



**ART & ICICLES**  
Defined in Turners Falls  
Page 10



**BIENVENUE À MONTAIGU**  
French surnames in Montague  
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LAKE PLEASANT MILLERS FALLS MONTAGUE CENTER MONTAGUE CITY TURNERS FALLS

# The Montague Reporter

YEAR 6 - NO. 10

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THE VOICE OF THE VILLAGES

DECEMBER 6, 2007

## DOE Report Focuses on G-M School Leadership, Staffing Problems

BY DAVID DETMOLD

On November 19th, the Massachusetts Department of Education released its final report on the Gill-Montague Regional School District's "District Leadership Evaluation," following a visit to the district by a three-member review team of independent evaluators in October. The review team conducted interviews with GMRSD teachers and administrators, community stakeholders, all the members of the select-boards along with the finance committee chairs of the towns of Gill and Montague. The team reviewed numerous documents relating to the school district's performance, including the 2002 - 2005 Massachusetts Office of Educational Quality and Accountability (EQA) Report of the GMRSD.

The Department of Education placed the Gill-Montague Regional School District on their "underperforming" list on June 26th, 2007, due to a perceived lack of leadership within the district, and a lack of financial resources to meet educational goals.

In their findings, the DOE evaluators report that the Gill-Montague schools have experienced a 29% decline in enrollment over the past ten years, from 1,598 students in 1998 to the current enrollment of 1,142 students. There are presently 357 students at the high school, 273 at the middle school, 152 students at Sheffield school, 185 students at Hillcrest, 70 students at Montague Center, and 105 at Gill Elementary. (Last year, the number of students enrolled at Gill Elementary was 103; at

Montague Center, 86. This year, a number of parents at Montague Center took advantage of intra-district choice to send their students to Gill, while a number of Gill parents took the same option and sent their sixth graders to the Great Falls Middle School.)

The report notes the Gill-Montague schools employ the equivalent of 95 fulltime teachers. It further notes a district-wide scarcity of math and reading coaches, with "no English Language Arts coach for grades 4 and 5, or a mathematics coach for grades K-5."

It also cites a perception on the part of teachers within the district that, "as a consequence of... staffing arrangements, none of the schools has full-time leadership, and the district lacks full-time curricular and instructional support for the elementary grades. Elementary school teachers reported to the review team that having part-time principals negatively affects relationship building, information sharing, and communication."

The report further states, "The teacher at Gill Elementary School teaches a combined class of fifth and sixth graders using two [math] curricula: Math Expressions for fifth graders and CMPII for sixth graders." This is one of several places in the 19-page report where the decision of Gill town meeting on May 3rd of this year to retain sixth graders at Gill Elementary, rather than move them to the Great Falls Middle School with Montague sixth graders was implicitly or explicitly criticized. In another instance, the report states, "Seven sixth grade stu-

see **SCHOOLS** pg 8

## "ABANDONED MILL, WITH PAPER, NEEDS WORK..."

### A TOUR OF STRATHMORE MILL



DETMOLD PHOTO

A canalside view through the burned out roof of Building #1, with Building #11 in the background.

BY DAVID DETMOLD  
TURNERS FALLS - Walking through the Strathmore Mill is a bit like walking through an abandoned mine, dark and

dripping with ice, with soot lining the buckling floors and walls, light coming in from distant openings and shafts, broken equipment, massive

beams lying around where the last scavenging owner dropped them, doors jammed shut, stripped wiring, rusted radiators, rot, decay, bro-

ken glass, and graffiti everywhere and gaping holes in the floors. And those are the floors that weren't damaged by the see **TOUR** pg 17

## LET THERE BE LAUNDRY

BY TARA GORVINE

TURNERS FALLS - On Saturday night, December 1st, Suzee's Third Street Laundry hosted its third annual Lost and Found Laundry Fashion Show. In what has become a wildly popular hot ticket event, Chris Janke, owner of Suzee's and the man behind the madness, gives designers garbage bags of abandoned laundry with which to create their fashions. After a whirlwind behind-the-scenes transformation, the castoffs return as cutting edge couture adorning the bods of the area's top models, who strut their stuff for an adoring crowd on a catwalk strung above the washing machines and folding tables, in an event



DETMOLD PHOTO

Robin Todd sports a Harding original on the catwalk, Suzee's Third Street Laundry on Saturday night

that has quickly come to pin Turners Falls down on the haut monde map.

Last year's designers -- Rachel Teumin, Anja Schutz, Ann Harding and

Sarah Pruitt - returned again this year, with Teumin and Harding back for the third time. While all of them have done it before, each garbage bag

of clothes brings its own challenges. For some, it was the difficulty of turning mostly baby clothes and t-shirts into the latest

see **SHOW** pg 13

## PET OF THE WEEK

### Home for Xmas?



### Beulah

My name is Beulah, and I'm a 2½-year-old female Bassett Hound mix in need of a good home. I'm about the size and build of a Bassett Hound, but I have a very unique face. I don't have the long droopy hound dog ears, but I do love having my ears scratched. I think I might like to play fetch outside, or hang out with you on a cold day, snuggled up on the couch. I like people a lot, and I hope I can be your only pet so I can have all your love! No dogs or cats please.

Kids over 10 only. For more information on adopting Beulah please contact the Dakin Pioneer Valley Humane Society at 413-548-9898 or via email at leverett@dpvhs.org.

### Knights of Columbus Free Throw Championship

All boys and girls ages 10 to 14 are invited to participate in local competition  
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## MILLERS FALLS LIBRARY NEWS

### Library Reception

BY LINDA HICKMAN

**MILLERS FALLS** - On Tuesday, December 11th, there will be a reception to welcome the new librarian, Anna Greene, at the Millers Falls Library, from 6:30 - 8 p.m. All

are welcome to attend. Refreshments will be served. The event is sponsored by the Montague Public Libraries Trustees. For more information, call the Carnegie Library, 863-3214.

## CARNEGIE LIBRARY NEWS

### Ruth O'Mara Now at Carnegie Library

**TURNERS FALLS** - The Carnegie Library in Turners Falls is continuing story hour on Wednesday mornings with a new children's programmer,

was awarded a Local Cultural Council grant to teach a Family Clay Class with students and parents at the school. The students learned how to work with



Ruth O'Mara read "My Friend Teddy" to the preschool Story Hour children on Wednesday, December 5th, three times because they enjoyed it so much.

Ruth O'Mara! Ruth has a long history in bringing art education to the children in Turners Falls. She teaches art at Sheffield Elementary School's after school and summer programs and has been involved with the school plays as a set designer. Last year, O'Mara worked with students, creating a mural in the school lobby for part of a two year Massachusetts Cultural Council grant the school received.

Ruth has also worked at Hillcrest Elementary in the past, teaching painting and drawing for after school. In 2006, she

clay, glaze their work, and at the end of the program took a tour at Mudpie Potter's Community Clay Center in Leverett, where Ruth is the co-director.

O'Mara also brings art education to the Frontier Regional School system. She has been teaching art to the kindergartens in Deerfield and Conway for the past five years with Amherst Community Arts Center's Art Outreach Program. She provides students with a basic understanding of the principles of art, materials, and famous artists and tries to give the students a positive art experience.

## SENIOR CENTER ACTIVITIES Dec. 10th - 14th

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

**Monday, 10th**  
10 a.m. Senior Aerobics  
11 a.m. Easy Aerobics  
**Tuesday, 11th**

9:30 a.m. T'ai Chi  
**Wednesday, 12th**  
10 a.m. Senior Aerobics  
12:45 p.m. Bingo  
**Thursday, 13th**  
THANKSGIVING  
**Friday, 14th**  
10 a.m. Senior Aerobics  
11 a.m. Easy Aerobics

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



DETMOLD PHOTO

*A Maroon(ed) Pontiac has no way out,  
in the courtyard of the Strathmore Mill*

After having received her fine arts degree in painting and drawing, Ruth has traveled to other countries, finding her inspiration from different cultures and faraway places. She also has a background in ceramic works and continues to sell her tiles, lights and mirrors at local and East coast galleries.

Her favorite part of doing the pre-school story hour at the Carnegie Library is looking at the wealth of books available to the Western Mass Library System. Ruth likes to find a good book that is age appropriate with a good story and illustrations. After she selects a few that meet her criteria, then she can dream up interesting projects to go along with them!

This month, Ruth will be reading Native American Tales, stories about family and friends, and Autumn Harvest. Every Wednesday there are a few books that are read, a snack, projects, activities, songs and more!

Join Ruth O'Mara for Pre-School Story Hour on Wednesday mornings, 10:15, at the Carnegie Library in Turners Falls. This program is free and is for young children and their family and caregivers.

For more information, please call 863-3214.

### Great Falls Middle School Students of the Week

**Grade 6**  
Kolbe Martineau

**Grade 7**  
Shannon Hersey

**Grade 8**  
Malik Odeh  
Alyssa Nicotra

*"At home my mother  
said that she was  
proud I had the  
gumption to borrow  
the dog and take part  
in the show."*

### From Local Color #9

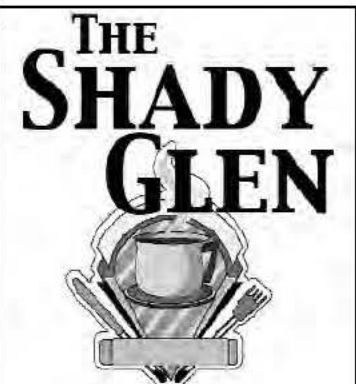
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# Demonstration Mounted on Big Y Plaza Pylon

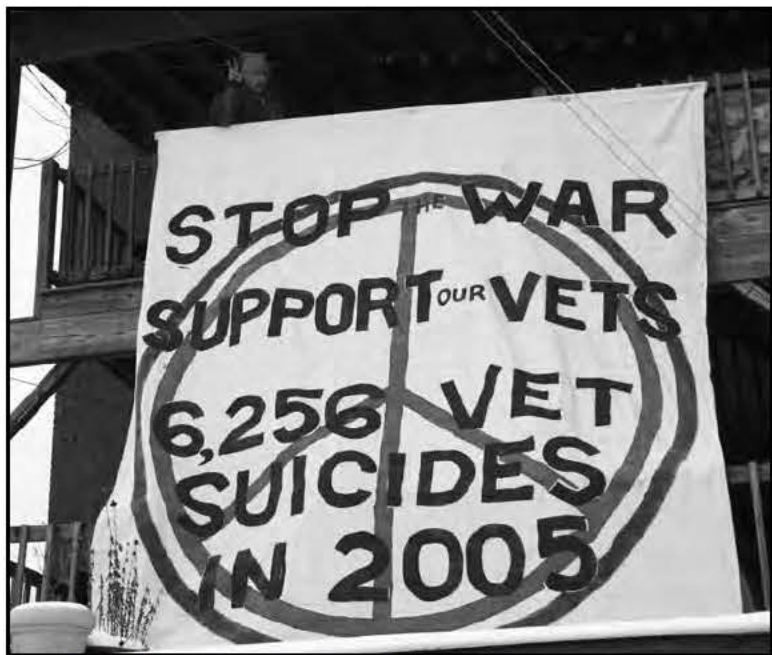
**BY DAVID DETMOLD GREENFIELD** - A New Salem man, Joshua Dostis, planned to scale a 26-foot-high former movie marquee at the front of the Big Y plaza on the Mohawk Trail in Greenfield this morning, in order to unfurl the hand-painted sign in the photo at right. The former movie marquee currently bears a sign that reads, "Support Our Troops, God Bless America, 7000 square feet For Rent." It also bears a large American flag. The sign and pylon are the property of Barry Gidseg of Robar Inc., the company that owns the Big Y plaza, and was the subject of a hearing by the Greenfield Zoning Board of Appeals on Thursday, November 30th, which voted unanimously that the sign was illegal because it was no longer being used for the purpose for

which it was originally permitted. The ZBA directed Gidseg to take the sign down, or face \$100 a day fines if he refuses, but Gidseg vowed to fight the town in court. Dostis, a Vietnam-era veteran known locally for decades of

peace sign, over which he superimposed the words, "Stop the War, Support our Vets, 6,256 Vet Suicides in 2005." Dostis said when he heard about the number of American veterans who had taken their own lives in recent years, "It

was like a knife through my heart." He called the incidence of veteran suicide in America in the years since the invasion of Iraq, "an epidemic." He also cited a widely quoted statistic that one quarter of homeless people in America are veterans, as another reason impelling him to "speak truth so that people can hear it." Dostis said he planned to sit on top of the sign on the Big Y plaza, "weather permitting" for a period of time, and said he planned to call Gidseg by cell phone to see if Gidseg would support him in his effort to hang a new sign on the old movie marquee. Gidseg made a bit of splash himself, recently, by taking out two full page ads in the *Greenfield Recorder* asking if

local people supported his use of the pylon for a Support our Troops sign, (and the rental sign below), and thanking them for their support. Dostis said, "I'm from New York; he's from New York; I know where he's coming from. He's an in-your-face kind of guy." Still, Dostis said he doubted Gidseg would approve the new use to which Dostis planned to put his pylon on Thursday.



Joshua Dostis of New Salem with a sign he planned to unfurl at the Big Y Plaza in Greenfield this morning.

colorful agit-prop demonstrations in the public arena on a wide array of political concerns, said, "I'm going to be putting an illegal sign on top of an illegal sign." Dostis planned to dress as Uncle Sam, before climbing a 30-foot ladder he purchased specially for the occasion, and unfurling the large canvas banner, which he painted with a

the Big Y plaza, "weather permitting" for a period of time, and said he planned to call Gidseg by cell phone to see if Gidseg would support him in his effort to hang a new sign on the old movie marquee. Gidseg made a bit of splash himself, recently, by taking out two full page ads in the *Greenfield Recorder* asking if

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**HIGHLIGHTS OF THE ERVING POLICE LOG**

## Possible Explosion

<p><b>Wednesday 11-28</b> 11:22 p.m. Accident car vs deer area of North Street. Deer gone on arrival. Vehicle had minimal damage. No report needed.</p> <p><b>Thursday 11-29</b> 7:02 p.m. Medical call North Street. Assisted Erving EMT's and Orange ambulance.</p> <p>10:43 p.m. Alarm at state building East Main Street. Building checked. All secure.</p> <p>11:23 p.m. Burglar alarm Copper Angel, East Main Street. Checked area, secured building.</p>	<p><b>Friday 11-30</b> 7:34 a.m. Accident car vs deer area of Mountain Road.</p> <p><b>Saturday 12-1</b> 5:57 a.m. Burglar alarm State Road. Searched residence and secured.</p> <p>10:37 a.m. Report of explosion near Briggs and Cross Streets. Reporting party stated noise too loud to be gunshot. Patrolled area, unfounded.</p> <p>6:25 p.m. Trespass on River Street. Individual advised of private property.</p> <p><b>Sunday 12-2</b></p>	<p>11:14 a.m. Criminal application issued to [redacted] for operation of a motor vehicle after license expired.</p> <p>2:40 p.m. Report of debris in roadway Route 2A at Orange town line. Debris removed.</p> <p><b>Monday 12-3</b> 9:21 a.m. Report of dispute and medical at North Street residence. No medical found. Dispute was verbal. Subjects refused assistance.</p> <p>12:10 p.m. Report of woman wandering on Moore Street looking confused. Officer in area checked, unable to locate.</p>
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## Crunch Time on School Closing

For supporters of the Montague Center Elementary school - roughly 43% of the voters in town, if last May's non-binding referendum is an accurate measure - the writing is on the wall. One way or another, the school committee - where a majority of members support closing that school - will bring some finality to that long simmering dispute, which has pitted our villages against each other for far too long. And if the committee can't agree, the town meetings of Gill and Montague are likely to make it easier for them, soon.

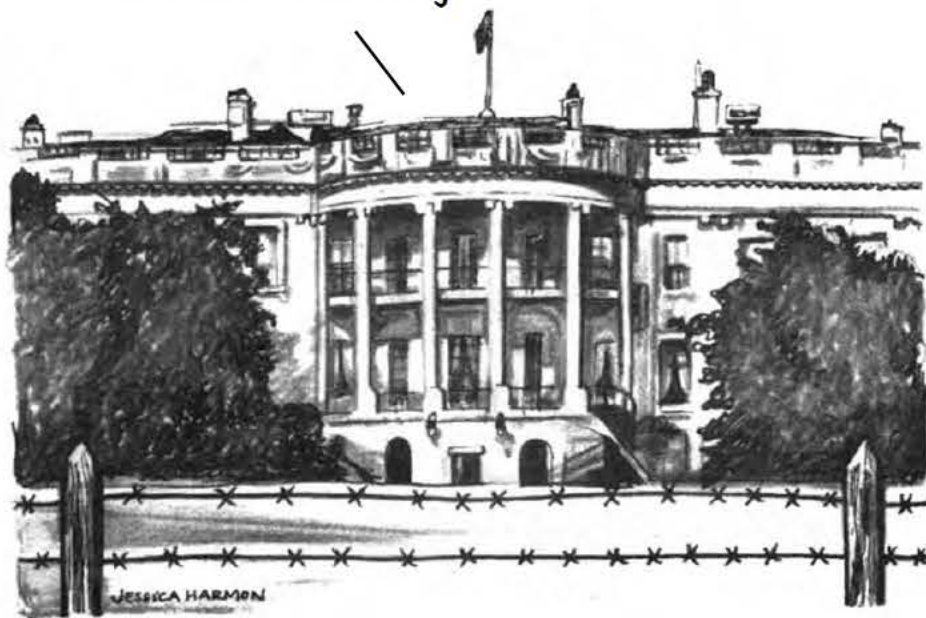
Under the guidance of interim superintendent Ken Rocke, the school committee has advanced a motion to the two town meetings to alter the regional agreement between the towns of Gill and Montague, to lower the threshold of school committee votes needed to close a school within the district. It currently requires the positive vote of eight out of nine school committee members to close a district school, and that has been a shield behind which the supporters of Montague Center have long held off the desire of the majority to close it down. But in the next few months, unless some bolt falls from the blue, a majority of town meeting voters in Gill and a majority of town meeting members in Montague are likely to lower that threshold to six out of nine members of the school committee, coupled with a simple majority of town meeting in the town where a school targeted for closing is located. And since the regional agreement will still guarantee the right of Gill elementary students to attend a school within the borders of their town, we

know which town that will be.

The parents whose children have attended Montague Center are already beginning to vote with their feet. School population in Montague Center dropped from a low of 86 last year, to a new low of 69 today. A number of those students now attend school on intra-district choice in Gill, the only district elementary school where students can receive a broad grade span education, K-6. And the number of students who choice out of the district, 160 last year, is unlikely to decline this year. Nor is the amount of state aid they take with them to schools outside the district, over a million dollars a year, counting charter school tuition losses.

If Montague elementary schools are consolidated next year, as the school committee majority intends, Rocke cautions that property taxpayers looking for a windfall are going to be disappointed. There will be no large savings in salaries, since the district needs to add back programs to stave off further enrolment decline, and possible state takeover. There will be at most modest gains on utilities or maintenance, since any building empty of students will have to be heated and maintained until a new owner or a new use is found for it. Deferred capital costs at Montague Center School would be more than made up for by renovations needed at Sheffield School, if all Montague elementary students are to attend school there, as the most recent plan would have them do. And Rocke said this week, in the upcoming budget cycle, "We are going to be making requests at the local level and state level for funding that we need to improve education in

How're we coming with that Man on Mars thing?



JESSICA HARMON ILLUSTRATION

the district."

There is still a modicum of breathing room for supporters of Montague Center school, with its strong school community and its integrated, grant-funded environmental curriculum, to find a way to keep that school open within the district as a magnet school, a pilot school, or a Horace Mann charter school, but that time is running out.

Hillcrest School, a fine elementary school in its own right, with an equally devoted school community, is also on the chopping block, although likely to survive as an early childhood education center. The children in the first and second grades would simply move across the playing

field to Sheffield.

Closing any school is a wrenching decision. But if half of Hillcrest does become vacant as a result of school consolidation, it would make an ideal location for the Gill-Montague senior center - desperately in need of expansion in an ADA accessible building with adequate parking and a central location. That would be a positive outcome for an older generation of district residents.

As for the Montague Center School, it is difficult to anticipate accurately what will happen if the wishes of 43% of the town are disregarded, in an era of school choice. The time when you can simply say to one village or neighborhood, "We're closing

your school, now all your children will be bussed over here instead," is now, for better or worse, over. So even as the endgame in this longstanding grudge match is played out, all sides would be wise to keep their eyes on the ultimate prize: a strong, well-funded school system that allows for district growth and unity, in a town that needs an excellent educational system to support an expanding economic base. The reverse of that - continued bleeding away of student enrolment and the loss of accompanying state aid - is a real and frightening possibility, unless a compromise that satisfies all sides is reached, and soon.

## LETTERS TO THE EDITOR



### And the Winners Are...

The winners of the Mohawk Ramblers Motorcycle Club Annual Fall Raffle are:

First Prize: Tina Petrin - two tickets to Patriots vs. Jets.

Second Prize: Marge Fisher - \$150 gift card to Ristorante DiPaolo.

Third Prize: Charlie Verderosa - \$100 cash.

Congratulations to the lucky winners, and thank you to all who participated!

-John Burek  
Montague

### Craft Fair Thanks!

This is to express our sincere thanks to Marianne Sundell for letting the Hampshire-Franklin Children's Day Care Center (HFCDC) provide the luncheon this year at the Wendell Holiday Fair. The fair was held this past weekend, and it was an amazing array of vendors selling beautiful crafts, and musicians playing wonderful music. We feel very fortunate for having the opportunity to use the luncheon as a fundraising event for our non-profit day care center. Not only did the fair generate some much-needed income for the center, but we got to meet many really kind, friendly people - and not a few who had children who attended

the daycare ten, 20, and even 30 years ago! Special thanks go to Dean's Beans, Big Y, and Stop & Shop for their generous donations toward the luncheon fundraiser. We truly hope we have the chance to make this a regular event.

-Melissa Grader  
Wendell

### Lyme Disease Inaccuracy

The article "Lyme Disease An Emerging Epidemic," by Emily Maiella (MR VI #9), is well written, and provides much useful history and background on Lyme disease and the life-cycle of ticks. However, the article includes inaccurate and troublesome information about treatment of "late stage, chronic Lyme disease." While the article does cite "the harsh and sometimes intolerable side effects of antibiotics," it errs in its claim that "a prolonged course (months to years) and high doses of antibiotics, sometimes intravenously" may be required.

The CDC (Communicable

Disease Center) treatment recommendation for Lyme disease is as follows: "Patients treated with antibiotics in the early stages of the infection usually recover rapidly and completely. A few patients, particularly those diagnosed with later stages of disease, may have persistent or recurrent symptoms. These patients may benefit from a second four-week course of therapy. Longer courses of antibiotic treatment have not been shown to be beneficial and have been linked to serious complications, including death." The CDC treatment approach to Lyme disease is supported by

continued next page



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MARINE CORPS LEAGUE

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

# GUEST EDITORIAL

## Ignoring the Fiscal Crisis at GMRSD

BY JEFF SINGLETON

**MONTAGUE CENTER** - I have a great deal of respect for Ken Roche, the current interim superintendent of the Gill-Montague Regional School District. But I must respectfully disagree with the positive spin he put on the recent state evaluation of the district.

My reading of this report is that state officials almost completely ignored the core problem faced by the local school district - the constant budget crisis that destabilizes the system and undermines support for public education. Instead, the report simply repeats the tired conventional wisdom that elementary school consolidation will solve the problem. Yet it presents no evidence for this conclusion.

Part of the problem is that dealing with the real crisis in local public education requires taking a good long look in the mirror. The state, under Education Reform in the late 1990s, encouraged local schools districts like the GMRSD to increase budgets to the point where they were unsustainable. Then the state backed off, dumping a huge burden on the cities and towns. Since 2000, the level of Chapter 70 state aid to the Gill-Montague district has been virtually flat, a recipe for disaster.

This core fiscal problem is compounded by school choice and the constantly rising cost of special education. Both of these are state and federal mandates that tend to negatively impact the poorest school districts the most.

And both of these mandates encourage a downward spiral, where the middle class essentially bails out of these districts. This, in turn, impacts fiscal stability (and test scores).

These problems are almost completely ignored in the report.

Of course local school districts (and towns!) need to take responsibility for the budget crisis too. They need to lower their "fixed costs" (wages, benefits and special education) and try to reduce school choice losses. There also needs to be better long-term fiscal planning, and probably periodic property tax overrides. But, ironically, the state report is virtually silent on these issues. As a matter of fact it seems to recommend a policy - closing a school with strong community support - that could cause even more school choice losses and make the situation worse.

Even on the issue of the elementary schools, there is almost no substance, and a lot of questionable analysis. There is little evidence to support the argument that consolidating elementary education will improve test scores or solve perennial budget problems. Instead, the report promotes the theory that closing a school (or moving the Gill 6th grade to the middle school) will show "leadership" and improve the reputation of the school committee. This is essentially a political argument commonly used by those who cannot justify consolidation on education or fiscal terms. It is sad to see a state

agency in charge of public education putting it forward.

In reality, the DOE is encouraging the district to close a high performing school and move everyone into a school that has been declared "underperforming" by the state itself. I know that last sentence will anger many people in the town and district. I don't blame you: labels like "underperforming" are insulting and often unfair.

But my point is, we have state and federal policy driven by the notion that schools are evaluated according to certain standards, particularly test scores. The state DOE comes here in part because some test scores are low and in part because last year the towns almost did not approve a school budget. So what does the DOE do? It essentially ignores the budget problem and provides fuel for those who want to close a school with high test scores.. Does this make any sense?

I know this appears harsh to the consultants who produced the evaluation. This is probably not mainly their fault. They only had a short time to deal with a complex local situation. The DOE appears to have tasked them to focus only on "leadership" and ignore the fiscal crisis. They also seem to have gotten some poor advice from (unnamed) "local officials" with an agenda.

Most importantly, the report simply reflects the broader problems of state education policy, which seems to be a bundle of contradictions.

**LETTERS continued**

the National Institutes of Health, Infectious Diseases Society of America, the American Academy of Neurology, and the Mayo Clinic.

Hopefully, better treatments

will emerge, whether natural or pharmaceutical, to provide more effective relief from the as-yet poorly understood Post-Lyme Syndrome.

- Allen Ross, M.D.  
Montague Center

## Dynamic Art Tour

As I explored downtown Turners Falls during the Arts & Icicles walking tour last weekend, I talked to several people about why this event continues to be so energizing to those who brave the rain, heat, wind, and other distractions of past tours. What we all mentioned, sooner or later, is that each event in the series showcases new artists and craftworkers.

But what I look forward to most is the chance to see how familiar exhibitors develop, expand, and change their artistic expression. This is no static

artistic community!

I am neither an educated Art Viewer nor a Creator, so the open studio tours expand my appreciation of the visual arts and let me talk to my creative neighbors on their own turf. I am glad to see the next tour is already scheduled for mid-May, and it's already on my calendar.

Many thanks to the organizers and sponsors, and I hope we all remember them when we do our shopping and eating out.

- John T Hanold  
Turners Falls

## Hunting on the Bike Path

Monday, November 26th, was the start of shotgun hunting season for deer. I know this not because I read about it any local papers, or read any public warning notices. I found out about it while walking along the bike path between Turners Falls and Montague City.

Out of the woods emerged three hunters dressed in camouflage and orange, presenting their shotguns as if to fire on any deer that might wander onto the bike path. Anyone familiar with the bike path knows there are plenty of notice signs of what can't be done in this area. I am quite surprised that hunting and the bearing of firearms isn't on the list of

prohibitions. If there is a law that prohibits hunting within 500 feet of a dwelling, then there sure should be a law that does not permit hunting alongside a frequently used public area.

As a result of this experience I have a few informal requests. First, to the hunters: Please hunt in the woods, which are plentiful in this area, and if you do come upon someone walking along a public bike path, at least put your guns down. Secondly, to town officials: try to pass an ordinance that prohibits hunting anywhere near the bike path. Lastly, to walkers: Wear Orange!

- Don Clegg  
Montague City

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## GUEST EDITORIALS

### Kemble Resigns as Community Health Center's Executive Director

BY JONATHAN VON RANSON

**WENDELL** - Eight or ten worried people - doctorless patients and ex-staff of the troubled Community Health Center of Franklin County - have been meeting every couple of weeks in Orange in recent months, to coordinate a community response to what they see as problems in the health center's management approach, and to help restore its lost function, especially in Orange. The health center's troubles - and the group's activity - are related to the departure of five providers and the resignation under duress of three members of the board of directors in the past few months, leaving a tight local healthcare situation even tighter.

Then came news last weekend of the resignation of the center's executive director, Dr. Sarah Kemble, and the six month leave of absence of medical director Dr. Wayne Hioe. But given the widespread anxiety over staff turnover and firings, charges and countercharges flying in the press, and the sharp, painful rift that exists within the health center community, and given especially that North Quabbin-area CHCFC patients today are left with virtually no primary care, there was no sense that the effort to heal the community health center ends with these departures.

The Orange center's physician, Dr. Steve Martin, resigned in October, a few months after a nurse practitioner there, William Levine, was fired. Despite the shortage of staff there, Orange staff are reportedly sometimes diverted to Turners Falls. The waiting time for services has lengthened at both locations. Dr. Joseph Andrews, an agency doctor from Lexington hired as a temporary fill-in, works only part-time. At the main facility in Turners Falls, it's said by staff that new patients are not being accepted.

An aide to congressman John Olver at his Holyoke office confirmed that "the delegation" - in this case state representatives Chris Donelan and Steve Kulik, state senator Stanley Rosenberg and the congressman himself - had been in touch with the health center prior to

Kemble's resignation, regarding the problems at the center.

Kemble is the founder, and recognized as an effective and single-minded promoter and fundraiser of the health center, which admirers have called "her baby." Many don't blame Kemble, who will be executive director until Dec. 31st, at all for the losses of staff and healthcare services. In a November 17th opinion piece in the *Greenfield Recorder*, Community Action! director Jane Sanders praised Kemble highly, pointed to a tight market and widespread high turnover in health care providers, and mentioned acts of "sabotage" by ex-staff. She alleged that one ex-staffer "pressured" potential new hires not to accept the job. She hinted at other "astonishing details," and said personnel privacy requires that "the full story can never be told." No source in the existing board or management to date has spoken of any real management missteps.

Rebecca Bialecki is executive director of the North Quabbin Community Coalition, and one of three who quit as a director of the health center board in October. The resignations happened after a struggle within the board over whether or not to accept a report from an outside consultant, Patricia Moore, who reviewed the situation at the health center. The struggle included a vote of no confidence in the three by their fellow directors. In a conversation for this article, Bialecki pointed to "quite a number of resignations" over time as evidence of the difficulty of working on the board. By her account, "We looked into the problems with the staff, and the end result was the board got the overwhelming sense of the staff being unhappy with management. We hired a consultant to recommend changes, to identify what the difficulties were. She did; she recommended changes, and that eventually brought us to this point."

The health center has 8,000 patients, whom the center is committed to serving without regard to their insurance status or

see **HEALTH** pg 12

### A Farewell Letter to Board and Staff

BY SARAH KEMBLE, MD, MPH  
Executive Director, Franklin County Community Health Center

We have come through a difficult week with the announcement of Dr. Hioe's leave of absence. Many, many thanks to Wayne for his three and a half years of service to the health center; he made many contributions, most of them (like Wayne himself) quiet and subtle, but powerful and important at the same time. I know how hard it is for people to let him have this break, but in many ways he has taken the worst brunt of the destructive campaign of the last year. Just as Wayne has offered respect and support to all individuals despite an extremely uncomfortable and polarized situation, now he deserves all of our gratitude and support to be with his young family.

Everyone is tired from the unprecedented challenges of the last year, and no one has escaped the effects. The last year has been so hard on each and every one of you. I regret the incredible stress we have all been under, and the toll that this has taken on the organization, in particular my prolonged preoccupation with crisis management and decreased availability to offer support to staff people when you all were under the same stress.

I truly believe that there is light at the end of the tunnel, and want to give everyone a sense of how I think the recovery process is going to happen. First, while our internal recovery is well underway, I have reached the very difficult personal decision that I am no longer the right person to continue leading the health center out of the crisis. For the good of our center I will resign as Executive Director effective December 31st. I have always been willing to do whatever I believed the health center needed from me, and this decision is no exception.

I am very pleased that, in a special meeting two nights ago, the board

appointed Jim Worden, who has agreed to step in as the acting Executive Director. This will start on January 1st, and Jim has agreed to continue until the board is able to hire my permanent replacement. I believe that in leaving I can take with me a lot of baggage from the last year's internal struggle, and this will allow the board and management team to go forward without being hobbled by ongoing sabotage of our hiring processes aimed at the lightning rod that I have unfortunately become.

Once our hiring process is able to go forward normally again, I have all the faith in the world that the management team and board members will be able to carry out a complete turnaround by this coming summer. Unfortunately due to the intentional interference and disruption of four medical provider hires, it's no secret to any of you that our clinical and financial situations have become precarious, and changes in our medical practice and staffing patterns will be necessary. There will be some lean months between now and next summer, but just as we have seen the incredible, amazing and wonderful flowering of our dental department over the last eight months, the same thing is going to happen for medical too, and I believe much more quickly with Jim as your acting Executive Director.

Over the years, I've become aware that it's normal for mission-driven organizations to have complicated feelings about and relationships with their founders. I was naïve about this before starting the health center, but I've learned that, to some people, founders can seem larger than life. I've been amazed to discover that because I did one good, hard thing in seeing the health center into existence, sometimes people have assumed I had super-human strengths and abilities that actually I do not feel inside at all. Founders are human, and must not be

see **KEMBLE** pg 12

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# TFHS Students Inducted into National Honor Society

BY ALI URBAN

**TURNERS FALLS** - For interim Gill-Montague Regional School District superintendent Kenneth Rocke, one of the high points of his job is to be able to honor students' achievements. He had an opportunity to do just that at a November 29th induction ceremony at the Turners Falls High School theater for nine new members of the George F. Wrightson chapter of the National Honor Society (NHS).

Rocke addressed the inductees, saying that to enjoy reading, learning and thinking is a "valuable tool (that will) serve you well in the rest of your life," which will be an inspiration to continue learning and studying. He encouraged the students to create a habit of learning, and to enjoy the learning process.

To be inducted in the NHS, juniors or seniors must achieve a grade point average of 3.5 to 4.0. Students must then complete an application listing their co-curricular activities, leadership positions, service and community activities, work experience and recognition and awards. A faculty selection committee then reviews the applications and decides which students will be inducted.

Selection is based on students' scholarship, service,

leadership and character. NHS officers highlighted these qualities with a candle-lighting ceremony at the induction, explaining their importance.

Senior Molly Perry, the co-secretary of the George F. Wrightson chapter of the National Honor Society, shared with new members the importance of leadership, noting that leadership requires a level of maturity. "You need to make decisions and recognize their effect on people," she said. She believes that leaders must be able to admit

when they are wrong and listen to other people's ideas.

School committee chair Mary Kociela addressed the group for their distinguished honor. "This honor is also a reflection of who you are as persons and reflects your values, principles and integrity," she said.

Upper school principal Jeff Kenney agreed. "(This is) a truly outstanding group of young men

and women," he said. He added that NHS is an important tradition of excellence at TFHS, and the members are charged with meeting a high set expectations.



Left to right bottom: Ali Urban, Kayla Pecor, Gina Varuzzo, Molly Perry, Alix Ackerman, Alex Tufano; left to right middle: Stephanie Johy, Samuel Johnson, Abbey Daniel-Green, Amanda Golembeski, Amy Baxter, Katie Christenson; left to right back row: L-R Top: Samuel Colton, Theodore Dunbar, Joshua Gammon, Amber Henry, Brittany Mazor, Sara Pease, Nicholas Skarzynski.

New members were presented with membership pins and certificates of membership by Rocke and Kenney. The new members also signed the membership book, which contains signatures of earlier members dating from 1975.

Samuel Colton, a junior, was honored to be selected for induction. He said he is looking forward to the community

service opportunities offered through the NHS. "I'm excited about caroling at the nursing homes," he said. "I think everyone will like it."

Joyce Phillips, a member of the Gill-Montague Regional School District school committee and keynote speaker at the induction, commended students for their hard word and reminded them that "any

recognition is just the icing on the cake, not to be expected, but definitely to be enjoyed."

She noted that scholarship is more than outstanding grades but a "life-long love of learning...a sum of small choices." She also said that community service deepens academic learning with a connection between what a teacher is saying and the world outside the classroom.

Under the guidance of advisors Mary Jane Prasol and Lisa West, the National Honor Society members participate in several community service activities including caroling for the elderly for the holidays, raising money for cancer research and organizing a prom fashion show to benefit a charity of choice.

New members inducted into the George F. Wrightson chapter of the National Honor Society were: Amy Baxter, Katie Christenson, Samuel Colton, Theodore Dunbar, Joshua Gammon, Amber Henry, Brittany Mazor, Sara Pease and Nicholas Skarzynski.

## HIGHLIGHTS FROM THE GILL POLICE LOG

### Accident Reports

**Wednesday 11-28**

11:05 a.m. Alarm sounding at French King Highway business, all secure upon arrival.

8:45 p.m. Attempted warrant service on West Gill, subject not at residence.

**Thursday 11-29**

6:03 p.m. Report of possible narcotic activity at French King Highway business, under investigation.

**Saturday 12-1**

1:31 p.m. Report that fire extinguisher system had activated at the Gill Mobil station, checked with fire department.

**Sunday 12-2**

7:20 a.m. Arrested [redacted] charged with assault and battery.

9:25 p.m. Stayed in area of Northfield town line to assist Northfield police with domestic disturbance.

10:01 p.m. Assisted with

motor vehicle lock-out at Main Road business.

**Monday 12-3**

12:20 a.m. Report of loose cows on West Gill Road.

11:59 a.m. Motor vehicle accident on West Gill Road, no injuries.

**Tuesday 12-4**

6:59 p.m. Report of car on its side on West Gill Road near South Cross Road, checked area, unable to locate

## HIGHLIGHTS FROM THE MONTAGUE POLICE LOG

### Assaults & Larceny

**Thursday 11-29**

6:52 a.m. Report of vandalism at the gatehouse at the Turners Falls Dam on 1st Street. A pumpkin was dropped from the bridge and a truck windshield was smashed. Report taken.

**Friday 11-30**

11:48 a.m. Report of a larceny at the Carnegie Library. A wallet was stolen. Report taken.

**Saturday 12-1**

1:39 p.m. Report of a loud

noise disturbance from a 4th Street address. [redacted]

was arrested on a straight warrant.

**Sunday 12-2**

4:04 p.m. Report of an assault in the alley between 4th Street and 3rd Streets. Caller states he was jumped by a known assailant. Advised of options.

**Monday 12-3**

11:37 a.m. Report of a motor vehicle theft from the

1st Street alley. Motor vehicle had been towed. 12:40 p.m. Walk in to station reported a past assault at a Bridge Street address. Assailant was known to reporting party. Advised of options.

5:56 p.m. Report of a unwanted person at a 2nd Street address. Woman was causing a disturbance. Gone on arrival.

**Tuesday 12-4**

8:48 a.m. Report of a car vs deer accident on Route 63 at Gunn Road. Report taken.

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## NOTES FROM THE WENDELL SELECTBOARD

# Building Report Back on the Agenda

**BY JOSH HEINEMANN** - The November 28th meeting of the Wendell selectboard was so short that selectboard member Dan Keller decided to reintroduce "our favorite part of the meeting," the building update. With the municipal building projects complete at the new library and the new town office building, the focus is now on converting the old library building into a senior center, and the renovations needed at the town hall for Good Neighbors food pantry to move there.

At the old library, the grinder pump has been installed for the bathroom, and the water line is connected. Tom Chaisson refinished the cellar floor. Librarian Rose Heidkamp said that starting the heat for the first time of the season in the old building is tricky, and selectboard chair Ted Lewis said with water in the pipes they should hurry up and get the heat on. Heat will also help keep the cellar humidity down in the winter. In summer, a dehumidifier will be necessary.

The building has no insulation whatsoever, and what Heidkamp said was true; at the old library, the books *were* the insulation. Selectboard member Christine Heard said the company that insulated her house, Eastern Weatherization, did a good job.

Because the town hall renovations needed for Good

Neighbors involves a building that was not part of the original project, transferring money for that will have to be authorized at a special town meeting, to be held December 19th.

Carolyn Manley, as a member of the interior design committee, made a brief appearance in the selectboard office to say the committee had purchased some art for the halls of the new office building, including a painting by Bob Ellis of Montague Road, and a photograph by Gloria Kegeles, of Cooleyville Road, and some photographs taken by former residents of Wendell.

Town coordinator Nancy Aldrich opened the meeting by reporting the state is reimbursing Wendell \$2,424.09 for road reconstruction needed after the floods of October 2005. Lewis wondered when the town would receive reimbursement for tornado clean up, from the following year. Aldrich also reported that a private company has installed a satellite dish, connected to her computer. However, that access is not through the office building, and discussion followed about the logistics of wired access to the dish through the new building.

Aldrich had a copy of the warrant for the December 19th special town meeting. Most of the articles are for money transfers. This year the town has \$265,248 in free cash, which the

selectboard wants to put into stabilization, except for \$600 to purchase three six-foot tables, and three eight-foot tables, to replace old ones in the town hall.

As a member of the landscape committee, Heard said the committee would be spreading mulch around the plantings at the library on Saturday, December 1st, from 11 a.m. to noon. December 1st was cold with a biting wind, but at the scheduled time three women were there at the library spreading mulch.

Aldrich read a notice distributed by the Athol Chamber

office building and the library are already tight and the style that mounts into grass and soil would be a better choice.

Lewis said the town traditionally gives road workers the day before Christmas and New Years Day off with pay, unless snow makes plowing and sanding necessary. This year the road crew saved the town thousands of dollars in construction costs, and they deserve at least that, Lewis said, and Keller and Heard agreed.

Jonathan von Ranson met the board, continuing his effort to

sense, and I support you, and the other board members agreed at least a little. Aldrich said that building inspector Phil Delorey thought the selectboard was not the right venue to start such a discussion.

Heard said that it seemed like he was asking for the selectboard's support without much research, and von Ranson said he was wondering where to start his legal path. One issue that came up when he spoke with people at the Franklin County Housing Authority was the requirement for hard-wired smoke detectors in new construction.

Lewis said he saw three issues that may give von Ranson trouble, especially in a secondary dwelling: the septic system, the hard-wired smoke detectors, and a backup heating system. He said a wood stove heated house was required to have a back-up heat source, but an oil-fired system does not. Everyone in the room was puzzled at this, because a wood stove works whenever it is fed, but an oil furnace fails whenever the electric power is interrupted.

Keller recommended a visit to the building inspector, and Aldrich recommended the board of health. Lewis said the right person at the Franklin Housing Authority might help von Ranson find his way through the legal maze he will be facing.

"At the old library, the books *were* the insulation"

- Rose Heidkamp  
Wendell Librarian

of Commerce announcing a "Buy Local" craft fair, open and free to the public at the Athol town hall on Saturday, December 8th and Sunday, December 9th. Tables are still available to vendors, and the fair draws thousands of visitors.

The Franklin Council of Governments is offering free bike racks in two different styles, one that sits on pavement, and one mounted into soil. Board members decided the walks and parking areas at both the town

find a legal way to include a low footprint apartment with no electricity, a composting toilet, and a wastewater disposal system sized to accept the amount of water that a hand pump would supply in the barn he is rebuilding on Locke Village Road. Code allows for a 60% sized septic leach field with a composting toilet, but that still assumes hot and cold running water supplied by an electric pump or town water.

Keller said the idea makes

## SCHOOLS from pg 1

dents attend Gill Elementary School in combined classes of fifth and sixth graders, rather than attending the middle school with their peers. Consequently, the Director of Teaching and Learning, Grades 6 - 12 [Anna Stina Ohlson] will have to oversee the offsite work of the teacher of these seven students."

The report faults the school committee for failing to provide "sufficient leadership to enable the district to make academic progress. The Committee's inability to effectively address and resolve issues related to grade configuration and elementary school building closings impedes the district's progress and undermines public support."

Throughout the report, the

failure on the school committee's part to make a final decision on school closing is highlighted as a factor that drains away administrative time and school committee attention that could otherwise be devoted to improving educational outcomes for G-M students.

However, interviewed after the report's release, interim GMRSD superintendent Ken Rocke stressed, "We are not saying we will save a ton of money," by closing elementary schools. He said there would not be much if any reduction in the size of the district's teaching faculty, since, except for a few small classes at Gill and Montague Center schools, class sizes at the high school, middle school and larger elementary schools are already "maxed out," and the district is under pressure from the DOE to add

back programs that will engage students at risk of dropping out at the high school level, or are in need of special education, math or reading help. As to savings on utility or maintenance costs, "Unless you are willing to abandon buildings, you wind up heating them to 55 degrees at least, plowing them for access in a fire, and doing basic maintenance on them." Rocke also said that if a school building were closed and turned back to the town, the town would simply assume the cost of heating and maintaining that building, rather than the school district, providing little relief for local taxpayers.

Yet, Rocke said, "The gains tend to come in ancillary positions, such as administrative staff, nurses," and the like. And school

consolidation would also provide the district with the ability to deliver educational services more efficiently, while enhancing "the power of a professional learning community" for the teachers, who can otherwise be isolated in far-flung, smaller district schools.

In contrast to their assessment of the school committee, the review team gave Rocke high marks for his leadership of the district, which he began serving in June of this year, only four months before the team's visit. Still, school and town officials were united in their regard of "his strong leadership in making progress on two significant and vexing issues: employee health care costs and elementary school closings." Under Rocke's tenure, the GMRSD forged an

agreement with teachers and staff to join the cost-saving state health plan, the Group Insurance Commission, one of the few districts statewide that were able to do so under the tight timeframe provided this year.

The report noted Rocke, a retired superintendent on state pension, is serving the GMRSD on an interim basis, and his contract is due to expire at the end of the present school year. Negotiations are ongoing between the school committee and Rocke to extend that contract, but the report notes Rocke may be "willing and eligible to service the district for only one or two additional years," leaving the question of longer term leadership for the school district up in the air.



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**NOTES FROM THE ERVING SELECTBOARD**

# Past Due Usher Demolition Bill Will Be Paid

**BY NICHOLE CLAYTON**

On December 3rd, Clayton 'Buster' Davenport approached the board with a bill for the work his company, Davenport Trucking, of Greenfield, performed at the town's request following the July 30th arson fire at the Usher Mill on Arch Street in Erving Center. Following the containment of that blaze, fire chief Mick LaClaire had called in Davenport to bring an excavator and demolish a brick wall facing the Millers River, so the fire department could more easily douse the embers. Davenport has been waiting on payment ever since, and said he has been unable to collect from the former plant owners, Morris Housen and family.

Erving administrative coordinator Tom Sharp said that LaClaire had told him that Housen had made assurances on the day after the fire that he would be willing to pay for the excavator's bill. Based on that assurance, LaClaire said he called Davenport to do the work. The bill is in the amount of \$6,600, and has been outstanding for four months.

Since LaClaire had called Davenport to do the work on behalf of the town, the board asked the finance committee to pay the bill from reserve funds. The board will now take steps to collect the funds from the mill's previous owners, Housen and family.

A few weeks after the fire, a company called Patriots Environmental, an asbestos removal contractor from Worcester, purchased the Usher Mill in early August, for a token sum, and paid the town back taxes that had accumulated on the property in the amount of \$194,135.91. At the closing, the company's president, Ron Bussiere, made assurances that he would have the remaining buildings on the property demolished, as Franklin County cooperative building inspector Jim Hawkins had ordered, and removed by the beginning of September. "Heavy equipment has been parked on site since then," said Sharp. "But nothing has been done there since they purchased the property."

Hawkins said an order to "board and secure" the Usher Mill had been outstanding since 2000, but following the fire, demolition of nearly all the buildings, except for one boiler room, has become a matter of public safety. He said court action is contemplated against Bussiere if he continues to delay complying. "He's dragging his feet," Hawkins said.

In other news from the December 3rd selectboard meeting, Geoff Rogers from the Hampshire Council of

Governments' 'Hampshire Power' program, a non-profit energy broker which is licensed by the Commonwealth to buy and sell electricity on the wholesale market, came to the board with a proposal for Erving to sign up with Hampshire Power, and provided numbers to demonstrate the potential cost savings for the town's electric bills. If Erving had signed on with Hampshire Power last year, they would have seen a savings of around \$24,000, Rogers said. He noted that Belchertown had saved \$155,000 by buying electricity through Hampshire Power last year, while Palmer has shown a savings of \$60,000 in a nine-month period since signing up, Rogers said.

Since last year, Erving has participated in a similar wholesale electricity buying program, called Design for Energy Management, which has saved the town money over the past year. However, the amount saved is not as significant as the savings Rogers forecasted. "In the first quarter, the savings [the town realized with DEM] was about \$1500," said Sharp.

Rogers explained the difference in scale of the savings, saying, "This is due to the fact that the company currently used is not a non-profit company, like Hampshire Power."

The board expressed interest, asked Rogers to draw up a contract, and said they will proceed once they see the proposal in writing.

Budget season is approaching, and the selectboard issued their annual invitation to the school committee to join them, along with the finance committee, so everyone could get on the same page in advance of the new year. The school committee only had one member, Melanie Burnett, show up to the meeting, along with Union 28 business manager Charlie Paulin.

The board looked forward to meeting with the entire school committee, according to board chair Andy Tessier, because "We really need the school committee to understand that we ask every committee to level fund. The budget is tight this year and they need to level fund, not level service," Tessier emphasized. He hoped the committee is using caution and restraint while negotiating wage increases for staff this year.

"We need the school committee to get on board this year. We want to support education, but I do not know how, with the increases every year," Tessier said.

Finance committee member Stanley Gradowski jumped in saying, "The school's budget has gone up \$100,000 in the past

four years. That is ridiculous. As far as the MCAS test, the school notes they have improved, but they are still in the bottom ten percent in the state, and that is just criminal in my opinion." The finance committee said teacher salaries and school staff wages have increased 18% over the past three years, which exceeds all other salary increases for the town of Erving.

"The board emphasized the town would have only about \$300,000 in new revenues to work with, over and above last year's revenues," said Sharp, after the meeting. "There was \$19,000 remaining untapped in the town's tax levy last year," he added. "That [extra] money is going to get eaten up really quickly with energy costs, health insurance and contracted wage increases," Sharp predicted.

Paulin said, "Our children ought to shine, because we have put a lot of resources out there for them." However he asked the selectboard to keep in mind, "The population is growing in the school system."

The board awarded the bids for salt at \$62.08 per ton to low bidder Granite Salt, and the sand bid to low bidder Bob Cook out of Northfield at \$8.20 per ton. "We estimate we use about 600 tons of sand," said Sharp. "Most of our roads are maintained by the state," he added.

**In news from previous selectboard meetings, on**

**Monday, November 19th:**

The board accepted a letter of resignation from Mike Pierce, the operating manager of Erving's wastewater treatment plants, effective November 23rd. Erving has recently hired Arthur Pace as environmental supervisor to oversee the operations of the three wastewater treatment facilities. Pierce accepted a job in Easthampton's water treatment plant, after working for Erving for 21 years.

Sharp said Pace has recommended the town "wait and see how much he and plant worker Cal Taylor can accomplish for the here and now," before hiring a replacement for Pierce.

The board held a public hearing on a request from Ralph Semb, owner of the French King Bowling Alley, to transfer to his name the liquor license currently held by Gary Betters, who owned and ran the former Country Living restaurant, which Semb has purchased and renamed *Jillian's on the '2.'* Semb has hired Betters' son Ryan to manage and cook for the new establishment, to provide continuity for the clientele. The board approved the transfer, and sent the request on to the Massachusetts Alcoholic Beverages Control Commission.

**On Monday the 26th of November:** the board held a

public hearing on the town's 2008 Community development block grant application. About a dozen residents turned out for the hearing, with senior citizens predominating. Two main priorities were identified for CDBG funding, namely continuing to seek state money for the zero percent housing rehabilitation program that has been offered for a number of years in Erving, and the second being a new senior center, to be located on town-owned land near the elementary school. This land is also the target area for a proposed new senior housing complex, to be financed with the help of Rural Development Incorporated. Sharp said the town would seek CDBG funds for design of a new senior center, and to prepare bid ready plans for same.

The board also reviewed Erving's Commonwealth Capital program. The town's participation in the program, which ranks communities across the state on their progress in providing such things as open space, agricultural preservation and affordable housing, would make Erving more competitive for state grants. The board is specifically interested in qualifying for state revolving fund money for the upcoming \$6.4 million wastewater treatment plant renovation in Erving'side.

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# What is Art?

a

## What is art?

"Well, for me the art that comes out of me is inspiration, things that I see, feelings that I have for the world around me, and so then it comes out in the paintings. So I have to say art is whatever the inspiration is in each individual artist. That could come out in whatever it is that you're doing whether it is quilts, paintings, or woodworking or whatever. So that's it, inspiration."

- James Whitbeck, Montague City



b

## What is art?

"I have no clue what art is. I just like to make it."

- Joe Landry, Turners Falls

## What are icicles?

"Art." - Jack Nelson, Turners Falls



c

## What is art?

"To me art is expression and reflection on different aspects of life, and then incorporating it visually to express it through your way, to share with others, then letting them finish paintings or sculpture or anything that you're working on (in their minds). To share your way with others and let them experience it too and let them put their own story on it."

- Derrick Zellman, Turners Falls



d

## What are icicles?

"Icicles are my fingers as I take photographs of icicles." - Janel Nockleby, Turners Falls

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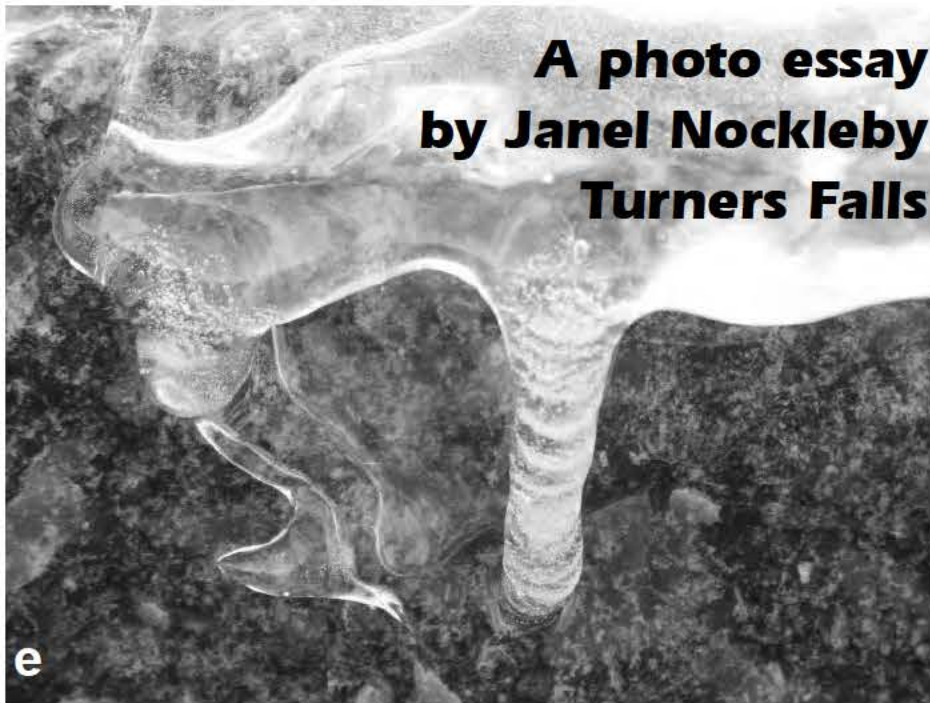
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# What are Icicles?



**A photo essay  
by Janel Nockleby  
Turners Falls**

## What are icicles?

"The darkest matter there is. They convert light, they expand, they refract. Icicles are dark matter." - Neil Young,

**Photo captions:**

a - James Whitbeck in front of his oil painting at the Great Falls Discovery Center; b - Jack Nelson Sculpture at 2nd Street Baking Co.; c - Derrick J. Zellman in front of his painting at the Great Falls Discovery Center; d - Frog painting by Zack, 7th Grade Exhibit "Watershed Wildlife," teacher Mandy Lock, Four Rivers Charter Public School; e - Icicles by the power canal by the Discovery Center; f - Art gazers at 3rd street gallery



## What is art?

"Art's an old friend of mine." - Patricia Pruitt, Turners Falls

*All photos and comments recorded during the Art Walk weekend December 1st and 2nd in Turners Falls*

# RiverCulture Brings Big Bucks to the Region

**BY CHRISTOPHER SAWYER-LAUCANNO**

**TURNERS FALLS** - To anyone who has spent any time at all over the last few years in Turners Falls, it is pretty evident that the downtown is far more vibrant than it has been in recent memory. And it's not just the Hallmark Museum or Ristorante Dipaolo or the Rendezvous that are making the difference, though certainly they are major contributors to the rejuvenation of downtown. It's more than just these marvelous destinations that make the difference. It's the feeling one gets while strolling along the Avenue these days, so vastly different from what it was just three years ago. In short, Turners feels good, feels alive, feels energetic and energized.

Last weekend, for instance, despite blustery cold, the downtown was filled with folks wandering from art venue to art venue, stopping along the way at Avenue A Café or Second Street Bakery or the Rendezvous for a warming bite or a hot drink. As more than one person remarked to me last weekend, "Turners is the place to be."

Those of us who live here already know this, but you do not need to trust only feelings any longer to feel good about what is happening here. The Center for Policy Analysis at UMASS Dartmouth has just completed a survey that documented the economic impacts of Turners Falls RiverCulture's collective programming on the local community. And the

results are fairly amazing: Cultural programming in Turners Falls generated a total regional economic impact of \$785,399 last year, according to the study. The total is based on attendance and expenditure data from cultural visitors and partner organizations producing programming through direct, indirect and induced impacts. It also created an additional 8.6 full-time equivalent year-round jobs. The major employment impacts occurred in non-profit organizations, independent artists and eating and drinking establishments.

A primary goal of RiverCulture is to encourage the development of creative and cultural industries in Turners Falls that attract residents and visitors, and the survey results

clearly demonstrate success in creating this cultural synergy. For example, more than nine in ten respondents indicated they would return to Turners Falls for other RiverCulture events based on their experience, and more than four in five respondents said that they would return to Turners Falls to shop, eat or engage in another activity even if a RiverCulture event were not being held. More than 300 visitor surveys were completed by attendants at RiverCulture events, with 36.6% of respondents from Montague, 21.5% from Greenfield, and the rest coming from other towns, or even out of state, to attend events in Turners Falls.

The report only focuses on programming in Turners Falls

by the RiverCulture partnership to include Shea Theater, Great Falls Discovery Center, Hallmark Museum of Contemporary Photography, the Brick House Community Resource Center, Carnegie Library, Friends of Wissatinnewag, Northfield Mountain Recreation and Environmental Center, Franklin County Chamber of Commerce, Suzee's Third Street Laundry, Jack Nelson, Eileen Dowd, Fostering Arts and Culture Partnership and RiverCulture signature projects.

One member of Montague's selectboard likes to quip that "Montague needs to get a night job." When the results of this report are better known, it will become clear we already have one.

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**HEALTH** from pg 6

ability to pay for services. Asked her impressions of the current situation at the health center, one of them, Suzette Snow-Cobb, who with her children is a patient at the Turners Falls facility, expressed sympathy with the sheer difficulty of managing such an institution. She could imagine, she said, "if you're not totally vigilant, communications breakdowns occur" due to the sheer number of constituencies and the various levels - "board, management, staff, insurance companies, the state... changes in regulations

and treatments, all the things happening around healthcare, the new changes in access..." Snow-Cobb works on the management team of Green Fields Market and refers staff to health care providers under the store's health insurance policy. It "would be a significant impact," she said, not to be able to refer them to the Community Health Center, since "some of them are new in the area and others aren't yet hooked up with a private practice."

A patient at the Orange facility, Norman Bouchard of Athol, said Dr. Martin had been his doctor, and "It's a

shame for a good doctor to go." He visited Dr. Andrews, the doctor hired temporarily to replace Martin, and complained that he, too, is about to leave.

"When you're over 60," he added, "it's very difficult being shoved around."

Bouchard said he was one of those who "made up signs and picketed in front of Dr. Martin's office to try to get him to stay."

Bouchard added that Orange is unlucky. "It seems like in this area here, it's always bogging down with problems. Something gets started, then it quits. No, I

don't like it a bit."

A current board member, Judy Atkins, assigned no blame. She offered her thought that "The Orange community is different than the Greenfield community - more close-knit," and therefore naturally inclined to go its own way. "It's a problem of spawning new health centers," she said, "the way the Franklin County center broke away from Holyoke. It's not a bad thing; it just wasn't a phenomenon that was recognized at first, before the hurt started to happen. I really think there were the best of intentions on both sides."

Ex-board member Bialecki

wanted to speak of the center's assets and prospects for the future: "The health center has wonderful facilities," she said, "wonderful staff - support staff, many of whom are still at the health center - and it gives a great opportunity to make good changes and rebuild the health center."

*Jonathan von Ranson is a patient at the Community Health Center of Franklin County. He has been working with a group of ex-staff and patients and writing letters to, in his words, "encourage constructive changes at the health center."*



**KEMBLE** from pg 6

seen as the owners of what they started, or as having any special proprietary hold over the mission. I, like all health center employees, have been lucky to have a really good job here - in my case, for the last twelve years. I have always approached my job with a focus

on high quality care, responsible use of public resources, consistent and fair treatment of all patients and employees, and building an institution that can and will survive the departure of us all.

I have always known that from the moment a good idea (such as the health center) takes root in reality, the role of the

founder begins to diminish. This is the way it should be! For the organization to grow and truly thrive, many must add their efforts and hearts to the endeavor. To succeed, many must carry it forward. This has been happening all along; for example, one of the happiest days of my life with the health center was the day Wayne became Medical Director and I stopped being acting Medical Director! It will continue to happen. I always hoped that, in spite of my deep attachment to the center and of course to so many of you, that I would be able to recognize when that moment inevitably arrived for me to let go of the health center, and for the health center to let go of me.

Some of you know that while I have many strong beliefs, I am not a religious person. In spite of this, I do very much admire the golden rule and the serenity prayer, and wish I could follow both of them at all times. I have received a lot of personal comfort from those wise words - in medical practice, in life, and in facing the challenges of the last year.

I won't try to pretend that I've enjoyed how it has all come about, but I know that the moment for letting go has arrived. Some of you will disagree. You will disagree with each other too - some will say I waited far too long, others will

say I should have hung on longer. My personal thinking right now is that our community needs me more to be a full-time doctor, while the nature of the health center's organizational challenges and the work that the leadership must carry out is work that I am no longer the best person to lead.

How fortunate the community is that Jim is exactly the right person, and that he is ready, willing and able to take up this challenge! I want to encourage everyone who can to stick with the health center and give Jim and each other your respect and support, going forward constructively together, as a team. There are many good medical provider candidates in the wings, and (remember dental!) we are truly only three or four hires away from being a totally healthy organization once again.

Years ago, when I was reacting emotionally to an earlier health center crisis (the crisis itself is long gone from my memory), my dear mentor Des Callan said, "there will be casualties." It's tough right now to be one of the casualties, but I agree with the point that Des was making, that this (and all turnover) is an inevitable aspect of change and growth. The process is healthy and necessary. The comings and goings of individuals are personal transitions, but will never be a cata-

strophe for the organization; the assumption that there is always someone to blame whenever someone leaves their job can be destructive in itself. Learn to weather turnover; in this health care environment, it isn't going to change any time soon. It's OK to be sad too (I sure hope it is). But sadness doesn't last forever; life will go on.

For me, life going on will involve taking a break to be with my family (let's see if they remember who I am)! After that I will go into private practice. Given the critical shortage of primary care doctors, full-time primary care practice is where I now believe the community needs me, and it's where I always wanted to be too. Many of my long-term patients can verify that this was actually my plan ten years ago, to be able to do patient care full-time once the health center was up and running. So I'll get my wish.

Please know that all employees, board members and your family members are welcome to continue with me as a primary care doctor in a couple of months, once I'm back in business. If you wish to talk before or after I leave the health center, my door is (almost) always open.

Thank you from the bottom of my heart for all these good years doing this great work together. Keep it going - make it better!



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### SHOW from pg 1

trends, for others it was not settling on a theme before starting on their outfits, and finding little to guide them in the worn camouflage pants and sheer polyester blouses.

It might be fashion made from cast-off clothing, but it was clear from the attention to detail the designers gave it their all, putting hours and hours into their creations.

Tickets for the show were hard to come by given the number of participants: opening bands, designers, models, and their respective entourages. For those who didn't score a ticket, the fashion show was simulcast - like any gala should be - at the Rendezvous bar next door.

Two bands, 'the lower case g's' and 'IGANIC sound system' started the festivities. Since Janke didn't have time this year to get a temporary liquor license and hire a bartender for the laundromat, most of the fashion show patrons repaired to the Rendezvous, co-owned by Janke. While this was convenient, it also meant that festivities at the laundromat got off to a slower start with the party happening next door, and the bands played to a much smaller audience than in previous years.

The crowd grew restless as 10:30 p.m. came and went with still no sign of the models. Backstage, or rather, in the basement amidst cast-off furniture, books and odds and ends, models and designers crowded around mirrors to apply make-up and arrange their hair. Still others used the narrow aisle to



DETMOLD PHOTOS

The area's top models strut their stuff on Suzee's catwalk. Left to right: Zoe Weizenbaum, Rachel Teumin and Jennifer Dewitt.

ready to file upstairs.

First down the runway was Rachel Teumin's collection - a redefinition of prep and jock, a blast from the future. The women wore a colorful mix of fleece and other active wear cut up and put back together in entirely new configurations. One male model sported a jacket he removed to reveal a preppy striped shirt with cut out sleeves and back, the polo symbol "tattooed" in the center of his back. Illustrating the future of football fan style was a model sporting a multicolored Mohawk, leather jacket, and fleece skirt.

As the beats blared from the sound system, Anja Schutz went next with a collection of five distinctive dresses made from t-shirts and sweatshirts, as well as ties ingeniously redesigned as neck straps. The collection included frocks inspired by flappers, candy stripers, school girl innocence, evening wear (the bosom of which was stitched together by Schutz as the models lined up to go on), and a cut-up hooded sweatshirt rock'n roll enough to wear on the street. Several models wore fetching hats as well, giving the designs a pulled-together look.

Below: bouncer James Damon and Sarah Swanson, lookin' stylish themselves



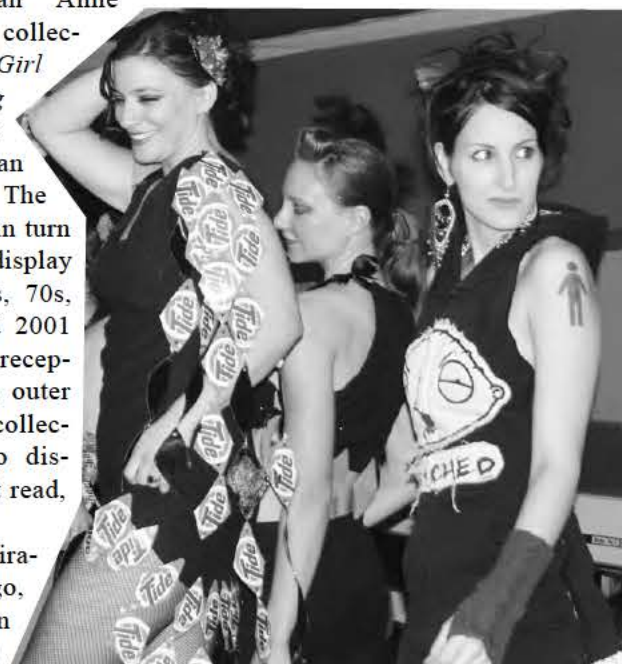
Thomas Anderson says Fleece and Leather practice their catwalk, as seasoned veterans of the fashion show gave tips on how to manage the notoriously slippery runway. Tension ran high as last minute adjustments were made. Finally, the models stood shivering in their outfits,



Fashion show veteran Anne Harding unveiled a frisky collection to the tune of *I Want a Girl in a Short Skirt and a Long Jacket*. A skit played out as the models preened for a man at the end of the runway. The picky fellow rejected each in turn as they removed jackets to display skirts representing the 20s, 70s, 80s, a 90s power suit and 2001 sass. The man got a great reception when he removed his outer clothing in the collection's finale to display a shirt that read, "I Want Suzee."

Sarah Pruitt found inspiration in the seductive tango, clothing her models all in black, for a new take on the little black dress. For accent the designer used diamonds cut out of laundry soap boxes. These were sewn on the hems of dresses as fringe, a dramatic train, and on the corset of her harlequin-inspired design. The women wore fishnets, high black heels and flowers in their hair for a cohesive look. Her male model wore all black and a mask, a sort of mystery man with whom the women could do the dance.

Throughout the show the crowd hooted and hollered, clearly delighting in the spectacle, as Jaime Berger kept up a constant patter from the MC's chair atop a triple loading washer. But will the fashion show be back again next year? Chris Janke doesn't have a definitive answer. The most he'll say is that he assumes he'll do it annually. He says this year's show went more smoothly than last, but there's still the matter



Above: Left to right: Cheri Monette, Jennifer Dewitt, and Anja Schutz, take their final turn on the catwalk.



The incandescent Cathe Janke

of managing the anticipation for two or more hours until the fashion show begins. That means finding the right entertainment to keep people happy, building the evening to the perfect pitch of excitement. And what could be more exciting than Montague's own fashion show, at Suzee's?



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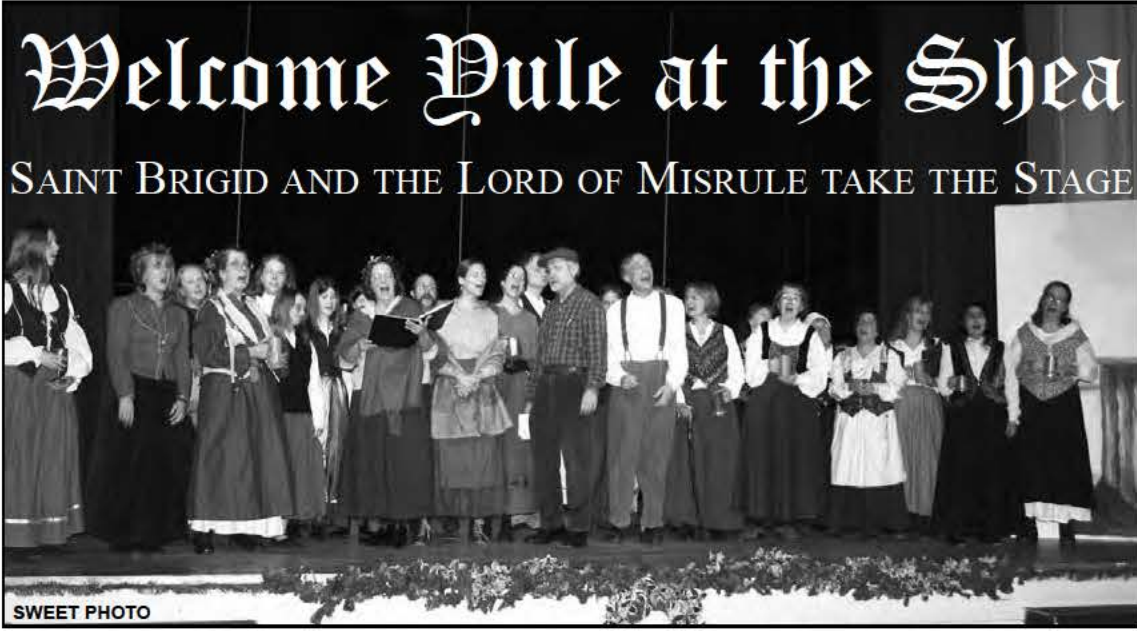


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SWEET PHOTO

Merriment and laughter rule as *Welcome Yule*, the community winter solstice celebration, returns to the Shea Theater for its 23rd season. Shows Friday December 7th, Saturday December 8th, and Sunday December 9th.

**BY BRIDGET SWEET**  
**TURNERS FALLS** - Welcome Yule returns to the Shea Theater in Turners Falls this weekend for the 23rd annual community winter solstice celebration, with shows Friday, December 7th and Saturday, December 8th at 7:30 p.m., and Sunday, December 9th at 2 p.m.  
 Get ready for merriment and laughter, and toe tapping chorales to chase the winter dark away. The play is set in an English

village, when Irish visitors come calling. The main stars are Brigid and Mad Sweeny, played by Kate Richardson and Ijod Schroeder.  
 Richardson returns for her second year in the Welcome Yule company, to take the role of "Brigid," the Celtic goddess of healing, poetry and smithcraft. Richardson said she was "honored they chose me to be Brigid. It's a pleasure, spending time, singing with them. I feel there is a magic in it."

Richardson can be seen on stage smiling or singing throughout the play; she portrays Saint Brigid in a quiet, demure way.  
 Ijod Schroeder is "Mad Sweeny" also known as "the Lord of Misrule." He can be seen with a twinkle in his eye hopping, dancing or playing the accordion throughout the show. Schroeder commented, "I like creating mischief." This is his third consecutive year appearing in Welcome Yule, and fifteenth year

with the production in total, so that's a lot of mischief over the years.  
 Northfield's Jed Proujansky is back for his second year as stage director. His job is to bring a modicum of order to the proceedings; at rehearsal he keeps the whole picture in mind and gets the actors to their places, and prompts them on their parts with plenty of humor.  
 Jinny Mason and Alan McArdle produce this year's play, with a cast of 49. They've "been involved in Welcome Yule since it was held in Amherst, about 19 or 20 years ago. Our three children starred in it until they were sixteen years old," Mason said. Mason plays an Englishwoman, and a green dragon, while McArdle plays Dark Winter.  
 Liz Smith is Welcome Yule's artistic director of three years running. This year, she plays an Englishwoman, as well. Her eight-year-old son, Granger, is also in the play, one of many children from the community to take part.  
 Louise Doud, in her twelfth year with the production, is director of the children's chorus. With fourteen children between the ages of six and eleven to

instruct, she has her creative hands full. "They have a fun time singing and being with their friends," Doud said. She plays an Irishwoman on stage.  
 Julie Jonassen plays an Englishwoman and doubles as choral director. She has her pitch pipe ready for the singers off-stage when needed.  
 Doud with Jonassen's help researched the music and developed arrangements with the cast in mind. Melodious songs such as: Christ Child Lullaby, John Ball and Lord of the Dancing Day will be heard this weekend.  
 Bart Bales of Gill plays both a witch and a man! He can be seen in a green dress with blond wig, when not in his suspenders. His voice ranges from squeaky to deep. Bales authored the Mummer's play, and the puns will surely keep the audience on their toes.  
 From Morris dancing to the killing of the wren to rubbing the yule log with a sprig of holly, Welcome Yule is full of ancient magic to drive away the darkness and welcome the returning of the light. Don't miss it. More information can be found at [www.welcomeyule.org](http://www.welcomeyule.org).

# It Takes Five Villages

By Norma Johnson

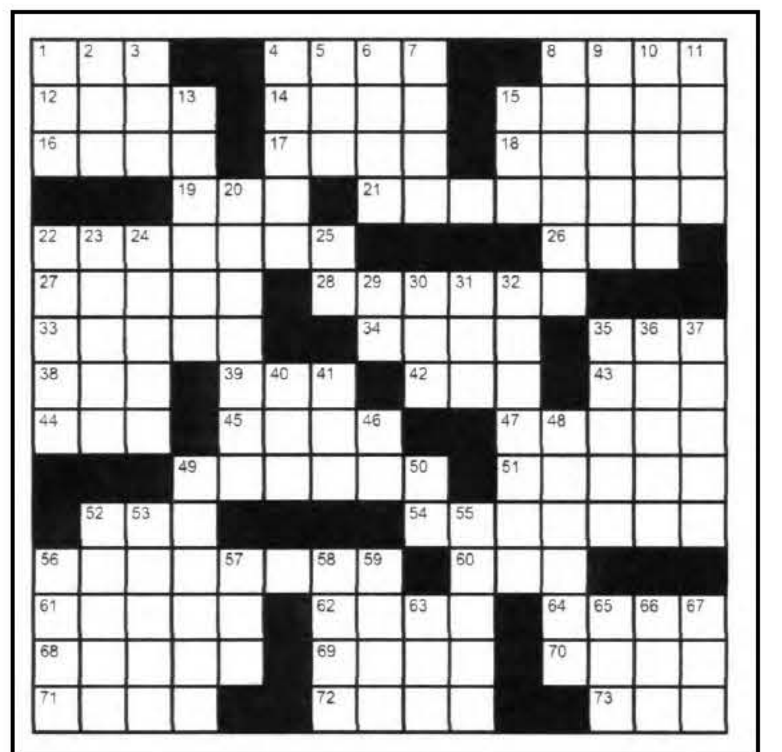
- Across**
- 1. Highest card in the deck
  - 4. Strap
  - 8. Irk
  - 12. Oil cartel
  - 14. Lotion ingredient
  - 15. Wild West event
  - 16. Ricki or Veronica
  - 17. Hammer or sickle, e.g.
  - 18. Signal
  - 19. Highest degree
  - 21. Good-humored
  - 22. David and Venus de Milo, e.g.
  - 26. Really jumbo jet
  - 27. Less wild
  - 28. Prompt
  - 33. Motorist's maneuver
  - 34. Atlanta Hawks' former stadium
  - 35. WWI group
  - 38. My, in France

- 39. Clock setting, in MA
- 42. Pres. Coolidge, informally
- 43. Cordial, \_\_\_ Maria
- 44. Before, before cursor
- 45. Hotel offering
- 47. Sticker on a jar
- 49. What not to be at the wheel
- 51. On-line shopping
- 52. Opposite of "t'aint"
- 54. Dry river beds
- 56. Romeo's family name
- 60. Gobs' grp.
- 61. Smears
- 62. Dither
- 64. Burg
- 68. Fabulist
- 69. Ye \_\_\_ Shoppe
- 70. Jacob's twin
- 71. Fr. holy women
- 72. Postpaid encl.
- 73. Lap doggie

- 25. "\_\_\_ what?"
- 29. "\_\_\_ way!"
- 30. HBO alternative
- 31. One \_\_\_ million
- 32. Grain grinders
- 35. In check
- 36. Refrain for Old MacDonald
- 37. Takes a nose-dive
- 40. Fa, \_\_, la
- 41. Little piggy?
- 46. Not you
- 48. Now
- 49. Houston players

- 50. Ma's mate
- 52. Condominium sign
- 53. Restroom sign
- 55. Indian capital
- 56. Wall St. degrees
- 57. Venomous viper
- 58. Alien transports
- 59. Singer Fitzgerald
- 63. Come-ons
- 65. 1 Down, abbr.
- 66. Chinese path
- 67. "Delish!"

- Down**
- 1. Internet svc. provider, for one
  - 2. Tax pro
  - 3. Response to a mouse
  - 4. Clean up
  - 5. "Xanadu" grp.
  - 6. Circle
  - 7. Show and \_\_\_
  - 8. Creamy chocolate concoction
  - 9. Brainstorms
  - 10. False move
  - 11. Baptismal basin
  - 13. Kareem's position
  - 15. TV manufacturer
  - 20. Contra dancers, at times
  - 22. Baffle
  - 23. Idaho spud
  - 24. Entertain



Norma Johnson is a crossword puzzle crafter who lives in 56 across.

## MCTV Schedule

### Channel 17: Dec. 7th - Dec. 13th

**Friday, December 7**  
 8:00 am Power Canal Draw Down  
 8:30 am Flotilla  
 9:00 am Montague Select Board (12/3/07)  
 10:30 am Carlos W. Anderson: Passion & Compassion  
 11:30 am Coffee House Series: Jeff Martel  
 1:00 p Physician Focus: Becoming a Smarter Patient  
 6:00 pm TFHS Presents: National Honor Society Induction 2007  
 7:00 pm GMRSD Meeting (11/27/07)  
 10:00 pm Over The Falls: PVMA and The Big Read

**Saturday, December 8**  
 8:00 am TFHS Presents: National Honor Society Induction 2007  
 9:00 am GMRSD Meeting (11/27/07)  
 12:00 pm Over The Falls: PVMA and The Big Read  
 12:30 pm Physician Focus: Weight Loss Surgery the Answer to Obesity  
 1:00 pm Seabrook 1977

**Sunday, December 9**  
 8:00 am Carlos W. Anderson: Shalom  
 8:30 am Montague Update: Ted Graveline  
 9:00 am Common People Concerts: Denise Grendon  
 10:00 am Windchanger: Sea Horse  
 11:00 am Independent Voices 36  
 11:30 am Preachin the Blues  
 6:00 pm Chronicles of Czestochowa: St. Jude Mass  
 7:00 pm Montague Update: Paul Mariani  
 8:00 pm Carlos W. Anderson: So What  
 9:00 pm Discovery Center: Birds of Prey  
 10:30 pm Physician Focus: Men's Health

**Monday, December 10**  
 8:00 am Chronicles of Czestochowa: St. Jude Mass

**Tuesday, December 11**  
 8:00 am Independent Voices 37  
 8:30 am TFHS Presents: National Honor Society Induction 2007  
 9:30 am Over the Falls: PVMA and the Big Read  
 10:00 am Common People Concerts: Eric Goodchild  
 6:00 pm Songs for Wee People  
 7:00 pm GMRSD (Live)  
 10:00 pm Montague Grange Variety Show  
 11:30 pm Thomas Jefferson Speaks

**Wednesday, December 12**  
 8:00 am Songs for Wee People  
 9:00 am Montague Grange Variety Show  
 10:30 am Thomas Jefferson Speaks  
 6:00 pm Chronicles of Czestochowa: Volume 5  
 6:30 pm On The Ridge: Getting Ready for Bow  
 7:00 pm Power Canal Draw Down  
 7:30 pm Independent Voices 34  
 8:00 pm Coffee House Series: Taft Mountain Toppers  
 10:00 pm Windchanger: Sea Horse  
 11:00 pm Naturalist Laurie Sanders

**Thursday, December 13**  
 8:00 am Chronicles of Czestochowa: Volume 5  
 8:30 am On the Ridge: Getting Ready for Bow  
 9:00 am Power Canal Draw Down  
 9:30 am Independent Voices 34  
 10:00 am Coffee House Series: Taft Mountain Toppers  
 11:00 am Windchanger: Sea Horse  
 12:00 pm Naturalist Laurie Sanders  
 6:00 pm Positive Profiles in Courage  
 7:00 pm Montague Select Board: (12/10/07)  
 8:30 pm Carlos W. Anderson: So What  
 9:30 pm Montague Community Band  
 11:00 pm Physician Focus: GI Health

## Montague Parks & Recreation Winter Programs

**Youth Registration** - We're taking registrations for our K-2 Bball program, held Wednesday evenings 5:30 p.m. - 6:30 p.m. in January and February.

**Knights of Columbus Free Throw Contest** - Youth ages 10 - 14, Saturday, January 12th.

**American Red Cross Babysitting Course** - Youth ages 11 - 15. Monday, January 21th & Monday, January 28th

**Basketball**

**Intro To Tae Kwon Do for Youth** - Youth ages 7 & Up. January 5 - February 9.

**Moderate YOGA Adults** 18 and over; January 22 - April 1 (No class February 19th).

**Family Fun Nights** - Friday evenings; January 25th, February 29th, & March 28th; 6:30 p.m. - 8 p.m.; Ping-pong, board games, music, and raffles!

**Berkshire East Day** - Saturday, February 9th; 12:15

p.m. - 5:30 p.m. Enjoy Skiing, Snowboarding, on their NEW Tubing Hill!

**Open Swim** - January 11, February 8, & March 7 (Fridays); Turners Falls High School Pool.

The Montague Parks & Recreation Department at 56 First St./Unity Park Fieldhouse. Office hours: Mondays - Fridays; 8:30 a.m. 4:30 p.m. [www.montague.net](http://www.montague.net); 863-3216

VILLAGE SKETCHBOOK

# What's In A Name? Or, Pardon My French!

BY DAVID BRÛLÉ

**MONTAIGU** -There's a mosaic of family names from all over the world represented in our villages. You can trace our evolving demographics over the past 200 years by scanning town histories, town reports, and street lists. As for me, I've always been fascinated by the French Canadian family names, partly because I've carried around a Quebec name all my life, but also because we Canucks have such descriptive surnames! Granted that our Anglo-Saxon, German, Polish, Irish, Italian, or Hispanic neighbors have family names they're proud of, but they can't hold a candle to the boisterous French Canadians for the sheer originality, vigor, even poetry of our family names.

Immigrants came down to our town from Quebec over a period of hundreds of years. They came to work on the building of the power canals, dams and factories. Then they came to work in those factories. Some came down the Connecticut with the log drives, many came to town looking for work during the Depression. Strangely enough, it's been noted that they didn't really leave behind any lasting vestiges wherever they went and settled, rather seeking, like a lot of immigrants, to blend into the American stereotype.

And now, with the fading of St. Anne's Church, and earlier, the French School, there'll not be much left in our landscape to remind us of the role the Québécois played here, although the Rendez-Vous, Couture Brothers, San Soucie Locksmith and Aubuchon's still evoke a French past. Yet, the names of those French-speaking families do remain.

Historians tell us that family names came into usage well before the first explorers

reached Canada in the 1550s and 1600s. In fact, by the year 1000, family names had become more and more common. As the population grew in France and the rest of Europe, it was no longer easy to identify people as the "son of so-and so" as the Scandinavians do (Carlson = son of Carl) or even as some Irish names have it, like Fitzgerald (son of Gerald, which is really French = fils de Gerald!). And so on.

French family names became very descriptive, and their origins came from basically four sources:

1. Names based on trades and occupations (e.g. *Chartier* = wagon maker or driver; *Cloutier* = maker of nails).
2. Names derived from locations, villages, or where the family lived (e.g. *Dubreuil* = one who lives near a clearing in the forest; *Bellemare* = one who lives near a beautiful pond).

3. Names based on physical or moral characteristics (e.g. *Lemieux* = the best; *Tetreault* = a headstrong person).

4. Names based on nicknames or memorable exploits (e.g. *Boivin* = drinker of wine).

My own family name could also serve as an example: *Brûlé* is based on the French word for "burnt" (as in *crème brûlée*!) The name possibly derived from ancestors dwelling near a burned-off place at a time when slash-and-burn agriculture was common practice, or perhaps an ancestor was literally burned, in an accident, or at the stake?

Below, I've gathered just a few *Montaigu* (Montague) names to serve as examples to illustrate the point. Please note:

no offense is intended to the families mentioned here, some of the French meanings as I

said above can be very "original".

But first, a note on French pronunciation. I'm sure that some of our elder citizens of French descent still use correct pronunciation, as do some of us who have studied French, but for the rest of you, there are a few basic rules in dealing with the problematic "French



accent". One main rule involves intonation. That is where the emphasis falls in a word with several syllables. I'll use for example a familiar French family name from our town: *Letourneau*. Anglo pronunciation has this name as LeTOURneau. Whereas a French speaker would say: LetourNEAU. French always emphasizes the last syllable; English speakers tend to emphasize the next to the last syllable (which leads to the infamous American accent in French, and vice-versa). By the way, with further apologies to Dean, there should also be an l apostrophe (l'...) at the beginning; also the "*étourneau*" is a familiar bird, the starling, but it also means "a silly fellow."

The second basic rule of pronunciation is that the last consonant in a word (if it's the last

letter) is never pronounced, and the letter "n" is rather special: it's a nasal. You can't pronounce it, but rather you have to send it up your nose, without ever really saying "n". For example the name *Beaubien* or *Paulin* would be pronounced with the emphasis on the last syllable, and you couldn't pronounce the "n" either; it would have to come out your nose! Try getting someone who has some French say the expression "*un bon vin blanc*" (a good white wine) to get the feel for the four nasals. (Then have a glass for yourself, too!) The wine helps you to speak the best French, and it also would be helpful to have a good head cold, or at least a sinus problem, to get those nasal sounds out!

So here's a list of local French names:

- Beauchesne = mighty oak
- Beaulieu = beautiful, good place
- Bergeron = shepherd, guardian
- Bordeaux, Bourdeau = variation on the city of Bordeaux, river's edge
- Boulangier = baker
- Boucher = butcher
- Chapdelaine = woolen cap, hood
- Chevalier = horseman, knight
- Croteau = one who dwells near a small grotto or cave
- Cournoyer = one who lives near a hazelnut or walnut tree
- Couture = one who makes clothes, sews
- Delisle = someone from the island
- Desautels = from a place called Les Autels (the altars)
- Desrosiers = of the roses
- Ducharme = one who lives near a beech grove, a charming person

Duguay = one who lives near a ford of a river

Fugère = variation on fougère, a fern, or from the city of Fougères

Gagné = farm laborer, based on the old French *gainier*

Gagnon = nickname designating a ferocious person

LaPierre = a rock, stone

La Pointe = one who carves stone or wood

Leveillé = he who is clever, alert

Martineau = diminutive of Martin

Nadeau = variant of Nadal, meaning Noël in Occitan from Provence

Paradis = one who lives on excellent land, as opposed to one from the same village living on poor land (l'Enfer)

Pelletier = one who sells furs

Poirier = one who owns pear trees

Prunier = one who owns plum trees

Routhier = a highwayman, mercenary soldier

San Soucie = carefree, from *sans souci* (without care)

Saulnier = one who harvests or sells salt

St. Germain = celebrated French saint, and one who lives near a holy site of the saint

Tessier = weaver

Understandably, there are many more French surnames that were not included in the sampling. If you are so inclined and would like to record information with the Montague Reporter on the origins of your own family name, please contact the office at 863-8666 or reporter@montaguema.net at your earliest convenience. We also urge all others of the variety of heritages represented in our region's population to contribute to this project. Your help would be invaluable in recording some of the richness of our cultures here in the villages.

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NOTES FROM THE MONTAGUE SELECTBOARD

# Airport Commission to Expand

**BY DAVID DETMOLD** - The Montague selectboard voted unanimously to expand the number of seats on the airport com-

mission from five to seven, on a motion by Allan Ross. Ross has been serving as the selectboard liaison to the airport commission since a group of airport pilots and hangar owners petitioned the selectboard in February of this year to fire Mike Sweeney, the airport manager, over numerous complaints they presented about arbitrary enforcement of rules and what they considered to be exorbitant lease fees at the Turners Falls airport, in comparison to nearby municipal airports.

On Monday, December 3rd, Ross asked commission chair Peter Golrick if there had been any changes to the rates for commercial users at the airport. Golrick said, "There have been no votes on that." He asked if the airport manager had made any change to his policy of issuing security badges to airport users, and Golrick replied, "There has been no change in badge policy." He asked if a letter had been sent to the airport users group, the Committee to Save the Airport regarding their questions about

use of access roads, and Golrick said there had been no response sent. Ross asked if there were any new tenants at the airport, or any activity to indicate interest in new leases there, and Golrick shook his head, "No." At which point Ross made a motion to expand the board, saying new viewpoints might be helpful, "to increase the dialogue and move forward on issues like comparative commercial rates, how literally we interpret security issues, etc."

Board chair Pat Allen said she would like a written policy establishing the criteria for appointing members of the commission before any new members are added.

Golrick pointed out that past policy has been for members of the commission who live out of town to refrain from voting on budgetary matters, and noted that commissioner Brian Carroll will be moving out of town shortly. He also said two members of the commission, Mike Sokolsky and Gary Collins, as members of the Franklin County

Flying Club, are tenants, and have been advised by the state ethics commission to also recuse themselves on certain fiscal matters.

Therefore, town administrator Frank Abbondanzio said the five-member commission as currently constituted would soon become a non-functional board when it came to voting on money matters, since a majority would have to recuse themselves.

Ross suggested it might be a good idea to add someone with real estate experience to the board, since the airport controls an area of potential developable land near the town's nearly full industrial park.

Golrick also noted that no word had yet arrived from Washington DC of any resolution in a separate dispute about the airport's planned runway expansion, which has been held up by claims by two Native American tribes that a sacred site near the runway will be destroyed if the runway is expanded as planned. "The FAA is continuing to work with

Native Americans," on that issue, Golrick said.

In other news, Abbondanzio said two members from the town of Gill, one from the selectboard and one from the finance committee, had been invited to join the oversight committee for the five-year town and school budget planning process with the Gill-Montague schools. He also said the town hopes to hire a project manager for the recently approved police station building project, by the end of the month.

The board appointed Mark Allen, of the Turners Falls Fire District's prudential committee, to serve on the police station building committee.

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**THE HEALTHY GEEZER**

**Varicose Veins and How to Get Rid of Them**



JESSICA HARMON ILLUSTRATION

BY FRED CICETTI

**LEONIA, NJ** - Q. My mother had varicose veins in her legs and now I'm getting them. She put up with them. I don't want to. So how do I get rid of them?

Varicose veins are twisted and enlarged veins that bulge in legs, but they can appear in other places. Varicose veins are more common in legs, because veins from the groin to the ankles endure the most pressure of any veins in the body.

Varicose veins affect half of

people over the age 50. Women get varicose veins more often than men.

Spider veins, which are named for the spider webs they resemble, are like varicose veins, but they're smaller. Hemorrhoids are anal varicose veins.

Aging is a major cause of varicose veins. As we get older, our veins stretch and the valves in them weaken. These valves keep the blood flowing toward the heart. If the valves malfunction, blood backs up in the veins and engorges them.

Varicose veins are blue because the blood in them needs oxygen, which it gets when it returns to the heart and is pumped through the lungs.

These bulging veins can be painful, but, for many, they are

just ugly nuisances. There are many options available to treat them. The first step in dealing with varicose veins is to get them examined by your doctor and get personal advice about how to deal with your condition.

Before trying a variety of procedures, you can wear compression stockings that squeeze the legs and help the veins move blood. They are available at most pharmacies. If these don't work, your doctor may recommend one of the following:

- Lasers can make varicose and spider veins vanish.
- Injections can close the veins and make them fade away. This is called "sclerotherapy."
- Heat is used to destroy varicose veins. A catheter is inserted in a large varicose vein. The tip of the catheter is heated and then

withdrawn.

• Catheters can also be used with radiofrequency or lasers to close veins.

• The veins can be removed with incisions. This is called "vein stripping."

• Small varicose veins can be taken out with little punctures of the skin. Surgical hooks remove the veins. This is called "ambulatory phlebectomy."

• In advanced cases of varicose veins, "endoscopic vein surgery" may be used. In this procedure, the surgeon inserts a tiny video camera to help in the removal of the veins with incisions.

Varicose veins can't be prevented, but there are steps you can take to reduce the chances of getting them. Here are some pointers:

• Walking improves the circulation in your legs.

• Losing weight reduces pressure on veins.

• Low-heel shoes and flats exercise your calves.

• Tight clothes restrict circulation.

• Lying with your legs up improves circulation.

• Sitting, especially with crossed legs, or standing for a long time cuts down on circulation.

• Eating foods low in salt and high in fiber is beneficial. Salt leads to water retention and swelling. Not consuming enough fiber leads to constipation, which can contribute to varicose veins.

*If you have a question, please write to fredcicetti@gmail.com.*

**TOUR** from pg 1

fire. Get up to the attic of Building #1 and look out through the burnt out roofing timbers to the derelict Building #11, standing alone now by the canal, with broken windows and partially destroyed roof, and a frozen mound of rubble between, where Building #10 once stood, and you begin to get a sense of the scale of destruction left behind by the arsonist who struck the 136-year-old mill in the early morning hours of May 26th, 2007. Walk the length of the attic and open a door to the east end, and you can still see the remains of the last fire that burned that part of the mill, perhaps the fire of 1878, less than five years after the original construction was complete. Yet the imposing old paper mill came back from those flames to employ thousands.

The much of the mill is in better shape, in Building #5, windows are out in many rooms. Some have just lost window glass, in others the frames are gone entirely. The town of Montague came into ownership of the mill complex through a land court proceeding last month in Boston, over a matter of nearly \$200,000 in unpaid taxes and fines.

Walking down the scarred, empty stairs to the lower levels, you come suddenly upon the heaped remnants of the former owner's paper recycling business. Jerry Jones, who still haunts the mill, with the town's permission, during the day (he has to be gone by 4 p.m.) has,

over the course of the last few years, brought in tons of brightly colored paper, in bales, on skids, or, standing upright, in the form of the ends of unused rolls. Now, with Jones' five year tenure at the mill all but extinguished, the bales of paper remain, stacked on top of each other, to the height of fifteen feet, and extending the entire length of the fourth floor of Building #1. Then, on the first floor, they take up more space, vastly more, jamming the entire length of the main floor of the whole complex, from the west down to the east, sometimes in spaces permitted by the building and fire departments, sometimes not.

Jones, who is allowed in his former domain ostensibly to shrink wrap and prepare for shipment as much of the warehoused paper as possible, wanders the purlieus, directing non-existent traffic. Five tractor trailer trucks are expected sometime this week, to begin the process of removing the tons of paper, according to building inspector David Jensen, but the first two were due on Wednesday, and by nightfall they had not arrived. When they do come, the paper will begin a trip to Pakistan, where stacks of paper Americans consider worth-

less still have market value, regardless of the state of emergency. If all five trailers depart fully loaded, Jones estimates fifteen more will have to come - someday - to empty out the rest of the paper he has warehoused at the Strathmore. Jensen, eyeballing room after room of

the Strathmore mill, which they claim is legally in dispute, Jensen has countered by claiming the Strathmore has a "permanently deeded easement to the loading dock, and 12 parking spaces" in that vicinity." After consulting town counsel, town officials descended on the area in force



On Saturday, November 24th, when a sprinkler pipe in Building #1 froze and burst an elbow, it sent a geyser of water up through the burnt out roof, where it continued to spout in the early morning light like a beached whale.

stacked bales, rolls, and odd lots, estimates ten or twenty truckloads beyond that.

If those trucks arrive, they will at least be able to arrive at the mill's main loading dock, to load the paper on. On Friday, November 30th, two police cruisers, one carrying the chief of police, along with a Turners Falls fire truck and a Montague DPW truck drove down the narrow access road to a disputed stretch of asphalt where the abutter, Montague Energy Group, had put up stanchions and a cable barricade, blockading the loading docks. Although Montague Energy Group spokespeople told Montague town meeting on October 11th that they intended to assert their rights to that end of

Friday morning, and removed the barricade, over the protest of Jeanne Golrick, one of the principals at MEG. She said she would consult her lawyer before deciding whether to put the barricade up again, and took a number of photographs of the police and highway workers removing the blockade.

Jensen said pipefitters have been at work for the last two weeks in the Strathmore retrofitting the miles of sprinklers, after draining the water from the lines, to enable them to operate on a dry system. When activated, pressurized water would be forced through the lines to extinguish a blaze, but otherwise the pipes will remain empty. This will prevent a repeat, hopefully of an incident that happened Saturday, November 24th, when a sprinkler pipe in Building #1 froze, and burst an elbow, and sent a geyser of water up through the holes in the roof, where it continued to spout in the early morning light like a beached

whale, soaking the floors and stacked up bales of paper below.

Town administrator Frank Abbondanzio said the town would be preparing a Request for Proposals (RFP) on the 244,482-square-foot property by the first of the year.

Meanwhile, Jensen said the town's priority will be getting the sprinkler and alarm system functional, and installing a new roof on the fire-damaged buildings, at an estimated cost of \$300,000. Underneath Building #1, the single remaining sewer line for neighboring Southworth Paper Company runs. Southworth is a major employer in town, so securing that building from the elements is of added concern. Putting up hard plastic where windows have fallen out is another priority. The town has also hired a security guard to patrol the grounds and buildings, day and night.

Town planner Dan LaRoche said he has submitted a \$100,000 grant request for engineering and design assistance at the Strathmore to the Massachusetts Permitting Regulatory Board, a branch of the Executive Office of Housing and Economic Development. He said he expects to hear whether the town is approved for the grant by mid-December, and if so to apply a good portion of the funds toward solving the problem of the condemned pedestrian footbridge from Canal Street, the only real access point for large numbers of people to reach the Strathmore, should they ever wish to do so again.



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# ARTS & ENTERTAINMENT



JACK COUGHLIN ILLUSTRATION

**FRIDAY, DECEMBER 7TH**  
**Moonlight & Morning Star** at Smokin' Hippo Restaurant, Erving. (413) 423-3220, www.thesmokinhippo.com, 6:30 - 8:30 p.m.

Rt. 63 Roadhouse, Millers Falls: **Rescue Lola** - rock & roll covers, come dance! 9:30 p.m.

**FRIDAY & SATURDAY, DECEMBER 7TH & 8TH**  
**Off The Map**, a beautifully made and touching tale about the joys and sorrows of living a life full and free. Directed by Campbell Scott. 2003, PG 13. 108 min.

**FRIDAY TO SUNDAY, DECEMBER 7TH TO 9TH**

**Welcome Yule:** A Midwinter Celebration. Irish & English music, dance, songs and stories celebrating the return of the light. A show for all ages at The Shea Theater, Turners Falls, Dec. 7th & 8th at 7:30 p.m. and Sunday, Dec. 9th at 2 p.m. \$10/adults, \$7/ seniors & children, 4 yrs and under free. Reservations 863-2281, or Jones Library, Amherst, Broadside Books, Northampton, the World Eye Bookshop, Greenfield. 665-3206 or www.welcomeyule.org



Michael Nix at the Great Falls Coffeehouse, Friday, December 14th at 7 p.m., doors open at 6:30 p.m..

Neil Simon's *Lost in Yonkers*, performance by Ashfield Community Theater, Ashfield Town Hall, Ashfield. Fri. & Sat. at 7:30 p.m. Directed & produced by Elisa A. Martin, starring: Alexander Bianchi, George Funk, Dolores Griel, Jerri Higgins, Knowles, Leventhal, and Jim Lobley. **Sunday at 2 p.m.** Tickets are \$12 (only \$6 opening night and at the matinee!) Reserve tickets at (413) 628-4574 or www.acth.org

Galen Rona

*Mosey up the bill to Wendell for an evening full of high jinks and capers, an extravaganza of baked delights, fine music and dance at the Wendell Full Moon Follies. The Cast of Characters includes Francis Doughty, Hadama and Shalom Habibi, Middle Eastern music & dance with Karen Traub and friends; original theatrical moments with Paul Richmond & Suzie Polucci; Richard Chase & friends, and more! 7:30 Open Mic; Main Act Around 8 p.m.*

*Taking Control of Change, Embracing Simplicity.* New England Gathering of War Tax Resisters & Supporters. Woolman Hill Conference Center, Deerfield. Info. (802) 257-5725 or andbe-free@yahoo.com

**SUNDAY, DECEMBER 9TH**

Deja Brew, Wendell: **Steve Crow, Peter Kim & Don McAuley** - Warped Americana, 9 - 11 p.m.

**MONDAY, DECEMBER 10TH**  
 Live jazz at Ristorante DiPaolo, Turners Falls, *Interplay Jazz Band*, modern and original, 6:30 - 9:30 p.m.

At The Rendezvous, 78 Third Street, Turners Falls: **Ghost Quartet**, progressive electric jazz trio with guest (ghost) vocalists, trumpeter and other soloists, 8 p.m., no cover.

**TUESDAY, DECEMBER 11TH**  
 Montague Reporter Holiday Party at The Night Kitchen. Celebrate 5 years as the voice of the villages. 5 to 7 p.m. Sliding scale donation \$10 to \$1,000! Free hors d'oeuvres, cash bar.

At The Rendezvous, Turners Falls: **Craft Night**, 7 p.m. on. Careful mixing knitting and drinking though - remember, it's all fun and games until somebody loses an eye.

**WEDNESDAY, DECEMBER 12TH**

Reel World documentary film: *Jesus Camp*, Pastor Becky Fischer runs a summer camp for Evangelical children. 93



*Mosey up the bill to Wendell for an evening full of high jinks and capers, an extravaganza of baked delights, fine music and dance at the Wendell Full Moon Follies. The Cast of Characters includes Francis Doughty, Hadama and Shalom Habibi, Middle Eastern music & dance with Karen Traub and friends; original theatrical moments with Paul Richmond & Suzie Polucci; Richard Chase & friends, and more! 7:30 Open Mic; Main Act Around 8 p.m.*

minutes (2006) 7 p.m. Held at the Arms Library, Shelburne Falls. Info. 625-9959.

**THURSDAY, DECEMBER 13TH**  
 Deja Brew, Wendell: **Free Range** - Folk Rock, 8 - 10 p.m.

At The Rendezvous, Turners Falls: **Robert and Glenda Holmes** Lounge Duo. Former Til Tuesday member Robert and Glenda interpret tunes from the 60s to the 80s, everything from Bill Withers to Ozzy Osborne and back. 5:30 p.m., free.

**FRIDAY, DECEMBER 14TH**  
 Great Falls 2nd Friday Coffeehouse: Musician/composer Michael Nix celebrates the release of his CD *Barton Cove* in the historic Great Hall of the Great Falls Discovery Center. Nix performs on the seven string Banjar. To add to the festivities the concert will include a special "chocolate reception" as well as the drawing for the Friends' of the Discovery Center's annual Holiday Raffle. 7 p.m., doors open at 6:30. There is a suggested sliding scale donation of \$6 - \$12 (free to children). Info. (413)863-3221 X3.

Deja Brew, Wendell: **The Relics** - Blues/Reggae, 9 - 11 p.m.

**SATURDAY, DECEMBER 15TH**  
 Athol Christmas Bird Count, 7 a.m. Team leaders pick up their zone folders and meet their crews at Cinnamon's Restaurant at 491 Main Street, Athol. Feeder watchers may call in their day's sightings, anytime before 5 p.m., on 12/15 to the Environmental Center's message machine (978) 248-9591; leave the address for where your birds were observed and a return phone number. Contact Dave Small at Dave@dhsml.net or (978) 413-1772 to set up teams.

The 25th annual Winter Solstice Celebration at The Roundhouse, Colrain. Storytelling, music, juggling, and Mummers play, refreshments! Benefit for The Food Bank of Western Massachusetts and Oxfam America, donation \$10/ adults and \$26/ family of four and \$3/ each additional child. 7 p.m. 624-5140 info@roundhouseculture.com.

The Echo Lake Coffee House, 9 Montague Rd., Leverett presents singer/songwriter, **Dennis Caraher**, at 7:30 p.m. Admission \$12/10 seniors. More info: (413) 548-9394

Deja Brew, Wendell: **Nexus** - Rock, 9 - 11 p.m.

Full Moon Follies at The Wendell Full Moon Coffee House. \$6 - \$12 (978) 544-5557. www.wendellfullmoon.org. Partial proceeds benefit the Wendell Free Library. Doors open at 7 p.m., Open Mic at 7:30.

**UNTIL DECEMBER 16TH**  
 Hallmark Museum of Contemporary Photography, Turners Falls on display: Michael Yamashita's *Great Wall of China & The Silk Road*.

**SUNDAY, DECEMBER 16TH**

## HOT SPOT TEEN CENTER

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

## Upcoming at the Great Falls Discovery Center

Winter hours open: 10 a.m. to 4 p.m. Friday & Saturday and by special arrangement.

**THROUGH DECEMBER 15TH**  
 View the Junior Duck Stamp artwork from Massachusetts students grades K - 12. The Federal Junior Duck Stamp Conservation and Design Program (JDS) is a dynamic arts curriculum that teaches wetlands and waterfowl conservation to students in kindergarten through

high school. The program incorporates scientific and wildlife management principles into a visual arts curriculum with participants completing a JDS design as their visual "term papers".  
**THURSDAY, DECEMBER 15TH**  
*Beginning Birding*, 9 - 10 a.m. Join Refuge staff on this early morning

scouting trip for local birds. Handouts, field guides, and binoculars will be available to borrow.  
**Living Like an Animal** - 'become' a bat, a bird and a fox. 10:30 - 11:30 a.m. We will use our senses to experience life on the wild side. This program is for elementary age students and their caregivers.

(413) 863-3221

www.greatfallsma.org

2 Avenue A, Turners Falls

Memorial Hall Theater  
**POTHOLE PICTURES**  
 Friday & Saturday  
 Dec. 7th & 8th 7:30 p.m.  
**OFF THE MAP**  
 A small family in New Mexico living so far "off the grid" they don't know they owe the IRS money, 'til the tax man cometh-then moves in and discovers he's actually an artist. 2003, PG 13. 108 min. Screenwriter and Berkshires resident Joan Ackerman will be our guest to discuss the film on Saturday night.  
 Music before movie 7 p.m. Friday: Eco Drum Corps Ensemble Saturday: Abdul Baki & Family.  
 51 Bridge St., Shelburne Falls 625-2896

**GREENFIELD GARDEN CINEMAS**  
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3. AMERICAN GANGSTER R	DAILY 6:00 9:00
4. MR. MAGORIUM'S WONDER EMPORIUM G	DAILY 6:45 9:15
5. FRED CLAUS PG	DAILY 6:45 9:15
6. HITMAN R	DAILY 7:00 9:30 in DTS sound
7. DAN IN REAL LIFE PG13	DAILY 7:00 9:30 in DTS sound
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THEATER REVIEW

Wonderland Revisited

BY DAVID DETMOLD

TURNERS FALLS - As noted ruefully in these pages before, in dramatic productions, wicked witches tend to be instant crowd pleasers, while good little girls seem to have their work cut out for them if they hope to impress an audience. This trite truism is brought to mind not by yet another revival of the Wizard of Oz, but by the recent production of Alice in Wonderland, which, in the play by Anne Coulter Martens presented by the Shea Young Stage Theater Company under the direction of Melissa Urey this past weekend, made much of the similarities between the two nineteenth century classics of children's fantasy - one British, the other American - each with a homesick heroine seeking help in her homeward journey from the strange inhabitants of a bizarre land, dominated by an outsized villainess who keeps everyone in terror of her cruel, capricious ways.



Mary Lovelace played Alice in last weekend's delightful Young Stage Theater Company production at the Shea

just for the Cheshire Cat-sized grin she flashes on suitable occasions, but for the utter naturalness of her insouciant, arrogant, self-possessed assurance that the limelight was made just for her, and enhanced by her deigning to appear in it. And if any dare disagree, well,

with a deft whisper that only a careful eye in the front row could catch. But good is over-matched by evil, in theater if not in theology or the affairs of man, and here it was even so.

Some of the problem - if problem there was - may have lain in Urey's direction, for Lovelace played a more petulant Alice than the sunny, naïve young damsel of Lewis Carroll's idealized memory. Rather than a child yearning to go deeper into the beguiling glades of fantasy, reaching for the golden key to the "loveliest garden you ever saw... with beds of bright flowers and those cool fountains," she portrayed a more Dorothy-like Alice, longing to go home.

The brassy, Cockney slinging, moralizing Duchess, played to a fare-thee-well by Sarah Crowell, never let her recover. Smiaroski also provided a hyperactive White Rabbit, eager to please her implacable monarch. And Erica Martenson nearly upstaged everyone with her extremely cool kitty, the deadpan, devil-may-care, discombobulating Cheshire Cat. Even the Queen fell into her disappearing shadow once or twice, for after all, if a cat may look at a King, why not a Queen?



Fiona Wilson as the Queen of Hearts kept her courtiers on their toes in "Alice."

need we say? "Off with their Heads!" Playing opposite her, Mary Lovelace, as Alice, worked diligently in the title role, and deserved the ovation she received at the curtain, and more. She delivered her lines with verve, and was especially effective declaiming such gems of nonsense verse as "You are Old Father William." She had her part by heart, and everyone

else's too, and should they slip on a line, she would supply it

ing behind her torso, threw the level headed Alice off balance. Smiaroski returned as a delightful pipsqueak dormouse, drunk

with torpor. They played the scene beautifully, too a muchness, until Lovelace declared it, "the stupidest tea party I've ever been to in all my life!" while the others carry the dormouse off, squirming, stage right.

But with Wilson in charge again during the trial of the Jack of Hearts, when the cacophony of the script might well overwhelm a lesser actress, she brought the scene - and the entire play - to new heights, with her impatient, vain, wickedly indifferent Queen, careless of the mad temper tantrum she creates, as chaos reigned around her.

No wonder Alice longed to go home at last, although the crowd would have willingly stayed for more, and watched the talented youngsters keep their antics up far into the night, so long as these stars continued twinkling, and the celestial tea tray remained balanced there, just above the stage, like a bat.



Erica Martenson, left, as Tweedledum, and Sarah Crowell as Tweedledee. Or was it the other way around?

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