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The Montague Reporter

YEAR 8 – NO. 10

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THE VOICE OF THE VILLAGES

DECEMBER 3, 2009

Montague May Turn to Student Intern to Fill Planner's Role

BY BILL DRAKE – The town of Montague may look to an intern from the University of Massachusetts, Amherst, as a possible alternative to hiring a new town planner, town administrator Frank Abbondanzio told the selectboard on Monday, November 30th. The town planner position has been vacant since mid-November, when Dan Laroche left to take a planning position at the Franklin Regional Council of Governments.

As of now, only a half-time planner's clerk remains on staff in the town's planning department. But the selectboard has been advised by the chair of the finance committee, John Hanold, to refrain from hiring a new town planner, at least in the short term, as one means of addressing the gap in town finances resulting from the loss of state aid during the present economic downturn.

"We're playing phone tag [with UMass] right now," said Abbondanzio.

But even as a budget saving measure, would a student intern provide the skill set needed to help foster the town's economic development, planning and conservation needs?

"A good planner not only works with the planning board, but knows the state government, and how it deals with the towns and the hoops the towns must jump through," to receive grant money to fund economic development and planning projects, said Ted Armen, interim chair of the Montague planning board.

Armen said he is open to an intern filling the planner's role. "If it's the right person," Armen said. "I have kids that age, and I'm amazed how smart they can be at times."

Lisa Davol, the coordinator of the downtown arts-based economic development RiverCulture project understands the importance of the planner's role.

"RiverCulture came out of the planner's office," said Davol. "When Dan [LaRoche] came on, he was my supervisor." RiverCulture, which was initiated by a \$37,000 Mass Cultural Council grant written by former
see **INTERN** pg 6

Charter School Slammed



Deb Foucault of Lake Pleasant, a member of the Founders Group for the Discovery Charter School of Sustainability, told the Department of Elementary and Secondary Education on Tuesday the K-6 school would provide, "a wonderful elementary option for the students of Franklin County, graduating academically excellent students engaged in the practice of sustainability."

BY DAVID DETMOLD GREENFIELD – The passion of parents for alternatives in public education collided with the status quo of Franklin County's established school districts on Tuesday, as the Department of Elementary and Secondary Education held a hearing on the proposed Discovery Charter School of Sustainability, at the Greenfield Youth Center. The parents' group that developed the proposal for the Discovery School emerged bruised, but not necessarily beaten, from the encounter.

About 100 people attended, and

despite the overwhelmingly negative reaction from school superintendents, school committee members (with one exception), administrators, teachers, and the mayor of Greenfield, the parents' group and a handful of their supporters stood their ground and advocated for the proposed 260 student, K-6 publicly funded charter school planned to draw students from throughout Franklin County, where public schools are currently struggling to fill classrooms and balance budgets.

Students at the proposed charter school would focus on "sustainable

practices in their lives, their school, and their communities," according to the founders' mission statement. But with sending districts paying the cost in lost state aid of more than \$7500 per student enrolled, "to found a new elementary charter school in Franklin County – even one with sustainability in the title – would be the height of unsustainability," as Whately school committee chair Nat Fortune put it.

Yet, with Governor Deval Patrick reversing his position in July and lifting the cap on new charter schools in the Commonwealth, a reversal which
see **CHARTER** pg 11

Thanksgiving in New York with Spiderman, Monet, and Burton

BY RICHARD ANDERSEN & DIANE LYN

NEW YORK CITY – Crowd Control. The words call to mind images of restriction. Think of lines zig-zagging back and forth in front of a ticket counter at the airport or a ride at Disney World. Think of barricades restraining protestors who object to war or antiquated nuclear power plants. Police officers Alexandra Paquette and David Sherogan of New York's 17th Precinct think differently.



Spidey makes the scene at the Macy's Thanksgiving Day parade.

"The city is on display," officer Sherogan explained. "People come here from all over the world to see the Thanksgiving

Day Parade. We want to make sure it's a memorable experience."

"We've been preparing since

three o'clock this morning," added officer Paquette.

And they succeeded. Ten marching bands, 24 floats, 50 sky-high balloons, and more than 800 clowns made their way for three hours past thousands of cheerful police officers and hundreds of thousands of cheering onlookers.

Highlights of the parade included the NYPD Marching Band's rendition of "New York, New York" and air-filled sculptures of

Spiderman, Snoopy, Mickey Mouse, Buzz Lightyear, and

see **NEW YORK** pg 8

Old Grads, New Twist at TFHS Career Day



Greenfield Savings Bank branch manager Linda Ackerman (Class of '65, standing) and assistant manager Kerri Lynch ('96) were among the many TFHS grads who came to inspire students at Turners High on Career Day.

BY DAVID BRULE TURNERS FALLS – The invitation came via email, a call to the Old Guard from Turners Fall High School. Bob Avery, former high school guidance counselor, was still at it. He lined up 58 of us to come to Career Day the day before Thanksgiving, to share

some of our accumulated wisdom with the current crop of high school students.

We were being called on to talk to students about life in the work-a-day world, share experiences about our lives after graduation from TFHS, and hopeful-

see **GRADS** pg 10

PET OF THE WEEK Sister Cat



Louise

Hi, my name is Louise. I'm a four-year-old shorthair cat in need of a good home. The staff here love me. I'd be a perfect companion for an adult who wants good company, or for a cozy family. I've lived with my sister cat so I should do fine with other cats as long as you introduce us properly – the staff here will tell you how it's done.

Anyway, the point is, my friend says I've been here long enough and it's sure time for my special someone to come and meet me and take me home! I can't wait to relax into your arms in my real forever home – please come soon! For more information on adopting me, please contact the Dakin Pioneer Valley Humane Society at (413) 548-9898 or via email: info@dpvhs.org.

MONTAGUE LIBRARY NEWS Local Author Visits

BY LINDA HICKMAN
MONTAGUE CENTER – First-time author and illustrator Jan Atamian of Lake Pleasant will be reading from her new book, *My Grandmother's Lace*, at the Montague Center Library on Monday, December 7th at 7 p.m. The charming picture book details her very talented grandmother's life in America after fleeing from war-torn Armenia. Atamian will

display her original, very colorful artwork used for the book's illustrations, as well as the original sketches, and will discuss how the book was produced.

Refreshments will be served. For more information, call the Montague Center Library, 367-2852.



Cover art of the book *My Grandmother's Lace* by author and illustrator Jan Atamian

FACES & PLACES



ELLEN BLANCHETTE PHOTO

Former Gill-Montague superintendent Ken Roche, now the Regional Assistance Director of the District School and Assistance Center, in conversation with present Gill-Montague superintendent Carl Ladd at the DSAC launch meeting in Northampton Tuesday morning.

Eagle Update

GILL – For those of you who don't know, the tree that held the eagles' nest on Barton Cove fell last year. There is another nest in a different tree with a second camera trained on the nest.

Late October, Bill Gabriel from First Light Power and Robin Mide of MCTV checked out the signal coming from the second nest into the Montague town hall. No signal was coming in, so Bill went out to the island in Barton Cove to see

what was happening. Power was getting to the base of the tree, but it wasn't clear if power was getting to the camera. It's probably not, since we couldn't get a signal at Town Hall.

Bill contacted Ralph Taylor at the Department of Fish and Wildlife and asked that a "climber" be sent to check out the camera. We hope the climber will be scheduled before the end of December, when the eagles come back to the nest. – *Courtesy of MCTV*

CLARIFICATION

Four other members of the Leverett Affordable Housing Committee had intended to sign the letter that appeared in last week's issue (Leverett Affordable Housing Committee Resigns; MR VIII #9) but due to the latest of the hour at which the letter was received, we were unable to confirm their signatures in time for publication last week. The other signers are: Barbara Carulli, who co-chaired the committee, and Arlyn Diamond, Ann Ferguson, and Terry Gaberson, who were members of the committee. Their resignations effectively dissolved the committee.

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Great Falls Middle School Students of the Week

Grade 6
Kamryn Frost
Grade 7
Ryan Bezio
Melanie Howard
Grade 8
Nick Wells

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LINDA HICKMAN PHOTO

TURNERS FALLS – Mabel Chesnes of Greenfield showed off her cat mask to her friend Alexis of Montague at the Carnegie Library Story Hour on Wednesday, December 2nd. Story Hour meets weekly on Wednesdays at 10:15 a.m. For more information, call 863-3214.

UNITY PARK IMPROVEMENT INFORMATIONAL MEETING

Wednesday, December 9th
at 7:00 p.m. in the Montague Public Safety Building's Community Room on Turnpike Road. Residents invited to attend a presentation by Berkshire Design Group for an overview of all proposed improvements.

Wendell

Holiday Fair

December 5th & 6th

Saturday 9 a.m. to 5 p.m.

Sunday 10 a.m. to 4 p.m.

Wendell Town Hall

Free Admission & Parking

Come Shop with Local

Crafters, Artists & Farmers!

Profits donated to the Swift

River Music Department

SENIOR CENTER ACTIVITIES – Dec 7th to Dec 11th

GILL / MONTAGUE
Gill/Montague Senior Center, 62 Fifth Street, Turners Falls, is open Monday through Friday from 9:00 a.m. to 2:00 p.m. Congregate meals are served Tuesday through Friday at 11:30 a.m. Meal reservations must be made a day in advance by 11:00 a.m. Messages can be left on our machine when the center is not open. Meal site Manager is Becky Cobb. Council on Aging Director is Roberta Potter. For information or to make meal reservations, call 863-9357. Feel free to call the senior center for information on any programs.

Don't miss the Senior Lunch at the Tech School on Monday, December 7th, \$10 per person, choice of entrée, call the Senior Center to reserve your tickets.

Monday, Dec. 7th

10:00 a.m. Senior Aerobics
10:45 a.m. Easy Aerobics
11:30 a.m. to 12:45 p.m. Senior Center Closed
1:00 p.m. Knitting Circle

Tuesday, Dec. 8th
Senior Center Closed for Primary Election

Wednesday, Dec. 9th
9:00 a.m. Foot Clinic
10:00 a.m. Senior Aerobics
11:15 a.m. Mealsite Friends Meeting

12:00 noon Lunch
12:45 p.m. Bingo
Thursday, Dec. 10th
10:00 a.m. Coffee & Conversation

12:00 noon Lunch
1:00 p.m. Pitch
Friday, Dec. 11th
10:00 a.m. Senior Aerobics
10:45 a.m. Easy Aerobics
12:00 noon Lunch
1:00 p.m. Scrabble

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

Lunch is daily at 11:30 a.m., with reservations 24 hours in advance. Transportation can be provided for meals, shopping, or medical necessity. Call the center for information on the Flu Clinic and Pneumonia shots.

Monday, Dec. 7th

9:00 a.m. Exercise
12:00 noon Pitch
Tuesday, Dec. 8th
9:00 a.m. Aerobics
9:30 a.m. C.O.A. Meeting
12:30 p.m. Painting
Wednesday, Dec. 9th
8:45 a.m. Line Dancing
12:00 noon Bingo

Thursday, Dec. 10th

9:00 a.m. Aerobics
Friday, Dec. 11th
9:00 a.m. Bowling
11:30 a.m. Out to lunch at Christina's

WENDELL Senior Center is located at 2 Lockes Village Road. Call Kathy Swaim at (978) 544-2020 for hours and upcoming programs.

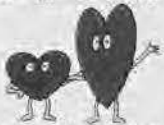
FRIENDS HELPING FRIENDS

A community concert

sponsored by Shea Theater & Traprock Peace Center

SATURDAY, DECEMBER 5TH

7:00 P.M. TO 9:30 P.M.



Performers include Raging Grannies, Molly Scott, Sarah Pirtle, Julia Burrough and No Known Address: Produced by Annie Hassett. All proceeds to benefit the Franklin County Homeless Shelter and the victims of the Chapman Street fire. Prices at the door \$8 to \$16, children under 10 free.

Advance tickets at World Eye Bookshop in Greenfield or reserved at the Shea Theater box office. Call to reserve (413) 863-2281. Advance tickets \$10 adults, \$8 seniors. No one will be turned away for lack of funds.

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JESSICA HARMON ILLUSTRATION

Local Briefs

COMPILED BY DON CLEGG

TURNERS FALLS – The festivities for the 2nd Annual Christmas Tree Decorating Party at Peskeomskut Park, on December 5th, from 3:00 to 5:00 p.m., have now been finalized. From 3:15 to about 3:40, participants will be entertained by the “Celtic Heels” dance troupe. At about 3:45, the TFHS Holiday Orchestra will keep the party in the holiday spirit. Shortly after 4:00 p.m., Mr. and Mrs. Santa Claus are expected to arrive, along with Bernie Gonyer, guitarist, finishing the festivities off with some more holiday music.

There will be baked goods and hot beverages available, along with a warming fire. Bring along a log or two. You are also encouraged to bring along a homemade decoration to hang on the Christmas tree, donated by Stewarts Nursery. This event is sponsored by the Montague Business Association, and Judd Wire.

A public meeting on the design and construction of a new facility building will be held on Wednesday, December 9th, from 5 p.m. until 7 p.m. at the S.O. Conte Anadromous Fish Lab, at the conference room in the main building, One Migratory Way, in the Patch section of Turners Falls. The proposed building will replace tent-style temporary wet lab and storage space with a permanent structure. To meet National Environmental Policy Act requirements, an environmental assessment is being performed. Any questions or input related to environmental issues concerning the new construction may be presented at the public

hearing.

The Brick House Community Resource Center is selling a Lowrey electric organ to make room for a shelving unit. The organ works great, and was originally purchased for \$1500. The Brick House is asking for \$150, or best offer. Dimensions of the organ are 45” by 37”. Interested buyer must pick up, but youths are always there to help you load it into your vehicle. If interested, please call the teen center at (413) 863-9559.



For the Elks, Kevin Hastings (left) presents a check to Kyle Dodge for Greenfield Youth Football

The Montague Elks, represented by Kevin Hastings, presented Kyle Dodge, linebacker and quarterback, age nine, of Montague with a \$1,000 check for the Greenfield Youth Football Association on November 25th at the Elks Lodge.

The Youth Football Association offers football and cheerleading for boys and girls in grades 3 to 8 for the towns of Bernardston, Erving, Gill, Greenfield, Leyden, Montague, Northfield, and Warwick.

On December 5th, from 10 to 11:00 a.m., join educator Rachel Roberts at the Great Falls Discovery Center, 2 Avenue A, in Turners Falls to make a variety of seasonal projects using acorns, pine cones, twigs and other natural objects. This free class is geared towards young school-aged children and their families. No pre-registration is required!

While you are at the Discovery Center, don't forget to check out the Massachusetts Junior Duck Stamp Exhibit in the Great Hall. Maybe your child's drawing will be hanging there some year.

Send local briefs to reporter-local@montaguema.net

Christmas Keepsakes at the Don Campbell Show

TURNERS FALLS – The Gill Montague Education Fund will introduce a new feature at the December 6th Country Christmas concert with the Don Campbell Band at the Turners Falls High School. Called Christmas Keepsakes, the program will offer all concert goers the opportunity to win autographed gifts donated by country music stars – including hats, CDs, shirts, calendars, and photos from Rodney Atkins, Alan Jackson, Sara Evans, Doug Stone Martina McBride, Dolly Parton and others. The autographed keepsakes will be available to concertgoers only, and the winners will be drawn throughout the concert at TFHS on Sunday, December 6th, starting at 2 p.m.

Tickets to the benefit concert are still available from Scotty's Convenience Store, the World Eye Bookshop in Greenfield, by calling Sandy at the Turners Falls High School at (413) 863-7215, or going to the GMEF website: www.thegmef.org. Tickets are \$15 in advance, or \$20 at the door.

Visit the GMEF website for details about the concert and the “Christmas Keepsakes” giveaway. All proceeds will benefit educational programs in the Gill-Montague regional schools.

Saturday Workshops at Laughing Dog Farm

GILL – “Building Permanent Garden Infrastructure”: December 5th; 10:00 a.m. to 12:30 p.m.

Permaculture-influenced gardening inspires us to build raised beds, vertical trellising, fences, arbors, cold frames, low hoops, pergolas, and the like, to grow, support and ripen maximum yields on minimally-sized plots. By constructing our garden infrastructure with rot-resistant black locust, we not only make our gardens more attractive and productive, but we make them last for generations. We will demonstrate multiple uses for black locust lumber, including slab, stumps, slats and posts. We will observe and discuss theory, practice and function of permanent raised beds. Together we may even design some new ways to use vertical garden structures to maximize and extend crop production and diversity.

“Backyard Goat Husbandry” Saturday, December 12th; 10:00 a.m. to 12:30 p.m.

Goats are said to be the perfect “homestead” animal

because they are so adaptable to numerous niche habitats, climates and types of food. They are also temperamentally suited for the backyard gardener. Goats are hardy, easy to care for, relatively disease-free, and produce a rich, digestible milk, fine cheese, and high-quality red meat. What's more, goat manure is “cool,” pelletized and readily usable as a soil amendment, and for making rich compost. To top it off, goats are entertaining and acrobatic creatures whose playful and feisty antics keep their human stewards chuckling all year long. In this beginning level workshop we'll cover lots you'll need to know to get started with dairy and meat goats, plus a basic cheesemaking demo and tasting session!

These intensive information-sharing sessions are offered by donation (suggested \$20 to \$25) and include hot soup and time for further questions and dialogue following. To reserve space or receive directions, contact dbotkin@valinet.com, or call (413) 863-8696.

Senior Medicare Update

LEVERETT – The Leverett Council on Aging will offer Medicare Updates for 2010, on Friday, December 11th at 1:00 p.m. at the Leverett town hall.

Lorraine York-Edberg from SHINE will discuss Medicare Part D Open Enrollment, and Daniel Moraski from Social Security will discuss the Medicare “Extra Help” Program, which many more seniors should qualify for.

For more information, call: (413) 548-8099.

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Hunger in the Commonwealth

As we recover from the state of satiety brought on by one too many helpings of mashed potatoes, cornbread, parsnips, turkey and stuffing at last week's family feasts and prepare for the "season of giving," it might be an appropriate time to consider the rising incidence of hunger in the Commonwealth.

Last month, Project Bread, the state's leading anti-hunger organization, released numbers from the annual status report on hunger in the Commonwealth. The disquieting trends described in this report, caused by high unemployment, point to 554,000 people in the Commonwealth struggling with hunger.

Food insecurity has found its way into middle class suburbs, and has driven low-income people further into crisis. Over 8.3 percent of households in Massachusetts struggle with food insecurity, a measurement that captures the degree to which an individual or family cannot obtain adequate nutritious food for a healthy life. Field research conducted by Project Bread indicates that food insecurity numbers to be issued in 2010 will dwarf current data as they capture the full impact of the economic crisis we're in.

"The current economic problems are driving a crisis in food insecurity that is broader and deeper than we've seen before in this state," said Ellen Parker, the executive director of Project Bread. "There is every indication that hundreds of thousands of Massachusetts citizens will need help to cover the basics - including many

who have never needed help before."

Food pantries and soup kitchens funded by Project Bread through The Walk for Hunger served 57.3 million meals last year, an increase of 32 percent from the year before.

In their recent press release, Project Bread states, "Because the scope of the problem has changed - there is a need for systemic hunger solutions that are bigger, broader, and more effective; that bring federal dollars into Massachusetts; and that serve entire populations of food-insecure people.

"The Commonwealth has made great strides in maximizing participation in federal nutrition programs including SNAP (formerly known as food stamps), school and summer meals programs, and WIC; however, the current crisis calls for bringing participation in these programs to scale so that every eligible person is served.

"Low-income children rely on school meals for up to 55 percent of their daily calories, but school lunch and breakfast programs could potentially protect tens of thousands of low-income children from food insecurity and boost students' health and capacity to learn if they were brought to scale.

"Preliminary findings from a study by the Harvard School of Public Health shows that children will eat healthy food, including whole grains, breads, pastas, fresh fruits, vegetables, and low-fat dairy products, and when this food is offered in an appealing way, participation in the lunch



KAREN WILKINSON ILLUSTRATION

LETTERS TO THE EDITOR

Capuano for Senate

As state legislators who represent many communities in Franklin and Hampshire counties, we know how important it is for our region to have experienced and effective people representing our interests in Washington. That is why we are supporting Congressman Mike Capuano in the special election to fill the U.S. Senate seat of the late Edward Kennedy.

Mike Capuano has fought hard in Congress for a progressive agenda that includes health care reform, protecting civil liberties, promoting environmental quality, improving our financial system, and building a strong economy. He has been a leader in crafting health care reform legislation that includes a strong public option that will hold insurance companies accountable. He had the common-sense

and courage to vote against both the invasion of Iraq and the Patriot Act. And he has been an outspoken advocate for investing in mass transit, alternative energy, and building a stronger green economy for our future.

We know that Mike Capuano will be a strong voice for western Massachusetts in the United States Senate. He understands our region's concerns, values, and opportunities. We are pleased to be supporting him in the special Democratic primary election on December 8th.

- Rep. Stephen Kulik (D-Worthington)
- Rep. Ellen Story (D-Amherst)
- Rep. John Scibak (D-South Hadley)
- Rep. Daniel Bosley (D-North Adams)

Champlain's Dream

Purely by coincidence, I just got to reading David Brule's November 19th "Postcard from France" article last night, regarding his ancestors and their coming to New France and Quebec in the 1600's. I read his article very shortly after reaching the point in David Hackett Fischer's biography *Champlain's Dream*, where he talks about the first French settlement at Quebec. Brule's piece made the history come even more alive.

Since Fischer's book came out in 2008, I'm guessing M. Brule has read it already. If not, I highly recommend it.

- Michael Bosworth
West Brattleboro



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REAL WORLD FILM SERIES

SATURDAY, DECEMBER 5TH
Wendell Real World Film Series presents *Rethink Afghanistan*, a feature-length documentary, by award-winning filmmaker Robert Greenwald, which shatters the perceived truths behind the war in Afghanistan. Following the film screening, a discussion will take place about Obama's plan for sending more U.S. troops to the war. 7 p.m. at the Wendell Public Library, 7 Wendell Depot Road, Wendell. Free. For more info: www.rethinkafghanistan.org.

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We Welcome Your Letters!

American Dead in Iraq and Afghanistan as of 11/30/09



LETTER to the EDITOR

Backs Coakley

I have considered all the candidates for US Senate very carefully, and have decided to vote for Martha Coakley in the primary, Tuesday, December 8th.

Two major issues have convinced me to support her.

The first is Coakley's position regarding the death penalty. Her website states that she is a "strong opponent of the death penalty. In 2005, when Governor Mitt Romney made a major push to reinstate capital punishment, Martha testified against his bill House 3834, An Act Reinstating Capital Punishment in the Commonwealth. She also testified before the Joint Committee on the Judiciary against capital punishment in 2007. In recognition of her anti-death penalty advocacy the Massachusetts Citizens Against the Death

Penalty awarded Martha the annual Herbert and Sara Ehrmann Award in 2008."

My second point is in regards to her position on nuclear power.

Coakley has done excellent work on behalf of the Commonwealth in trying to protect us from the dangers of the continued operations of Pilgrim, Vermont Yankee, and Seabrook Nuclear Power Stations. Over the years she has kept a lawsuit going that was first initiated by AG Thomas Reilly. That lawsuit is filed with the commissioners of the Nuclear Regulatory Commission accusing the NRC of violating the National Environmental Policy Act because it is trying to exempt compliance by these facilities with spent fuel requirements that are now under consideration by

the U.S. Court of Appeals for the First Circuit.

Five Massachusetts environmental groups have written to Coakley to thank her and commend her advocacy on behalf of public health, safety and environmental protection in the Commonwealth. They stated, "We are proud that you have taken a national leadership role on the issue of spent fuel pool safety and security. Several other states have followed your lead and raised the same concerns regarding the vulnerability of the spent fuel pools to accidents and terrorist attacks."

There many other issues listed on Coakley's website that I applaud. However, her initiatives on these two issues leave no doubt in my mind that Martha Coakley is most suitable to replace Ted Kennedy for Senate.

- **Hattie Nestle Athol**

Leadership with the Alinsky Method of Community Organizing

BY KAREN WERNER

MONTAGUE - In an interactive weekend workshop, we will cover essentials from Saul Alinsky's Industrial Areas Foundation model of empowerment and organizing, the approach used so successfully in Obama's presidential campaign.

The workshop will include an overview of the IAF analysis of power, and the relationship between public and private; role plays; techniques for developing strategic relationships; a discussion about leadership, and facili-

tation for participants to consider next steps for their own projects and future collaborations.

The workshop will take place on Saturday, December 12th, from 9 a.m. to 5 p.m. and Sunday, December 13th, from 9 a.m. to 3 p.m. at the Montague Farm Zen House, at the Zen Peacemakers, 177 Ripley Road, in Montague. Transportation and scholarships are available; no one will be turned away. Registration deadline is December 7th.

To register: laurie@zenpeacemakers.com or (413) 367-5272.

Al-Anon Family Group Meetings

Meeting are held in Amherst at three locations: Mondays and Thursdays, noon to 1 p.m., UMass Campus Ctr, room 802; Tuesdays, 7 to 8:30 p.m., Amherst College Chapin Hall; Wednesdays, 4 to 5 p.m., First Baptist Church. Call: (413) 253-5261

The COST of WAR :

Million Dollar Men

CHRISTOPHER HELLMAN NORTHAMPTON - President Obama delivered a major policy speech on Afghanistan Tuesday, calling for the deployment of 30,000 more troops to conduct combat operations and assist with the training of Afghanistan's national security forces.

Prior to fiscal year 2010, combat operations in Iraq and Afghanistan have been funded outside the normal Defense Department budget through 'supplemental' spending bills. The Obama administration pledged it would end this practice after FY '09 and included, as part of its FY '10 budget request, a \$130 billion request for "Overseas Contingency Operations," the majority of which was dedicated to the Iraq and Afghanistan wars.

The FY '10 funding, which awaits final approval from Congress, does not include the funds that will be required to support any further increase in U.S. troop levels in Afghanistan. Thus it is very likely the White House will again resort to a supplemental spending bill to secure additional war funding in the coming

year. It has been widely reported in recent weeks that both the Pentagon and the White House estimate any additional forces sent to Afghanistan will require \$1 billion per year for every 1,000 troops sent, or \$1 million per soldier.

In all, total funding for Afghanistan could exceed \$325 billion in FY '10.

In addition to increased numbers of combat forces in Afghanistan, President Obama proposed greater support for political and economic development. According to the Library of Congress's Congressional Research Service (CRS), 95% of total funding to date for Afghanistan has supported military operations, while only 5% of spending has supported development-related activities.


Also, according to CRS, Defense Department contract employees outnumber U.S. military personnel in Afghanistan. As of June of this year, contractors made up 57 percent of U.S. military forces in Afghanistan, with 73,968 contractors relative to

55,107 uniformed personnel. Many analysts believe the U.S. military is already severely stressed by the size and duration of deployments in Iraq and Afghanistan. It is unclear what impact deployment of additional troops will have on the military and its ability to respond to events elsewhere in the world.

A number of U.S. civilian and military leaders, including General Stanley McChrystal, commander of U.S. and NATO forces in Afghanistan, have indicated the need to send large numbers of additional State Department and U.S. Agency for International Development personnel to Afghanistan. Yet it is not clear that the personnel needed for these duties and the funds necessary to support them are available.

Christopher Hellman is the Research Director for the National Priorities Project, a non-profit research organization that analyzes federal data so people can understand how their tax dollars are spent, located in Northampton, MA. For more info: www.nationalpriorities.org

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NOTES FROM THE WENDELL SELECTBOARD

Conservation Restriction Approved

BY JOSH HEINEMANN – At the November 25th meeting, the Wendell selectboard heard from Bob Wilber, a representative from Mass Audubon, and Mason Phelps, as the board considered whether to approve Phelps' plan to donate a conservation restriction (CR) on nine separate parcels of land totaling 221.8 acres.

The land is already under Chapter 61 protection, so there would be no added tax loss to the town, and the parcels are contiguous with other Audubon or state owned land, so they would contribute to a protected wildlife corridor connecting Quabbin Reservoir to the Millers River and the Connecticut River watershed.

The CRs would allow traditional woodland activities, logging and hunting, but will not allow commercial or residential development. Phelps kept his house lot out of the CR.

The selectboard was generally enthusiastic about the donation, coming as it did in time for a federal tax incentive that expires at the end of December. But with most of Wendell already owned by the state, or owned by Audubon, which pays no taxes to the town as a nonprofit organization, the board did express some qualms. The state pays a small PILOT (Payment in Lieu of Taxes) amount to the town for land it owns in Wendell, but the amount of these payments fluctuates with state finances.

Selectboard member Dan Keller asked Wilber if Audubon considered a similar PILOT type of payment.

Wilber answered that Audubon owns 30,000 acres in Massachusetts, and even a minimal payment in lieu of taxes would be more than the organization could afford. He suggested holding a conversation with the assessors about some form of in-kind payment, such as going into schools with a science program.

The selectboard approved the CR.

Selectboard member Jeffrey Pooser said he had been contacted by assistant state attorney general Britte

McBride in response to his letter protesting the harassment of town residents from low-flying helicopters, presumably searching for plots of marijuana. According to Pooser, McBride said she did not know much about the helicopter surveillance program, but promised to look into it.

Because of unpaid back taxes, the house and land where Marion Herrick lived on Wickett Pond Road has had a tax lien placed on it. If it becomes town property, there will be a liability for the town, because the house is unoccupied.

The house itself is standing, but the 2006 tornado damaged the connected barn.

Selectboard member Dan Keller said the town historic commission has an interest in the house, but he wondered how much value there would be in a building that stands almost by itself amid state forest. He thought maybe money from the account for upkeep of town properties could pay for boarding up the windows and doors, and he suggested the selectboard pursue a conversation with the historic commission about the property.

The Franklin County Solid Waste Management District inspected the Wendell recycling and transfer station (WRATS) for the state DEP, and approved it with only minor corrections. There should be drinking water with cups for attendants, and hand sanitizer available, and the front gate needs a sign with an emergency telephone number.

Locke Village Road Fire

BY JOSH HEINEMANN **WENDELL** – High winds on Saturday, November 28th, took down a power line above Locke Village Road.

The live ends fell to the road and continued to spark for well over an hour before the repair truck from National Grid came and turned off the current. The Wendell Fire Department responded with two firefighters, and closed the road.

Sometimes, live wires can

jump, and sometimes electric potential in the ground can electrocute a person standing near. (When I was young, my father said something about "live wires," and for days I was terrified they would slither up the stairs and get me in my sleep.)

By the time the repair truck got there, the pavement itself was burning, and while foam put the flame out, heat continued to boil the foam away. The workers on the National Grid

truck said the heat from such a pavement fire can go several feet down into the ground.

Firefighters went to the station, and returned with shovels and Pulaskis, along with coffee from the Country Store. With help from tree warden Peter Zera (who paid for the coffee), they dug a trench next to the fire, filled it with foam. Eventually the foam stopped boiling, and the firefighters reopened the road and went back to their daily lives.

INTERN from pg 1

town planner Robin Sherman in 2005, has since brought in more than \$260,000 in additional state and local matching funds from businesses and organizations to apply to arts-based economic development efforts in downtown Turners Falls.

Davol said she is uneasy about the idea of a student intern filling the town planner's position.

"Economic development is a chief responsibility of the planner, and especially in these tough times, it's the only thing that will carry us through," Davol said.

Chris Janke, president of the Montague Business Association, said, "When my wife and I were looking for our first place to live and run a business, the town planner was a big reason why we chose Turners."

Janke is the owner of Suzee's Laundromat, and co-owner of the Rendezvous, on 3rd Street. As the commercial district has expanded south of the Avenue in recent years, other businesses like 2nd Street Bakery and La Bodega have opened on side streets, and a new handmade soap company is readying to

open two doors down from Janke's businesses.

Speaking of handing off the planner role to a student intern, Janke said, "What an intern won't bring is experience and long-term strategy. How long will the internship last? Is it a new person every semester, every year? Finally, what about the other end of the equation, the planner's role as conservation agent? What becomes of that?"

In other news, the two fire districts in Montague appear to be at odds over how the town's ambulance service should be provided in coming years. But the selectboard isn't rushing to any conclusions.

"We're at a fact finding stage," said board member Mark Fairbrother. "No one has gotten back to us."

On November 12th, the Montague Center Fire District prudential committee sent a letter to the Montague selectboard endorsing the town's current provider, Baystate Health Ambulance, as the committee's choice to continue serving the residents of the Montague Center fire district. The letter, see **INTERN** pg 7

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NOTES FROM THE ERVING SELECTBOARD

Open Space Plan Presented

BY BILL FRANKLIN

ERVING – Representatives of the Franklin Regional Council of Governments [FRCOG] presented a draft seven-year open space and recreation plan at a public forum at the Erving town hall on Monday, November 30th. FRCOG assisted the town open space committee in preparing the plan, which updates the previous five-year plan, and addresses the town's natural, cultural, agricultural and recreational resources, covering everything from wildlife to recreational tourism.

Megan Rhodes, transportation and land use planner for FRCOG, explained the background of the plan – its purpose, goals, and implementation. The town's ad hoc open space plan committee, comprised of representatives of various Erving boards, committees, and interests, has held six public meetings since June, and has solicited public input by means of a survey mailed to residents.

An approved open space and recreation plan is necessary to qualify for various state grants, Rhodes explained, and helps a

community guide its future growth and development, while preserving vital natural and recreational resources for the enjoyment of the public.

The four main goals of the plan are to secure the quality of Erving's natural environment; to maintain and improve its recreational facilities; to insure the town retains its traditional character; and to promote recreational tourism in the town.

While the first three goals have been part of past open space plans, the last goal is new.

Recreational tourism, said committee member Jeff Dubay, is a "major force in the area." However, Dubay noted, "We're better known out of town than we are in town," for recreational opportunities. Tourists often ask locals where certain points of interest are and, although "many people have lived here all their lives, they don't know where these [attractions] are," Dubay said, referring to features like the Metacomet-Monadnock Trail, and the Hermit's Castle.

Most in attendance seemed to agree the town and its residents would do well to promote this goal and make recreational tourism a priority.

Selectboard member Jamie Hackett observed that certain problems seem to accompany recreational tourism. Foremost, said Hackett, is the problem of trash. Visitors and residents alike fail to always adhere to the principle of, "Carry it in; carry it out."

Assistant assessor Jacquie Boyden suggested perhaps the town should use signs at trailheads to remind everyone to pack out their trash. Others noted that signs themselves can alter the character of a natural area.

Another idea put forward was to improve access to various sites such as the Hermit's see ERVING page 8

INTERN from pg 6

signed by Jonathan Rastallis, Karen Greene, and Diane Hansen, expressed their desire to remain with BHA, questioned why they were not involved in the town's initial discussions with the Turners Falls Fire District about dropping BHA in favor of an ambulance service provided by the Turners Falls Fire District itself, and asked to be included in all further talks.

At a selectboard meeting on Monday, September 21st, Abbondanzio read a letter to the selectboard signed by Mark Allen, the chair of the Turners Falls Fire District prudential

committee, in which Allen suggested the town sign only a one-year contract with BHA for fiscal year 2010, giving the town freedom to explore the possibility of the Turners Falls Fire Department providing ambulance service for the Montague area. Allen stated the prudential committee plans to place a ballot question before the voters of the Turners Falls Fire District this winter about the idea of the district providing ambulance service for the town.

"When and if there's a proposal," said Fairbrother, in response to a call for public discussion, "but right now, no proposal's

been submitted."

DeChristopher Seeks \$1,000 for Discontinuance of Town Road

The selectboard approved eight articles for consideration at a special town meeting on December 15th in the Turners Falls High School, at 6:30 p.m.

Article 1 asks the town to vote to raise \$182,413 to fully fund Montague's share of operating the Gill Montague Regional School District for the present fiscal year.

Article 2 asks if the town will vote to reduce the Wastewater Pollution and Control Facility's wages and expenses by \$80,000, and thereby reduce sewer user fees by \$80,000. According to Abbondanzio, this request came from the Massachusetts Department of Revenue.

"The cost of handling sludge has gone down dramatically," said Abbondanzio, as one reason for the reduction.

Article 3 sets a three-year valuation agreement with First Light Hydro Generating Company for \$73,544,000, \$74,544,000 and \$75,544,000 for their generating facilities along the power canal.

Article 4 deals with raising and appropriating \$11,770 to make up for the money transferred from the reserves to pay for brick repointing on the old town hall in Montague Center. A collapse of facade bricks led to the closing of the main entrance

to the library there in August.

Article 5 looks to deal with an unpaid bill from April 2008 of \$297.66. Article 5 requires a nine-tenths vote to pass.

The last three articles all deal with the property needed to construct the Great Falls Skate Park at an expanded Unity Park. Article 6 asks the voters to pay \$1,000 to Tim de Christopher as compensation for the discontinuation of Williams Way, located between First Street and Second Street in Turners Falls. Article 7 then asks the town to give de Christopher back a 15 foot strip of land closest to his property at the former Williams Garage. Article 8 asks the town to discontinue the public's right of access and to abandon maintenance of Williams Way.

Sewer Cost Dispute

Robert Trombley, superintendent of the Water Pollution Control Facility discussed the engineering fees on Montague's Combined Sewer Overflow project. Design work for the WPCF's sludge dewatering project had been put on hold until the selectboard had a chance to discuss the fees billed by the town's consultant, Camp Dresser and McKee, on the recently completed combined sewer overflow project.

For the United States Department of Agriculture to pay the engineering fees on the CSO project, the fees may not exceed 25% of the total cost of the proj-

ect. Trombley reported that CDM billed the town for \$2,134,400, or 32% of the \$6,670,000 estimated total cost of that project for engineering fees. The town will pay the remaining 7%, or \$466,900, from money already appropriated (\$5.7 million), and the total cost of the project is not at issue, just CDM's share of it. (Montague has also recently received a \$1 million federal grant to help pay for the sewer upgrades.)

"This raises the question if we should go to competitive bids to select engineers," said Abbondanzio. "We're beyond that point now for this project."

"Next time, we definitely will," said Trombley in a follow-up call.



HIGHLIGHTS FROM THE MONTAGUE POLICE LOG

Rash of Break Ins

Tuesday, 11/24

2:41 p.m. Report of hit-and-run accident, with property damage, at Turning Point Salon area on Fifth Street. Unable to locate.

4:59 p.m. Report of burglary / breaking and entering at a West Main Street address.

8:49 p.m. Report of burglary / breaking and entering at an Eleventh Street address.

Wednesday, 11/25

9:03 p.m. Report of burglary / breaking and entering at a Park Street address. Investigated.

Thursday, 11/26

2:18 a.m. Report of a

domestic disturbance at a Fourth Street address. Arrested [redacted]

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

10:45 p.m. Report of assault and battery at a Fourth Street address.

Friday, 11/27

8:37 p.m. Warrant arrest of [redacted] on a straight warrant.

Saturday, 11/28

7:53 a.m. Report of

burglary / breaking and entering at a Randall Wood Drive address. Services rendered.

5:15 p.m. Report of burglary / breaking and entering at a Randall Wood Drive address.

9:51 p.m. Report of an unwanted person at a Turnpike Road address. Arrested [redacted]

[redacted] Charged with assault and battery, domestic.

Monday, 11/30

12:29 p.m. Report of burglary / breaking and entering at an Avenue A address. Investigated.

Advertisement for All Grade Plumbing & Heating, featuring an image of a pipe and contact information for Brian Bowden-Smith.

Advertisement for Carol's Beauty Nook, featuring a woman's face and contact information for Ann Bagnell & Carol Demers.

Advertisement for Animal Crackers Aquarium & Pet Supplies, featuring a dog and contact information for 44 Deerfield St.

Advertisement for Old Deerfield Country Store, featuring a house image and a 10% off coupon for purchases over \$25.

Advertisement for Ron Sicard, Sales Professional at Dillon Chevrolet Inc., featuring a Chevrolet logo and contact information.

Advertisement for Renaissance Excavating, Inc., featuring an excavator image and contact information for Douglas Edson.

NOTES FROM THE GILL-MONTAGUE REGIONAL SCHOOL COMMITTEE

State Assumes Control of District Budget - Again

BY ELLEN BLANCHETTE -

On November 24th, Gill-Montague superintendent Carl Ladd told the school committee he had sent a letter to the Mitchell Chester, Commissioner of the Department of Elementary and Secondary Education, informing him that the Gill-Montague Regional School District (GMRSD) had for a second year in a row been unable to agree on a budget with the member towns.

The school committee had voted previously to support an operating budget of \$16,657,788, which reflects the so-called 1/12th budget set by the commissioner on July 1st, 2009, although Montague town meeting and the subsequent special district meeting of both towns did not fully fund the

local assessment figures necessary to support this budget.

Michael Langknecht, school committee chair, also sent a letter to Commissioner Chester in support of the DESE mandated budget. By law, DESE will now set a permanent budget for the GMRSD for the present fiscal year, and Chester said in July he will stick to the 1/12th budget figure.

Montague will hold a special town meeting on December 15th, seeking to raise an additional \$182,413 to meet the assessment level required for the \$16.65 million budget.

At the November 10th school committee meeting, a subcommittee was appointed to revisit the question of moving kindergarten and pre-K classes from Hillcrest Elementary to

Sheffield Elementary, bringing the entire elementary grade span into one building.

Members of the subcommittee reported on their efforts at the November 24th meeting, saying they held two meetings, during which they gathered a lot of information about the previous school committee's investigation of the issue, and toured the Sheffield and Hillcrest buildings.

Jeff Singleton, speaking for the subcommittee, asked that they be given until the end of January to complete their study of the matter and write a report. Joyce Phillips said there had been extensive examination of this subject in past years, including reports from an architect and estimates of costs for renovations for handicapped access and installation of an elevator. According to Phillips, the school committee at the time the decision was made to leave pre-K and kindergarten in Hillcrest felt

the renovations required to bring all classes into Sheffield would be too expensive.

One concern about extending the time for the subcommittee investigation of the issue is the uncertainty this would create about the future of the buildings, which could impede the development of a proposed Readiness/Innovation School at Sheffield. Chip Wood, director of elementary curriculum for the district, said he doubted the teaching staff and principals, who would need to spend a great deal of time and effort developing a proposed Readiness School at Sheffield, would be willing to proceed if there were a possibility of a large construction project planned for the same time.

Wood asked that any construction be put off until 2012, should the committee decide to make changes to the present configuration, so the Readiness School would be in place prior

to any physical changes to the buildings.

But the school committee, after discussion, agreed that the short delay in completion of the report by the subcommittee would not interfere with the plans to develop a Readiness/Innovation School, and voted to give the subcommittee time to bring some closure to the matter.

As charged by the school committee, the subcommittee will look at three possibilities: bringing kindergarten into Sheffield, bringing both pre-K and kindergarten into Sheffield, or keeping the status quo.

Phillips agreed to provide materials she gathered from the previous evaluation of construction costs for renovating Sheffield, and to write a summary of the work, as no final evaluation report was ever written.

Singleton also presented the

see **BUDGET** next page

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ERVING from pg 7

Castle, where access routes presently lead visitors through private property, creating problems with local landowners.

The seven-year action plan submitted by FRCOG listed ten objectives. The first and foremost is to create an officially appointed open space committee to implement the plan.

Significant among the other items on the list are the improvement of access to parks and open spaces for the elderly and the disabled, and more effective facilities and programs for teens and seniors.

Among the many items dis-

cussed was the ongoing acquisition of lands to be set aside for preservation and recreation. The newly acquired Giniusz estate on Old State Road was mentioned as an example.

Finally, the discussion turned to the feasibility of using Erving's zoning laws to protect the town against deforestation, and to ensure the Northfield Mountain Project does not engage in unwanted forms of development.

Among other matters on the agenda, National Grid and Verizon have submitted a proposal for a new utility pole at the intersection of Maple

Avenue and State Road. Residents Maureen and Gary Lewis, whose home abuts the site of the proposed pole, stated they were unable to determine where, exactly, the pole would be placed. They said they couldn't find the stake placed there by National Grid.

National Grid representative Richard Nalewski stated that stakes often "end up as part of fences, stakes for tomato plants and in kindling piles," but assured the Lewises a stake had been placed on site that very day.



NEW YORK from pg 1

Kermit the Frog. The biggest balloon, Spiderman, floated in at 78 feet long, 38 feet wide, and 29 feet tall.

Similar praise cannot be bestowed upon the Museum of Modern Art, where the words "crowd control" sounded a more familiar ring: long lines, grumpy people, and perfunctory attendants. Gaining entrance to the museum's stellar collection made getting to the Thanksgiving Day Parade seem like a walk in Central Park.

No unpleasantness, however, could take away from Claude Monet's 40-foot-long triptych of water lilies. Floating

delicately in the pond he had built for them in the backyard of his home in Giverny, the lilies fulfill Monet's ambition to capture on canvas what he called "the free and emotional interpretation of Nature." Visitors can dive in through April 12th of next year.

Also not to be missed: Tim Burton. Everything from the pop surrealist's childhood drawings to memorabilia from his movies is on display. More than seven hundred cartoons, photographs, poems, sculptures, costumes, puppets, videos, paintings, and storyboards explore, through April 26th, the full range of Burton's

visual imagination. There are even special screenings of all his films, including Batman, Edward Scissorhands, Charlie and the Chocolate Factory, Sweeney Todd, and The Nightmare Before Christmas.

Like Monet, whose up-close and personal depiction of water lilies changed the way nature can be represented on canvas, Burton turned Hollywood genre filmmaking into an artistic expression of his own personal vision. No one who experiences their revolutionary works will ever be able to look at anything in the world the same way again.



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Riley Howe
Alexander Interlande
SiriRadha Khalsa
Troy Langknecht
Brendan LeDoyt
Brandon Lenois
Daniel McCormack
Timothy Meyer
Garrett Reipold
Abigail Rubin
Christian Sawicki
Dakota Smith-Porter
Kelsey Yolish

SECOND HONORS

Brianna Aubrey
Wyatt Bourbeau
Dallas Broga
Carolyn Campbell
Nathaniel Cross
Ceara Dolhenty
Joseph D'Ovidio

Kayla Drumgool
Kelli Dubay
Emilee Felton
Anamarie Gonzalez
Hannah Harvey
Bethany Laramie
Michaela Loynd
Jonathan Marguet
Brooke Martineau
Brianna Mattos
John Ollari III
Andrew Peters
Hailey Peterson
Kory Ryan
Tanisha Sanders
Rebecca Smith
Olivia Tardie
Nala Vaughn
Brandon Wegiel
Tyler Whipple
Ryan Wilder
Brittany York

THIRD HONORS

David Baxter
Preston Chabot
Wayne Conant
Dominic Emery
Tenzin Khenrab
Patrick Lapinski
Mathew Osowski
Angel Rivera, Jr
Nichole Voudren

10TH GRADE

FIRST HONORS

Jolina-Rose Blier
Brandyn Boroski
Daniel Colton
Haley Fiske
Mark Hudyma
Jesse Langknecht
Samuel Letcher
Patrick Moretti
Alyssa Nicotra
Emily Pollard
Cameron Savinski
Caroline Sena
Christopher Torres

SECOND HONORS

Samantha Caouette
Taylor Croteau
Jeanine D'Ovidio
Brooke Drost
Matthew Fowler
Stephanie French
Christopher Gordon
Sara Hanley
Alicia Hathaway
Corban Mailloux
Jeremy Mankowsky
Mary Morris
Haley Ozdarski
Brittany Rawson
Angelica Renaud

Aria Roberts
Maghen Samal
Jeremy Tetreault
Tara Williams

THIRD HONORS

Trevor Berman
Zacharie Boisvert
Stacy French
Ryan Howard
Quincy Ortiz
Katelyn Phillips
Shawna Williams

11TH GRADE

FIRST HONORS

Zhanna Bocharnikova
McKenna Brunell
Erin Casey
Sarah Crowell
Makayla Dolhenty
Colleen Dumas
Kristy Dunbar
Nicole Fuller
Taylor Howe
Jack Hubert
Kelliann Humphrey
Katherine Kuklewicz
Elysia Ollari
Emily Robertson
Daniel Skarzynski
Andrew Turban

Taylor Varilly

SECOND HONORS

Brandon Ambo
Anna Bocharnikova
Nina Dodge
Nemours Duteau, Jr
Brooke Hastings
Julie Howard-Thompson
Kelsey O'Brien
Katarina Palso
Ryan Pelis
Anthony Reed
Cody Wells
Danielle Whiteman

THIRD HONORS

Rachel Ariel
David Garcia
Samuel Stevens
Natasha Vaughn
Kelsey Waldron
Brittany Yolish

12TH GRADE

FIRST HONORS

Olivia Nicotra
Ashley Sears

SECOND HONORS

Felicia Atherton
Julie Auger
Aleh Barun
Emma Butynski
Daniel Cruz
Matthew Garber
Megan Grimard
Katherine Morris
Justin Pacheco
Carlyn Perry
Evan Pleasant
Cayla Pollard
Kathleen Rinaldi
Julie Seard
Christopher Shattuck
Melani Sicard
Sarah Underwood
Alex Westfall

THIRD HONORS

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Brandon Deputy
Mackae Freeland
Jacob Lapean
Jacob Lewis
Dustin Rivard
Tam Roberts
Elena Rushford

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Jessica Loynd
Trevor Mankowsky
Riley Palmer
Sadie Pelletier
Mackenzie Phillips
Caitlyn Poirier
Jenna Putala
Nevan Shattuck
Alexandra Vieira
Hailey Whipple
Ashley Williams
Alexxis Young

SECOND HONORS

Jacob Barboza
Jarod Brown

Raleigh Carlisle
Ceridwyn Carlton
Tarah Dempsey
Mitchell Mailloux
Timothy Momany
Sabrina Petrowicz
Bradley Sawyer
Kelsey Shafer

THIRD HONORS

Brennan Camara
Ivy Cross
Nadia Hasan
Tanner Jones
Dominic McLellan
Allyson Renaud
Avery Riddle
Jalen Sanders
Marissa Sierakoski
Tatiana Vellon-Santiago

7TH GRADE

FIRST HONORS

Sara Bradley
Lisa Callahan
Amber Caouette
Danielle Conant
Liam Ellis
Melanie Howard
Emily Kells
Andrew LaPenta
Ken Leng
Ian MacPhail
Alexander Morin
Mackenzie Salls
Serena Smith
Zachary Wright
Nicholas York
Charles Zilinski

SECOND HONORS

Haleigh Bassett
Hayley Black
Trenton Bourbeau

Felicia Craver
Zachary Demars

Alexander Fitzpatrick
Connor Kelley
Stephanie Robertson
Rachel Savinski
Liam Theis
Savannah Thornton
Emmett Turn

THIRD HONORS

Cage Afanasiew
Zachary Battistoni
Ryan Bezio
Alex Carlisle
Halle Harvey
Matteson Heath
Spencer Hubert
Jade Linscott
Andrew Vellon
Alex Tirrell
Cole Tognarelli
Alexandra Wing-LaClaire

8TH GRADE

FIRST HONORS

Samuel Danford
Courtney Eugin
Kaylannah Frost
Jessica Fuller
Lauren Grimard
Emma Johnson
Sophie Letcher
Heather McKenna
Katri Mizula
Morgan Ozdarski
Jonathan Rawls
Katerina Sankova
Hayley Westfall
Shelbi Williams

SECOND HONORS

Shayna Aubrey
Kathryn Austin
Benjamin Bocharnikov
Meghan Casey

Teagan Felton Linnell
Danielle Loynd
Rayanne Mercure
Marcel Ortiz
Alexander Osowski
Kenneth Sroka
Nicole Whiting

THIRD HONORS

Danielle Bassett
Sierra Bodell
Elyssa Carner
Eric Ferguson
Cooper Grace
Brody Markol
Kaineeca Pabon
Tyler Peters
Malcolm Smith
Nicholas Wells
Justin Wyman

BUDGET from previous pg initial findings of a subcommittee looking into "the structural gap" in the school district's budget. The report defines this gap as "revenues used to finance the Gill-Montague budget that cannot be sustained in the long term."

Singleton listed four basic sources of this structural deficit, including excessive use of district reserves to fund operating expenses (\$493,000), the use of Montague stabilization funds to

meet assessments (the amount cited was \$276,000), the use of one-time federal stimulus money (\$235,000), and circuit breaker funds (\$300,000) to meet ongoing district operating expenses.

With the exception of the stimulus money, all of these categories are, potentially, ongoing sources of revenue, but the amounts available from them are not guaranteed year to year. Singleton also included grants that need to be applied for annu-

ally and so are not, in his opinion, dependable sources of income.

The total budget gap created by using these sources of funds to meet ongoing operating expenses, Singleton said, is around \$1.3 million dollars.

Singleton proposed a theoretical reduction of the budget gap, by allocating \$200,000 of school reserves to the operating budget each year from the excess and deficiency fund, a figure in line with historical

reserves. If the committee accepts this target, Singleton said the structural budget gap would fall to about \$986,000, which he recommended chipping away at by reducing the gap \$330,000 per year. Singleton said the school committee should not assume this reduction could be accomplished by cuts alone, but rather by a combination of cuts and increased revenues.

School committee members agreed they needed time to con-

sider the information presented, and will discuss the matter further at another meeting.

Kenneth Rocke, former GMRSD superintendent and present director of the Pioneer Valley Regional District and School Assistance Center (DSAC), and Lynda Foisy, associate commissioner of the Center for School and District Assistance, will attend the December 8th school committee meeting at the high school, at 7 p.m.



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GRADS from pg 1

ly strike a career spark in the minds of the younger generation.

I'm sure I wasn't the only one entering the new building with the same trepidation. Were we prepared for this? Would anybody be interested in old grads from a different era?

Many of us had never set foot in the modern high school building with the shiny surfaces. I found myself missing the old high school on Crocker Avenue, with its ceiling-high windows, oaken floors and stairways, familiar lockers and classrooms. No chance of seeing that again, since the building burned down in the 60s....

Each of us was met in the lobby by a guide, who led us to the cafeteria, the pastries and the coffee. Some of us were going to need it!

Right off, familiar faces began emerging from the milling crowd. With some relief, I recognized Todd Currie ('68) and his brother Mike ('71). Ah, there's someone to talk to! Lou Chappell ('65) and I got into a conversation right off, evoking a brilliantly eccentric English teacher we had both enjoyed, Maurice Donovan. We were passing acquaintances back in 1964 when I graduated, but I had passed his Auto Sales site opposite Barton Cove several times a week since then.

Lou was the ice-breaker for me, and we spent a few minutes chatting about the town and our newspaper. Tireless Turners booster Linda Ackerman ('65) popped into the coffee line right behind me, and again, although we chat once a week at the bank, we exchanged remarks and wisecracks before she was off to set up her display, with her trademark lollipops, while worrying about preparation for her Thanksgiving guests on the morrow.

In a ceremony reminiscent of our high school graduation, we marched into the auditorium, not to Pomp and Circumstance, but to the applause of the student body. Talk about a home-

coming! We felt pretty special.

We took our seats on the stage and Bob Avery introduced each and every one of us, to more polite applause. Fire chief Ray Godin ('70) remarked to me that some of the alums looked awfully young! Indeed, starting with Mildred Green ('54) and Carol Charest ('56), most classes were represented, with even some youngsters from 2006 and 2007 among us!

The morning had been organized like a professional conference. Many of us set up displays in the gym where students were to come and inquire about careers and life in general. Other presenters had a more challenging morning: 16 of them were assigned to classrooms, to run concurrent sessions in three segments of 45 minutes each. Students had chosen or been assigned to the various sessions. As for me, I set up next to Rich Herchenreder ('78), brother to our indispensable *Montague Reporter* layout specialist, Kat!

the unpredictable pathways of lives began to emerge, as I moved from presenter to presenter to find out what had led them to their current career situation. The answers were varied, yet had similar strands.

Sue Ann Hilton ('98), a Child Life specialist, said "I had no idea what I wanted to do. Bob Avery suggested I look into advocating and support for children, and here I am."

Lori-Lee Adams ('89) had a particularly fascinating story. She's a speech therapist, and you may say she got into that field quite by accident. "I couldn't have planned this career!" She said she wasn't motivated in high school; couldn't find her way. She joined the military (Air Force) which taught her some life skills, especially perseverance, which came in very handy. She then had a serious car accident, in which she broke her back and suffered serious brain injury.

Her need for therapy and rehabilitation opened a door for

tion due to accidents, others due to congenital problems. She has completed her degree, and intends to pursue a Master's, with the expectation of working with wounded military personnel returning from Iraq.

David Viens ('74) is a state investigator, covering abuse of the handicapped and the elderly by caregivers. He started off in law enforcement but saw an opportunity and a need for his investigatory skills. "You wouldn't believe the amount of cases we get. Close to 1000 a year!"

Drawn to the table manned by Tavares Brewington ('95), TFHS football legend and attorney with a Boston-area law firm, I just had to ask him about his choices thus far. Tavares shared that football helped him get an education at the College of the Holy Cross, and then on to Austria to play in the European Football League. Tavares added, "That year in the European League also changed my life." In addition to the culture shock, and living in Austria on the Italian border, he was challenged by many new viewpoints on politics, society, and his own life trajectory. He decided to come back to the U.S. and pursue a law degree at Boston College. And here he is, back at TFHS for a day, sharing his experience and advice with kids who were just like he was a little more than 15 years ago.

Next was a chat with Rosemary Watroba ('60), a fellow educator and registrar at Williston Academy. She shared that she had no idea what she wanted to do after high school but, "I worked my way up through the administration. I'm thrilled with my job." She admitted she was not yet ready to retire, but the subject was coming up more and more in family conversations.

A final stop at the town offices table for a conversation with town administrator Frank Abbondanzio and town clerk Deb Bourbeau. Their take on the event was becoming a

familiar theme. "Kids inquire, often not knowing what to ask, and we answer as best we can. You can tell that sometimes we strike a chord in an individual. Hopefully we can spark their interest and open some avenues of thought for them."

It was clear that many students were surprised and even intimidated by all the career options awaiting them. Our job was to move them forward in the process of thinking seriously about all this.

I made my way through the maze of corridors and wings of the new building, where the stalwarts were doing their 45-minute focused sessions. These were alums who were teachers, veterinarians, fire department officers, and all.

I first dropped in on Michael Boulanger ('68) former jet pilot, retired Colonel, and mayor of Westfield. He struck a familiar theme. "I was really unclear about the direction to take as a high school grad." He tried to impart to the 15 students listening that ultimately you have to "find something you love to do, something you're passionate about. Mine was flying a jet."

Having interrupted his post-high school education, he realized his choices were limited, and he needed to get back to finish his education. The military took him a long way, and he's still passionate about flying. "Knowing I could get up in the morning and fly my jet," was daily confirmation he had been lucky in finding the right career path.

I then dropped in on a pro at the other end of the spectrum: Ryan Interlande ('93), professional disc jockey. Again, variations on a theme: follow your dream and focus on your talents. He quizzed the students, "Tell me about your music." Timidly, various students told about what they liked. One was a guitarist forming a rock band; another is learning the trumpet; one was writing her own songs.

continued on next page



Bill Brown, ('66) product development manager at Judd Wire, where careful planning has allowed the company to preserve 260 manufacturing jobs despite the tough economy, was among the Career Day presenters.

Before long, I was off wandering and floating from table to table with my notepad to chat with the presenters, before heading up to the sessions in the classrooms. It didn't take long before patterns of choices and

her. She found she had a talent, and now a motivation, to help others with their need to learn to communicate, either through sign language or other alternatives. Some of her patients found themselves in this condi-

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CHARTER from pg 1



Chris Sawyer-Laucanno, of Turners Falls, representing no one but himself, said he found himself unexpectedly among the charter school proponents. "I've realized over the years you guys have failed our communities and our schools because you have not adequately funded our schools. The charter provides what is needed here in Franklin County. We are a Green community. I strongly support the proposal," he told associate DESE commissioner Jeff Wulfson, DESE coordinator of charter schools Ruth Hersh, and Beverly Holmes of the DESE board, who presided over Tuesday's hearing.

mence and logic of their arguments may finally hold sway with the three DESE representatives holding the hearing.

As Greenfield mayor Bill Martin pleaded, "We hope you listen to the opponents, unlike in Gloucester, where the entire community was opposed to the charter school there, but the DESE approved it anyway," (following an email entreaty from Massachusetts Secretary of Education Paul Reville).

"The proposed Charter School for Sustainability will most certainly undermine our efforts to develop a long-term plan for fiscal stability and will continue to destabilize our elementary enrollment," said Gill-Montague superintendent Carl Ladd.

Union #28 superintendent Joan Wickman went further, and predicted the approval of a 260-seat elementary charter school in the county would lead to a "death spiral" for the public schools.

But Jeff Singleton, GMRSD committee member, and a chief

proponent of the long-term fiscal plan Ladd referred to, stood in favor of the proposal, along with a group of parents he has worked with to develop the plan ever since the threat and final closing of the Montague Center Elementary catalyzed the parents' group to action.

"If it were not for the funding issue, there would be little opposition. The funding issue has to be worked on, but it is not a criticism of the actual proposal," Singleton said.

He noted the GMRSD is already losing \$280,000 to charter school tuition, "an enormous amount of money for a financially struggling district," but still maintained, "by opposing the charter school you are coming across as anti-innovation. That is a huge mistake."

Sue Dresser, a member of the founders' group, and the main spokesperson in 2008 for a core group of the same parents who worked to establish a Horace Mann charter school at the for-

mer Montague Center School, an arrangement which had it been approved would have kept state funding within the Gill-Montague district while allowing independent governance of the proposed environmentally focused elementary school, said the Discovery Charter School of Sustainability would graduate young people with a solid foundation in the environment, the economy, and equity, "fostering a more sustainable world." She said she is a PTO member at Sheffield, and actively engaged in her children's public school community, "but I also believe in educational options. That's why I believe in the Discovery School. This option, to provide a sustainable curriculum, is not currently being done in Franklin County."

She promised the charter school, if approved, would bring "all the innovation," developed in their curriculum "to the Franklin County school districts."

see **CHARTER** pg 15

many in the audience ascribed to the governor's desire to access-federal grants from the \$4.35 billion Race to the Top fund established by Secretary of Education

Arne Duncan to reward states that advance educational innovation, the ranks of opponents realized neither their numbers, institutional authority, nor the vehem-

continued from previous page

Ryan admitted, "One of my first songs was written for a girl, and I sang it outside the cafeteria to impress her. It didn't get me anywhere with her, but it got me started on a music path with encouragement from the musicians in my family."

After chatting with Bill Brown ('66), product development manager with Judd Wire, I capped off my visits by dropping in on Mike Currie ('71) advertising and sales manager for a big local newspaper. Mike is a master communicator, story teller, and knows how to work a classroom. He had students looking at a copy of the morning's edition and picking out ads or news items. He wove local success stories in with local industrial and business history to try to give students a sense of perspective and a hint of the future. "We don't know what jobs there will be in the future. You've got to be able to switch gears. What'll happen when you graduate?" he challenged them. He coaxed

answers out of the gathering.

He got them to say there were three choices for most people: college, work, the military. "You've got to choose something you'll enjoy. You've got to bring good attitude to the job."

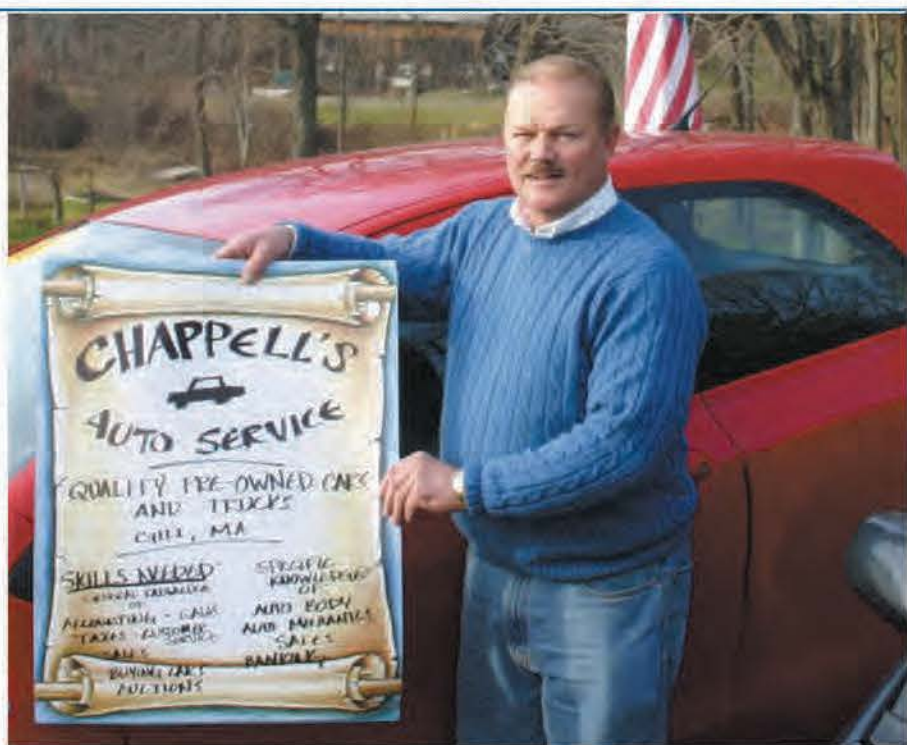
All of us that morning were hoping the students were hearing that very message.

By 11 a.m., we were all talked out, some tired of standing, others even more energized than the kids. Principal Jeff Kenney expressed the hope that Career Day would become an annual event, but Bob Avery later confided that maybe once every three years would be enough. It took him and the Alumnae Association more than four months to organize the whole morning! It would be good for each class to have a chance to experience this once in their four years.

After the brief closing ceremony, we were on our way out once again. I left with the others, but with my penchant for trying to connect the past with

the future, I was drawn to the trophy cabinet. This was after all the day before Thanksgiving, and sports tradition still reigns at TFHS.

I was looking for something, anything, familiar from the old days in this new building. There it was. Newspaper stories from the celebrated 1942 State Baseball Championship, won a few years before I was born. There were the familiar faces of old grads, some of whom have gone before us, but it was strangely comforting to see those baseball legends: Arthur Burke, Hennick Welcome, Walter Kostanski, Paul Whiteman, Francis Bourdeau, Chuck Mucha, Mike Milewski, Ed Myleck,



Lou Chappell, ('65), brought visual aids to Career Day.

Ray Zukowski, John Togneri, Coach Earl Lorden. They provided the role models and set the examples for my generation. They passed through here and did what they could with what they had. Some succeeded and some didn't.

Life constantly provides challenges for each generation. Let's hope that Bob Avery's brainchild has given inspiration to the current group of students in these bewildering times.



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VOTER GUIDE 2009

Massachusetts Primary Election for U.S. Senate Tuesday, December 8th

THE CANDIDATES

IN THEIR OWN WORDS

The statewide primary election which will take place on Tuesday, December 8th, will go a long way toward determining who Massachusetts' next United States senator will be. The primary will winnow the field of six candidates – four Democrats and two Republicans – down to two*.

Massachusetts has not elected a new senator since 1984, a fact that adds to the momentous nature of Tuesday's primary.

Polling places will be open from 7 a.m. to 8 p.m. on Tuesday. (Voters in Montague's sixth precinct, Montague City and the Patch, are reminded their polling station has moved to the community room of the new police station on Turnpike Road.)

With key votes coming up in the Senate on climate change, health care, and United States foreign and domestic policy, the *Montague Reporter*

has compiled this special candidate's question and answer section to give readers the chance to assess the candidates' responses – in their own words – to some of the major issues at hand, to better inform readers in advance of Tuesday's vote.

Five of the six candidates responded to a list of seven questions posed by our editorial team. We did not limit the length of their replies. Those candidates are Massachusetts Representative from the 8th Congressional District Michael Capuano, Massachusetts Attorney General Martha Coakley, City Year co-founder Alan Khazei, Boston Celtics co-owner Steve Pagliuca – the Democrats – and attorney Jack E. Robinson, Republican.

The other Republican in the race, state senator Scott Brown (R-Wrentham), did not respond to the *Reporter's* questions.

1) On climate change legislation, what do you think of the proposals being considered in the Senate for action in the spring, and how would you attempt to influence that legislation? What are your priorities regarding climate legislation, and do you favor conservation or the development of alternative technologies to address this issue?

MIKE CAPUANO: Both conservation and alternative energy are important in the effort to counter climate change. I have always supported increased funding for the National Science Foundation because I believe that basic, curiosity-driven research is essential to progress. I have also supported more targeted R&D and innovative industries. I helped a firm in Charlestown secure a competitive grant to produce wind blades, the next generation of wind energy.

I have urged higher Corporate Average Fuel Economy standards since I entered the House of Representatives. In the 110th Congress (2007-2008), I supported inclusion of H.R. 2847, the Green Jobs Act, into the Energy Independence and Security Act of 2007. This bill authorized up to \$125 million for national and state job training programs administered by the US Department of Labor for green industries, such as energy efficient buildings and construc-

tion, renewable electric power, energy-efficient vehicles, and biofuels development.

In this Congress, I voted for H.R. 2454, American Clean Energy and Security Act, which passed the House with only 218 votes, the bare minimum majority. Forty-four Democrats opposed this measure, which I believe is only a modest step in the right direction. I have fought, in my own party's caucus, for the necessary bolder steps. The bill awaits action in the Senate. Should I reach the Senate, I will work to strengthen the bill and rally support for passage.

I am an urban environmentalist, committed to environmental justice. As Mayor of Somerville, I created open space, reclaimed brownfields, hired the first full-time local Environmental Protection Officer, instituted curbside recycling and planted thousands of trees.

MARTHA COAKLEY: As Attorney General, I led the way nationally in challenging Bush administration policies that prevented states from proactively reducing global warming. In *Massachusetts v. EPA*, the Attorney General's Office and others challenged the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency's refusal to regulate greenhouse gas emissions from motor vehicles pursuant to the federal Clean Air Act. In a victory, the Supreme Court ruled that it was the responsibility of the EPA to regulate greenhouse gas emissions.

In Washington, I will continue my commitment to combat global warming by supporting the American Clean Energy and Security Act of 2009, as well as the more recent Clean Energy Jobs and American Power Act that Senator Kerry introduced. These comprehensive bills will make the United States a leader in the fight against global warming.

I will also support national energy efficiency policies and investments in clean energy pro-



Mike Capuano
www.mikecapuano.com

grams, as well as promote the continued development of renewable energy technologies.

ALAN KHAZEI: I support emissions trading, because I believe global warming from carbon emissions is one of the gravest threats facing humanity. The United States has a special responsibility to show leadership on this issue, which may have catastrophic effects on regional and worldwide economies, and threatens the stability of fragile, strategically positioned states. I applaud Senator Kerry and Senator Boxer for taking leadership on climate legislation.

I have developed a plan to address climate change and how I would attempt to influence the legislation. In my approach, reducing the devastating effects of climate change goes hand-in-hand with promoting alternative technologies. By investing in growth in the clean energy technology sector, we will be able to come up with clean energy solutions that will make emissions caps more palatable for our nation – and will also create jobs.

Massachusetts is a pioneer in cutting-edge science and technology, and we can create high-skill, high-paying jobs that help preserve our environment while growing our economy. Clean energy technologies are poised to become one of the dominant global industries of this century.

America was a technology

leader in the 20th century; we can lead in innovation again. The U.S. has a vital economic interest in staying ahead of the curve in this sector, and in generating green jobs.

My plan will create clean energy jobs, by passing clean energy legislation now, putting a price on carbon pollution, committing to a reduction in carbon dioxide emissions, creating clean energy jobs, and promoting energy efficiency. I support investing in the development of clean renewable energy technologies, including Cape Wind and technology neutral biofuels. I propose to quadruple research and development by increasing U.S. investment in clean energy research to \$20 billion a year, and allowing citizens to invest in Clean Energy Independence Bonds. I would close the commercialization gap by creating a Clean Energy Institute to accelerate the commercialization of new energy technologies from the research lab to new industries, businesses and jobs. I would promote and reward energy efficiency through education, incentives and public-private partnerships. And I would end Big Oil subsidies, to pay for these investments, to retake America's lead in the clean energy revolution through reducing fossil fuel subsidies, rebalancing federal R&D spending, carbon permit revenues, and returns from clean energy co-investments.

STEVE PAGLIUCA: I am supportive of both the Kerry-Boxer and Waxman-Markey bills, and agree that the best way forward on climate change is an approach that sets ambitious-but-achievable benchmarks for reduction of emissions. In the Senate I will attempt to overcome the reluctance of my colleagues to lead on this issue by making my case that our economic fate is closely linked to our environmental progress. The technologies that transform our energy use will redefine our

relationship with the planet and create the jobs that will sustain the next generation. It is high time we started taking our obligations to the planet seriously, and time we overcame the influence of the energy lobby that wants to maintain the status quo.

I believe conservation is important and I will support efforts to maintain the resources and beauty we haven't destroyed, but our focus needs to be on changing our approach to energy and the environment, and doing both in a way that creates jobs and puts America in a position to lead in the future.

JACK E. ROBINSON: While I support the goals of climate change legislation, i.e., the 20% reduction of greenhouse gas emissions by 2020, I disagree with the Kerry-Boxer "Cap and Trade" bill currently pending in the Senate. I prefer a credit – private market mechanism to induce polluters either to "Go Green" or invest in Green projects that will eliminate four times the amount of carbon from the air polluters currently generate.

My Republican opponent has no plan whatsoever to address the issue of climate change, and will simply act as a rubber stamp in Washington for the conservative out-of-the-mainstream Republicans.

On the other hand, as a progressive Republican in the mold of Teddy Roosevelt and Ed Brooke, I will be a true progressive voice independent of the hard core Republican conservatives.

* Note to Readers:

Peter Zschau, the former Millers Falls resident who announced his candidacy as an Independent for U.S. Senate in the *Montague Reporter* on September 3rd, wrote at the end of November to say he had been unable to gather the 10,000 signatures of registered voters needed to qualify for the ballot.



State Senator Scott Brown (R)
www.scottbrown.com

Alone among the candidates for the Senate seat, Scott Brown (R-Wrentham) did not respond to our requests for answers to policy questions.

VOTER GUIDE: IN THEIR OWN WORDS

2) *On foreign policy, what is your position on the U.S. military involvement in Afghanistan? Should U.S. troops remain in Iraq? Would you tolerate an Israeli pre-emptive strike against Iran, and should Israel remain the only nuclear power in the Middle East?*

MIKE CAPUANO: I voted to support the use of force against Afghanistan when its Taliban leaders refused to take action against al-Qaeda, which had launched an unprovoked attack on the United States and killed almost 3000 of our fellow citizens. I have spent time in Afghanistan, meeting not just with generals and high ranking officials, but with soldiers in the field and Afghan leaders. I believe we have accomplished our mission there and routed al-Qaeda, which is now widely dispersed in many other countries: Pakistan, Somalia, Yemen, Kenya. I do not believe we make ourselves or our allies safer by sending more troops to Afghanistan.

The proximity of nuclear armed Pakistan must inform our strategy in the region, and active regional diplomacy that includes India and China must address these dangers. It is essential that the Pakistani nuclear arsenal not fall into the hands of forces reckless of human life, or of non-state actors.

I did not vote to authorize the use of force against Iraq. I did not believe Iraq had been involved in the 9/11 attack, and the evidence presented to Congress did not convince me that Iraq was stockpiling weapons of mass destruction.

I have long called for an orderly withdrawal of our forces from Iraq.

I believe a nuclear-armed Iran would pose a grave danger to the peace of the Middle East and the world. Iran recently refused an offer to ship its enriched uranium to Russia and France to be processed for civilian and medical uses and returned to Iran. It has just announced its intention to build ten more uranium enrichment facilities. No one in the world can seriously believe Iran seeks nuclear capacity for peaceful purposes. I am a co-sponsor of the Iran Refined Petroleum Sanctions Act (IRPSA), which calls for vigorous multilateral diplomacy and, if that fails, harsh economic sanctions on Iran. I would support the use of force only as an absolute last resort, but I do believe that all options must remain on the table. I do not favor a preemptive strike against Iran at this

time by any nation.

That said, if Iran were to become a nuclear power, I believe it would spark an arms race among the nations of the region. Saudi Arabia, which has not felt threatened by the notion of Israeli nuclear weapons, has announced its intention to seek a nuclear deterrent if Iran



Martha Coakley
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achieves nuclear capacity. Proliferation is one of the many dangers posed by the Iranian threat.

MARTHA COAKLEY: Based on what I know now about the President's planned troop increase, I do not believe we should send additional troops into Afghanistan. I believe we should begin the process of bringing our troops home. I will of course listen further to the President's address, but I remain very concerned that the case for an increase in troops has not been made.

Had I been in the Senate at the time, I would have voted against the Iraq invasion. In Washington, I will support measures meant to ensure the prosperity of Iraq, both for its own sake and for the broader, fundamental goal of a stable Middle East. In Washington, I will work for solutions that ensure Iraq continues to move towards full sovereignty.

I take very seriously the possibility of Iran becoming a nuclear state. I understand a nuclear Iran threatens the security of America, and the entire Middle East. Iran must have a transparent civilian nuclear program that allows for inspections and appropriate safeguards. In Washington, I will push for continued international cooperation in holding Iran accountable to its promises to the International Atomic Energy Agency.

Israel is one of America's most important allies. In Washington, I will work to make sure Israel's safety and security remains our priority. I recognize that a safe and secure Israel is part of the foundation of a stable Middle East, and thus America's national security.

ALAN KHAZEI: I have spent my life in civilian service, but

have not been in the military. I have many friends, however, who have put their lives on the line for our country. The most sacred decision an elected official can make is to put our troops in harm's way. I was the only candidate to discuss Afghanistan in my announcement speech, because it is such an urgent issue.

I do not support an increase in troops in Afghanistan.

STEVE PAGLIUCA: I am opposed to any further involvement of troops in Afghanistan. Our country has never been successful at nation-building, and we won't be this time either. Our initial goal in Afghanistan was to disrupt terrorist operations and take away Afghanistan as a base of operations for terrorists. I believe we have accomplished this mission, and the terrorists have moved. As such, I would like to bring our troops home as soon and as safely possible.

JACK E. ROBINSON: I agree with the current timetable for our troops to leave Iraq. I am still unsure exactly what our mission is in Afghanistan, even after the president's recent speech at West Point. After all, 20 years ago Ronald Reagan called the people we now call the Taliban "freedom fighters" when they were fighting the Soviets.

So I want more specific information on exactly what is the goal before deciding whether to support the new "mini-surge" of 30,000 additional troops in Afghanistan.

I have always believed that the best deterrent to a nuclear Iran is a strong Israel, and I would not object to an Israeli pre-emptive strike if it is deemed necessary to preserve peace in the region.

3) *Considering that states are often the laboratories for reform, would you agree to support a national health care bill with an amendment to allow states to enter into a single payer option? Do you support the Senate proposal for a government sponsored plan?*

MIKE CAPUANO: I have co-sponsored H.R. 676, the Single Payer Health Care bill in both the 110th and 111th Congresses. I also supported a single-payer amendment in H.R. 3962, the Affordable Health Care for America Act, and urged that it be brought to the floor for a vote. It was not.

Nonetheless, though I recognized the bill was imperfect, I voted, with 219 other Members

of the House, to move the bill to the Senate. If I am elected to the Senate and the bill remains under consideration there, I will attempt to allow states the option to experiment with a single-payer plan. I support a public option and I believe the determination of my colleagues in the Progressive Caucus to insist upon a public option preserved it in the House bill.

MARTHA COAKLEY: One of my top priorities is reforming our health care system so that all Americans have access to quality, affordable health care. I support a public option and would vote for the bill that recently came to the floor of the Senate.

ALAN KHAZEI: I am opposed to a single-payer option because I believe the private sector and competition drive innovation. But I recognize the health care debate is one where we all have to consider many different paths to expand coverage to all Americans.

I do strongly support the government-sponsored public option, because it will create a badly needed competitive force — especially in the 40 states where health insurers have almost no competition.

STEVE PAGLIUCA: I am a strong supporter of comprehensive health care reform and would be a reliable 60th vote for health care. Both the current House and Senate health care bills are acceptable to me. I am also a believer in the need for a robust public option. Any set of proposed reforms need to be considered as part of this broader objective.

JACK E. ROBINSON: The current health care bills pending in Congress are an unmitigated



Alan Khazei
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disaster because they cost too much, incur too much debt, raise taxes, cut Medicare, and give too much control over private health care decisions to government bureaucrats. My Twelve Point Plan for Health Care Reform, explained on my website, provides universal coverage at low cost by bringing competition to the health care marketplace — as happened with auto insurance rates here in

Massachusetts.

4) *To what extent are you willing to re-examine the NAFTA treaty, and what is your position on immigration reform?*

MIKE CAPUANO: I would not have voted for NAFTA, which passed before I entered Congress. I believe that trade agreements should protect basic human rights, including the right to organize independent trade unions, and protect against degradation of the environment. I do not think we should attempt to impose US regulations on our trading partners, but we must uphold some fundamental principles. On these grounds, I have voted against Permanent Normal Trade Relations with China and against CAFTA. I voted for bilateral treaties with Australia, whose laws are comparable to ours, and with Vietnam, for whose well-being we bear some responsibility.

MARTHA COAKLEY: I believe trade agreements must be fair to American workers, promote workers' rights, and protect environmental standards. These principles will guide my approach to trade policy.

I support a responsible pathway to citizenship for those who have been in this country for years abiding by the law, paying their taxes, and contributing to society. Reform in this area is long past due.

ALAN KHAZEI: I support free trade and NAFTA, but I am willing to re-examine some aspects of it — namely, to consider further labor and environmental restrictions.

I am the son of immigrants. My father came from Iran, leaving behind a dictatorship and coming to a country of democracy and freedom. The United States, the greatest nation on earth, was the only country that would welcome him and embrace him from day one. Immigration has been critical in America's past, and it will continue to be critical to our future.

We need common sense immigration reform, including an earned path to citizenship. It's time to bring millions of undocumented immigrants out of the shadows and into the light of our democracy. Many of these hardworking men and women do the most difficult jobs in our society. In conjunction with allowing undocumented immigrants to earn citizenship, we need to do a better job securing our border. We must improve our ability to verify workers' employment eligibility and punish employers who knowingly violate our laws.

continued on next page

VOTER GUIDE: IN THEIR OWN WORDS

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STEVE PAGLIUCA: I believe in the spirit of NAFTA, and that flexibility should be a key component of any trade agreement. We need both free and fair trade – I have repeatedly supported amending NAFTA to support Fair Trade policies. If we want to let U.S. manufacturers compete on a truly level playing field, then we need to re-examine NAFTA regarding the enforcement of tighter labor and environmental standards. America's manufacturers have set an example for human rights and environmental sustainability; our trade partners ought to adhere to those same standards to prevent a "race to the bottom." NAFTA is a 15-year-old treaty and needs to be amended to reflect the dynamics of the 21st century.

I believe strongly that any comprehensive reform of immigration policy needs to start with a path to citizenship. Such an approach is an acknowledgment of the broken system that has existed for so long in this country that has resulted in our large population of undocumented workers.

JACK E. ROBINSON: Because I am a progressive Republican in the Teddy Roosevelt mold, I am a free trader and support NAFTA, CAFTA and all other free trade agreements. They create jobs here in the U.S. by opening up markets around the world for our superior products and services.

Immigration reform is sorely needed, and must include a path to citizenship for all legal immigrants, without draconian mass deportations.

5) *Should there be additional federal stimulus focused on creating or preserving state and municipal jobs?*

MIKE CAPUANO: I have already written to President Obama to ask that billions of dollars appropriated under TARP and not yet spent be made available for job creation. I would support a second stimulus as long as it was focused on job creation. In terms of economic recovery, a job saved is as important as a job created.

MARTHA COAKLEY: I think the jury is still out on the first stimulus. An infusion of capital was necessary to help take the country back from the brink of collapse, but there are still literally hundreds of millions of dollars that are left to be spent. We need to continue to evaluate

where that money went, who benefited, and whether it worked as it was intended to. As for a second stimulus, I would like to see more data on the impact of the first stimulus package before we put even more taxpayer dollars into this program and put the country further into debt.

ALAN KHAZEI: Yes, there should be, and I have created a comprehensive jobs stimulus plan to outline my strategy. As a U.S. Senator, my number one priority will be to create good, paying jobs for the people of Massachusetts and America. With unemployment rates in double digits, the families and businesses of our Commonwealth are hurting. We need bold action and we need it now. I am also the only candidate for U.S. Senate who has called for a second stimulus focused entirely on increasing consumer spending and creating jobs.

My plan would: stabilize the housing market, keep Americans in their homes by giving courts the ability to align homeowners' mortgages with their property values, create a Home Price insurance program to bring buyers back to the market, and restore home values to give consumers confidence to spend again.

I would reward job creation with a new jobs tax credit, refunding 15% of additions to payroll in 2010 and 10% in 2011. Economists estimate this

would grow nonprofit job opportunities and support social entrepreneurs by funding the Edward M. Kennedy Serve America Act to add 175,000 AmeriCorps members, and fully fund the White House Social Innovation Fund. I support creating a further \$5 billion nonprofit loan fund to increase jobs and employment opportunities for low income Americans.

Finally, I would support providing \$25 billion in aid to our cities and towns to avoid layoffs and cutbacks in schools, police and fire departments, saving over 600,000 jobs. I would develop a Solar on Schools program to finance solar power for schools and public buildings, creating over 250,000 jobs and lower energy costs for cities and towns.

STEVE PAGLIUCA: What we need is a program of focused investment directed at job creation. The federal government did the best it could in the situation it was faced with, but now that we've had time to examine the success of the first stimulus, we need to carefully and strategically apply resources to industries that will create lasting jobs, not merely act as a stop-gap measure.

JACK E. ROBINSON: No. The only thing the stimulus has stimulated is the government. The only way out of the recession is private sector job creation. My jobs plan is to eliminate the capital gains tax on all investments made in 2010. This will unleash trillions of dollars in new investment, will create millions of new jobs, and will end the recession by the end of next year.

6) *Describe in detail what you would consider to be a meaningful foreclosure prevention program.*

MIKE CAPUANO: I have worked hard to protect families from foreclosure. In this Congress, I voted for S. 896,

Helping Families Save Their Homes Act, which became law in May. It helps struggling homeowners refinance and modify their loans. I also supported a measure to allow bankruptcy judges to modify mortgages to make them more affordable. Judges are already allowed to do this for second homes and vacation homes. Despite our urging, the Senate stripped this provision from the

bill. The Helping Families Save their Homes Act included, at my urging, a tenant protection provision. The measure, which is now law, requires 90 days' notice before tenants may be required to vacate a foreclosed home. Prior to my amendment, innocent tenants could be evicted immediately.

I have also been a strong advocate of the Neighborhood



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Stabilization Program (NSP) which helps protect communities from the devastating impact of foreclosures. The NSP provides states and cities with funds to buy foreclosed and abandoned homes and renovate them into affordable housing to redeem neighborhoods that would otherwise be blighted by foreclosures. In 2008, I voted in support of H.R. 3221, Housing & Economic Recovery Act, to create and fund NSP with \$4 billion. I also voted to provide the program with an additional \$2 billion in the stimulus package in February 2009. I wrote recently to the Secretary of HUD urging the award of \$59 million of these funds to redevelop 1,200 foreclosed and abandoned units in 14 distressed communities in the Commonwealth of Massachusetts.

Further, I voted for H.R. 1728, Mortgage Reform and Anti-Predatory Lending Act, which has passed the House. The bill prohibits practices that contributed to the foreclosure crisis, including prohibiting lending to borrowers who don't have the ability to repay and prohibiting brokers from getting kickbacks for getting consumers into loans with excessively high rates. The bill also authorizes funds for foreclosure assistance and creates a national database of foreclosure statistics. The bill currently awaits action in the Senate. If, with your support, I am elected to the Senate, I will fight for its passage in that chamber also.

MARTHA COAKLEY: I understand that unscrupulous actions by large housing lenders trying to market and sell products that were doomed to fail were a major contributor to the recent financial collapse. As a

result of lending misconduct, many hardworking families have been forced into foreclosure and many more homeowners are at risk of losing their homes. As Attorney General, I brought actions against fraudulent mortgage brokers and those who employed foreclosure rescue scams. I also brought first in the nation enforcement actions against national lenders who sold risky loans using deceptive sales tactics. I pressed for legislation to provide relief to homeowners facing foreclosure, and to create an abandoned property registry to address the public safety problems created when homes are abandoned.

In Washington, I will work for loan modifications when appropriate, so people can remain in their homes. I will also support enhanced regulation of mortgage products and disclosure laws so that homeowners can better understand their mortgage terms.

ALAN KHAZEI: The genesis of our current record unemployment rates can be traced at least partially to the fall in home prices and the mortgage foreclosure crisis. Consumer confidence fell in line with declining home prices, and families stopped spending. Home foreclosures and anemic home sales increased demand for rental units, which increased rents, especially in areas like Boston, where rates are the second-highest in the country. Higher rents further decreased consumer spending and demand for goods, which resulted in layoffs and hiring freezes. Stabilizing home values and increasing home sales are key imperatives for a successful recovery and creating good paying jobs in Massachusetts and across America.

I support giving bankruptcy courts the power to modify mortgages. Over 1.5 million homes were foreclosed in the first half of 2009 alone. Currently, 10% of mortgages are past due, and 14% are in foreclosure. These figures show that we are still in the midst of a crisis. The current programs to fix the mortgage crisis are too late and too passive – we need action now.

I support the Helping Families Save Their Homes Act that passed the Senate with the guidance of Senator John Kerry. As senator, I will fight to amend the legislation to allow bankruptcy courts to modify mortgage terms. Giving bankruptcy courts this right will help 20% of borrowers facing foreclosure to stay in their homes.

STEVE PAGLIUCA: I believe that one way to strengthen our economy is to make some fundamental policy changes aimed



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would create between 3.0 and 5.1 million jobs. I propose further to increase the job creation tax credit for small businesses to 15% for both years. I support creating a \$5 billion loan fund for small businesses, extending the temporary doubling of expense write-offs and accelerated depreciation, and establishing a federal commission to support and invest in women- and minority owned businesses. I

NOTES FROM THE LEVERETT SELECTBOARD

Selectboard Purchases Affordable Housing Manual

BY DAVID DETMOLD - At a cut rate price of \$35, the Leverett selectboard dove into the subject of providing affordable housing for Leverett residents by purchasing a 240 page tome called the *Community Land Trust Legal Manual*, authored by Kirby White, from the Turners Falls-based non-profit Equity Trust. The manual, which normally sells for \$100 (plus shipping), offers an A - Z guide to creating community land trusts, along with practical knowledge on affordable housing deed restrictions and other legal mechanisms designed to provide communities with a permanent stock of affordable homes.

Unlike Turners Falls, in the town of Montague, which maintains an inventory of 10.3% affordable housing, according to the Massachusetts Department of Housing and Community Development, Leverett presently has 0% affordable housing. A citizen committee co-chaired by former selectboard member Fenna Lee Bonsignore and Barbara Carulli had worked for a number of years on exploring possible avenues to create some units of affordable housing in Leverett. But that committee resigned *en masse* last month after the selectboard blocked their proposal to spend at least \$600,000 of Community Preservation Committee funds to install infrastructure on a sloped and wooded nine acre parcel that was to have been donated by the landowner on Montague Road, near the Cave

Hill Road intersection. By using town funds to build an access road and install utilities, the committee had hoped to reduce below market rates the ticket price of ten clustered homes on that site, to be built by a private builder, and then sell them by lottery to income eligible applicants, senior citizens or the children of Leverett residents now priced out of the housing market in town.

The selectboard balked at committing such a large percentage of present and future CPC funds, which are raised by a 3% local option tax on real estate transactions in Leverett, to simply install infrastructure on the land. Board member Peter d'Errico expressed the opinion that the town could not be certain that private builders would indeed produce affordable homes on the land, even if the infrastructure were paid for in advance and the land donated.

The committee felt the board had acted in bad faith, by allowing them to proceed with the project, call on volunteers, pay consultants to develop plans, and expend \$31,000 of funds designated for the creation of affordable housing in town, and then pulling the plug before the estimated construction costs were determined. So the committee resigned in protest, and the selectboard has now taken it upon themselves to research a different approach to creating affordable housing in town.

After meeting with Rebecca Fletcher, outreach coordinator for Equity Trust, d'Errico

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But Greenfield superintendent Susan Hollins said no one from the founders group had talked to her school district as they developed their proposal, though the charter school would undoubtedly draw largely from Greenfield's student population. Hollins said she had been involved in the charter school movement in Massachusetts since its inception in 1994, and that "one of the first guidelines in developing a new charter school is talking to the superintendents," of the districts involved.

Hollins and many other educators in the room denounced the Discovery School's application for failing to take note of the innovation underway in Franklin County districts, including science-based elementary schools, green practices and curricula, and parent-driven initiatives.

And, Hollins said, "This school is too large for the community it purports to serve. I don't think there are enough students in this area to support a school of this size."

Michael DeChiara, chair of the Shutesbury school committee, said the proposed school would "devastate the little rural

schools. If we lose one or two students, our budget gets killed," even though parents are already paying for field trips, and supplies are slashed. "Why are we taking apart vibrant, healthy schools, that are trying to innovate? We are going to create more inadequate schools."

Patricia Pruitt said, "As chair of the selectboard in Montague, I'm very concerned with the effect of this on local schools. I see them struggling year after year, trying to come up with new programs despite continual cuts. It boggles my mind why Horace Mann set-ups aren't the way to go, so as not to send students out of the district to access innovative schools. In my view, the parents who worked so hard to put this proposal together did so when their proposal for a Horace Mann charter school was not supported by the district administration."

Former Gill-Montague superintendent Ken Rocke - who in 2007 brokered a deal with the GMRSD school committee to vote for a process of reconfiguring the district's elementary schools by holding out the promise that if a "valid proposal" for governance of the Montague Center School was brought to the

school committee by parents, it would be given a fair hearing - sat in Youth Center on Tuesday, but spoke not a word. When the parents' group brought a proposal for a Horace Mann charter school forward in 2008, Rocke counseled the committee to turn it down, for lack of resources to develop such a school. The parents' group at that time was never able to take the further steps of seeking funding for necessary renovations to the Montague Center building to prove their proposal was "valid."

GMRSD school committee chair Mike Langknecht, who has worked with and supported the parents' group for the past three years, and taken heat in recent school committee meetings for doing so, signed up to speak, but yielded his time.

Joanna Frankel, a parent of a toddler, formerly of Montague Center, now a resident of Gill, said, "I began working with this group with the closing of my neighborhood elementary school. I am strongly in favor of elementary options: public, free, so everyone can afford them. Education is not one size fits all."



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at preventing foreclosures. President Obama's plan, announced February 18th, is a crucial step in the right direction, and I intend to support all aspects of that proposal requiring Congressional approval, such as allowing bankruptcy judges to modify mortgages of distressed homeowners. Additionally, any meaningful program must address the issue of secondary mortgages which have held up mortgage modification attempts in the past. Lender participation is essential to the success of any program, so stronger incentives or mandatory participation should be included. Finally, a meaningful plan would apply to

securitized mortgages, which are notoriously difficult to modify.

JACK E. ROBINSON: I propose requiring all lenders who have received TARP funds (which hold or service 99% of all mortgages) to immediately write down all mortgages to fair market value at a 5% 30-year fixed rate. This will solve the foreclosure crisis immediately. My Republican opponent has no plan whatsoever.

7) Do you support changing the federal milk pricing support program to preserve New England dairies?

MIKE CAPUANO: Yes, I support changing the current federal

fluid milk pricing support system. Since the demise of the New England Dairy compact, there has been a negative impact on our family-owned dairy farms. Although the Agriculture Bill does make some attempt to stabilize fluid milk prices, it does not take into account the fact that Massachusetts family farms' costs of production exceed market prices, given the cyclical nature of fluid milk demand and the relatively small size of our dairy farms.

Massachusetts dairy farmers, unlike their counterparts in the major milk producing states, do not have the financial flexibility to participate in either the futures markets or in the Federal insurance programs. Currently, pro-

posals are pending in the Senate to modify these inequities. If elected, I will give them my immediate attention. I am heartened to see these bills are bipartisan and not solely promoted by the major dairy states.

MARTHA COAKLEY: No answer provided on federal milk pricing.

ALAN KHAZEI: No answer provided on federal milk pricing.

STEVE PAGLIUCA: I understand the hardship that New England's dairy farms have endured in recent times. This year, dairy was one of the hardest-hit agricultural sectors, largely due to the combination of

able housing options. The board talked of the need of developing a long range strategy to achieve community goals, but Shively added, "I can think of three families off the top of my head who would love to switch from rental housing to ownership. We need a plan..."

"Then we flesh out the guidelines..." continued d'Errico.

Brazeau proposed hiring a consultant with CPC funds to help the town come up with a plan for affordable housing.

increased global output despite decreased demand as a result of the recession. While I would like to review and consider the situation more closely, I am inclined to support the USDA's enhanced efforts to alleviate the pain.

JACK E. ROBINSON: Honestly, I need to learn more about this program. Being a proud alumnus of Northfield Mt. Hermon School in Northfield and Gill (where we always beat Deerfield Academy), I am sensitive to the concerns of our local dairies. However, I don't want all of the benefits going to Vermont dairy farmers. So, I need to study this issue in more detail, and welcome the input of all concerned.



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THE NEIGHBORHOOD TOXICOLOGIST

Getting to the Bottom of the BPA Controversy

BY EMILY MONOSSON

MONTAGUE CENTER – When asked to write about bisphenol A or BPA, I hesitated. I'd already written about it once. Hasn't everybody? If you missed the editorial about BPA in last month's Sunday New York Times, you may have caught one in the Boston Globe, Newsweek, Consumer Reports, or a myriad of online blogs and e-zines. What more could I add?

Unfortunately, plenty. It seems as soon as one popular news article goes to press another scientific study expanding the universe of possible health effects caused by BPA is published. What is intriguing about BPA is its presence in range of products, many of which cradle our food and drink. Not only that, but it's a chemical which readily breaks free from its solid matrix and leaches into those foods and drinks to the extent that over 95 percent of the US population tested, have measurable concentrations of BPA in our urine. Since BPA tends to be rapidly metabolized (that is, it doesn't accumulate like DDT or PCBs) these data suggest some constant low level exposure to the chemical.

In rodent studies, BPA, a synthetic estrogen (back in the 1930s, it was almost developed as an estrogen, until DES was discovered), causes diabetes, weight gain, mammary gland cancer, early onset puberty in addition to infertility and behavioral changes. Epidemiology studies have associated the chemical with – though not proven it to cause – heart disease and diabetes, and, in the past month, infertility in industry workers and behavioral changes in toddlers born to mothers whose urine concentrations during pregnancy mirror those in the general population.

So what's the debate? Shouldn't this chemical just be banned?

Traditionally, chemical testing

and regulation falls upon the delicate shoulders of innumerable laboratory animals, primarily rats and mice (though past practices are changing in order to reduce dependence on animal testing). So, you might wonder, if BPA causes all these effects in animals and is associated with some similar effects in humans, why is it still in our bottles, cans, and – according to a recent analysis by John Warner of the WarnerBabcock Institute for Green Chemistry – in surprisingly high amounts in some of those credit card receipts you shove into your wallet every time you use plastic to pay for your organic greens?

While no one denies that BPA is estrogenic and that it is in our foods and our bodies, some scientists question BPA's ability to cause harm at the concentrations to which we are exposed, and question the relevance and lack of reproducibility of some of the studies' endpoints listed above. The ability to reproduce results is central to discerning the integrity of a scientific study. As a result of such concerns, two summary panel reports on BPA prepared by the National Toxicology Program (NTP) and by the Food and Drug Association (FDA) downplayed the risks earlier this year. (Although NTP called for more research and FDA's was a draft).

Scientists, environmental advocacy groups, and the press were quick to accuse the panels (which included scientists from all sectors of industry, government and environmental advocacy groups) of industry bias. In turn, some scientists on the panels defended their conclusions, suggesting instead "reverse bias" by academic researchers vying for limited funding. There tends to be more funding for chemicals that loom large as public health threats, and the National Institutes of Environmental Health Sciences, for example, recently committed \$30 million

to BPA research.

Bisphenol A, after its demise as a new pharmaceutical, was resurrected in the form of polycarbonate plastic in 1953. With global BPA production and use of over six billion pounds a year, two billion pounds in the U.S. alone, there's certainly room for skepticism – although, according to Chemical and Engineering News, of all BPA used in the US in 2007, only 3% was used for packaging. The rest is used in products unlikely to reach our digestive tract.

Yet given that BPA is estrogenic, is known to leach from packaging into goods, and is measurable in almost all of us – not to mention all the bad press – why not just admit it's a problem and remove it, even if scientists are divided over the "true" impacts on the population?

Indeed, many bottle makers have already replaced their polycarbonate water bottles with another plastic product called "Tritan." (We can only hope they've learned from BPA when it came to testing for potential toxicity.) Unfortunately, when it comes to cans, according to a report prepared for the Investor Environmental Health Network, there are currently no BPA-free alternatives capable of replacing the epoxies used to coat metal food and drink cans. Although Eden Foods, an organic food provider, managed to phase out BPA years ago in favor of a natural oleoresin product, they still use BPA epoxy to line cans for tomato-based products. The highly acidic nature degrades the oleoresinous material, and the oleoresin cans cost 14% more than traditional cans.

Phasing out BPA from can liners is difficult but not impossible. And the difficulty of doing so probably doesn't account for the apparent industry-versus-academic split when it comes to determining health risks of BPA. Perhaps industry's recalcitrance

is more far-reaching than the bottom line for a single chemical.

Some scientists suggest that industry's resistance to recognizing BPA's toxicity is more a question of addressing and overhauling an antiquated system of chemical testing that for too long has favored industry.

I mentioned animal testing earlier – and it's far too large a topic to discuss here – but for decades, chemical testing has relied upon a regimen of toxicity tests requiring so many rats, and so many mice, and so much chemical. So much chemical, in fact, that an increasing number of scientists are suggesting that reliance upon high-dose testing in combination with a fixed set of endpoints (many determined decades ago) is archaic and inadequate, and that unless these protocols are changed, researchers will continue to miss chemicals capable of causing effects in very small and very relevant concentrations.

These tests are changing, with more sensitive endpoints being incorporated, particularly for estrogenic chemicals and other endocrine-disrupting chemicals. But it has taken over a decade to implement these changes – far too slow a timeline when it comes to toxicity in consumer goods.

Yet even when additional, more sensitive endpoints are incorporated into standard toxicity test protocols – according to Dr. L. Earl Gray, Research Biologist and Team Leader, Reproductive Toxicology Division, US EPA, whose studies of endocrine-disrupting chemicals like BPA are highly regarded



– many of the endpoints that have raised concern about BPA exposure just can't be reproduced.

Said Gray, "Standard and enhanced multigenerational studies [required of

industry] are negative for low-dose effects, and many academic studies were positive.... Several of the multigenerational studies have added low-dose groups, estrogen-sensitive endpoints, and tried to replicate the low-dose effects [of academic studies] to no avail..."

It's enough to make a toxicologist's head spin. So is it or isn't it a health risk? That's the 30 million dollar question.

Maybe in a decade or so BPA will be one more example for the scientific flip-flopper pile, along with fiber, mammograms, and therapeutic estrogens. The FDA's final report on BPA is due out this month, and Consumer Reports published an investigation of BPA in canned goods in this month's issue. These reports, along with a recently introduced legislative bill to ban BPA, will surely spice up the debate. Though I tossed the bottles, I'm keeping the cans – at least for now.

HIGHLIGHTS FROM THE WENDELL POLICE LOG

Landlord Issues

Thursday, 11/12

Locke Hill Road resident reported finding residence's rear sliding door handle broken and door slightly open. Nothing missing, unknown if entry was made.

Tuesday, 11/24

Old Farley Road resident having issues with landlord.

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JESSICA HARMON ILLUSTRATION

BY FRED CICETTI

LEONIA, NJ — *Q. I seem to be getting sick a lot lately, and I'm worried my immune system isn't working properly. Could that be a reason?*

A diminished immune system could be the cause of your problems. Go to your doctor for a check-up and diagnosis.

The immune system is a network of cells, tissues, and organs that work together to defend the body against attacks by organisms such as bacteria, parasites, and fungi that can cause infections.

The cells that are part of this defense system are white blood cells, or leukocytes. Foreign substances that invade the body are called antigens.

No two individuals have the same immune system. Some people seem to be dressed in a suit of armor against infections, while others get floored whenever there are bugs about.

When it comes to germs, getting older has advantages and

disadvantages.

As we age, our immune systems develop defenses against antigens. We acquire antibodies to the germs we've defeated in the past. Because of this phenomenon, adults tend to get fewer colds than children.

Now for some of the bad news:

- The thymus, which is located behind the breastbone, is one of the organs of the immune system. The thymus is where immune cells — white blood cells — called T lymphocytes (T cells) mature. The thymus begins to shrink when we are young adults. By middle age, it is only about 15 percent of its maximum size.

- Some T cells kill antigens directly. Others help coordinate other parts of the immune system. Although the number of T cells does not decrease with

aging, T-cell function decreases. This causes parts of the immune system to weaken and increases the risk for becoming ill.

- Macrophages, which are white blood cells that ingest antigens, don't work as quickly as they used to. This slowdown may be one reason that cancer is more common among older people.

- There are fewer white blood cells capable of responding to new antigens. Thus, when older people encounter a new antigen, the body is less able to remember and defend against it.

- The amount of antibodies produced in response to an anti-

gen is less in older people, and the antibodies are less able to attach to the antigen. These changes may partly explain why pneumonia, influenza, infectious endocarditis, and tetanus are more common among older people and cause death more often. These changes may also partly explain why vaccines are less effective in older people.

- Later in life, the immune system also seems to become less tolerant of the body's own cells. Sometimes an autoimmune disorder develops; normal tissue is mistaken for non-self tissue, and immune cells attack certain organs or tissues. Among the autoimmune disorders are: lupus, rheumatoid arthritis, scleroderma, and

ankylosing spondylitis.

- Diabetes, which is also more common with increasing age, can also lead to decreased immunity.

There are immunizations that are important as we get older. Adult tetanus immunizations should be given every 10 years; a booster may be given sooner if there is a dirty wound.

Your health care provider may recommend other immunizations, including Pneumovax (to prevent pneumonia or its complications), flu vaccine, hepatitis immunization, or others. These optional immunizations are not necessary for all older people, but are appropriate for some.

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

Cartoonists and Illustrators Wanted

If you would like to apply your graphic skills to some editorial cartooning for your local community newspaper, please send a sample of your work to the *Montague Reporter* at 58 4th Street, Turners Falls, MA 01376, or to: reporter@montaguema.net. For more information, call (413) 863-8666.

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

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

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

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

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

Number in Household	Annual Gross Income
1	\$43,450.00
2	\$49,700.00
3	\$55,900.00
4	\$62,100.00
5	\$67,050.00
6	\$72,050.00
7	\$77,000.00
8	\$81,950.00



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

HIGHLIGHTS FROM THE ERVING POLICE LOG

Breaking and Entering, Two Locations

Tuesday, 11/24

2:30 p.m. Report of low wires at intersection of Maple Avenue and Route 2, Farley area. Checked same, observed traffic and tractor trailers. Wire was at proper height.

Wednesday, 11/25

11:22 a.m. Report of vandalism at the Erving / Millers Falls Bridge. 12:10 p.m. Report of past breaking and entering at a North Shore Road address.

Thursday, 11/26

9:12 a.m. 911 call from a Reynolds Street address. Subject transported to Baystate Franklin Medical Center.

11:09 a.m. Report of a two or three car crash on West Main Street.

Found to be a single car crash into a telephone pole. Erving fire and Orange ambulance responded.

3:55 p.m. Report of erratic operation of a

red jeep on Mountain Road and in a cemetery. Gone upon arrival.

Sunday, 11/29

9:30 a.m. Arrested [redacted] on a default warrant.

Monday, 11/30

6:00 p.m. Report of past breaking and entering into a cabin at Laurel Lake. Nothing taken, cabin left disheveled.

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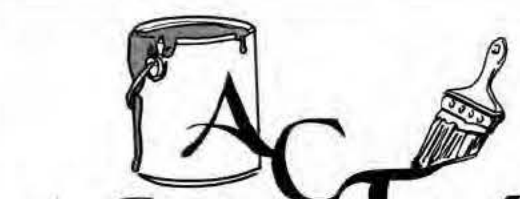


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Greenfield Romps on Turkey Day

BY LEE CARIGNAN

TURNERS FALLS – Greenfield High defeated Turners Falls 27-8 in the 83rd annual Thanksgiving Day game at Bourdeau Field. The Green Wave defense put pressure on Turners all afternoon, crowding the line of scrimmage, trying to force Turners to try for big plays in the passing game, something Turners has been unable to do all year.

Greenfield's game plan worked, as Turners could only muster one first down in the first half, and had to get a late score to avoid being shut out entirely.

Greenfield started the game with an onside kick, which

caught everyone by surprise except the Turners players, who promptly recovered the ball to give the team great field position at the Greenfield 42-yard line. Turners attacked Greenfield, with running back Tim Carlisle gaining four yards on the first play, and almost breaking the play for a big gain.

The Green Wave defense tightened up on the ensuing plays, forcing Turners to turn the ball over on downs, and denying Turners the chance to capitalize on good field position.

On their first possession, Greenfield picked up a couple of first downs, but two penalties caused the drive to stall, forcing

the Green Wave to punt. Turners' Ryan Wilder returned the punt to the 35-yard line. However, Turners once again failed to convert a first down, and had to punt again. Turners' John Ollari boomed a 55-yard punt to force Greenfield back to their 11-yard line.

It looked like Turners defense was going to pin Greenfield back deep in their territory with a key sack, but a personal foul penalty on Turners gave Greenfield 15-yards and a first down. This setback seemed to take the life out of the Turners defense and give Greenfield momentum.

Two plays later, Greenfield fullback Connor Nolan sprinted down the right side for a 52-yard touchdown, to give Greenfield a 7-0 lead, with 45 seconds to play in the first quarter.

Early in the second quarter, Turners went three-and-out and punted the ball back to Greenfield once again. The Green Wave got a first down from Nolan. Zach Butynski followed with a nice run to set Greenfield up with a first down at the Turners 40-yard line.



Greenfield quarterback Shawn Parsons finished off the drive with a 40-yard touchdown pass to Adam Wroblewski to put Greenfield up 14-0.

After an exchange of possessions, Turners received the ball at midfield with a great opportunity to close the gap before half-time. However, Eric Bastarache threw an interception on a half-back option, giving Greenfield another chance to score before the half, and Butynski took full advantage on a draw play, exploding down the field for a 41-yard touchdown to give Greenfield a commanding 21-0 lead.

Greenfield got the ball to start off the second half. They drove past midfield, but Turners forced them into a fourth-down situation. The Green Wave attempted a fake punt, but Turners was ready for it and stopped them on downs. Then, Bastarache gained

a quick 19 yards on a draw play to move Turners into Greenfield territory at the 36-yard line. Bastarache ran a keeper on 4th and 8, but came up a little short at the 30-yard line.

Greenfield scored again in the fourth quarter on a five-yard touchdown run by Butynski to put the Green Wave up 27-0.

Turners avoided the shutout with a last-minute touchdown run from Tim Carlisle, from two yards out. Jeremy Mankowsky connected with Bastarache on a 65-yard pass completion to set up the touchdown. Turners made the two-point conversion to finish out the scoring.

Eric Bastarache led Turners with 43 yards rushing. Tim Carlisle had 42 yards and a touchdown. Quarterback Jeremy Mankowsky had one completion in seven attempts for 65 yards.

Zach Butynski led Greenfield with 123 yards rushing and two touchdowns. He was named the game MVP.

The loss is Turners' third in a row against Greenfield, after upsetting them 14-8 in 2006. Turners hasn't beaten Greenfield at home since 1981, and have only beaten the Green Wave four times over the last three decades, winning in 1981, 1984, 1996, and 2006.

In the early years of the rivalry – 1927 to 1949 – Turners was very competitive with Greenfield, winning six times and tying Greenfield seven times with only ten defeats. From 1965 to 1984, Turners had a very respectable 9-11 record against Greenfield. Unfortunately, over the last 30 years it has become a one-sided rivalry.

With the loss, Turners finishes the season with a disappointing 1-9 record. The defense played well for most of the year, but Turners could not get consistency on offense, to put it mildly.

Turners scored only 50 points all year, did not have any touchdowns through the air, and only made 41 completions on 177 attempts. Hopefully the team can continue rebuilding for a stronger showing in 2010.

TOWN OF MONTAGUE INFORMATIONAL MEETING UNITY PARK IMPROVEMENTS PROJECT PARKS AND RECREATION COMMISSION

The Town of Montague, Parks and Recreation Commission, will hold an informational meeting on Wednesday, December 9, 2009 at 7:00 p.m. in the Montague Public Safety Building's Community Room, Turnpike Road, Montague, MA.

The purpose of this meeting is to invite the residents of Montague to attend a presentation of the proposed improvements to Unity Park by the designer, Berkshire Design Group. The presentation will provide residents an overview of the project, including all proposed improvements to the park.

The Town of Montague intends to apply for a Community Development Block Grant (CDBG) for the construction of the project in the FY 2010 CDBG application. The town will contract with the Franklin County Regional Housing & Redevelopment Authority (HRA) to administer the Community Development Block Grant Program. The HRA will be available to discuss the application process.

The Parks and Recreation Commission wishes to encourage local citizens to attend the meeting where any person or organization wishing to be heard will be afforded the opportunity.

POSITION AVAILABLE – ADMINISTRATIVE ASSISTANT

The Town of Gill seeks an administrative assistant. Performs administrative work related to the implementation of town policies, providing aid to the Selectboard, departments and committees in the operation of town business. Minimum Qualifications: Bachelor's Degree in administration, business or related field, plus three years of municipal experience and/or office administration, or an equivalent combination of education and experience. Knowledge of computers, Microsoft Office software, small networks and municipal finance, budgeting, and personnel laws essential. This is a 37.5 to 40 hour position, with competitive salary and benefits. Job description and applications available at the Town Clerk's Office, 325 Main Road, Gill, MA 01354 or at www.gillmass.org. Applications due by 12/16. Gill is an equal opportunity employer.

HIGHLIGHTS FROM THE GILL POLICE LOG

Emergency Assistance

Friday, 11/27
 7:29 p.m. Criminal phone call complaint on King Highway.
 complaint sought against [redacted] Boyle Road.
 Saturday, 11/28
 12:31 a.m. Erratic operator complaint on Dole Road.
 9:53 p.m. Welfare check of possible suicidal subject on Oak Street.
 Monday, 11/30
 1:29 p.m. Report of a traffic hazard on French King Highway.
 3:20 p.m. Assisted with a medical emergency on Dole Road.
 9:53 p.m. Welfare check of possible suicidal subject on Oak Street.

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JACK COUGHLIN ILLUSTRATION

THURSDAY, DECEMBER 3rd
The Greenfield Community College Peace and Social Justice Club & The Traprock Center for Peace and Justice present: John "Dr. T" Tierney, and selections from his most recent CD, *Bone Therapy*. At Traprock Center for Peace & Justice, Miles St. Greenfield.

Live jazz every Thursday at Ristorante DiPaolo, Turners Falls. 6:30 to 9:30 p.m. 863-4441.

At the Rendezvous, Turners Falls: *Falltown String Band* with Kenny Butler. 7:30 p.m. No cover.

Deja Brew, Wendell: *Kellianna*, Acoustic rock, 8 to 10 p.m.

FRIDAY, DECEMBER 4th
Montague Community Band Holiday Concert at the 1st Congregational Church, Montague. 7:30 p.m. Free.

At the Rendezvous, Turners Falls: Jim Olsen's *Rendezvous Ramble* at 7 p.m. and *High Country, Low-Fi* with Jeffrey Foucault and friends. 9 p.m. \$5 cover.

Route 63 Roadhouse, Millers Falls: Metal Show with *Orphius Lyre* and *The Package*, 9 p.m.

Deja Brew, Wendell: *Occam's Razor*. Join Dan Putnam and company for some Rock, Reggae & Funk, 9 p.m.

FRIDAY & SATURDAY, DECEMBER 4th & 5th
Youth Theatre performance: *The Lion, the Witch, and the Wardrobe* by C.S. Lewis will be presented by Starlight's Youth Theatre at 7 p.m. at Hopkins Academy, Route 9, Hadley. \$5. Info:



On Saturday, December 12th at 8 p.m., the Wendell Full Moon Coffee House is firing up the dance floor with local bernes Mass. Production!

starlightyouththeatre.wordpress.com or (413) 586-9741.

Pothole Pictures, Shelburne Falls: *Princess Mononoke*. Astonishing anime fable directed by Hayao Miyazaki. 7:30 p.m. Music before the movie at 7 p.m. Friday: Leo T. Baldwin. Real hilltown music. Saturday: Abdul Baki & New Roots. Reggae.

SATURDAY, DECEMBER 5th
Greenfield Center School Rumpus – a colossal arts and crafts event for ages 1 to 100, 10 a.m. to 4 p.m. Art and craft workshops for children 3 to 12. Artists and crafters from New England, selling hand-created wares. Food, silent auction, admissions open house and demonstrations. www.centerschool.net.

At the Discovery Center, Turners Falls: *Nature Crafts* with Rachel Roberts. Join educator Rachel Roberts and make a variety of seasonal projects using things found in nature. This class is geared towards young school-aged children. Free, 10 to 11 a.m.

At the Discovery Center, Turners Falls: Learn to draw wildlife! 11 a.m. to 1 p.m. Annie Chappell, local artist will be on hand to teach young people about wildlife drawing. Pre-register for this event by December 1st. Call (413) 863-3221 to register.

Montague Holiday Concert at the First Congregational Church, Turners Falls. Free admission, 7:30 p.m.

At the Rendezvous, Turners Falls: *Suzee's Lost & Found Fashion Show*, big screen Simulcast and Dance Party! Free.

Route 63 Roadhouse, Millers Falls: *John Sheldon & Blue Streak*, 9:30 p.m.

Deja Brew, Wendell: *A Ghost Quartet*, Jazzy Blues, 9 to 11 p.m.

SATURDAY & SUNDAY, DECEMBER 5th & 6th
Steve Martin's play, *Picasso at the Lapin Agile*, presented by the Greenfield Community College Theater

Department, Sloan Theater. Saturday at 8 p.m., Sunday at 5 p.m. \$8, or \$5 for students and seniors. Continues 12/11 to 12/13.

THRU DECEMBER 6th
The Gallery at Hallmark, Avenue A, Turners Falls: Michael Zide photography display *Illuminated Ground*.

SUNDAY, DECEMBER 6th
Country Christmas with *The Don Campbell Band* at Turners Falls High School Theater. \$15 for advance tickets, \$20 at the door. www.thegmef.org.

Monthly Scandinavian workshop/dance series, Montague Grange, Montague Center. Open request dancing follows teaching. All levels of experience are welcome! No partner necessary. 2 to 5 p.m. Christmas dance party featuring your requests. \$10 / \$8 students, seniors, low income. Info: (802) 451-1941 <http://montaguescandinavia.org>

Community Carol Sing at the Montague Congregational Church, 6 to 7 p.m. All are welcomed.

At the Rendezvous, Turners Falls: *Pat LaMountain* CD release party of her twelve-song project *A Few Miles Later*. The party starts at 6 p.m., and her band will begin around 7 p.m.

At the Rendezvous, Turners Falls: *Pat LaMountain* CD release party of her twelve-song project *A Few Miles Later*. The party starts at 6 p.m., and her band will begin around 7 p.m.

MONDAY, DECEMBER 7th
At the Rendezvous, Turners Falls: Sally Bellerose and Gail Thomas read new poetry and fiction. 7 p.m. Free.

TUESDAY, DECEMBER 8th
At the Rendezvous, Turners Falls: Craft night.

THURSDAY, DECEMBER 10th
At the Rendezvous, Turners Falls: *Bok Choy Jazz*. 8 p.m., no cover.

Deja Brew, Wendell: *Free Range*, rock out with Betsy, Mark and Bruce to classic rock & dance music, 8 to 10 p.m.

FRIDAY, DECEMBER 11th
Open House and 10th Anniversary celebration at the Visitor Center, Greenfield. 5 to 8 p.m. Great holiday gifts, local crafts, food, vendor demos, free raffles.

Great Falls Coffee House: Tom Carroll Holiday Concert. 7 p.m. in the Great Hall of the Great Falls Discovery Center, Turners Falls. Doors open at 6:30 p.m. Coffee & homemade baked goods will be available. The museum and Museum Store will be open during intermission. Sliding scale donation: \$6 to \$12; children free.

At the Rendezvous, Turners Falls: Ben and Ansel have a Holiday Party! DJs, 9:30 p.m.

Deja Brew, Wendell: *Cosmic Moxa*, Hip, modern, worldbeat, funk, 9 to 11 p.m.

Route 63 Roadhouse, Millers Falls: *Jonathan Scott & the Blazing Hearts*, rocken country, 9:30 p.m.

SATURDAY, DECEMBER 12th
Annual Make-It-Yourself Family Craft Fair at the Montague Grange, 10 to 3 p.m. Guided craft activities for all ages to make great gifts! Cool jewelry and jewelry boxes, beeswax candles, painted glass ornaments, gnomes, paper crafts, picture frames, lavender sachets, and lots more. Proceeds to benefit the Montague Grange Building Fund. Info & directions: www.MontagueMA.net/Montague_Gränge

Wendell Full Moon Coffee House: *Mass. Production*, a reggae, hip-hop, dub conglomerate that has earned a well-deserved reputation for creating the dance experience you've been looking for. Benefit for *Good Neighbors*. In Old Town Hall, Wendell center. Open Mic begins at 7:30 p.m. www.wendellfullmoon.org.

At the Rendezvous, Turners Falls: *The Warblers* and *The Original Cowards*, indie, experimental, garage rock! No cover, 9:30 p.m.

Deja Brew, Wendell: *Richard Chase Group*, acoustic driven originals, 9 - 11 p.m.

Route 63 Roadhouse, Millers Falls: *Turn It Loose*, rockers their only area show, 9:30 p.m.

SATURDAY & SUNDAY, DECEMBER 12th & 13th
Montague the Montague Farm Zen House is holding a weekend workshop, *Leadership with the Alinsky Method of Community Organizing* with Alisa Glassman, lead organizer for Action in Montgomery. Sat 9 to 5 p.m. and Sunday 9 to 3 p.m. at 177 Ripley Road, Montague. Sliding scale, \$0 to 100. Info: Karen (413) 367 5275 or karen@zenpeacemakers.com

SATURDAY, DECEMBER 19th
Santa's Breakfast at the Montague Elk's Lodge, Turners Falls. 7 to 11 a.m. \$6, or \$3 for kids.

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A lush visionary cautionary parable about the clash between nature and machine. Anime with voices of Claire Danes, Minnie Driver, Billy Bob Thornton. 1997. PG13. Color. 115 min.

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Sat. Abdul Baki & New Roots – reggae

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Wednesday, Dec. 4th to Thursday, Dec 10th

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WED, FRI, SAT, SUN 12:00 3:00
- OLD DOGS PG** in DTS sound
DAILY 6:30 9:00
WED, FRI, SAT, SUN 12:00 3:00
- 2012 PG13**
DAILY 6:30 9:30 in DTS sound
WED, FRI, SAT, SUN 12:00 3:00
- PLANET 51**
DAILY 6:45 9:15
WED, FRI, SAT, SUN 12:15 3:15
- NINJA ASSASSIN R**
DAILY 6:45 9:15
WED, FRI, SAT, SUN 12:15 3:15
- THE BLIND SIDE PG13**
DAILY 7:00 9:45 in DTS sound
WED, FRI, SAT, SUN 12:30 3:30
- TWILIGHT: NEW MOON**
DAILY 7 9:45 PG13 in DTS sound
WED, FRI, SAT, SUN 12:30 3:30

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Local Nature Notes *December: Things to See, Hear, and Do*



Robin in Winter Crabapple

BY JEN AUDLEY

TURNERS FALLS – Two full moons this month! An especially bright one earlier this week, followed by another on New Year's Eve, December 31st. The lunar cycle for us Earthlings is 29.5 days, so every once in a while we see two full moons in one calendar month. The last time this happened was in May 2007.

Brown fields, green lawns. By now, most roadside and

meadow grasses have died and gone to seed, but many lawns and playing fields are still green. Most of the lawn, or "turf" grasses planted in U.S. yards are not native species, which means they're not adapted to New England's climate, and they don't "know" when to die. Lawn-owners further complicate matters by mowing, fertilizing and watering. Mossy lawns, however, stay naturally green throughout the winter.

Berries on trees and shrubs. Many of Turners Falls' street trees are studded with bright berries this year! Keep an eye on them throughout the winter, as they will become feeding stations for overwintering and migrating birds.

People counting birds. From December 14th to January 5th, tens of thousands of volunteers across the country will participate in the 110th Christmas Bird Count, an annual census of wild birds. Participants identify and count as many birds as they can within an assigned area on one day. The data thus compiled since 1900 makes this one of the all-time great citizen science initiatives. See below for information about joining a counting circle near here — or visit www.audubon.org to learn more.

Daylight lengthening after the 21st. Day length dwindles each day until the Winter Solstice, then starts to increase in small increments. Right now

the sun rises at about 7:00 a.m. and sets at 4:15 p.m. By the beginning of January, sunrise will come about 20 minutes later and sunset a bit later, too, at about 4:30.

Learn more:

Gearing Up for a Wonderful Winter, Part II

Sunday, December 6th, 1:00 to 4:00 p.m.

Northfield Mountain Education Center invites you to enjoy the camaraderie and motivation of a group to get ready for winter outdoor fun. This program includes a hike led by Beth Bazler to learn the Northfield Mountain trail system. Bring an exercise mat, water, hearty trail snacks and hiking or ski poles if you have them. For ages 12 and up. For more details and to register, call (800) 859-2960.

Special Screening of "The Deerfield, a Working River"

Thursday, December 17th, 7:00 to 8:30 p.m.

Come view this film produced by Riverbank Media. It's

an in-depth look at the Deerfield River with great interviews regarding its past, present and future. At the Great Falls Discovery Center in Turners Falls. Free.

What's that tree? How to identify common trees in winter!

December 19th, 1:00 to 2:00 p.m.

Come learn how to identify a tree without its leaves. You will learn about tree shape, bark, and buds of our local trees. This presentation is geared towards folks 12 years of age and older. At the Great Falls Discovery Center in Turners Falls. Free.

Christmas Bird Count

December 19th, all day

Join the longest continuously running collection of bird data in the area. Contact Dave Small for additional information and to participate in this nationwide annual event: (978) 413-1772 or dave@dhsml.net Millers River Education Center / Athol Bird and Nature Club.

Steep Rooves Offer Certain Advantages

BY JOSEPH A. PARZYCH

TURNERS FALLS - Below, photos of three buildings taken while under construction, two of them in Turners Falls. All three buildings show similar construction in that they have rather steeply pitched roofs.

Flat roofed buildings were once all the rage, when Frank Lloyd Wright came out with his flat roofed marvels — the "Prairie" houses, and his most

famous, 'Falling Waters'. Most of them leaked like sieves. Falling Waters was built on a ledge, cantilevered out over a waterfall, hence the name. The cantilevered sections sagged immediately, followed by leaks in the flat roof. It continued to do so until



The building pictured above was under construction in the village of Blalka in the Tatra mountains of Poland, taken when I toured the country with my daughter Deborah. The steep pitched roof is standard construction to avoid collapse from heavy snows. The overhang is designed to keep snow sliding off the roof from burying the side of the house and anyone outside when the snow slid off, according to Rev. Charles DiMascola of Our Lady of Czestochowa in Turners. This type of architecture was not a design of any architect, he said, but rather simply the common sense construction of Polish carpenters.

Falling Waters was in danger of being renamed *Falling in the Water*. That \$2300 house is being reconstructed to the tune of several million dollars.

In the meantime, Wright fostered widespread inspiration in a great many admiring

architects who began designing flat roofed buildings, like the Greenfield High School, which began to leak shortly after completion. The Greenfield High School now, again, needs another new roof, plus repairs to the building to remediate water damage. The reason given for flat roof design by most architects was, "Everyone's doing it."



JOSEPH A. PARZYCH PHOTOS

The new Greenfield Savings Bank building has a pitched roof and wide overhangs reminiscent of the railroad station that once graced this plot of land. The overhang sheltered travelers as they gathered to board trains.



The chapel under construction at the Polish cemetery in Turners Falls also sports a pitched roof. The design is from a drawing by DiMascola of a building typical of the Tatra Mountains, and is being constructed by volunteers led by Larry Krejmas, a parishoner. More about the chapel's construction (stained glass windows, steeple, etc.), later, in a more comprehensive story as the chapel nears completion.

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