUSTRATION

BY FRED CICETTI

LEONIA, NJ – Q. *I'm in the process of selling my home and my realtor told me to get the house tested for radon. I had no idea this stuff was in my house until I tested it. You should write about this health hazard.*

About one in 15 homes in the United States contains high levels of radon, an invisible, odorless, radioactive gas. High radon lev-

THE HEALTHY GEEZER: Dangers of Radon in the Home

els have been found in every state.

Radon levels vary greatly throughout the United States, even within small geographic regions. A stretch from New York through Pennsylvania to Maryland and Virginia, as well as a broad area of the upper Midwest, have geological formations that yield higher radon levels. In contrast, radon levels are low in the Southeast as far west as Texas and along much of the West coast.

Radon is the nation's second leading cause – after smoking – of lung cancer. Smoking combined with radon is an especially serious health risk.

A link between cancer and working in underground mines

was suspected even before radon was identified as an element. In 1556, German scholar Georgius Agricola reported high death rates of miners in the Carpathian Mountains of Eastern Europe. More than 300 years later, autopsy studies of miners in that region revealed a common cause of death to be chest tumors, which were later shown to be primary lung cancer.

Radon comes from the natural decay of uranium in soil, rock and water. It rises into your home through fissures in the foundation, floors and walls. Radon can also be in your water, especially well water.

Radon test kits are available at most hardware stores. If you discover that the radon level is unac-

ceptable in your home, there are systems to remove the gas. There is no safe level of radon, but the risk can be reduced by lowering the level.

The amount of radon in the air is measured in picocuries per liter of air, or pCi/L. The average indoor radon level is about 1.3 pCi/L. The outside air contains about 0.4 pCi/L of radon. The U.S. Environmental Protection Agency recommends corrective action if the radon level is 4 pCi/L.

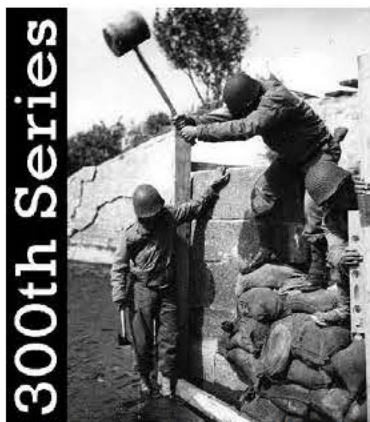
The U.S. Congress has set a long-term goal that indoor and outdoor levels be equal. While this goal is not yet reachable in all cases, the radon in most homes today can be reduced to 2 pCi/L or below.

If you've tested the air in your home and found a radon problem, and your water comes from a well, have your water tested, too. Radon in your home's water is not usually a problem when its source is surface water.

The primary system for reducing radon is made up of a vent pipe and fan, which pulls radon from beneath the house and blows it outside. This is called a soil-suction, radon-reduction system. It does not require major changes to your home.

The cost of fixing a home generally ranges from \$800 to \$2,500 (with an average cost of \$1,200). Costs depend on the size and design of your home and which radon reduction methods are needed.

If you would like to ask a question, please write fred@healthygeezzer.com.



300th Combat Engineer Battalion repairing the under piling of a bridge destroyed by enemy fire along the Carentan – Cherbourg Road in France – June 30, 1944.

BRAD PETERS & JAN ROSS ERVING – In recognition of the 65th anniversary of the U.S. campaign in Europe in WWII, the Montague Reporter is following the men of the 300th Combat Engineer Battalion as they move through France, Belgium and Germany from their landing in Normandy in June, 1944 to VE Day on May 8th, 1945. Donald Ross, father of Jan Ross of Erving, served with the 300th.

Don Richter of the 300th remembered Christmas 1944 in Belgium at the beginning of the Battle of the Bulge.

"The squad truck rolled up one day and our driver, Pfc. Roy Welchel, told us to get our gear onto the truck to go back to Chateau LeBois, because the

Dispatches from Belgium Christmas, 1944

Germans were threatening to take over that area. We awaited orders there to join the battle.

"We heard stories of engineer units being overrun by the Tiger Royal Tanks. I was resting with 3rd Squad buddies in our room on the third floor of the servants' quarters when we heard Sergeant Brod's boots on the stairs. He was yelling, 'Fall out with full combat gear on the double.'

"When we reached the courtyard, Lieutenant Campbell was addressing the Third Platoon saying, 'We have been given a mission to secure a bridge in Marche, and the last report from there is that German tanks are in the outskirts of the town. You have all been in combat before, so I expect each and every one of you to perform well, so that we can successfully carry out this mission.'

"We loaded all that we had on our trucks and sped down the winding road to the Huy-Modave highway. Civilians along the highway were hanging white surrender sheets out of their windows and waving encouragement to us.

"But after a few miles, Captain Falvey stopped the convoy and passed the word back that a radio message received

said that another unit had beaten us to Marche, and had secured the town which had no enemy tanks anywhere in sight. We turned around and went back.

"At Chateau LeBois, we waited for further developments, keeping sharp eyes on watch. Before long, we were ordered to Ciny, another lovely little town where we set about preparing a stone arch bridge over a small stream for blowing when the enemy arrived.

"We arrived at our mission site in the middle of the night and as day broke I saw that we were in a tiny village with a grove of trees a few hundred yards up a small hill. We set the bridge for blowing. Our men stomped plastic explosive into the holes that had been drilled by jackhammer. We then fused the explosive with two ways of exploding the charges.

"Enough explosives were set under the bridge to destroy most of a town. Just before dark we moved back down the highway, taking a narrow road back off the highway about a quarter mile. There was an old farmhouse where the command post was set up. I was put on watch in an old buggy shed, where I could see out across the open field. I

remained there in that old buggy all night listening to the sound of tanks moving along the highway and the sound of German voices when the vehicles stopped. I expected at any moment to see enemy tanks appear up the narrow road, perhaps setting off the mines that had been laid. It never happened. It was so cold that my feet were like chunks of ice.

"In the morning the order was given to load up and move out back the way that we had come, blowing all the bridges after we crossed. The enemy had somehow crossed the river at a point other than where we had set up our roadblocks, and very likely had cut us off.

"Lieutenant Webendorfer came hurrying up from the other direction in his jeep and went up to Captain Falvey saying, 'I've been out on recon and found that going in your direction you will run right into a German Army tank column. I have found a narrow road back toward the Meuse River where we can find friendly units.'

"So the convoy moved out, crossing the mined bridges which were blown and destroyed after we had safely crossed. The charge under the bridge that Pfc. Hubert Reinke was to set off failed to blow. He went into the water under the bridge removing the charge, moving above the deck and setting it off using

primer cord. He was one frozen combat engineer when he was helped on to his squad truck. We set out to return to our chateau.

"All sorts of our own aircraft filled the clear sky, some dropping supplies on the encircled Bastogne and others strafing and bombing enemy troops. I was afraid that some fighter pilot would mistake our convoy for the enemy and attack our column. A small plane, likely an artillery spotter, took a close look at our strung out vehicles and must have radioed that a lost bunch of engineers would be approaching the Meuse River defense line. We safely passed through that line of U.S. Army tanks in the late afternoon of December 24th and entered the town of Givet, France just before dark.

"Early the next morning we loaded up taking off down a highway toward our dear old Chateau LeBois. It was Christmas Day 1944, and each vehicle that we met exchanged a "Merry Christmas" greeting with us. It was so good to return to our billet in the chateau again, though all that Mess Sergeant Clough and his cooks were able to serve us for Christmas dinner was a thick slice of bread with English marmalade spread over it and a steaming cup of coffee. We were all thankful to be able to

see 300th page 14

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The Philosopher Reflects on an Improbable Life

BY JOE KWIECINSKI

LEVERETT – The first thing a visitor notices about Ernst von Glasersfeld is his utter lack of pretension. Dressed casually in beige slacks and a pea green sweater, the world renowned philosopher is relaxed, engaging, and courtly.

At the age of 93, von Glasersfeld is spry, handsome and mannerly, a gentleman with an obvious zest for life.

“At my age,” said von Glasersfeld, “I’m very lucky to be able to do what I love – to write and to think.”

And it is precisely his writing and cognitive skills that have earned this Leverett resident a place in the history of modern ideas. He is the author of 280 books, journal articles, and chapters in the volumes of other scholars.

His latest effort, though, is a departure from the serious work that has marked his career. In a few weeks, von Glasersfeld’s new book will be released by Imprint Academics. Entitled “Partial Memories: Sketches from an Improbable Life,” it looks back over a long lifetime that reads a bit like the stuff of motion pictures.

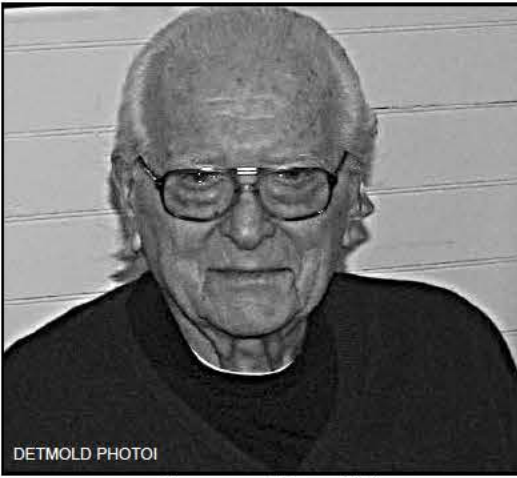
“My memory is excellent,” the scholar said. “This book is a series of sketches of events and situations in my life, not an autobiography.

“I hope there will be things that amuse people. It’s totally unlike any of the philosophy of science and psychology books I’ve written.”

Von Glasersfeld’s chief claim to fame derives not from his abilities as a memoirist, however, but as a philosopher. He developed the theory of radical constructivism, also known in academic circles as constructivist epistemology. Radical constructivism is a way of thinking that posits knowledge is actively, not passively, built up by our brains. Thus, knowledge is a self-organized process, functioning as a mental construct rather than a mere cumulative accumulation of empirical data (things we see, touch, hear, etc.).

The brilliant Swiss scholar Jean Piaget, whose theories of learning had a profound impact on 20th century psychologists and educators, remains one of von Glasersfeld’s leading lights. “Piaget wrote his first paper at the age of 14,” the Leverett scholar said, shaking his head in amazement. “It was Piaget who launched the word ‘constructivism.’ From his work, you come to realize that the world an Italian speaks about is different from that of an Englishman. Only when you learn other languages, do you see there could be other worlds. You yourself are responsible for how you see and know the other person.”

Recently, von Glasersfeld attended an international conference in Vienna, where he received a gold medal from the city. Modest about his achieve-



Ernst von Glasersfeld

ments and international renown, von Glasersfeld said, “I’m not one for official awards. They’re nice, but my writing and my work are so much more rewarding.”

Nonetheless, von Glasersfeld was gracious as he accepted a small token of the town of Leverett’s esteem: a pin in the shape of a gold cane, given to him as one of the town’s oldest residents in a ceremony before the town selectboard at the senior center last month. In his brief acceptance speech, von Glasersfeld told the assemblage, “This is a total surprise. And I can honestly say, ‘I did not make any effort for it.’”

Von Glasersfeld was born in Munich, Germany in 1917. His father was in the diplomatic service at the Austrian embassy at the Court of Bavaria. In 1918, Czechoslovakia was founded, and his family became Czech citizens, since the family’s property was actually located in

Prague.

Von Glasersfeld graduated from Zuz College in Switzerland in 1935. He went on to study mathematics at Zurich University and at the University of Vienna.

“I loved to ski in the high mountains of Austria,” said von Glasersfeld, who built an improvised ski run behind his Leverett house. “I did courses back in Austria and would have been certified to become a ski instructor, but Hitler marched into Austria.”

The family’s property was taken over by the Nazis, cutting short von Glasersfeld’s academic career.

Escaping the tumult of the Continent, von Glasersfeld headed to Ireland in 1939, a land with which he soon fell in love. He worked on the land, farming with horses, milking cows by hand, for nearly ten years.

“It was a wonderful time,” von Glasersfeld said of the period, which features prominently in his upcoming book. “There were no tractors, no plows, no electricity. It was a truly happy existence.” With a smile, he added, “You were outside in nature. You worked with big horses. You were free to think, knowing they were too big to get away from you.”

In 1947, von Glasersfeld moved to Italy, where he studied under professor Silvio Ceccato. Von Glasersfeld became a trans-

lator and language consultant for Ceccato and his Italian Operational School. Since his work was only part-time, von Glasersfeld became a full-time newspaperman, working for about a decade as a foreign correspondent for German and Swiss publications.

From 1959 on, von Glasersfeld devoted his life to research and academia. His last two major appointments were at the University of Georgia, where he served as an associate professor from 1972 to 1977 in the psychology department, and most recently at UMass Amherst, where he was visiting adjunct professor of psychology from 1979 to 1987. Since then, for many years, he has served as a research assistant at the Scientific Reasoning Research Institute at UMass.

As he looked back on his interesting, varied career, von Glasersfeld observed that he feels truly at home in Leverett. Perhaps giving the formula for his long life, he said, “I love life, on the whole. I’ve had difficulties, as we all have. But I particularly love the different seasons we have in this area. Here we have farmers who respect the land and work on it. I like it much better than when I was in Georgia.

“The government there pays about half the farmers not to grow crops.

“Here you have the feeling that farmers and others are looking out for the land.”

AIRPORT from pg 1

port commission to interview the three finalists on January 11th at 6 p.m. at the airport office on Millers Falls Road; that meeting is open to the public.

“We’ll see who we like the best, and hopefully take a vote that night,” Herzig added.

Herzig said the airport runway is still closed, following a construction delay caused by the Federal Aviation Administration shutting down the \$5 million runway replacement project in October, after a subcon-

tractor violated an order not to work in an area of land that had yet to be cleared by Native American tribes watching over the archeologically sensitive site. Herzig said a final inch and a half of pavement would be laid down in spring on the 3200-foot runway, but the only thing immediately holding up the reopening of the runway is the need to grade the edges of the pavement to FAA specifications.

Herzig said it was possible that portion of the work could be completed, and the runway reopened, before the turn of the year.

300th from pg 13

enjoy even that. That was a memorable dinner.

“Sergeant Clough requisitioned turkeys for the company to be served the evening of December 26th. When he went to the quartermaster supply to pick up the birds, he was told that they had been promised to some headquarters for a general’s dinner party. Sergeant Clough unslung his carbine and said, ‘I’m taking these turkeys for my men. They deserve a turkey meal this evening more than any general does.’ He took the

turkeys and trimmings and we enjoyed a very sumptuous meal that evening.

“Our commanding officer, Colonel Crandall, years later told me that the best Christmas present he ever received was to see us come out of the Belgium Ardennes and return to the battalion. I told him that getting out of there was the best Christmas present I ever received or could ever have.”

The website of the 300th Combat Engineer Battalion can be found at: www.300thcombatengineersimwii.com

HIGHLIGHTS FROM THE GILL POLICE LOG Hazardous Traffic

Wednesday, 12/9 8:58 a.m. Motor vehicle accident on Main Road. 10:05 a.m. Motor vehicle accident on French King Highway.2:10 p.m. Assisted Bernardston police with motor vehicle accident traffic control on Rt. 10.3:01 p.m. Motor vehicle accident on Rt. 10. Saturday, 12/12 1:33 p.m. Assisted Northfield police with possible domestic dispute. Sunday, 12/13 10:29 p.m. Motor vehicle accident on Main Road.	Monday, 12/14 9:40 a.m. Assisted with traffic hazard on French King Highway Tuesday, 12/16 4:18 p.m. Assisted Erving police department with possible domestic dispute on Mountain Road. Wednesday, 12/17 6:13 p.m. Car vs. deer accident on West Gill Road. Sunday, 12/20 7:27 p.m. Assisted Montague police with traffic control at structure fire scene.
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ARTS & ENTERTAINMENT



THURSDAY, DECEMBER 24TH
Deja Brew, Wendell: *Larry Kopp*, country and city blues, 8 to 10 p.m.

SATURDAY, DECEMBER 26TH
At the Rendezvous, Turners Falls: *The Raised 5th*, jazz, at 6:30 p.m. No cover.

MONDAY, DECEMBER 28th
Evening Sing-A-Long, Montague Center: 6:30 p.m. Children of all ages and their families are invited to join childrens librarian Linda Hickman for a fun informal live music program. Info: call the Carnegie Library at 863-3214.

Deja Brew, Wendell: *Nexus*, harmonic, eclectic rock, 8 to 10 p.m.

SUNDAY, DECEMBER 27th
Deja Brew, Wendell: *Rik Rolski*, acoustic guitar, 8 to 10 p.m. No cover.

MONDAY, DECEMBER 28th
Deja Brew, Wendell: *All Small Caps Extravaganza!* Poetry open mic all night. 7 to 10 p.m.

WEDNESDAY, DECEMBER 30th
Heather Maloney at Burrito Rojo, 7 p.m. Catch this rising star in a great-sounding room. Samantha Farrell opens.

At the Rendezvous, Turners Falls: *Montague Phantom Brain Exchange*, 9 p.m. \$5 cover

THURSDAY, DECEMBER 31st
New Years Eve Comedy at the Shea,



Dan Boulger headlines the New Years Eve Comedy at the Shea, Thursday, Dec. 31, at 8 p.m., with Jennifer Myszkowski as host. \$20. Beer and wine will be served.

with Jennifer Myszkowski, Dan Boulger, Steve Macone, and Alvin David. The Shea Theater, Turners Falls. Showtime 8 p.m., doors open at 6:30 p.m. Beer & wine served in the lobby before show and at intermission. Tickets \$20, (413) 863-2281/www.shea-comedy.com.



Talon of the Blackwater: Laura Siersema. at the Black Moon Music Lounge, Belchertown, Sunday, January 10th at 8 p.m.

New Years party at Rojo's, 9 p.m. to midnight. *Brook Batteau and the New Cosmology*, formerly known as *Honky*, *Thumbelina* and the *Skinnyman*, Burrito Rojo, 3rd Street, Turners Falls.

At the Rendezvous, Turners Falls: New Year's Bash!! Featuring, from Boston, the amazing *Lake Street Dive*. Horn-driven Southern soul, rugged jazz, twee-pop, and funky folk. Plus DJ Tommy TBA. \$12, party begins at 8 p.m. Free admission at midnight til 2 a.m.!

Ristorante DiPaolo, Turners Falls: *Interplay Jazz Quartet*. Special four-course menu and complimentary glass of champagne for \$60/person. Reservations accepted. ristorantedipaolo.com.

Deja Brew, Wendell: Valley Legend *John Sheldon & Friends*. 9 p.m. to 1 a.m. \$8/person or \$15/couple, includes Champagne at midnight!

FRIDAY, JANUARY 1st
Sawmill River 10K Run! 10 a.m. This popular New Years tradition in Montague Center includes Youth division (18 yrs. and under), Open (19 to 39 yrs.), Master (40 to 49 yrs.), Senior (50 to 59 yrs.), and Senior-plus (60 yrs. and up). Entry fees: \$20 advance; \$25 day of. Hot & cold refreshments provided. Benefit for MPRD services, including the Sponsor-a-Child Scholarship Program. Pre-register by contacting MPRD at (413) 863-3216, or online at RunReg.com. Race day registration and check-in begins at 9 a.m.

Deja Brew, Wendell: *Occum's Razor*, rock, reggae, 9 to 11 p.m.

SATURDAY, JANUARY 2nd
Deja Brew, Wendell: *Ghost Quartet*, jazzy blues with a taste of fistfight swing, 9 - 11 p.m.

SUNDAY, JANUARY 3rd
Monthly Scandinavian workshop and dance series at the Montague Grange, always with great live music! Open request dancing follows teaching. All levels of experience are welcome! No partner necessary. 2 to 5 p.m. \$10; \$8 students, seniors, low income. Info: (802) 451-1941.

Dead of Winter Film Series at the Montague Book Mill, Montague Center: *The Apartment*, written (with I.A.L. Diamond) and directed by Billy Wilder. Wilder at his best: sophisticated, acidulated, brilliant and very funny. Come wind up the holiday season with Jack Lemmon and Shirley MacLaine. 7 p.m.

THURSDAY, JANUARY 7th
Echo Lake Concert Series: *Emma's Revolution, Pat Humphries & Sandy O*, 7:30 p.m. at Leverett Town Hall. \$12 to \$15. No advance sells or reservations. Info: (413) 548-9394. Doors open at 7 p.m. Emma's Revolution is also currently touring in support of their new CD collaborative with Holly Near, "We Came To Sing!" Tender and daring a *cappella*



Swing with the Gypsy Wranglers at the Great Falls Coffeehouse, Great Falls Discovery Center, Turners Falls on Friday, January 8th at 7 p.m.

vocal arrangements of some of Holly Near's most requested songs are paired with some of Emma's Revolution's most popular songs, and some new tracks that perfectly fit the three women's voices!

FRIDAY, JANUARY 8th
Friends Coffeehouse hosts *Gypsy Wranglers!* Swinging, bluesing and jazzing, creating a musical cattle drive from Paris, Texas, to Paris, France. Voted favorite swing band by the Valley Advocate's Grand Blam Slam six years in a row. Doors open 6:30 p.m. with program starting at 7 p.m. Donations accepted. Refreshments available. In the Great Hall of the Great Falls Discovery Center, Turners



Emma's Revolution, Pat Humphries and Sandy O, Echo Lake Concert Series. Leverett Town Hall, 7:30 p.m. on January 7th.

Falls.
SATURDAY, JANUARY 9th
Artist's reception for Cate Woolner with photography displayed at the Great Falls Discovery Center in the Great Hall. Meet Cate and speak to her about her amazing adventure to Antarctica. Learn about the methods Cate uses to create her photographs. Refreshments will be served. 1 to 3 p.m. Photography is displayed through January 31st.

SUNDAY, JANUARY 10th
Talon of the Blackwater. Laura Siersema, vocals, keyboard, Billy Klock, drums, Wim Auer, fretless bass. At the Black Moon Music Lounge, 37 State St. (Rt 202) Belchertown, no cover, 8 p.m. (413) 323-0013. More information at: www.myspace.com/blackmoonjazz.

Dead of Winter Film Series at the Montague Book Mill, Montague Center: *Hedwig and the Angry Inch*, written and directed by John Cameron Mitchell. Trans-everything rock opera: Transgressive, transsexual, transformative, transplendent. Super-diva Hedwig, nee Hansel, tours the US with her rock band as she tells her life story and follows the ex-boyfriend/bandmate who stole her songs. 7 p.m.

THROUGH JANUARY 31ST

The Gallery at Hallmark, Turners Falls: *MySight* gallery exhibition, featuring work by Hallmark Institute Class of 2010.

ONGOING
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MONDAYS - Drop-in, 3 to 6 p.m.
TUES & WEDS - Ongoing Music Project, 3 to 6 p.m.
THURS - Drop-in, 3 to 6 p.m. & Movie Night, 6 to 8 p.m.
Free (except some trips), open to local teens. Some require permission slips.
Info: Jared at 863-9559.
Hot Spot Teen Center is in The Brick House
24 Third Street, Turners Falls, 01376



www.gardencinemas.net
Showtimes for Saturday, Dec. 26th to Thurs., Dec 31st

1. AVATAR in DTS sound DAILY 12:00 3:30 7:15 PG
2. SHERLOCK HOLMES PG13 in DTS sound DAILY 12:30 3:30 6:30 9:30
3. THE PRINCESS AND THE FROG G DAILY 12 2:00 4:00 6:30 9:00
4. DID YOU HEAR ABOUT THE MORGANS? PG13 DAILY 12:15 3:15 6:45 9:15
5. PRECIOUS R DAILY 12:15 3:15 6:45 9:15
6. IT'S COMPLICATED R DAILY 12:30 3:30 6:30 9:30
7. ALVIN AND THE CHIPMUNKS: THE SQUEAKUEL PG13 in DTS sound DAILY 12:00 2:00 4:00 6:30 9:00



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THE WARBLERS

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Rock!



DETOLD PHOTO
Mike Mascis, Suzanne LoManto, and Leo Hwang-Carlos form the Warblers's front line. (Bruce Todd on drums.)

BY DAVID DETMOLD LEVERETT – People who want a healthy dose of acid rock to chase away the blues can forget about winter migrations, cause the Warblers are here.

with the flight of the Pixies, the Scientific Americans, and the Pajama Slave Dancers. And man, are we ready for them.

Bands that stick to a minimalist approach to chord changes and a basic guitar, bass and drums combination have never gone out of style for those who know what's good for them in the realm of rock. The Warblers have emerged from some frigid garage in the hinterlands of Leverett, amplifiers cranked, ready to apply the tonic for what has been ailing the Valley for lo these many years, since blistering, intelligent rock headed south

Mike Mascis, Suzanne LoManto, Bruce Todd, and Leo Hwang-Carlos are the Warblers, and they have found their perch on the main line between the Troggs and the *Brain Drain*-era Ramones. They don't mess around with a lot of fancy tricks. LoManto, on bass, looking like Isabella Rossellini's cousin, locks horns with a pile driving Todd on drums at the outset of each number and never deviates from the groove. Mascis and Hwang-Carlos apply power chords above their framework

and put the hammer down, accelerating in volume and intensity until their audience is reduced to a seething mass of writhing meat puppets, rocking in ecstasy.

boozy brew fest at the Shutesbury Athletic Club in November, where they dominated the scene with aplomb. But then we caught up with them at the tail end of a wild party in downtown Turners at the Rendezvous two weeks ago, and they blew everybody's collective mind. Can a good thing get better, you bet.

the Voo with a searing rendition of "Sister Ray," segueing like a metal juggernaut into "Sweet Jane" for a few blissful minutes of rock and roll anarchy, with Hwang-Carlos applying the effects pedals in ways Johnny Ramone could not imagine in his most lucid dreams, sealing the Warblers' place in the pantheon of Valley Rock Gods, north of Chicopee.

Mascis takes his little brother J's vocal style in Dinosaur Jr. to the next logical extreme, and the result is not pretty. Perhaps that's where the band gets its name.

Finally, they closed out the tribute show for the Velvet Underground at Daniel Hales' birthday party on Friday night at

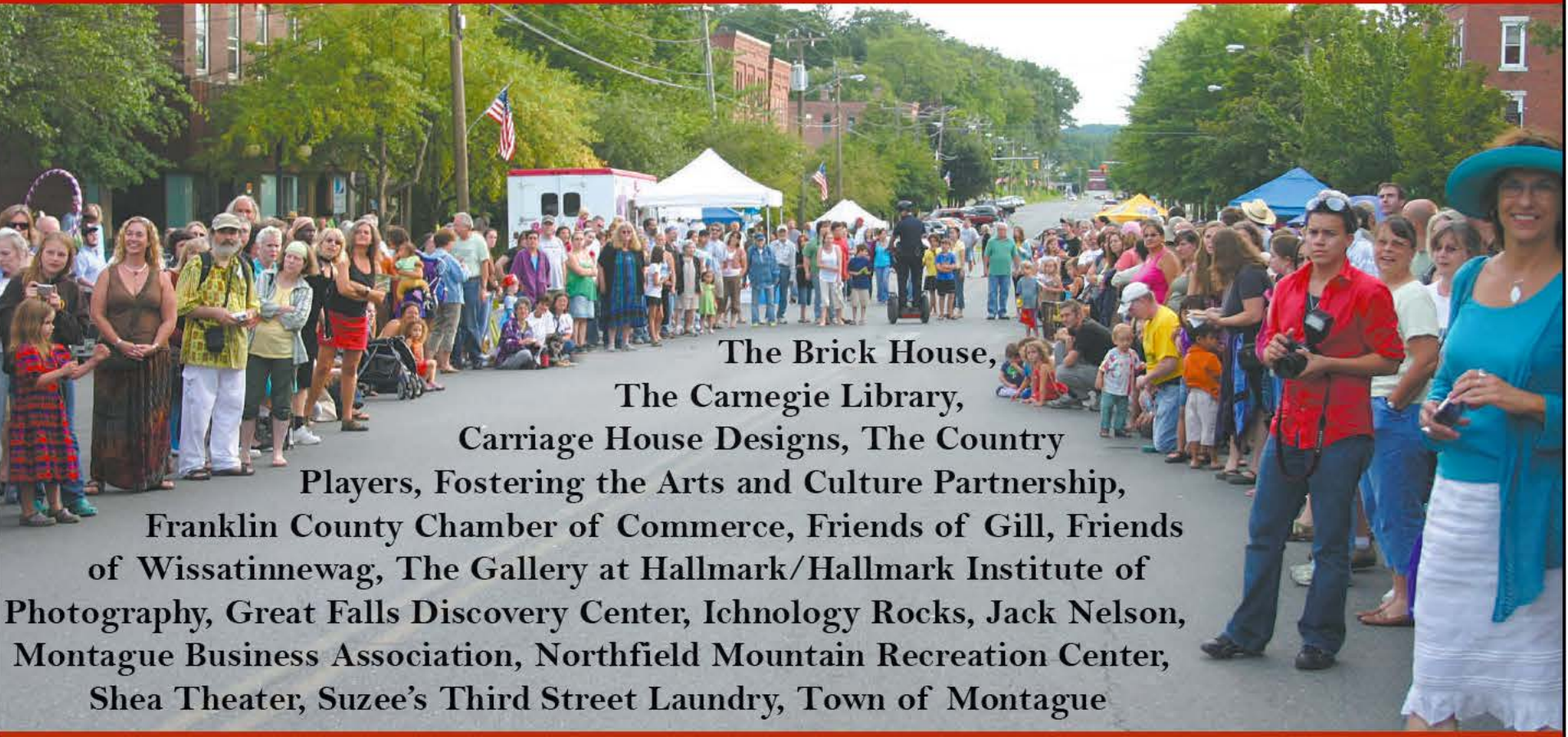
Better go see them at your earliest opportunity. Something this good can't last.

We first caught up with the Warblers this fall at a house party somewhere in the woods of Shutesbury Hill, and they were all right. Then we saw them at a



THANK YOU!

Turners Falls RiverCulture thanks its partners and sponsors for their outstanding year of programming, making Turners Falls a hub of artistic inspiration, recreational adventure and natural beauty!



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