



LOU HOOD

Helped Those in Need
Page 5

HAPPY NEW YEAR
The next issue of the
Reporter will come out
January 8th, 2009



SWEET TALK

on the Ave
Page 12

LAKE PLEASANT MILLERS FALLS MONTAGUE CENTER MONTAGUE CITY TURNERS FALLS

The Montague Reporter

YEAR 7 - NO. 13

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REPORTER@MONTAGUEMA.NET

THE VOICE OF THE VILLAGES

DECEMBER 24, 2008

Gill Override Shrinks

BY DAVID DETMOLD - Two weeks ago, the numbers were bigger. Now, the override amounts the voters of Gill will face in a special election on Tuesday, January 6th have been reduced. But it is even more vital that voters come out and support the override, according to selectboard member Ann Banash.

"I think it's really important that people come out and vote. What we're going to lose are some of things that are really important for a town, like the recreation department and the senior center funding, stipends for the board of health and the board of assessors. Everyone works really hard. All the things on that list are really important to the town, but we can't afford them without this override," Banash said.

There are still two questions on the override ballot. The first seeks \$35,013.33 in funding for a long list of town services, including \$5,000 to help repair a damaged pump on one of the fire trucks, \$800 for the operation of the Slate Library, \$560 for the historical commission, and smaller sums for the conservation commission and the agricultural commission. There are a number of other amounts, but

see **GILL** pg 13



HYRUM HUSKEY PHOTO

On Lake Pleasant Road

BY HYRUM H. HUSKEY JR.
MONTAGUE - It snows and snows.

They plow and plow, and plow some more.

All weekend, through two back-to-back storms, the Montague DPW stayed on the job to keep the 108 miles of locally plowed roads open. This is their story of winter work.

The planning had been completed right on time, late Friday morning, as the first snowflakes begin to fall from the two predicted weekend storms. Six of the department's crew are harnessed to pagers for a week at a time: they will be the first ones called in once the DPW is notified by the police department of worsening road conditions.

"But mostly, everyone is used for plowing duties once the storm is underway," said highway superintendent Tom Bergeron. He too will be out plowing, and he does so as he gives this reporter a lift out to join one of the crewmembers already at work in Lake Pleasant.

Snow is falling rapidly, and the plow's spray partially covers the headlamps on Bergeron's pickup truck. The snow, as it always appears to do, is flying directly into the windshield.

"These guys are experienced at this," Bergeron explained, adding that he himself is one of the "junior" members of the department, at five years. A sense of pride in his department workers clearly shows.

"They are distributed, mostly in pairs, to specific areas of Montague," Bergeron continued. Today, Robert Brownlee and Philip Przybyla will be working Montague Center; Billie Ann Hudson is working downtown Turners Falls and a portion of the Hill, along with Wayne Allen on Avenue A; Joe Dodge is detailed to the Patch and downtown alleys; Dennis Dobias is plowing the flatiron area near Scotty's; while Reggie Stevens works the Hill. Bergeron runs his own route and fills in as needed during his rounds and other duties.

Familiarity with the streets and parking issues makes for a better plowing job, as well as efficient coordination between the crewmembers. They learn to

anticipate each other's moves at specific locations, allowing them to work together seamlessly as a team.

The value of that team experience, and familiarity with the roads, become apparent later, as the work in Millers Falls and Lake Pleasant progresses. Slightly raised manhole covers, referred to as "bad holes," can bring a plow truck to a jarring halt if the driver is not aware of their locations. Knowledge of raised water valve gates, the locations of "bump-out" curbing, rock walls hidden under snow cover, and the places where snow can be more conveniently pushed, all become second nature to experienced snowplow operators. Of course, in residential areas such as Lake Pleasant, where streets are narrow and homes closely packed, there is little opportunity for the department's crew members to avoid closing up driveways as they make the streets passable.

At the intersection of Lake Pleasant Road and Old Northfield Road, Bergeron transfers me to Craig Gaudry, a six-year veteran of the department. Gaudry previously worked for the Gill road crew, in addition to having other truck driving experience.

I clamber into the 1995 Ford diesel as Gaudry expressed surprise. "I thought you were going to be the other fellow, Joe Parzych!" he exclaimed. Parzych was probably too busy rototilling

see **BLADES** pg 8



ELLEN BLANCHETTE PHOTO

EXTRA!

- **E**conomic turmoil!
- **A**dministration change in Washington promising relief to the hinterlands!
- **A** possible midyear cutback in state aid to local governments, with the promise of further declines to come!
- **G**ill must pass a levy override on January 6th just to make it through the fiscal year!

Read all about it. The *real* news.

BY DAVID DETMOLD - 2008 is fading faster than the embers of the Yule log. Yet the towns of Montague, Wendell, Erving and Gill have seen transformations big and small this year. So, before we pin our new calendars on the wall, let's take a moment to look back at some of the challenges faced, obstacles overcome, and the promise of new growth found in the headlines of the Montague Reporter over the past twelve months.

1. Undoubtedly, the biggest story in Montague and Gill in 2008 has been the consolidation of the regional school district. The GMRSD closed half of Hillcrest School and all of Montague Center School in a 6-3 vote on April Fools Day, after turning down reorganization plans presented by parents who wanted to keep Montague Center open as an expanded K-5 school or an in-district Horace Mann charter school.

Though savings were predicted — interim GMRSD superintendent Ken Rocke said the district could save \$228,000 by closing Montague Center

School alone — later in the budget cycle we learned those savings had been "redistributed" elsewhere in the district.

Meanwhile, the town of Montague has already approved spending \$80,000 to secure the Montague Center School, heat and insure the building, and commission a study on its future use.

In January, the state announced Turners Falls High School had experienced a 22.9% dropout rate in the 2007 graduating cohort, higher than dropout rates in Holyoke or Springfield.

The school committee rolled out a \$17,068,078 budget on March 4th, only to have it turned down by town meetings in Gill and Montague. A seesaw battle ensued with the school committee shaving fractional sums off the bottom line — first \$50,000, then \$200,000, and finally \$153,000 more — only to have their budget rejected two more times by voters at special district meetings on September 17th and November 18th.

With the towns and the school district

see **YEAR** pg 8

PET OF THE WEEK

Olive



The Other Reindeer

Olive is used to living outdoors in extremely cold conditions, so she would be grateful for any comfort you can provide. She used to exhibit anti-social behavior, laughing and calling names, but she changed her ways after getting lost in the fog. Now she is a history buff.

Olive enjoys a diet of moss and lichen and sugarplums. She is a docile creature now, after being subjected to years of saccharine marketing campaigns. She would make a good pet for children under the age of four or five, who are unable to stay up past midnight.

Global warming is changing her habitat, so please act fast to adopt Olive, before she is forced to live in a theme park at the North Pole.

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reporter@montaguema.net
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MONTAGUE LIBRARY NEWS

Evening Sing-a-Long

BY LINDA HICKMAN
TURNERS FALLS - Due to the holidays, there will be no Story Hour or Music and Movement through the end of December. The Evening Sing-a-Long at the Montague Center Library will be held on Monday, December



HICKMAN PHOTO

MILLERS FALLS - Regardless of what last week's paper may have led you to believe, the young lady above is no relation to Marcia Zutautas of Turners Falls, nor did she win a beautiful quilt made by library director Sue

29th. In January and February, the Music and Movement program with Tom and Laurie will be held at the Carnegie Library on Thursday mornings at 10 a.m. For more information, contact the Carnegie Library at 863-3214.

SanSoucie. In fact, her name is Kailyn Reardon of Millers Falls, and she and twelve other children enjoyed making easy gingerbread houses at the Millers Falls Library Club on Tuesday, December 16th. Thirty children also made gingerbread at the Carnegie Library on Saturday, December 6th. Decorating easy gingerbread houses has become an annual tradition at the Montague Public libraries.

NEW SALEM LIBRARY NEWS

Winter Film Series

The New Salem Library Winter Film Series presents: *Yellow Submarine*, the fun-filled fantasy starring the Beatles, in spectacular animation, complete with Blue Meanies! The

movie will be shown on Friday, January 9th at 7:30 p.m. at the Swift River School. Admission is free. All donations gratefully accepted. (Snow date: January 16th).

Nine Great Ways to Help Support this Great Community Newspaper in 2009

BY JEN AUDLEY - Reporting. Hard as we try, we can't be everywhere. Going to an event or meeting that might interest our readers? Write it up!

Letters. Always welcome! Send kudos, complaints, clarifications and items of community interest to us at reporter@montaguema.net.

Donations. Subscriptions, advertising, and in-store sales barely cover the basic cost of producing this weekly paper. Your gift will help us pay stipends for dedicated volunteers, upgrade key equipment, and heat our office.

Deliveries. Help with mailing on Thursdays, or get your own paper route!

Layout. Know Quark? Got a few

hours to spare between Sunday and Wednesday night? We could really use help in this area.

Proofreading. Call 413-863-8666 for details.

Ad sales. Ditto. Grant writing. Hey, it doesn't hurt to ask. We're a 501c4 now, and we're as fundable a grassroots organization as you'll find anywhere this side of Wall Street.

T-shirts. We've got 'em; all sizes, same cool Montague Reporter logo on a gray background. Perfect for any time of year.

Come to our winter fundraiser! Whoops, that's ten. Thursday evening, January 29th, 2009, at the Rendezvous in Turners Falls. B there or C squared!

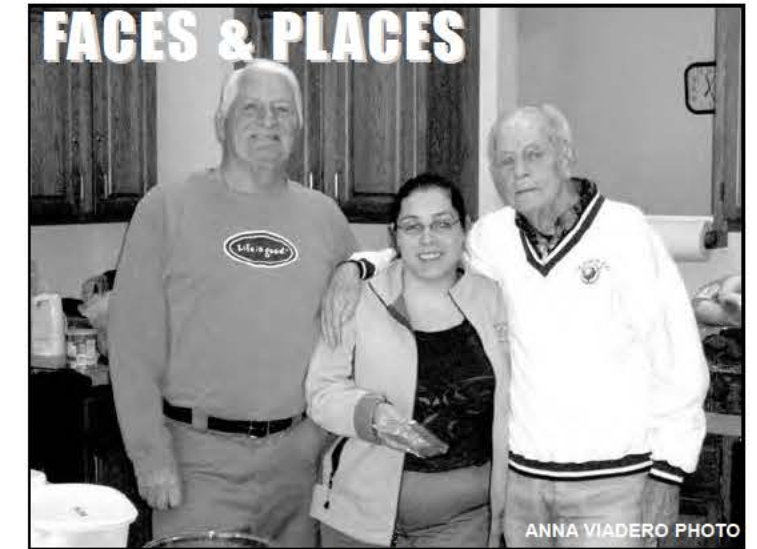
SENIOR CENTER ACTIVITIES -- Dec. 22nd to Jan. 2nd

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

Monday, 29th
10 a.m. Senior Aerobics.
11 a.m. Easy Aerobics
Wednesday, 24th
10 a.m. Senior Aerobics
Thursday, 25th
Senior Center closed for

Christmas
Friday, 26th
10 a.m. Senior Aerobics
11 a.m. Easy Aerobics
Only Aerobics Classes are scheduled for the week between Christmas and New Year's
Tuesday Jan. 6th
12:30 p.m. There will be a joint meeting of the Gill/Montague Council On Aging and the Gill/Montague Friends of the Mealsite

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 congregate meals. For information and reservations call Polly Kiely, Senior Center director at 413-423-3308. Lunch daily at 11:30 a.m. with reservations a day in advance by 11:00 a.m. Transportation can be provided



ANNA VIADERO PHOTO

Photo: (L to R) Joe LaChance (L) and Nikol Schreiber, both Deputy Sheriffs in the TRLAD division made lunch on December 23rd for Winslow Wentworth House residents in Turners Falls including Chick Underwood. Winslow Wentworth House, congregate housing, is managed by Franklin County Home Care. Read more about it at www.fcbcc.org.

Special Town Meeting Makes Short Work of Business

BY JOSH HEINEMANN
WENDELL - The evening of December 17th, when electricity had been restored to some but not all parts of town, was the occasion for a special town meeting that may have set a record for brevity. When Katie Nolan walked in to town hall at 7:00 p.m. she received a round of applause because she was the tenth voter in the room, a quorum. Behind her, I was number eleven, superfluous and ignored, and the person who came in behind me did not raise an eyebrow.

In ten minutes, voters approved the three article warrant. Article One allowed the

selectboard to appoint a trench permitting authority as required by a new state law; Article Two transferred \$2,500 from state 'Pothole' money to hire a temporary highway department clerk; and Article Three transferred \$1,500 from 'Pothole' money to buy a laptop computer for the highway department.

The meeting had been scheduled to meet the state order to have the town appoint a trench permitting authority by the end of the year. The state wound up delaying that deadline to March 1st, but the meeting had already been scheduled..

Amherst Museum Open During Winter Break

In response to increased interest and enormous positive feedback from the public, the Amherst College Museum of Natural History will adopt the following schedule during the school's winter vacation: — Open Dec. 26th, 27th, 28th, 30th — Closed Dec. 31st - Jan. 5th. It will be open each day from 11 a.m. to 4 p.m. Come see the dinosaur prints from Riverside, and other treasures.

GREAT FALLS MIDDLE SCHOOL STUDENTS OF THE WEEK

- Grade 6:** Liam Theis
- Grade 7:** Shelby Lewis
- Grade 8:** Jose Santiago, Rebecca Smith, Marjorie Gallagher

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NOTES FROM THE ERVING SELECTBOARD

Emergency Personnel Praised

BY DAVID DETMOLD - Town tax collector Shirley Deane came before the selectboard on Monday, December 15th to let them know she was one of the people left without power for 24 hours or more following the severe ice storm of December 12th. Deane was particularly grateful for the response shown by fire, police and emergency personnel to all those affected by the storm. The fire department had meals ready for people without power, they provided generators for residents who needed to pump out their cellars.

One volunteer firefighter came to Deane's home and helped her hook up her woodstove, which had been in storage for seven years, and then returned with a load of firewood so she could warm up her home while the power was down.

Police chief Chris Blair sent his officers out every two hours to check up on the well being of elderly residents who did not want to leave their homes during the power outage.

The town treasurer permitted the chief of police to make emergency purchases of food and water for the Senior Center in Erving, where an emergency dispensing station was set up to provide hot meals for the affected homes in town. The

power outage affected only National Grid customers, from Farley to Erving Center; Erving was relatively unaffected. Accept for a few residences at higher elevations, most people in town had their power restored by Saturday, one day after the storm hit. Emergency Management Director Mick LaClaire prepared a list of residents over 70 who were living by themselves, so personnel could check on their welfare.

"Our emergency personnel provided a great response during the power outage," said town administrative assistant Tom Sharp. "In a small town, sometimes you can really come through for your people."

Sharp said a meeting will be held soon with fire and police chiefs to talk about lessons learned during the storm, and to determine what could be done better in a future emergency.

Harry and Susan Sharbaugh, medical practitioners who volunteered to help with the four-town flu clinic held at the Turners Falls High School on November 22nd, (in conjunction with the boards of health of Monague, Gill, Wendell, and Erving) reported on the success of the emergency dispensing test site. But the Sharbaughs said next time, they would like

to have more people take advantage of the service provided. They wondered if the town of Erving would decide to forego holding its own flu clinic next year, and shuttle people to the Turners Falls High School instead.

The selectboard will check with the Erving Senior Center before a decision is made on that suggestion.

The selectboard issued a business license to Bruce Pollard Trucking, on Old State Road.

The board authorized the next payment to R.H. White of Auburn, the contractor handling the renovation of the Erving wastewater treatment plant, for \$186,171.

The board signed liquor licenses for 2009 for the Copper Angel, (closed for winter), the French King Entertainment Center, French King Motor Inn, and for package stores at the Franklin Grocery and the Pocket Saver.

Before going into executive session to discuss the disciplining of an employee, the board voted to dispose of the fire department's old self contained breathing apparatus as surplus equipment, authorizing the removal of the old apparatus by the vendor supplying the new units.

Unity Park Public Hearing January 8th, 7 p.m. Town Hall

BY DAVID DETMOLD - TURNERS FALLS - Peter Wells, a landscape architect working with the Berkshire Design Group of Northampton, came to Turners Falls on Thursday, December 18th to talk about redesign ideas for Unity Park. Wells and his firm have designed over 300 parks in New England. They did the landscaping design for the Great Falls Discovery Center, for example. Now, the Montague selectboard has hired Berkshire Design, using \$8,250 of program income money, to prepare a master plan for Unity Park.

The plan will then be used to seek funds to prepare bid ready plans for the park redesign in next year's Community Development Block Grant. After that application is successful, bid ready plans will be used to apply for construction funds for the park's facelift in 2010.

Town administrator Frank Abbondanzio estimates the park renovation could cost at least a quarter of a million dollars.

Wells walked the parks and recreation commissioners and a small audience of interested officials and residents through flip chart photos of present conditions at the park, along with a schematic map of potential improvements. But he emphasized, "I am here to listen."

A public hearing will be held on Unity Park plans on January 8th, at town hall, at 7:00 p.m.

Among the possible improvements Wells outlined for the park are: a new backstop for the southeast baseball diamond, crack sealing for the basketball court, clearer definition of the present parking area in back of the field house and creation of a new parking lot next to the basketball courts, replacement of old, unsafe playground equipment, and new signage to create a stronger definition of the entrance to the park and the field house office.

Other ideas talked about include the construction of a sandlot volleyball court, and the possibility of constructing an outdoor pavilion where children's programs could take shelter on rainy days.

A number of people talked about the idea of including a skate park somewhere in the Unity Park redesign. Town planner Dan Laroche mentioned the possibility of closing off the end of Williams Way, and combining that land with a 40 acre strip of town owned land bordering Williams Garage, to make a larger space for a skate park to be included in the park plans.

Wells said his company had also designed 12 skate parks, including Northampton's.

FAA to Hold Discussions on Turners Falls Airport Project

BY DAVID DETMOLD - Jim Peters, spokesperson for the Federal Aviation Administration for the New England region, called to comment on the determination by the National Register of Historic Places that the Turners Falls Ceremonial Hill at the Turners Falls Airport is eligible for inclusion in the National Register. Asked what impact the determination would have on the \$5 million airport runway expansion project, which had been slated to demolish the cer-

emonial hilltop site in the course of extending the 3000 foot runway by 1200 feet, Peters said on Tuesday, December 23rd, "The airport sponsor is aware that the area that has been identified by the Narragansetts [and other federally recognized New England tribes] is eligible for inclusion in the National Register of Historic Places. We will have to take that into consideration in planning. At this point we haven't had any discussions yet [about the future course of the runway improve-

ment project] with the airport sponsor, but I'm sure we'll have them sooner rather the later."

He added, "Anything another federal agency decides, we'll abide by. We have an obligation to do so."

"The National Register has the say over [whether the Ceremonial Hill can be impacted]. We can't do anything about that. That kind of outlines what the significance of the area is."

Peters concluded, "I think we have to work around it; that's the bottom line."

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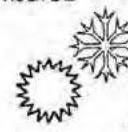
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If It's 5 a.m. This Must Be 3rd Street... PLOW DAYS, PART ONE

BY JANEL NOCKLEBY
TURNERS FALLS -

Apparently, the pounding on my front door had been constant for about five minutes, but I only heard the last ten seconds.

"Hello?" I asked, still half asleep.

"Good Morning. You're about to get towed..." yelled my landlord.

I don't believe I had moved that fast at 7 a.m. until then in my life. Was I wearing my red flannel PJs with kitties on them? No matter. I rushed to my car parked at the 3rd Street lot in Turners. I snuck into my car as an officer was writing down my license plate number and directing the tow truck to take my car away next. I saw in the rear view mirror there was a nodding of heads between the men, suggesting they were going to let me get away. Sweet!

That was my first winter here, three years ago. When I first got my apartment in Turners I had no idea not having off street parking was a big deal. You see, I'm not from these snowy New England parts. You would think a parking and towing policy would be straightforward, but either Turners or I make it more complicated, or both. You decide.

No parking on the street is allowed from 1 a.m. until 5 a.m. from December first until April 1st - but it turns out even that

policy has wrinkles. If you park on the street then, but there is no snow, you just get a ticket. Ten dollars. If you park there on a plowing day, you get towed. Ninety dollars. The start date for snow removal is really whenever the first major snow storm hits during the year... so even though the sign says December 1st, you could still get towed in November, which seems ornery. And while there is a snow parking policy posted on the montague net web site, the truth is the many nuances of downtown parking are learned only through hard experience, and by rumor.

There are a few parking lots in town meant for residents to use for overnight parking, but each comes with a special window of time when you can't park there. The one closest to where I live is the parking lot on 3rd Street, next to the Rendezvous. The magical window of no parking for plowing is from 7 a.m. until 9 a.m. Ack.

I am not a morning person. The 4th Street lot's magic window opens from 9 a.m. until 11 a.m., I believe. I've used it once when I was lucky enough to find an open spot there, saving me from getting up early when I didn't need to.

How much snow is enough snow to warrant plowing? One inch? No. Two inches? Apparently not. But four? Five? Who knows? If a snow storm happens when you're asleep, and you don't know it, will you get towed? (If a tree falls in a forest but you're not there to hear it, does it make a sound?) It took me a whole season to figure out that you don't get towed on Saturday mornings or Sunday mornings. *Useful information.* Sigh. Oh, and also, if it's still snowing during the plowing window, they might not plow until the next day. But you've already gotten up and moved your car way too early in the morning because you didn't know that. *Grrr.*



JESSICA HARMON ILLUSTRATION

SEE IF YOU CAN SKATE BY ON THIS

LETTER TO THE EDITOR

A Room at the Inn

BY JOSEPH A. PARZYCH

GILL - Here is a little Christmas story from *Jep's Place*. After my mother's first husband died in the influenza epidemic of 1918, my mother was left alone in Housatonic with two small children and another on the way.

A few days after my mother gave birth to Elizabeth (Bess), she went back to work in a factory. Mary, six, took care of the newborn while my mother was at work. The neighbors looked in on them, occasionally. Unfortunately, one of the neighbors was a child molester, who terrified

Mary.

In desperation, my mother approached the owners of the Manaco Inn, just before Christmas, to apply for a job as cook. They hired her and found a room at the inn on the third floor for her and her three children. The owners supplied a hot plate for Mary to heat up the newborn baby's bottle to feed Bess, while my mother was at work at her job down in the kitchen on the first floor.

Mary and Bess were very close throughout their lives. Mary died May 21st, 2005 at 92. Bess turned 90 on December 20th of this year.

But define still snowing. A few flakes? Forecasted to finish snowing by 7 a.m., but it hasn't? What are the chances you'll remember this the following day, when everyone's moved on and forgotten about the snow... will you remember to wake up and move your car? That's how they got me once last winter. Thankfully, only once. I missed my favorite poetry class and cried. Yes, like a girl. Stressed out. Ninety dollars gone.

And what about melting — what if the snow is going to melt quickly, will they tow you or not? And, will the police department think you're a freak because you're asking these questions at 5 a.m.?

To date my strategy has been to stay up until 5 a.m. and then move my car. Then go to bed. Is anyone at the police department at 5 a.m.? And how long does it take to dig out your car? Forever, because in the night they partially plowed

the lot so now you're plowed in? I know that answer.

And what about those signs? There's parking available on 1st Street, with a window of plowing from 1 p.m. - 3 p.m., but another sign says Commercial Vehicles Two Hour Limit No Overnight Parking. For the longest time I interpreted that as No Overnight Parking for anyone, but it must just be for commercial vehicles. Word order matters, at least to poets. And when I say I'm not a morning person, I can hear you now saying, well, get over it, but as a writer, teacher, and a student, I don't keep normal hours. I just drove around town confirming the signage for various lots at 3 a.m. (including the Discovery Center lot where the plowing window is 11 a.m. - 1 p.m.) I made my dog go with me. It was 2.3 degrees. It took doggy sausage bribes to get her in the car.

So as I write this I realize there are many other questions

worth plowing into that should be explored in Part Two. Say - how much revenue does the town make off of towing, anyway? How about the towing companies? Which ones do they use? Where do they take the cars? (They took mine up near the Turners Falls Fire Station ... not very walkable in the snow!) How many spaces are there in town for non-commercial residents to park? How many cars are registered in downtown Turners? Why can commercial vehicles park overnight in the 3rd Street lot but not in other lots? Where do residents on the Hill park if they don't have a garage or driveway? I've heard grumblings about Central Street and broken down cars taking up precious spaces there. And what about the rest of the villages? Are towing policies the same there? These are the questions that inquiring minds want to know! Turners, and all villagers, tell us your towing stories! Bring us your questions. We will investigate!

American Dead in Iraq and Afghanistan as of 12/23/08



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

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— Lou Hood, Rest in Peace —



Lou Hood was a volunteer at Franklin Area Survival Center for 16 Years

BY DON CLEGG
TURNERS FALLS - Lou Hood of Greenfield passed away on Friday, December 19th. Since his retirement, Lou had volunteered at the Franklin Area Survival Center for over 23 years. Lou was still there until just a few weeks ago, doing what he loved to do for all those years.

Every Monday, Wednesday and Friday, Lou was in charge of putting out bread, snacks

and dairy items in the front area of the Survival Center Food Pantry, at 96 Fourth Street in Turners Falls, replenishing the USDA food on the shelves, breaking down the cardboard for recycling and pushing the blue bins full of donations back to the sorting room. If you tried to do his job, he rewarded you with a stern look because, even in his eighties, Lou was there to work.

On Wednesdays, you could find Lou sharing knowledge of days gone by with the other volunteers in the Food Pantry.

Their form of trivial pursuit hit on many topics, but Lou was at his best when in came to classic movies, boxers of the 1930s and 1940s, and baseball stats from the era of the Brooklyn Dodgers and the New York Giants. But mostly, Lou loved the Red Sox, and knew more about them than anyone I ever met.

Lou, a quiet, unassuming man, had a sense of adventure about him. His idea of a summer vacation was getting in his car alone, and driving west. He made very few reservations,

and few planned stops. This year, for the first time, he stayed at home, and we sensed his time was near.

Lou was a man of few indulgences, but he had a sweet tooth for chocolate covered funny bones. Still, he was known to pass up a chocolate funny bone if there was a whoopie pie in the vicinity. I think some day soon I will spend some time looking through one of my Red Sox picture books, have a whoopie pie, and think about my friend Lou Hood.

The Franklin Area Survival Center Food Pantry

"We Want Everyone to Feel Welcome"

BY ELIZABETH NASH
TURNERS FALLS - Deerfield resident Esther Howe started what was to become the Franklin Area Survival Center in 1982. Working from her own home, she made food and clothing available to those in need, at no cost. "It just mushroomed," said current food pantry coordinator Mary Cavanaugh. The need kept growing and the center outgrew Howe's house. But her generosity of spirit lives on in the current thrift store and pantry, now housed in Turners Falls at 96 Fourth Street - the storefront there once housed a Polish cooperative grocery.

Now a private corporation overseen by a board of directors, the Survival Center serves people from throughout Franklin County. It is entirely self-funded. Clothing and household goods are donated to the thrift store, and operating funds for the pantry come from thrift store sales and from donations. The store and pantry are staffed almost entirely by volunteers, several of whom have been at their posts for many years.

Cavanaugh, the pantry coordinator for the past six years, has worked all her life in human services. Paid for eight hours weekly, she regularly works 35. "It's not like a job," she laughed. "I enjoy it so much. It's just a really good place to be."

Cavanaugh spends her 35 hours overseeing food purchasing, distribution, and storage,

supervising the volunteer workers, and occasionally filling in at the cash register in the thrift store. "But really," she says, "we all just pitch in and do whatever it takes to get food to people."

Besides obtaining and distributing food, Cavanaugh said she and her hard-working colleagues share another key goal: "We want everyone to feel welcome," she said. "Whoever has to come here, we don't want them to feel embarrassed. Any one of us could end up needing help; that's the way we look at it."

From the front shop area of the pantry, people needing just a bit of food to tide them over can drop in to help themselves to small quantities of bread, dairy products, fresh produce, canned goods with close sell-by dates - whatever happens to be available. Individuals or families needing food more regularly fill out a simple application form with generous income guidelines. They then come in to pick up free meal packages (set amounts and types of food) every three days.

To help people keep their dignity and sense of themselves as valued members of the community, the application form asks if they could volunteer in any way, either regularly or just one time. "Many do volunteer," said Cavanaugh. "And people just help out on the spot, too - they may be here to pick up their food, and they'll see us unloading the truck, and they'll just pitch in

and help."

Cavanaugh emphasizes that though the pantry keeps careful records of food coming in and going out, the personal application information is shared with no one outside the pantry. "It's strictly private," she said. "We do have to show some of our food records to the Western Massachusetts Food Bank in Hatfield, because we get U.S. Department of Agriculture commodities from them, but it's all about the food, not the people getting it."

Cavanaugh notes that the need for food is great, and, in this difficult economy, growing. "We need people to remember that we're here," she said, "and that we need their help all year round, not just at the holidays."

Food Pantry Needs

Food: Organic, gourmet, and special diet items in all categories are welcome. "We'll find a home for any food anyone brings us," said pantry coordinator Mary Cavanaugh.

- Baby food and formula (a constant need)
 - Canned soups, especially containing meat, chicken, turkey, or beans
 - Canned vegetables, fruits, meat, and fish
 - Macaroni and cheese and other boxed dinner s
 - Pasta and Ramen noodles
 - Spaghetti sauce
 - Cereal (hot and cold)
 - Peanut butter
 - Jelly
 - Pretzels
 - Crackers
 - Bottled juice
 - Mustard, ketchup, mayonnaise, salt, and pepper
- Other Needs:** Diapers, Recipes for quick, healthy meals that children like
- Donations of funds or gro-

cery store gift cards. If you have questions about pantry needs or about getting help, or to volunteer, please drop by or call 413-863-9549.

Food Pantry Facts at a Glance

- Founded:** 1982
- Location:** 96 Fourth Street, Turners Falls
- Hours:** 10 a.m. to 1 p.m., Monday through Friday
- Service area:** All of Franklin County
- People served:** Infants to elderly
- Money sources:** Thrift store sales, donations
- Food sources:** Donations from individuals and area supermarkets; low-price purchases from Western Massachusetts Food Bank in Hatfield
- Food guideline:** 4 pounds feeds one person 3 meals a day for 3 days
- Food distributed:** 15,000 to 23,000 pounds each month (3 meals a day for 191 people)

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NOTES FROM WENDELL SELECTBOARD

Grave Concerns

BY JOSH HEINEMANN - As the lone member of Wendell's cemetery commission, Richard Mackey took the initiative and called himself commission chair and met with the Wendell selectboard at its December 10th meeting. Mackey wanted to clarify some issues regarding cemetery plots and also he wanted the selectboard to appoint other people to the commission.

Alex Lankowski, of Morse Village Road, accompanied Mackey to the meeting and accepted one nomination. Later in the meeting Peter Zera, of Lockes Village Road, accepted a second nomination. Both men were sworn in across the hall at the town clerk's office, giving the cemetery commission a full complement. Lankowski and Zera will have to run for the posts in the spring town election.

Zera also volunteered to serve as acting tree warden until the spring election, and the selectboard appointed him.

Mackey had drawn up a set of proposed bylaws for the town cemeteries, based on cemetery bylaws from surrounding towns, and he passed out a copy to each board member to review before the next selectboard meeting.

Mackey was concerned that some people claim to have purchased plots in the Osgood Brook Cemetery, near the north end of New Salem Road, but he has found no paperwork to

confirm those claims. He proposed hiring Berry Engineering, from Petersham, to survey the new cemetery, as soon as possible, and to have a definitive lot plan available at town hall. The estimate for that work is \$3,500.

Mackey said the commission has \$2,200 in non-expendable money, and \$11,000 available to be spent, but he wanted to consult with the selectboard and possibly town counsel before committing funds.

Selectboard chair Ted Lewis suggested Mackey talk with the town treasurer and accountant, and selectboard member Dan Keller thought the finance committee should be consulted also, even though spending that money will not impact the town's annual budget.

Mackey said he had chained the gate access to the Osgood Brook Cemetery to keep snowmobiles and ATV's out, and to keep cars from getting stuck in mud and snow, but said he had gotten complaints from people wanting to enter the cemetery.

Lewis suggested there might be room for two or three cars just outside the chain, especially if the highway crew did some leveling. There is room to walk between the chain and the stone wall.

Mackey also asked for the commission to keep a file drawer in the town office

building. Town coordinator Nancy Aldrich said there is extra drawer space in the meeting room, but later in the meeting treasurer Carolyn Manley offered a drawer in her office, and selectboard member Christine Heard thought it would be better to avoid using the meeting room as regular office space.

Mackey mentioned dying maples in the town center cemetery, but Keller said the trees are not quite dead. He said they are still considered alive by many people.

Aldrich said that she checked town records and found that the board of health had turned over supervision of the Wendell Recycling and Transfer Station to the highway commission in 1998. Appointing a new WRATS supervisor is the highway commission's responsibility.

Aldrich said she had called an engineer to get an inspection of the dam at Fiske Pond. If a prior inspection is on record, the price is \$3,500, but without a prior inspection the price is \$4,500.

Lewis said, "There is not enough water (behind that dam) to wash your feet. We took that dam out in the sixties."

Aldrich relayed a letter from Orange Ambulance that calls for

an increase of the annual fee that Wendell will pay for ambulance service. Wendell has been paying \$3,000 or \$4,000 a year for ambulance service, but based on the new rate of \$10 per resident, the town's annual rate would more than double, to \$10,030.

Keller commented the town has no real choice, although it might be worthwhile to check the rates for BHS Ambulance, in Greenfield.

The highway superintendent hiring committee has met three times, written a job description and placed newspaper advertisements on December 13th and 14th, 19th and 20th. Applications will be accepted until January 8th and interviews will follow. A few people have already expressed interest in the job.

The finance committee met with the selectboard to discuss a number of matters. Committee member Barbara Caruso suggested once a highway superintendent is hired, his 90-day probationary period should be punctuated by 30-day and 60-day scheduled reviews, to ease his entry into a demanding position, and to prevent an unpleasant surprise at the end of 90 days. Selectboard members agreed to forward that idea to the

highway commission. Finance committee member Jim Slavas suggested future town meetings should consider creating a pension stabilization fund and a medical insurance reserve fund so the town can save on medical insurance by decreasing the deductible amount of the policies.

Slavas said a 10% reduction of state aid, which some are considering a likelihood for the fiscal year starting July 1st, would require a 60 cent per \$1,000 increase in the town's tax rate to maintain budgets at current levels.

Slavas said he learned that the state Department of Elementary and Secondary Education is operating under the assumption that Wendell's total property value includes full value of state owned land within the town, and that is why Wendell is considered richer than Orange in the DOE formula that assesses towns for the Mahar High School budget. The DOE is also under the impression that Wendell receives payment on the full value of state land, not the reduced and variable Payment in Lieu of Taxes money the town actually gets. Aldrich said Wendell has lost over \$1 million in PILOT money in the last ten years.

HIGHLIGHTS FROM THE MONTAGUE POLICE LOG

Suspicious Activities Investigated

Wednesday, 12/17
 9:05 a.m. Report of an abandoned vehicle at a Greenfield Road address. Investigated.
 10:26 a.m. Report of a threatening statement made at an Avenue A address.
 11:45 a.m. Report of a motor vehicle off the road at a Turners Falls Road address.
 1:24 p.m. Officer wanted at an Avenue A address. Subject removed to hospital.
 5:50 p.m. Report of an accident in the area of Pine Nook and Turners Falls Road.s Services rendered.
 5:55 p.m. Report of an accident with property damage at a Turners Falls Road address. Services rendered.
 8:34 p.m. Arrested [redacted] on a default warrant.
Thursday, 12/18
 1:30 a.m. Report of loud noise disturbance at an I Street address. Investigated.
 1:32 a.m. Officer observed a suspicious automobile at the Route 47 crossover and

Federal Street. Investigated.
 9:38 a.m. Report of vandalism at a Fourth Street address.
 9:48 a.m. Report of fraud - identity theft at a K Street address.
 1:52 p.m. Assist other agency at Great Falls Middle School, Turnpike Road. Arrested juvenile, age 14. Charged as Child In Need of Services.
 11:31 p.m. Officer wanted in the area of Turners Falls Road. Subject returned to home or family.
Friday, 12/19
 10:50 p.m. Report of restraining order violation at a Second Street address. Arrested [redacted] Charged with violation of a restraining order.
Saturday, 12/20
 12:18 a.m. Officer observed suspicious automobile in the area of Federal Street and Center Street. Investigated.
Sunday, 12/21
 12:04 a.m. Officer observed open door / window at a Greenfield Road business.

Secured building.
 1:08 a.m. Officer observed loud noise disturbance at Between The Uprights sports bar on Avenue A. Investigated.
 1:18 a.m. Report of a suspicious automobile at a Chestnut Hill Road address. Investigated.
 1:27 a.m. Report of a suspicious automobile in the area of Avenue A and Canal Street. Investigated.
 1:43 a.m. Report of loud noise disturbance in the Fourth Street parking lot. Investigated.
 2:16 a.m. Officer observed suspicious person in the area of Southworth Paper Mill on Canal Road. Services rendered.
Monday, 12/22
 7:54 a.m. Report of burglar alarm sounding at Jake's Tavern, Avenue A. Investigated.
 7:57 a.m. Report of an accident with property damage on Davis Street.
 9:16 a.m. Report of motor vehicle accident with property damage at 7th Street and Avenue A.
 3:34 p.m. Report of an accident with property damage on Millers Falls Road.

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Wendell Holds Emergency Management Meeting

BY JOSH HEINEMANN - About 30 Wendell residents came through the snow to the town office meeting room on Saturday, December 20th to discuss successes and misses in Wendell's response to the prolonged disruption of electric service following the severe ice storm that struck in the early morning hours of December 12th. Phone lines were down in most parts of town for three days or more, and it was two more days before many residents got power back.

Lonny Ricketts, the town's new Emergency Management Director, chaired the meeting. He provided handouts describing what should be in a household disaster supply kit.

Everyone at the meeting agreed the town road crew, tree warden, and WRATS crew did an incredible job clearing the roads of debris.

The police department has several generators, which they lent out to residents to help keep freezers frozen, and furnaces going long enough to prevent water pipes from freezing, but some residents did not know

about them, or about the water available at the highway garage. Neighbors shared generators and water.

Doug Tanner said keeping the Wendell Country Store open made it a good community and communication center. Before electricity was restored to the center of town, owner Patti Scutari traveled back and forth to the Diemand Farm to get brewed coffee to bring back to the store.

Annie Diemand of the Wendell police suggested the town should organize into neighborhoods, that look after each other, especially when parts of town are isolated from the larger community as they were this month.

Former firefighter Kathy Becker suggested the town buy relatively short range hand held radios for townspeople, for communication when telephone service is disrupted.

There was discussion of possible shelters for numbers of people, including the town hall or the Swift River School, neither of which had heat or electricity during the outage.

Maple Valley School has a back up generator with fuel for three days, a gym that can hold many people for a short time, and several beds which can hold a family or two for several days. The school has offered these facilities townspeople in need. Fire chief Everett Ricketts said Pine Hill Camp on the south side of town has an excellent facility to hold many people.

Paul Richmond, whose email in mid-October to the townwide list sparked the Wendell Sustainability movement, suggested gathering a list of residents with shallow wells and hand pumps who are willing to share drinking water with

neighbors.

Richard Mackey called for several large topographic maps of the town. He and several others said the utility crews who came from out of the area or out of state to help restore power had addresses to service, but no idea how to get to those addresses. Lonny Ricketts suggested transparent overlays to go over the maps showing electric lines, available water supplies, and other utilities.

It might be useful to publicize places where cell phones work, if cell service is not disrupted.

A second emergency preparedness meeting will be

held Sunday, January 25th, at 2:00 p.m. at the town office building.

To contact town emergency planning director Lonny Ricketts, call 978-545-2066 or via email at zchef@crocker.com.



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The Franklin County Regional Housing and Redevelopment Authority (HRA) is currently applying for funding for the Towns of Bernardston, Buckland, Charlemont, Colrain, Heath, Leverett, Montague, Rowe, Orange, Shelburne, Shutesbury, Warwick & Whately. At this time we are establishing a waiting list for each town.

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

# In Household	Gross Annual Income
1	\$41,450.00
2	\$47,350.00
3	\$53,300.00
4	\$59,200.00
5	\$63,950.00
6	\$68,650.00
7	\$73,400.00
8	\$78,150.00

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

HIGHLIGHTS FROM THE ERVING POLICE LOG

Water In Ceiling; Dog Complaint

Tuesday, 12/16

3:27 p.m. Fire alarm sounding at Erving Elementary School. Fire department responded and handled same.

5:39 p.m. Report of a loose goat on Mountain Road. Owner enroute to retrieve same.

11:43 p.m. Citation issued to [redacted] for illegally attaching plates, operating a motor vehicle without insurance and operating a motor vehicle with a revoked registration.

Wednesday, 12/17

8:30 p.m. Report of neighbor dispute on Old State Road.

Thursday, 12/18

5:30 a.m. Report of motor vehicle roll over with no injury. State police handled same.
 11:49 a.m. Medical emergency on North Street. Assisted Orange ambulance and Erving fire department.

Friday, 12/19

1:20 p.m. Report of child custody issue on Mountain Road. Spoke with both parties. Handled within the family.

1:41 p.m. Report of two car motor vehicle accident near Old State Road. State police handled same.

6:30 p.m. Assisted East Prospect Street resident with motor vehicle.

Saturday, 12/20

9:00 a.m. Dog complaint on Mountain Road. Dog in the way of snow plows. Spoke with the owner.

12:30 p.m. Spoke with Old State Road resident regarding neighbor problems.

10:00 p.m. Officer wanted at a Gunn Street residence for an unwanted person. Advised of options.

Sunday, 12/22

9:40 p.m. Report of water in the ceiling at a Forest Street address. Plumbing issue, landlord to handle.

11:48 p.m. Arrested [redacted] for speeding, operating a motor vehicle after revocation of registration, without insurance, after revocation of license as a habitual traffic offender and for a fugitive from justice warrant out of New Hampshire.

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from **BLADES** page 1

his garden with his excavator to stop and report on any snowstorms.

Gaudry had teamed up with his usual plowing colleague, Mark Stevens, a 21-year veteran of the department. He said he works well with Stevens, adding, "Mark takes a lot of pride in the condition of his streets. It's not just a quick once-over for him."

Crews typically are 'on' for the duration of a storm, working through the day and night as needed.

"We'll do about six hours either pre-sanding or clearing roads of snow," Gaudry explained. "Then maybe catch a four to six hour break if we can, returning to do it all again. After midnight is often the best time to work, because the bars close up and parked cars are off the roads. If the storm stops, we'll do a 'finishing' job on the second sweep, and clean up the edges. The nature and duration of the storm often dictates the approach taken."

Gaudry adeptly manipulated



Gaudry & Stevens took a moment to consult, while the snow kept right on falling.

the variety of plow and shifting levers in his cab as he talked. He keeps a partial soda container over the dump lever to avoid using that one by mistake.

"It's hard on family life," lamented Gaudry. "You can't plan for sure on being home for Christmas or any winter holiday or weekend." He laughingly admitted that the best way for him to plan his personal schedule was to pay attention to bad weather predictions, when the likelihood of being called out is high.

"Some storms you just have to wait for Mother Nature," he

said. "Otherwise, you can just waste sand or crew time. If you put down sand it gets wasted by heavy snow covering. If you plow, the street can ice over if the storm is a sleet mixture."

Gaudry explained the highway crew considers scheduled parking lot vacancies and hours of low traffic volume as factors in the equation of when to plow. But storm changes and unforeseen incidents can quickly change initial plans.

Some of those became apparent as the weekend storms progressed. One plow truck got

stuck up on Chestnut Hill and required a heavy tow wrecker to be called in, all the way from Rose Ledge, in Erving, (Ralph Rau was already out on a call). A private van, half in the ditch and half on the road, prompted a call to the police department. Another plow operator had a minor bump with a car downtown. Two tires and a rim are lost in work on the first storm alone, requiring mechanic Steve Lively to return to the garage from plowing.

"Couldn't you at least clean the snow off it on the way in?" Lively joked as he examined one of the damaged tires. These are expensive, but not unusual, problems for a department full of road equipment of all model years.

The equipment gets heavy use. Gaudry talked about his thirteen year old plow truck, one of the department's larger models. "You would think sixty thousand miles was not a lot," he said. "But they are hard miles, and even though the truck is a good old one, it is tired."

The point is clearly made when the truck must be backed

and forwarded repeatedly to clear intersections and tight corners. Sometimes wear and tear alone take a toll on old equipment, causing an axle to fracture or an engine to wear out.

"It really should be replaced," Gaudry said of his truck.

Proceeding toward Millers Falls, Gaudry said, "We try to help people if we can." He demonstrated by clearing a parking space where a school bus normally waits at the intersection of South Prospect and Highland, and by plowing the cul-de-sacs off Winthrop Road. At a number of locations, where most homes are on one side, he plows to push snow to the other side of the road.

Operators are familiar with many residents of the streets they plow, and often refer to their assigned roads by resident names rather than street names when communicating on the job. Still, complaints about blocked driveways come in a flurry during or after most storms, according to Bergeron.

"What can you do?" said Margaret Pyfrom, a Griswold Street resident who is a town

from **YEAR** page 1

unable to come to an agreement, the state took over the finances of the Gill - Montague regional schools on December 1st, only the second time this has happened in Massachusetts, and imposed a \$16,625,875 budget on the district and the towns.

2. The year began with the news that the Shea Theater had hired a new director to replace 16-year veteran Debra J'Anthony. Steve Stoia, of Northfield, who ran the theater component of Amherst Leisure Services for 13 years before taking the job at the Shea, lasted only a month in his new position, resigning due to what he considered to be the community theater's bleak financial picture. But the Shea's board of directors have worked together — as volunteers — to keep the doors open at the historic venue, and theater goers have noticed no change to the programme since then.

3. Boston stand-up comedy returns to the Shea this New Year's Eve, with beer and wine available by special permit in the lobby during the show. In the line-up, Rich Gustus, and for his take on 2008, see our exclusive interview on page 12.

4. Lowell entrepreneur John Anctil signed a purchase and sale agreement with the Diocese of Springfield on Ste. Anne's

Church in Turners Falls in the first week of January. He bought the church on April 18th for \$325,000, with the intention of turning it into a music hall. A week later, Anctil bought the 244,482-square-foot Strathmore Mill for \$50,000, after announcing plans to convert that complex into a production facility and school for students of film and video.

Along with the Strathmore, Anctil acquired back taxes totaling over \$200,000 that came with the property. Also a \$300,000 debt to the town of Montague for roof repairs and retrofits the town paid for following a devastating arson



Catcher Kellie Lastowski (l) and pitcher Dani Sullivan celebrate Turners' victory in the state championship Division II girls' softball tournament in Worcester, June 14th

fire at the mill on May 26th, 2007. Anctil has yet to pay a penny to the town toward the back taxes or repairs.

5. Meanwhile, the man responsible for burning down Building #10 at the Strathmore — Jonathan Tanzer, formerly of

Chestnut Lane in Turners — was sentenced on July 1st to 12 to 15 years in state prison.

6. The Hallmark Museum of Contemporary Photography opened a new 2300 square foot gallery in the Crocker Building on Avenue A, to complement their original gallery across the street at the Colle. New shows open January 15th.

7. March came, and — with the town of Montague facing a \$1.5 million budget deficit — selectboard member Allen Ross called for re-establishment of a Landfill Committee to study options for the use of a 34 acre parcel of town land off Turnpike Road. In the early 90s, the town spent \$333,500 developing the site, and received a Department of Environmental Protection permit to operate it as a landfill, making it one of the few areas in Massachusetts where a landfill could be easily developed today.

The re-formed landfill committee met for the first time on December 2nd. Some committee members were quite vocal about their desire to explore other uses of the land, but the possibility of earning up to \$10 million over a decade or two if the parcel is leased as a landfill will undoubtedly weigh on the committee's deliberations



The last classes at the Montague Center School gather on the front lawn, with their teachers and staff on May 16th

in the months ahead.

8. Also in March, Kurt Bussiere of Patriots Environmental Corp. in Worcester began the demolition of the arson damaged Usher Mill in Erving Center. The town is now pursuing funding to examine the possibility of lowering Arch Street, beneath the railroad overpass, for better truck access to the site, as a boost to potential redevelopment.

9. Yes, friends, April is the cruelest month. On April 4th, Robert Welch, executive director of the Massachusetts Aeronautics Commission, charged with overseeing the runway expansion and safety improvements at the Turners Falls Airport, uttered a racially insensitive remark at an informal meeting of the TFA commissioners, at the airport

operations building. Referring to claims made by Native Americans that a stone formation on a hilltop at the airport was in fact an ancient ceremonial site — which caused a delay in the \$5 million runway expansion — Welch said, "The only thing holding it up is those tree-hugging Indians."

A state investigation into the incident followed. Welch resigned his post on June 4th, after denying he had made the remark about "tree-hugging Indians." On December 11th, the National Register of National Historic Landmarks determined the Turners Falls Sacred Ceremonial Hill Site (formerly the Airport Improvement Project — Turners Falls Municipal Airport) was eligible for listing in the National Register. Indian tribes party to the dispute said it

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HUSKEY PHOTO

Mary Pyfrom and daughter Josephine take a breather from clearing the driveway Saturday, on Griswold Street

meeting member from Precinct 4. She was clearing her drive with daughter Josephine on Saturday morning.

"I'm sure they get lots of complaints, but obviously I'm not going to complain about the guys," Pyfrom said.

Peter Masi, a Montague Center resident, had a somewhat different view, stating that he "had some issues with them," because he will clean his drive out early in the morning and then gets snow "thrown right back." He pointed out that the village

common is right across the street. "I've got no place to go with it," said Masi.

Homeowners can help avoid damage to rock walls, yard turf, drainage pipes, and other objects near the roadway, by installing reflecting pole markers on the roadside edge of those objects or areas. Mailboxes can generally be seen, and the drivers are quite adept at clearing them with only a few inches between plow blade and mailbox. When a mailbox is occasionally taken out by one of the DPW snow plows, Gaudry said they are required to report it, and the department comes out to replace it for the homeowner.

A variety of equipment is needed for storm work. Loaders are good for downtown areas where their articulation aids in tight work at intersections, Gaudry said. The grader, which is also very "tired," is used primarily for heavier and wide

street work, such as on Avenue A. "Curb Peelers," a rounded plate for the end of the snowplow blade, rides a curb with less damage than a straight-sided plow edge that can more easily dig into asphalt curbing.

Different types of plows are purchased for the work. A folding V-Plow has useful dexterity; straight plows are limited in maneuverability, requiring more time consuming back and forth work, but they are useful at speed and for smaller trucks. Hydraulically operated angle plows provide rapid angle changes that permit convenient side-to-side road plowing, easier railroad track crossing, and tight corner work by larger trucks.

Plow blade cutting edges, a narrow strip of metal attached at the bottom edge of the plow, rapidly wear out, sometimes having to be replaced after use in just a few major storms,

depending on road conditions.

"Tom is pretty good at getting what we need, if we can justify its use," said Gaudry, who is also the shop's union steward.

At 5:00 p.m. Friday, the first road clearing was completed, with multiple passes over most roads, in time for evening 'rush hour.' No one was rushing much. Snow was still falling heavily.

The highway crew crowded into their cramped lunchroom for sandwiches and chow mien before heading back out, later Friday night, when they worked until five the following morning. At eleven on Sunday morning a new storm began, and the department's operators were back for another day and night of snow plowing, before returning to their regular shifts on Monday. It was a long weekend, in the worst sense.

Sometimes, it just snows and snows.



was the first time a Native ceremonial site in New England had been determined to be eligible for listing by the federal government. The future of the runway project is now in doubt.

10. After withholding more than \$90,000 requested to fund the budget for Mahar Regional High School, over a dispute with Orange and other member towns about how much each should pay, Wendell reversed course at a special town meeting in July and fully funded the Mahar budget. The dispute over how the various towns divide up the local assessment will be revisited in 2009. Meanwhile, the state is pushing for Wendell and New Salem to join with other towns in the region to form a larger elementary school district.

11. The Gill-Montague school committee on June 10th voted 8-1 to spend a graduating sum of money — totaling more than \$75,000 over the course of a five-year state grant — to establish a nurse leader position to oversee the four other nurses at the district schools. On June 17th, the Montague town meeting voted to cut \$23,000 out of the board of health's

budget, eliminating the position of the town public health nurse. The town nurse had been serving the public health needs of Montague — in particular the health needs of the senior citizens of Montague — since 1915.

What does that spell? **EAAG UTBLMTMYAT!**

And yes, we picked 11 major stories for 2008, rather than the traditional 10. It has, in fact, been an especially eventful year in the towns and villages we serve. And if you can find something especially interesting to do with **EAAG UTBLMTMYAT** we will gladly present you with a personalized subscription to the *Montague Reporter*. But it has to be a good something.

There have been other stories, big and small, covered in the pages of the *Montague Reporter* this year that could easily have made our roundup, if the hour were not so late or the year even later:

- The TFHS girls softball team won another state championship, a remarkable string of victories for the team and its coach, Gary Mullins. But the sign donated to the town by

the Greenfield Savings Bank to commemorate the teams' four state championship titles in five years was stolen from its location at 5th and Canal after a week and a half, at about 12:55 a.m. on Saturday, October 25th, according to surveillance cameras at the Southworth parking lot. Apparently, despite the best efforts of a state police dive team to recover it, the sign now lies somewhere at the bottom of the power canal, and the perpetrators of the deed fled in their cars in the direction of Greenfield. The surveillance videos have been sent to the state crime lab to enhance the cars' license plates; police chief Ray Zukowski has urged the perpetrators to make restitution before the crime lab results are known. We suspect that, given our stellar relationship with our neighboring town, the culprits must, in fact, have been from the metropolis of Shelburne Falls.

- In Gill, the historic store in the center of town has reopened as a popular tavern, and a coffeeshop at the corner of Main Road and French King Highway now serves earlybirds (doors open at 4 a.m.) the best organic

coffee.

If only it were open even earlier on New Year's Day, to serve the late returning revelers from the bars in Turners Falls. The selectboard, after consultation with the chief of police, decided to let the bars in town serve alcohol for one extra hour on New Year's Eve, until 1:50 in the a.m.

- There will be a lot of Auld Lang Syne to celebrate that night. Partygoers will ring in the New Year anticipating a Democratic House and Senate taking their seats with expanded (and, depending on the outcome of the no-laughing-matter recount in the Minnesota

Sernate race between comedian Al Franken and arch-conservative Norm Coleman) possibly still expanding majorities, to implement the priorities of the nation's incoming president, Barack Obama.

Perhaps that alone is enough to make even the most wizened resident of these snowbound country towns stay up long enough on December 31st to have a sip of their favorite cordial, toast the imminent departure of George W. Bush and Co, open the window, and shout, "Whoopie!" before retiring for a well-earned rest.

Whoopie, indeed.



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the poetry page

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

- William Carlos Williams

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

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

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

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

design by Boysen Hodgson

Sentiment certainly bittersweet treat
Like cupboard kept marrow long after the meet
All this green scorched
Earth was just found under stars
The fine swept cafes
Behind rough, filthy, bars

The Fine woven laces, oven Warmed tight and Soft
Sweep through streets where we stumbled
Wear we bickered and coughed
The wombs by our comments
Made the razors seem dull
Rest by actions that made us so sweetly and full

And all of those memories
Even those that cut deep
Bubble out from within me and
Equally sweet
Sentiment deliciously bittersweet treat

--Joel Matthew

The Falls

A person has to wonder
About the many different kinds of falls
Some occur out in the snow and ice
While others might happen inside in halls.

Let's see there's Turners Falls and Millers Falls
Now there's a different brand
Someone walking out in the streets
Could fall if there was no sand.

Of course there's also a Shelburne Falls
Along with Bellows Falls just to mention a couple more
The one out to our West was saddened
By the loss of their Coffee Roasting store.

Then there's one or two out in New York
Where newlyweds used to go
And some people go over these Falls in barrels
Hopefully landing safely down below.

There's also one called Wichita Falls
In Texas, the Lone Star State
Where over 60 years ago I did my Basic Training
And to that one I sure can relate.

Of course, there was an egg called Humpty Dumpty
He also had a great remembered fall
I'm not sure if he was a double-yolker
But he wasn't paying attention at all.

--Ed Boutwell
Turners Falls

A Louie de Broglie Christmas

Snowflakes wriggled and turned like snakes.
One snake seized its own tail, then the rest did the same.
The sight whirled before my eyes, and i awoke, as if struck by crystal lightning.

The house i live in, not really a house at all, is an electron microscope.
The snowflakes, not really snowflakes, are atoms, bombarding my not-house via the vacuum of walls, windows, and wood.
And i, happily, am an electron.

Never am i the viewer, looking squint-eyed into a blemished lens; never the viewed, mere shadow of something infinitely more real; just an electron.

Just an electron; scattering endlessly with other electrons - a crazed dance reveling in the joy of its own folly, a dance through which not-viewers look at not-views.

--Kevin Smith
Turners Falls



Entitlement

Each tiny leaf on its own tree is huge in its sublimity. Someone could be a botanist, could proudly tell how plants exist- and still be wholly lost for words.

A glance at photosynthesis presents a fine analysis. Yet, big, expensive and so drab is that equipment in the lab- A pen should be enough for words.

The leaf mulls not on how 'twas made but spends its life providing shade. All nature's marvels are entire and thus entitled to inspire- How fruitless to persist with words.

--Kathryn Flagg

Millers Falls & Allendale, NJ

Handwritten German text, likely a translation or commentary on the poem.

The Beggar

The hand of the beggar is clay before the kiln; breakable, thin; a pale limb on a sunless day. It juices are rotten and unstirred by the coins that tap in drops like slow rain. With this hand, the beggar touches the stars, and plops them into his life, a bucket of broken dreams and sewer rust. The night of the beggar is no colder than the day. It, too, is motionless, black; filled with suspicious concern and plump, sneering pity. A child looks at the beggar (a salient figure to a clear glance), and asks... "I just don't know", his father says, as he shakes his fading eyes. If the beggar could cry, he would reach out his tongue to catch the salt.

--Kevin Smith
Turners Falls

CONTRIBUTOR'S NOTES:

Don Clegg, of Turners Falls, says: "this poem was written and rewritten over one year ago. I just now have the guts to share it."

Edward Foster's numerous books of poetry include The Angelus Bell; Mähren; What Men Should do for Men, and most recently What He Ought to Know. New and Selected Poems, and he is the founding editor of Talisman: A Journal of Contemporary Poetry and Poetics.

Kevin Smith is 51 years old, a Turners falls resident, tubist and therapist as well as poet.

Joel Matthew works at Greenfield's Market

Ed Boutwell was born at Farmen 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 and is also known as KB1ENG

Gini Brown is a Berkeley mom watching life go by and kids grow up. Some moments feel like poetry.

Kathryn Flagg, a long-time resident of Millers Falls, now resides in Allentown, New Jersey.

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Pride and Proud

Pride is a funny thing, I do believe.
 Webster defines pride as "pleasure, satisfaction or one's own high opinion."
 Webster defines proud as "a feeling pleasurable, high self esteem or gratifying."
 We all have felt some sort of pride.
 We all have felt proud.
 This is only natural.

I have always felt proud of my children and parents.
 I look forward to the pride of being a grandparent someday.
 I take pride in my own upbringing.
 I sometimes did not take pride in what I have accomplished.
 Not always proud the road traveled to get there.
 I now take pride in my new life and health.
 I am proud to be around to celebrate it.

But pride has always gotten in my way and has taken too much.
 For that I am not so proud.
 Pride is a funny thing, I know.
 Maybe we should just be thankful.

--Don Clegg
 Turners Falls

A Poet Learns to Drive

"In three words I can sum up everything I've learned about life: it goes on." --Robert Frost

Bill couldn't drive, nor could Ted.
 Leonard learned, and geese flew cackling through the fog at his approach.
 Scary man, they said.

The fog divided space from dawn.
 All ourselves, we might be driving past a town or beach, a morning calm, or lonesome men. We hit a bump, the car goes on. Right now, there's not much left in Leonard's world but asphalt, fog, the traffic lights, and other things he has to see.

-- Edward Foster
 Greenfield and Jersey City, NJ

Sideshow

A boy in a folding metal chair creates an orchestra of note when his mother steps out

He conducts a flurry of kinetics from the confines of his chair a symphony Of acrobatics that draws my stare

His chair squeaks and shutters Holding those on stage in low regard his ankles grab at the rungs With mouth clamped hard

on saliva soaked shirt He bends at the waist And sits on his hands his head gives the floor an embrace

He's a contortionist An etude of atonal angst A scholar in pantomime With a cache of endless pranks

the quartet on stage plays in diminuendo as the folding chair reaches an irreverent crescendo

His mother returns To her well behaved clown For indeed it is true He never once voiced a sound

--Gini Brown
 Berkeley, CA

New Year's Resolutions

New Year's resolutions Do people make them any more Or do they say - what the heck And just continue on as before.

In times I can remember when Resolutions were all the thing They were followed most faithfully At least until the Spring.

Then people seemed to let them slide And then they'd fall behind By the time summer rolled around They were completely out of mind.

Some people set a target To lose a little bit of weight Others change their diet But cared not what they ate.

Others decided to clean out a closet And toss out all that trash But when time to get that job started They ended up saying "balderdash."

So you see New Year's resolutions Can be made for truth or fun I hope you all have yours made Cause I haven't made a one.

--Ed Boutwell
 Turners Falls

Carpe diem! - no it's a trout

What do Christopher Sawyer-Lauçanno, Ed Foster, Dorothea Lasky, ThomDonovan, Joseph Torra, Alan Halsey, and Geraldine Monk, have in common? They are the first class poets and featured readers who have recently graced the stage of:

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You too can be this great by being part of the most fantastic (I don't use that word lightly) open mike EVER this December 29th, sing your hymns to the end of the year, sing him to the spend of the boar. Poetry, that most elastic of mediums, bend your words to the will of the quill.

READING ALOUD the most fun you'll ever have with the spoken word -see above. Bring your poems, bring your prose, bring your boots, bring your shoes, what have you to lose, Toulouse? Slough off your fears, THIS IS NOT HIGH SCHOOL, this is the school of life, after recess, before 6th period, look at you now, celebrate, you've made it this far!

One line, five lines, your only limit is the sands of time (5 minutes max, it was a small beach)

E.G. There was an Old Man with a beard,
 Who said, "It is just as I feared!
 Two Owls and a Hen,
 Four Larks and a Wren,
 Have all built their nests in my beard!"
 ~ Edward Lear (Moral of the story: keep shaving)

Surprise yourself with the exhilaration of reading aloud to a room full of attentive revelers and fellow travelers skating the winding road. Give yourself goose-bumps reading sonnets, stanzas, epithets, couplets and rhymes.

December 29th Deja Brew Pub, Wendell
 Doors open 7pm. Look to see you there, Jess, Stephen, Charles & Paul-aka 'the committee'



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Sweet Talk on the Ave

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BY BRIDGET SWEET

TURNERS FALLS - Ready for the Main Event? Hey, at least it looks like a storybook holiday out there. And the rest is . . . well . . . just stuff. Whatever you do, try not worry: Lots of that going around, at least according to what I hear on the Avenue.

Having trouble making your way on the Ave, or in life, as you pick your way through the drifts? You might want to check out 'Round Here Café at 111 Avenue A! Longtime Montague resident Mary Beck Glazier bought Avenue A Café on December 19th with son Michael and daughter-in-law, Nayana, and opened Monday, December 22nd. The breakfast menu includes omelets, lunches will feature fresh-roasted meaty

sandwiches and Soup of the Day will be served between 6 a.m. and 2 p.m., Mondays to Fridays. An espresso machine is en route. Fogbuster, hazelnut and house blend coffees are the staples.

Mother Mary has 13 years of restaurant managerial experience and Nayana has 8 years food service experience. Nayana's paintings decorate the cadet blue - olive green striped walls. Catch them now before they move to The Gallery in the Woods in Brattleboro this January.

'Round Here will be closed on Christmas day and open at 8 a.m. on New Year's Day. Be sure to introduce yourself when warming up from this cold weather. They can be reached at 413-863-2800 and at roundherecafe@gmail.com.

Next, don't forget the strings. Guitar strings, that is. No need to venture out on the interstate for a new set of those Silk and Steel sweeties, when you can hang safely at home and cozy up to about three octaves of that Numero Uno. Feeling warmer

already? Me too, until the thing snaps, right as yer revving up to the bridge from Oh Holy Night into Dark Star. Thank goodness there is Seth and Eva's. Husband and wife, Seth and Eva Licata, have kept their schedule regardless of the recent storms. Sez Seth, "The snow hurt us, but we thank everyone for [their] local support." Musicians can walk to this store versus "travel to Northampton for guitar strings, it's cheaper," he added. Seth and Eva can be reached at 413-863-0150 or at their website, www.sethandevas.8k.com for more information.

And then there is that odd mix of faith, certainty, doubt and inventiveness that makes this holiday season what it is.

Voices on the Avenue:

Steve Bednarski, father of two, of Dell Street said, "Christmas is OK. We already have stuff. We have a few family members over; go to my wife's cousins for Christmas dinner the night before. We're OK." His

easy come easy go attitude eases from his pores. (Important to remember, it's just stuff.)

Ricy Butynski of Millers Fall, another father of two said, "Ya, they're teenagers and they're into electronics. Electronics are pretty expensive. We're shopping on-line, looking deep in the search engines. We started shopping on-line two months ago to comparison shop. It's more like tracking for the hunt [as in deer]." The Acer Notebook is costly and needed for his daughter's education. Butynski did find the best price too!

Sue Dresser of Montague Center, mother of three and active member of Hillcrest/Sheffield PTO, said, "We are trying to be inventive, the economy has changed our shopping. The last two or three years, we've looked at how we can involve the kids with making gifts, so people know we're thinking of them. We're looking on-line to make jewelry this year." Dresser oversaw a gift bag and gift tag table at the Hillcrest-

Sheffield PTO sponsored 'Make and Take' this past Thursday night. More than 49 people showed up to create festive items, such as gingerbread, cinnamon-scented ornaments, macaroni wreaths, and bookmarks. "It was good to see younger families at this event," said principal Elizabeth Musgrave of Sheffield Elementary School.

The economy may define our purchases, but remember - it's all just stuff! See you on the Ave!

Oh . . . and yo . . . even your Sweet Ms. B.S. hits a rough patch and takes a header on the Ave. sometimes.

Seems we got it wrong. Kharna Salon is *not* holding its grand opening on January 2nd. Wouldn't make sense, since they've been open for two months. Absolutely Fabulous Hair, across the street at 112 Avenue A, *is*, however, opening grandly on that day. Sorry for the slip. Blame the editor. Doesn't have a clue, but he means well.

2008 in My Rearview Mirror

Among the fine upstanding Boston comics promoter Dave Rattigan is bringing to the Shea Theater for a special New Year's Eve Comedy Night next week is Rich Gustus. We're not sure how Rich wormed his way into the lineup, but we're glad he did, because he appears to be otherwise unemployed. So he had plenty of time this week to give us his thoughts on the year that just passed, like a blast of bad gas.

Year-end retrospectives are the stock in trade of newspapers this time of year, because everyone's too exhausted to make real news. So without further ado, Ladies and Gentlemen, Rich Gustus....

Montague Reporter: What were the highlights for 2008, from your perspective?

Rich Gustus: I think that would be: I bought a new car. A Nissan Versa. I love it. It cost about 75 dollars and it runs great. It looks like a little cartoon car. The salesman asked me what color I wanted and I told him, 'I don't care. If it's cheap enough, it can be paisley.'

MR: Does it get good gas mileage?

RG: Excellent. I've had it about six months and I've only filled the tank once. I'm working all of New England.

MR: Will you be driving it out to Turners Falls for the New Years Eve show?

RG: One of the other comedians has a mini van; we're all piling in with him. Dave doesn't pay us enough to drive separately. It's going to be like the Partridge Family. We're going to paint it paisley.

MR: This scandal on Wall Street is giving Italian immigrants in Boston like Charles Ponzi a bad name. Do you have any thoughts on Wall Street?

RG: Not really. It was a good movie. Anything with Charlie Sheen in it, I run right out and see.



Rich Gustus

with a bag over my head and a car battery attached to my genitals until I confessed.

Look, I've always done bad. When Clinton was in office — they say the economy was strong — I did bad. When Bush was in office, I did bad. I'm more consistent than most people. I've adjusted already.

MR: Are you holding out high hopes for the incoming administration in Washington?

RG: What are you talking about?

MR: We have a new president. It was some sort of minority set-aside program: every 44 presidents, a black man gets to win.

RG: You're kidding. What's his name?

MR: Barack Obama.

RG: Did we lose the war? I only listen to FM radio.

MR: How about the voters of California taking away the right to marry for a majority of the population of

MR: The financiers who've been running our country into the ground got a \$700 billion bailout from Washington this year, but the CEOs of GE, Chrysler and Ford only got \$17 billion. What's up with that?

RG: I used to work at a Block Buster video store. If I was \$5 short in the till I got taken into the back room

San Francisco?

RG: They did?

MR: What about Jay Leno moving to prime time, what do you make of that?

RG: I'm getting older, so it's just right for me.

MR: What do you rate the odds for the Patriots making the Super Bowl?

RG: It'll take an act of God. But I think they made a deal with the other guy. I dunno, that coach...

MR: Belichick?

RG: He scares me a little. He seems mean. He reminds me of every other teacher I had in high school.

MR: Where'd you go to school?

RG: Needham High. Our team was called the Needham Rockets. I think that's promoting war. They should have picked a name that represents the city. Needham was the first place in the United States where the pansy was grown. The city flower is the pansy. That would have made a great name for the sports team: the Needham Pansies. It would have given us a psychological advantage. If the other team won, you'd say, 'So what, you beat the Pansies.' And if they lost, everyone would say, 'You lost to the Pansies!' It's a win/win situation.

MR: What about Peace and Prosperity coming to Iraq this year?

GR: Are the rents good there? Should I be looking to relocate? I'll just put the windows up on the Nissan when I hit the water. I saw that in a movie once; it works.

MR: We're looking forward to seeing you on stage at the Shea on New Year's Eve.

GR: You're a fast typist.

MR: Any final thoughts on 2008?

RG: All I can say is, 'Good riddance!'

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JESSICA HARMON ILLUSTRATION

BY FRED CICETTI
LEONIA, NJ - Q. What is the French paradox?

The paradox is that the French eat a lot of saturated fat, but have relatively low rates of heart disease.

When the French paradox is discussed, the robust consumption of red wine in France is often given as the explanation for the paradox.

The term French paradox was coined by a scientist at Bordeaux University in France. More than 700 million bottles of wine are produced every year in the Bordeaux region of France. Do you smell the bouquet of conflict of interest?

The wine explanation for the French paradox is in dispute.

There is evidence that wine has health benefits, but there have been no direct comparison trials to determine the specific effect of wine or other alcoholic beverages on heart disease or stroke.

But, before I hearten all you oenophiles, here's a killjoy warning from the American Heart Association. The AHA does not recommend drinking any alcoholic beverage for potential health benefits. The AHA position:

"The AHA does recommend that, to reduce your risk, you should talk to your doctor about lowering your cholesterol and blood pressure, controlling your weight, getting enough physical activity and following a healthy diet. There is no scientific proof that drinking wine or any other alcoholic beverage can replace these conventional measures."

The AHA warns people not to begin drinking because of many health risks. However, if you do

drink, the AHA recommends no more than one to two drinks per day for men and one drink a day for women. A drink is defined as a 12-ounce beer, a 5-ounce glass of wine, or 1.5 ounces of 80-proof spirits.

The men's limit is higher because they usually weigh more and have more of an enzyme that metabolizes alcohol than women do. People age 65 and older shouldn't drink more than one drink a day because older adults break down alcohol more slowly.

Okay, now for the information that could be comforting to those of us who like our cabernets and pinot grigios.

There have been many studies about how drinking alcohol may reduce deaths from heart disease. Much of the research has focused upon wine.

The reduction in heart-disease deaths may be caused by resveratrol, a substance found in the skin of grapes, especially purple and

dark red grapes. Because red wine is made with the pulp and skins of grapes, red wine contains more resveratrol than white wine. The skins of grapes are removed during the making of most white wines.

However, recent research indicates that the pulp of grapes has health benefits, because there are other substances in the flesh that can help the heart. And there's one study that indicates that white wine is good for your lungs, too.

Resveratrol is sold in capsule form. The scientific community is divided on the merits of the capsules. Some researchers believe it is too soon to take the wine ingredient until we have more evidence that it is effective and safe; others favor it.

Resveratrol is also found in grape juice made from dark grapes. Both red wine and dark grape juice may reduce the risk of blood clots and LDL, the

harmful cholesterol. Wine and juice may also prevent damage to coronary blood vessels, and maintain healthy blood pressure.

Both red wine and grape juice also contain antioxidants that have been shown to increase your HDL, the beneficial cholesterol, and lower your risk of clogged arteries. The antioxidants may help lower blood pressure, too.

The alcohol in red wine also appears to be good for your heart. Moderate amounts of alcohol raise HDL, inhibit blood clotting, and prevent artery damage caused by LDL.

There have been recent reports, too, suggesting that red wine can make you live longer, and that a glass a day of either red or white wine may reduce the risk of developing nonalcoholic fatty liver disease.

Salute.
 If you have a question, please write to fred@healthygeezer.com

DAYS from pg 1

the big ticket items on the list are \$5,157 to fund the Gill-Montague Senior Center for the remainder of the year, and \$3,684 to pay for the recreation commission's work. The largest amount on the laundry list is \$9,169 to provide stipends for the board of health, the assessors, and the selectboard.

A second override question, if approved, would provide \$13,631 for the building inspector stabilization fund. Banash explained the town needs to set aside these funds now because of all the building that has been going on recently at the Northfield Mount Hermon pri-

ivate school. The town has been taking in fees for the building permits, but will not get assessed for those fees by the Franklin Regional Cooperative Inspection program for two more years.

Two weeks ago, the selectboard promoted higher figures of \$35,679 and \$157,600 for the two override questions. But Banash said, "We didn't think the override would ever pass for the higher amount." That \$157,000 would have paid for a third full-time police officer, along with the items listed above. "That would have been \$50,000 in salary and benefits which I don't think we can sustain next year, with the governor talking about cuts," Banash said.

Besides abandoning an attempt to restore the third police officer, the selectboard decided to apply \$20,000 from the Northfield Mount Hermon discretionary fund (paid to the town in lieu of taxes, traditionally spent on public safety projects) to pay \$10,000 toward the fire truck pump repair and \$10,000 to pay for part time officers for the police department. Additionally, \$43,000 in Chapter 90 (highway) funds will be applied to reducing the highway budget, to be spent primarily on blacktopping projects (in Riverside).

With these cuts, Banash said, the override should be more affordable. "It's not a lot of money, but it keeps the services

we need, the things that make the town work."

The selectboard will hold an informational meeting on the override on Monday, January 5th, at 6 p.m. at town hall. Administrative assistant Tracy Rogers said if the first override question passes, it would add 24 cents per \$1000 of valuation to the tax rate, or \$51 a year to the average tax bill (based on the average single family home value of \$212,5000). If both override questions are approved, that would add 33 cents to the tax rate, or \$70.13 a year for the average tax bill.

Polls will be open from noon to 8 p.m. on Tuesday, January 6th; voting is at the fire station.

On December 22nd, the selectboard approved the warrant for an 11 article special town meeting, to take place at town hall on January 7th, at 7 p.m., the day after the override election, to make adjustments to the '09 budget based on whether the override questions pass or fail. Also on the ballot is a lengthy article placed on the warrant by the agricultural commission, called the Right to Farm bylaw. The purpose of the bylaw is to affirm the place of farming in the town of Gill, to provide for resolution of disputes, and to advise residents that slow moving vehicles, farm odors and agricultural activities are part of the make-up of life in town.



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JEP'S PLACE: Part CIV

Push Harder



BY JOSEPH A. PARZYCH GILL - One summer day, Pa was trying to remove a cellar window to air out the basement. Much to Pa's irritation, the window, swollen with dampness, refused to budge.

"Go outside and push on it," he ordered. When I got outside, there was nowhere to push, other than the window panes. I hesitated, not knowing what to do.

"Push the window!" my father yelled from the cellar.

I wanted to tell him there was no window frame to push on — that it was all hidden. But I was afraid he'd get angrier. I put my hand flat on a window pane so that the pressure would be spread

out, hoping it would not break. I pushed.

The glass broke with a crash. My hand went through the window. Pa turned around and headed up the cellar stairs. I figured that he was going to thrash me, but good. My hand felt numb. I looked down. My wrist was spurting blood. I clamped my left hand over the cut to try to stop the bleeding, and ran inside the house.

Pa came charging up out of the cellar. Afraid he would hit me, I let go of my wrist to show him what had happened. Blood spurting onto his shirt. He grabbed his chest and fell over onto the kitchen table, groaning. The blood on his shirt made me think of Julia dying and I figured I was going to die, too. Slashed wrists were among the options in the magazine showing ways to commit suicide.

Irene got a clean rag and tied it over the cut as tight as she could. Blood soaked through. She added another rag. Blood soaked through again. She added more layers, tying them as tight as she

could, until the blood stopped seeping through.

"My fingers won't move."
"Don't try to make them move. It'll only make matters worse."

"What's going to happen?" I asked Irene. I was scared.

"Pa, you've got to get Joe to the hospital, he can't move his fingers."

Moaning, Pa stood up and headed out the door to the car. Irene followed. She didn't say anything but I could tell from her face that things didn't look good. Pa took off down the road. He usually didn't drive very fast, but he didn't waste any time that day. He roared off down the road, but forgot to shift out of second gear. We drove along for miles, engine roaring. I stood it as long as I could.

"Pa, you still got it in second

gear."
He looked down, shifted into high, and we began making better time with a lot less noise. There was no emergency room at the hospital. A nurse grabbed a doctor making morning rounds. The doctor took a look at Pa and then at me.

"Well, well, well. Can't be that bad. I don't see much blood on you. There's more on your dad than there is on you."

The doctor began unwrapping the rags. When he removed the last layer, blood spurting.

"I'm going to have to have some help on this one," he said to the nurse. He tied a rubber tube tightly around my forearm to stop the blood. The nurse hurried away, white uniform swishing.

"Who tied the rags on your arm?"

"My sister, Irene."

"Well, she did a good job," the doctor said. "How old is she?"

"She's 13," I said, wondering why he didn't quit talking and get going on sewing me up. I tried to move my fingers again.

"Don't try moving your fingers. The tendons are cut. We've got to go up after them and pull them back down to hook them up again."

The nurse came back with another doctor. She held a sheet up so I couldn't see what they were doing. I could feel them cutting up inside my forearm and it hurt so I could hardly stand it. I let out a little moan.

"We've got to give him something to knock him out. This is going to take a while."

Someone put a mask over my face.

"Take a deep breath."

- Continued Next Week

Night Kitchen Offers Films and Cooking Classes

BY JOANNA FRANKEL

MONTAGUE CENTER - Clear the ice off the car, shovel the driveway, and head to the Night Kitchen restaurant at the Montague Mill for cooking classes and movie nights this winter.

This is chef/owner Max Brody's third year hosting these events, a good excuse to get out during the cold winter months. He finds that nothing creates camaraderie like sharing a laugh, having a nice glass of wine, or getting a little messy in the kitchen.

Movie nights begin on the first Wednesday of the new year. Paying homage to the late, great Paul Newman, *Butch Cassidy and the Sundance Kid* will be showing on the big screen on Wednesday, January 7th, and for some comic relief, Woody Allen's *Annie Hall* on Wednesday, February 11th. Films will be accompanied by a three course dinner prepared by Brody.

Cooking classes will be hosted on the remaining Wednesdays in January, featuring hands-on instruction, recipes to take home, a three course meal with paired wines, and of course, a great sense of accomplishment.

On January 14th, discover how to plan, prepare, and execute a stress-free dinner party on a budget. The theme for the class on January 21st is authentic regional Mexican cuisine. On January 28th make a lot of dough! Learn how to create pasta, gnocci, and both sweet and savory breads from scratch.

As our friends in the Hilltowns can attest, homemade bread can help warm you up during those long winter storms!

For price information and registration, call the Night Kitchen at 413-367-9580.

NOTICE OF HEARING

Erving's Conservation Commission, in accordance with MA Wetland Protection Act M.G.L. Chapter 131 Section 40, will hold a public hearing Monday, January 5th, 2009 at 7:30 p.m. at the Erving Town Hall, 12 E. Main Street, to discuss a Request For Determination. The Notice was filed by the Town of Erving for a new Senior Center (near the elementary school) on Route 63.

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HIGHLIGHTS FROM THE GILL POLICE LOG

Wandering in Traffic, Acting Strange

Wednesday, 12/17

9:31 a.m. Report of harassment / annoying phone calls on Mount Hermon Road.

Thursday, 12/18

12:33 p.m. 911 hang up call on Mount Hermon Campus, all checked o.k.

4:15 p.m. Suspicious activity complaint on French King Highway.

Friday, 12/19

7:30 p.m. Report of vehicle off of roadway on French King Highway

at Bickford Road. Checked area unable to locate.

Saturday, 12/20

6:45 p.m. Vehicle off of roadway on Mountain Road, assisted operator.

Sunday, 12/21

1:45 p.m. Report of person walking in traffic acting strange on Gill-Montague Bridge, checked area.

2:44 p.m. Report of larceny from a French King Highway residence.

7:39 p.m. Report of a family

dispute on Center Road. Checked, all o.k. Verbal argument only.

Monday, 12/22

12:05 a.m. Report of an intruder inside a French King Highway residence. Checked house with owner, all clear.

12:33 p.m. Stray dog found wandering in traffic on Main Road, calling party to hold dog until owner located, since no animal control officer in town.

3:05 p.m. Report of unwanted subject at an Oak Street residence

4:31 p.m. Trespass complaint at station, advice given.

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

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

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

SATURDAY, DECEMBER 27th
Route 63 Roadhouse, Millers Falls: *Love Bomb*, dance rock, 9:30 p.m.

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

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

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

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

SUNDAY, DECEMBER 28th
New Year's FAMILY DANCE, 4-6 p.m. at the Montague Grange, Montague Center. Family-style contra dancing

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

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

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

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

The Millers Falls Library Club is a free after school program that meets on Tuesdays from 3:30 – 4:45 p.m. The drop-in sessions are designed children of all ages. Activities include live music, arts and crafts, games, and homework help, depending upon the participants' ages and interests. Info: call the Carnegie Library, 863-3214.

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

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

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

New Year's Eve Comedy at the Shea

Theater, Turners Falls. Tickets: \$20; 8 p.m. to 12 a.m. (413) 863-2281.

FRIDAY, JANUARY 2nd
Deja Brew, Wendell: *Mass Production*. Simon White, Joe Cunningham and Christian Marano make this Reggae night something very special! - 9:30-11:30 p.m.



Josephine Sacabo - Lux Perpetua. On display January 15th thru March 29th at the Hallmark Museum of Contemporary Photography, 56 Avenue A, Turners Falls. New Orleans photographer Josephine Sacabo, featured in Gallery 56, will also have work from three distinct projects on exhibit; "A Geometry of Echoes," "The Nocturnes" and, "El Mundo Inalcanzable De Susana San Juan."

strate Native American style flutes that he designed and produced. He will discuss Native American flute styles and techniques and will perform a variety of flute music. 7 to 9 p.m.

SATURDAY, JANUARY 10th
Artist Reception at the Great Falls Discovery Center, 1 to 3 p.m. Come meet Thomas Stratford, our artist of the month. Landscapes and Nature Art exhibited through January 31st.

Regular Hours are Friday and Saturday, 10 a.m. – 4 p.m.

SUNDAY & MONDAY, JANUARY 11th & 12th
The Country Players holds auditions for Ken Ludwig's *Moon over Buffalo*, 7 p.m. Needed 4 men and 4 women for the April production at the Shea Theater.

SATURDAY, JANUARY 17th
Recycle, Reuse, Reduce: It's Fun! Greenfield Public Library Levanway Room, Greenfield. Join educator Rachel Roberts for afree children's workshop reusing recyclables into fun activities. *Recycled Village*: geared for school-aged children but fun for all! 10 to 11 a.m. Please register at Green Fields Market or contact Rachel Roberts at robertsml@verizon.net or 774-7290.

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

At the Pushkin Gallery, Greenfield, The Piti Theatre Company, based in Shelburne Falls and Les Ponts-de-Martel, Switzerland, bring their unique integration of theatre, dance and clowning to the Pushkin Gallery, Greenfield. The original nature fable *Elmer and the Elder Tree* is for ages 3 - 113 and tree seeds will be distributed after the performances. The show is followed by mural-making and theatre workshops for ages 5-14. All audience members will receive tree seeds to plant. Reservations: (413) 625-6569 or email info@ptco.org; \$8, 14 and under; \$10 general admission. For more go to : www.ptco.org/elmer.

Tickets on sale now!

New Year's Eve Comedy at the Shea

The hilarious Jennifer Myszowski hosts another evening of great comedy with

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Sean Sullivan
Chrissy Kelleher
John Rineman

Jennifer Myszowski

The Shea Theater

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MATINEE DAILY 12:00 2:15 4:30
- THE CURIOUS CASE OF BENJAMIN BUTTON**
DAILY 7:10 PG13 DTS sound
3. **THE TALE OF DESPEREAUX**
DAILY 6:45 9:00 G
MATINEE DAILY 12 12:15 4:30
- YES MAN** PG13
DAILY 6:40 9:20
MATINEE DAILY 12:15 3:15
- MARLEY AND ME** PG
DAILY 6:40 9:20
MATINEE DAILY 12:15 3:15
- THE SPIRIT** PG13 DTS sound
DAILY 7:00 9:30
- VALKYRIE** DTS sound PG13
DAILY 7:00 9:30
MATINEE 12:30 3:30

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Harmonic Eclectic Rock: *Nexus*
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Renaissance Teen



August Thomas

BY TARA GORVINE

MONTAGUE CITY - There are some pretty outstanding people in the town of Montague. It's not a showy place, and the people who live here tend not to be showy either, they just go about their business. Such is the case with August Thomas, who at 17 years old will graduate this spring from the UMass honors college. And as if that wasn't enough, she has three majors: Linguistics, Italian and the Ancient World (a major she designed herself) as well as a minor in Ancient Greek. She's also studied Latin, Turkish, Sicilian literature, Greek and Roman medicine, and volcanology. Her honors thesis is a trans-

lation of the first 14 canti of the Renaissance epic *Orlando Innamorato* ("Orlando in Love") by Matteo Maria Boiardo.

Thomas went to a public school until the age of nine. When asked what that was like for her, she told a short, illustrative story about how a teacher in her previous town of Kent, CT sent her to sit in the library during Language Arts "so she wouldn't have to deal with me." Her mother took over after that, home schooling her for the next five years. Thomas took her first college class at Elms College when she was 11, and entered UMass full time at the age of 14.

Much attention is paid to

keeping students from being left behind, much less on those capable of racing ahead. The Davidson Institute for Talent Development provides resources for this underserved population, and Thomas has been connected with it since the age of nine. As long as we are looking back over major news stories of the past year, in September Thomas was one of 20 students in the country to win a Davidson Fellowship, an honor that came with a \$25,000 scholarship and a trip to DC to meet both Ted Kennedy's and John Kerry's education aides, as well as Representative Richard Neal (D-Springfield). That evening she and other fellows gave a short talk about their

educational experiences at the Library of Congress.

As for the future, she plans to take a year off after graduating to plan her next move. Most likely she'll pursue a PhD, though in what field she hasn't decided. She does know that she wants to be a historical novelist. In fact, she already is one. The 400 page novel she began at age 13 is set in the time of Richard III (Thomas has studied all of Shakespeare's plays), and titled *The Other England* -- a sort of alternate history about the coming of age of a young king.

It's no coincidence that Thomas is a writer, as her mother, Roseanne Daryl Thomas, has published five books, three of them novels. Hence there has always been lots of talk in their home about the ins and outs of writing and storytelling.

Thomas's love of language and writing is clear. But how does she feel about math? Thomas laughed at this question and almost seems embarrassed. "I took calculus when I was 13. I was able to master it, but then I forgot it all as soon as I could. I decided to switch my attention to areas that felt like a better fit." Now that's something to which many of us can relate.

Thomas was lucky her mother was able to home school her. "It's a huge time commitment," she explained, "pretty much a full-time job." It's clear the two

are very close, as they would need to be for such an arrangement to be successful. And with Thomas going out into the world at such a young age, her mother has been a big part of those experiences, including her recent semester in Sicily. Thomas even took a UMass class her mother taught, and said her mother was probably harder on her than on the other students, because she knows what she's capable of.

One can't help wondering what it was like to enter UMass at such a young age. Was she intimidated, scared? It seems not. "UMass has been a wonderful experience," she said, pointing out she's been in classes with many of the same students for several years now, so they know each other well. This year her thesis advisor got her a job editing translations, while she has also been asked to be a Technical Advisor for one professor and to do research for another.

You get the sense when talking with her that she is incredibly curious and grateful for the opportunities her studies have brought her. There is no arrogance or conceit. If anything, she is self-effacing, though proud of her accomplishments. Indeed, she's already accomplished more than many of us will in a lifetime, and she's only just beginning.



KAREN WILKINSON ILLUSTRATION

BY NEIL SERVEN

GREENFIELD - Some of the most curious uses of language can be found in marketing copy. My girlfriend recently read the following text to me off the outside of a McDonald's take-out bag:

"A great story has two sides. Take the McDonald's hamburger. It's sear-sizzled on the grill so both sides come out perfect every time."

Immediately my ear latched onto that strange compound verb "sear-sizzled." It actually consists of two verbs that can also be nouns, though in this case "sear" appears to be playing the role of a noun modifying the succeeding verb.

Noun-verb compounds are more common in English than we realize, with the noun usually functioning as the tool or method by which the action of the verb is executed. When placed in front of nouns,

they usually function as adjectives. Consider these examples: "hickory-smoked"; "jet-propelled"; "grass-fed"; "spring-loaded"; and "horse-drawn."

Even McDonald's competitor, Burger King, famously employed the noun-verb compound "flame-broiled" (as in "broiled over an open flame") to describe its own method for cooking burgers.

The choice of "sear-sizzled" isn't necessarily wrong, but it is strange. *Merriam-Webster's Collegiate Dictionary, Eleventh Edition*, does give a transitive definition for "sizzle" that essentially means to cook: "to burn up or sear with or as if with a hissing sound."

More commonly, however, "sizzle" emphasizes the sound itself, as demonstrated in its second definition: "to make a hissing sound suggestive of something burning or frying." It is onomatopoeic, which means that the sound of the action influences the spelling and pronunciation of the word.

"Sear," on the other hand, unambiguously means to cook. Precisely, it

means "to cook the surface of quickly with intense heat." You can sizzle a piece of meat with a sear, but it makes more sense to sear a piece of meat with a sizzle.

When we describe bacon as sizzling when it fries in a pan, we are merely describing the effect; it's the action of frying that cooks the bacon, not the sizzling.

So why didn't McDonald's go with "sizzle-seared" instead of "sear-sizzled"? (And why not just "seared"?) The simplest explanation is usually the right one — somebody probably thought "sear-sizzled" sounded better. It does have that slick, hip-hoppish "-izzle" thing going on at the end, which might have gotten lost if they just went with "sizzle-seared." And when it comes to advertising, it's all about the impression you make, not how you go about making it.

Another word introduced by fast-food marketers is "melty," which Taco Bell

used in its commercials to describe its foodstuffs (such as burritos) containing melted cheese.

"Melty" is an odd choice that has received some sidelong looks from advertising critics, mainly because it does nothing to imply flavor - aside from cheese, wax can also melt, and so can slush, and I certainly don't want to put either of those in my mouth. What "melty" is apparently supposed to stress is mouth-feel - the notion of the food melting in your mouth. That's not a quality most consumers are used to associating with fast food. But again, as long as the chosen word has created the right impression, it has done its job - whether it makes sense or not.

Neil Serven is an Associate Editor for Merriam-Webster.

The Rogue Editor That Sear-Sizzled, Melty Goodness

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