



The Montague Reporter

YEAR 9 - NO. 11

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THE VOICE OF THE VILLAGES

DECEMBER 9, 2010

Zen Peacemakers Closing Shop on Ripley Road



Zen Peacemakers' House of One People

BY JONATHAN VON RANSON
MONTAGUE - Zen Peacemakers, an organization that blends Buddhism and activism, which moved its world headquarters to Montague in 2003, is shedding its extraordinary 34-acre

property - the storied Montague Farm on Ripley Road - and seeking to move to another, more affordable location in the area.

The news about the active and seemingly solid organization closing shop has stunned people

locally, and in the extensive Peacemakers community. Co-founded by Roshi Bernie Glassman in 1994, Zen Peacemakers is dedicated to applying Buddhist practice to compassionate care and social change through prison

see ZEN pg 11

SK8 PARK COMMITTEE WORKS TO BRING DOWN COST OF FINAL DESIGN



Schematic for the proposed skate park at Unity Park - from Pillar Design, Tempe, AZ

BY DAVID DETMOLD
TURNERS FALLS - The Great Falls Skate Park will cost more to build than proponents had once hoped, but the skate park committee is working hard to bring the final price tag down.

At a hearing Thursday, December 2nd, a dozen skate park committee

members and supporters met with members of the Montague parks and recreation commission to go over design plans and cost estimates for the proposed 7,300 square foot concrete skate park to be built on the former Williams Way, a one block side street abutting Unity Park.

On December 15th, 2009 special town meeting voters approved by a two thirds majority a motion to abandon Williams Way, to make room for a permanent skate park as part of Unity Park. On June 22nd of last year, the selectboard approved spending

see SK8 PARK pg 10

RiverCulture Tapped for State's Top Arts Award



RiverCulture coordinator Lisa Davol

BY DAVID DETMOLD
TURNERS FALLS - Once dissed on a local blog as a "rah-rah girl" for Turners Falls - a backwater mill town with no future - RiverCulture coordinator Lisa Davol was jumping up and down, even without pom-poms, on Tuesday afternoon when she got a call from the director of the

Massachusetts Cultural Council, Anita Walker.

Walker called to tell her that Turners Falls RiverCulture has been chosen to receive the MCC's top honor - the Commonwealth Award - given out every other year, this time to just ten nominees across the state. Davol, whose arts and economic development

project in Turners Falls won in the category of "Creative Community," will travel to Boston to accept the award in February, 2011.

The last winner in this category, in 2009, was the city of Pittsfield, more than ten times the size of Turners Falls.

Reacting to the news, Robin Sherman, the executive director of the Franklin County Regional Housing and Redevelopment Authority exclaimed, "That is so awesome!" It was Sherman who authored the original John and Abigail Adams grant to the MCC in 2005, to kick off the RiverCulture project, when Sherman was Montague town planner.

Since then, through five successive years of

see AWARD pg 12

Apples to Orange

North Quabbin Community Foods Coop Plans Storefront Opening - Soon

BY LIZ CARTER - The North Quabbin Community Foods Coop, an initiative to distribute high quality local foods at a price all residents of the North Quabbin

region can stomach, is growing to fill gaps in the distribution of local food in the North Quabbin region. The Coop's innovative marketing, regionally sensi-

tive vision, and grassroots development make it part of a unique cultural renaissance that is taking downtown Orange by storm.

see COOP pg 5



Left to right - Amy Borezo, Deb Habib, Nina Wellen and Julie Davis at one of the North Quabbin Community Foods Coop's first farmstands, in August of 2009, in front of the Orange Innovation Center on West Main Street. The Coop plans to open up a storefront on the second floor of the OIC this month, just in time for Christmas.

PET OF THE WEEK I'm Your Girl



Bella

Bella is a seven-year-old domestic short hair cat in need of a good home. If you'd love a big round cuddly white-and-orange kitty, I am the girl you're looking for. In fact I'm extra-special in that regard, because cats of my coloring are most often boys. I'm an indoor-only cat, and I am suited for a quiet and comfortable life with grown-ups only (little kids are too loud and unpredictable for me). I hope you'll take me home with you soon--I've been here in the shelter since August and I cannot understand why. To find out more about adopting me, please contact the Dakin Pioneer Valley Humane Society at (413) 548-9898 or via email: info@dpvhs.org.

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LEVERETT LIBRARY NEWS

Music and Movement for Small Children

Interactive Music and Movement is a free program presented by Debbie Weyl, Director of Music Together for Valley Families. Open to children from newborns to five-year-olds accompanied by a grownup. Sunday, December 12, 4:00 - 4:45 pm, Leverett Library, 75 Montague Rd., Leverett. Directions at www.leverettlibrary.org

NEW SALEM LIBRARY NEWS

Library for All Seasons on Saturdays

The New Salem Library for all Seasons continues every Saturday at 10:30 with Laura Rojo MacLeod. Storytelling and crafts are featured along with the seasonal theme. The Winter Solstice will be celebrated at the New Salem Public Library on Tuesday, December 21st at 5:00 p.m. with traditional songs, stories and holiday memories. Refreshments will be served.

CUSHMAN LIBRARY NEWS

Raffle Raises Programming Funds

BERNARDSTON - Offering more than 60 prizes, The Friends of Cushman Library's winter raffle in Bernardston has something for everyone, while raising funds in support of programming and patron services at the library. Featuring a wide variety of local artisen crafts, books by local authors, locally made products and gift certificates from local businesses.

The drawing will take place on December 22nd at 3:30 p.m., which will enable winners to col-

lect their prizes in time for the holidays. Ticket prices are \$1.00 for one, \$5.00 for 6, \$10.00 for 12, \$15.00 for 18, \$20 for 25 tickets. Tickets are available at Cushman Library, 28 Church Street in Bernardston, during open hours. Cushman Library is open Mondays from 2:00 to 6:00 p.m., Wednesdays from 10:00 a.m. to 7:30 p.m., and Saturdays from 10:00 a.m. to 3:30 p.m. For more information drop by 28 Church Street or call 648-5402.

WENDELL LIBRARY NEWS

Council On Aging Film Series Double Bill

By Doug Dawson - The Wendell COA Film Series continues on Sunday, December 12th, with *Waking Ned Devine*, a quirky and charming comedy set in a small Irish village, one of whose inhabitants has died upon learning that he has won the national lottery. Because Ned has no relatives (or does he?), the money will have to go back to the lottery for the next jackpot. Some of his fellow villagers feel "Ned would want us to have it," and set about with a scheme to collect the money for the village. *Waking Ned Devine* (1998, rated

PG, 91 minutes), a film about love, greed, friendship, and the smell of pigs, will be shown at the Wendell Free Library immediately following *Green Seen: the Documentary*. Earlier this year, one of the largest and most successful mail art shows of 2010 was held at our own Wendell Free Library. *Green Seen: the Documentary* features interviews with several Wendell artists involved in the project as well as activities at the library, the post office, and elsewhere. *Green Seen* (22 minutes) will be shown at 7:00 p.m. In the event



Santa Claus enchanted young and old alike, including Ella (lower right) from Gill at the Montague Business Association's annual holiday tree lighting Sunday at Peskeompskut park in Turners Falls.

Historic Bridge Facts

PROVIDED BY ED GREGORY, OF GREENFIELD - from the Gill-Montague Bridge dedication booklet, published for the ribbon cutting ceremonies that took place on Saturday, September 10th, 1938.

- The total overall length of the bridge is 2250 feet.
 - The roadbed is 30-feet wide, and the sidewalk is 5 1/2 feet in width.
- More bridge facts next week!

This Month at Great Falls Discovery Center

The Outdoor Skills Workshop series continues on Saturday, December 11th from 1:00 to 2:00 p.m. with an hour long exploration of compasses and finding your way in the woods. Pre-registration is required. Dress for

indoor and outdoor activity. Compasses will be available but bring your own if you have one.

On Saturday, December 18th from 10:00 a.m. to 2:00 p.m., find out what you can do with pinecones, sticks, acorns and other materials found in nature. This program is designed for families with children five- to twelve-years old.

For more information or to pre-register, call (413) 863-3221, greatfallsma.org. The GFDC is open 10:00 a.m. to 4:00 p.m. on Friday and Saturday.

Leverett Flu Clinic

The flu clinic is free for all Leverett residents. First come, first served. Wednesday, December 15th, 5:00 - 6:30 p.m., Leverett Town Hall. Sponsored by the Community Health Center of Franklin County. Call the Leverett Council On Aging at 548-1022, extension 5 for more information.

SENIOR CENTER ACTIVITIES - December 13th - December 17th

GILL/MONTAGUE Senior Center, 62 Fifth Street, Turners Falls, is open Monday through Friday from 9:00 a.m. to 2:00 p.m. Congregate meals are served Tuesday through Friday at Noon. Meal reservations must be made one day in advance by 11:00 a.m. The meal site manager is Kerry Togneri. Concl on Aging Director is Roberta Potter. All fitness classes are supported by a grant from the Executive Office of Elder Affairs. Voluntary donations are accepted. For more information, to make meal reservations, or to sign up for programs call (413) 863-9357. Messages can be left on our machine.

Monday, December 13th
9:00 a.m. Foot Clinic by appointment
10:00 a.m. Senior Aerobics
10:45 a.m. Chair Exercise
1:00 p.m. Knitting Circle
Tuesday, December 14th
9:00 a.m. Walking Group
10:30 a.m. Yoga
12:45 COA Meeting

1:00 p.m. Canasta
Wednesday, December 15th
9:00 a.m. Foot clinic by appointment
10:00 a.m. Aerobics
12:45 p.m. Bingo
Afternoon SHINE by appointment
Thursday, December 16th
9:00 a.m. Tai Chi
1:00 p.m. Pitch
Friday, December 17th
10:00 a.m. Senior Aerobics
10:45 a.m. Chair Exercise
1:00 p.m. Scrabble
1:00 p.m. Writing Group

ERVING Senior Center, 18 Pleasant St., Ervingside (Old Center School, 1st Floor), is open Monday through Friday from 8:30 a.m. to 2:30 p.m. for activities and congregat meals. For information and reservations, call Polly Kiely, Senior Center Director, at (413) 423-3308. Mealsite Manager is Jim Saracino. Lunch is daily at 11:30 a.m., with reservations 24 hours in advance. Transportation can be provided for meals, shopping, or medical

necessity. Please call the Senior Center at (413) 423-3308 to find out when the next flu clinic will be held.

Monday, December 13th
9:00 a.m. Tai Chi
10:00 a.m. Osteo-Exercise
12:00 p.m. Pitch
Tuesday, December 14th
8:45 a.m. Chair Aerobics
10:00 a.m. Senior Business Meeting
12:30 p.m. Painting
Wednesday, December 15th
8:45 a.m. Line Dancing/Zumba
12:00 p.m. Bingo
Thursday, December 16th
8:45 a.m. Aerobics
Friday, December 17th
9:00 a.m. Bowling
11:30 a.m. Lunch - Call the center for details

WENDELL Senior Center is located at 2 Lockes Village Road. Call Nancy Spittle, 978-544-6760 for hours and upcoming programs. Call the Center if you need a ride.

Great Falls Middle School Students of the Week

Grade 6
Gabrielle Arzuaga
Alison McKenna
Grade 7
Devan Rivera
Grade 8
Brandon Camara

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Local Briefs

JESSICA HARMON ILLUSTRATION

COMPILED BY DON CLEGG
Once again you can make a much needed donation to the Western Mass Food Bank any and every time you shop at the **Wendell Country Store**. Wendell residents receive many benefits from the Food Bank every month. So, next time you drop in for a coffee or other purchases, please remember to ask the cashier to add a \$1, \$5 or \$10 donation to your total. It's that easy! Owners Patti and Vic Scutari thank you on behalf of all those in need.

Poet's Seat Health Care Center, located at 359 High Street in Greenfield, is holding a special community pancake breakfast on Saturday, December 11th from 8:00 to 10:00 a.m. Bring the kids and grandkids for picture taking with Santa. The cost for the breakfast is \$5 for adults, \$3 for children, or free when you bring a gift for the Salvation Army's Adopt-A-Family program. No charge for residents and their families.

The Mid-Week Music Holiday Concert Series on Wednesday, December 15th, from 12:15 p.m. to 12:45 p.m. features the Greenfield High School Select Chorus, directed by Paul Calcari. Profits are donated to the *Recorder's Warm the Children* fund. Performance at All Souls Unitarian Universalist Church, www.uugreenfield.org, located at 399 Main Street (corner of Main & Hope) in Greenfield.

The Comical Mystery Tour of Western Massachusetts fundraising performance of An HMO Blue Christmas will be held on Saturday, December 11th, starting at 6:00 p.m. at the **Montague Elks**, on L Street in Turners Falls. The show will benefit the Relay for Life Team Eclectics and the Elks. Call 413-774-9844 (or the Elks Lodge at 413-863-2521) for ticket reservations.

A benefit for **Amy Roberts-Crawford** will be held on

Sunday, December 12th, starting at 8:00 p.m. at Winterland on Hope Street in Greenfield. Roberts-Crawford, a single mother with three children with Christmas just around the corner, was in a terrible car accident on November 13th, which caused muscular injury to her hands. She plays piano and keyboard for a living, and is unable to play until further notice from her doctor and physical therapist.

Roberts-Crawford has served as a valuable musical director for Arena Civic Theatre, the Country Players and other area troupes. A superb musician and vocal coach, Roberts-Crawford has entertained thousands throughout the Valley. Shining Star Karaoke and Ruby's Complaint are generously donating entertainment for Sunday's event.

The Dance of the Snow Queen, a community solstice puppet show with numerous dancers, musicians and performers, with a special appearance by belly dancer Attar and her troupe, will held at the **Montague Grange** on Friday, December 10th, from 6:00 to 9:00 p.m.

Proceeds from this event will help sustain Eve Christoph's children's programs at the Grange, specifically her art and nature winter break camp, which runs from December 27th through 31st, 9:30 a.m. - 3:00 p.m., at the Grange. For more information, call Eve at (413) 625-8275.

The Montague Grange will also host a Make-it-Yourself family craft fair on Sunday, December 12th, from 10:00 a.m. to 3:00 p.m. Affordable crafting activities for all ages will be offered. Make some great gifts! Lunch, warm drinks and baked goods for sale, with proceeds to benefit the Grange's building fund. For more info: 367-9608.

Send items for local briefs to: reporter-local@montague-ma.net

~First Snow of the Season~

BY JAN ATAMIAN

LAKE PLEASANT - I love the feeling that permeates the soul, upon seeing the first winter snowfall. Pulling back the lace curtain that shrouds the bay window, I peer out into nightfall and the lone bright light of a street lamp. The wind is howling, swirling gusts of snow around a frosted dome. Happy to watch in silence, my old friend the street lamp is piling up drifts while I absorb the warmth from a wood stove.

In the morning, everything is still while a sleeping white blanket spreads out for the eye to see, appearing softer than rabbit's fur. My house rises up like a pink peppermint, elegantly surrounded in snow. I am content to slow down in storm time, waiting for the town plow. It won't be by for hours, I know. My little village is a mere afterthought, seeming to be last on the list of priorities.

Some locals have acquired their own plow attachments. They speed through the virgin snow, spraying white bursts of newly formed crystals into the icy morning air. The snow is dry and it falls mechanically to one side in drifts. I will wait to shovel, for now; I sit contented on my sofa, picking up my discarded knitting.

Knit a row, purl a row, counting fifty-seven rows, alternating six green, six red. I'm not in the mood for this task, so I place the ball of yarn and needles on the glass topped coffee table. Beneath the glass float the square pieces of the 'sister quilt,' calico fabric cut into shapes to tell a story, held together with tiny stitches. Two

sisters sit in freshly fallen snow, you wearing the red and white striped hat with the dangling pompom. And look, our smiles are missing teeth, but that is of no concern, for you are only five and I nine.

I remember the endless snowfall, piled high above the back door, covering the metal milk box where Mom places the empty glass bottles. My cat darts out to carve a secret tunnel, with only the tip of her black tail visible. She creates an underground passage. We lie on our backs, moving arms and

grows smaller, while the space inside our shelter magically grows warmer.

The unfinished pieces of the sister quilt are encased gracefully under glass. In one square, it is summertime, and I'm dumping a bucket of pool water over your head. Another square shows delicate pieces of fabric made into freshly raked piles of fallen leaves.

We vow to keep in touch, each crafting an appliquéd piece for the sister quilt, showing snapshots from our childhood. Unfortunately, our lives have gotten busy with work and family obligations and the project has never been completed.

We keep in touch by phone, making plans for winter vacation, remembering the happy snowy days. Now, we are teaching our daughters to carve igloos, this time on the



"Two sisters sit in freshly fallen snow, you wearing the red and white striped hat with the dangling pompom."

Illustration by Jan Atamian

legs rapidly up and down, and rolling to one side to admire imprinted angel wings.

As the sun rises in the sky and the snow is warmed, it has begun to stick. Shovels in hand, buried up to our knees, we scoop up piles, forming a large white dome, a marvel to be sculpted into our very own igloo.

The process takes many hours. Our mittens caked with snow, we crawl into our hollow hide-out, feeling safe and secure, and warm from our exertion. We borrow candles from the house and carve little ledges for them to rest on. Taking care to light a match, we place the candle in a crevice inside our icy abode. We are content to watch the melting wax and dancing flame in silence as the candle

starry night of Christmas Eve, at the edge of a cold rushing river, on Tyler Branch Road in Enosburg Falls, VT.

Our igloo structures are much more methodical. We use plastic buckets and rectangular shaped molds to create bricks of snow, stacked into a circular dome. Next, candles are brought out and we are transported back to our youth, or perhaps a primitive stage, tens of thousands of years away from our families. Are we in the Arctic Circle, or inside a crystal palace enchanted by a snow queen? If transported back in time, perhaps we never left.

The lost minutes have become years, insignificant in our minds, as we listen in silence to the tic-tic-ticking of our lives.

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A \$900 Billion Dilemma

BY CHUCK COLLINS

JAMAICA PLAIN - How would you spend \$900 billion? Congress has to decide by the end of this month.

One simple solution would be for Congress to extend the Bush-era tax cuts for households with incomes over \$250,000 for another two years, and increase the threshold on the estate tax to \$5 million. Sweeten the deal with a 13 month extension on unemployment benefits and a few other middle class tax breaks, and that would use up the entire \$900 billion.

I feel bad for Congress. Lawmakers are under a lot of pressure to extend these tax cuts by New Year's Eve when they expire. Of course, it's similar to my teenage daughter who spent all weekend goofing off and was up late on Sunday night doing her homework. She's feeling pressure, too.

Congress must decide by year's end whether to give high-income households an extravagant holiday package. These are the same fortunate people who gave Congress those memorable campaign contributions in September and October. Members of Congress, at least those who won their reelection campaigns, may be feeling generous.

On the other hand, opinion polls show that the U.S. public strongly supports letting the tax cuts for high-income households expire. We've got a list of other priorities, such as fixing our infrastructure, reducing our energy bills, and reducing the deficit.

Congress has been putting off this decision all year. But it shouldn't be that hard. It's the choice between putting a "chicken in

every pot" or putting a Bentley in every Wall Street banker's garage by extending tax cuts for the richest Americans.

We need a combination of paying down the debt and making strategic investments that will strengthen our economy.

Such investments could include reducing our dependence on foreign oil, retrofitting buildings to make them energy efficient, and ensuring that our children have the skills they need to participate in the new economy. These kinds of investments would pay for themselves quickly in increased productivity and tax revenues to pay down debts.

So, what could we do with \$900 billion?

Well, we could build 138,461 new green schools, at the estimated cost of \$6.5 million per school. These could replace energy inefficient schools, generate millions of jobs in the real economy, and create healthy learning environments for the next generation.

Or we could weatherize every home in the United States. The estimated cost of retrofitting all of our 129 million residential units to geographically appropriate standards is \$650 billion. This would greatly reduce the need for imported oil and new power plants - and save the people who live in those homes billions of dollars in future energy costs.

You could pay for a 13 month extension on unemployment benefits with the spare change.

How about fixing every standard bridge? The American Society of Civil Engineers argues we need a 30-year plan to fund needed repair, renovation, or construction of our



Getting Serious on Deficit Reduction

LETTERS TO THE EDITOR

Missing a Reporter

I have looked for Joseph Parzych's bylines for the past several weeks and have been disappointed not to find any of his articles. I have enjoyed his memoirs and have found his articles on the bridge re-construction very informative.

Perhaps he has left for a warmer clime.

Please let him know he is missed and I look forward to seeing his byline again in the near future.

- Joanne Potee
Turners Falls

High Speed Internet, Conservation Development Bylaw on Special Town Meeting Warrant

BY DAVID DETMOLD

WENDELL - Wendell will hold a special town meeting in the town hall on Wednesday, December 15th, at 7:00 p.m. Among the seven items on the warrant is an article to revise the town's zoning bylaws to adopt the so-called conservation development bylaw.

This bylaw, if adopted by two thirds majority, would slow the pace of standard 'approval not required' building permits for primary dwellings, where sufficient acreage and road frontage exists, to no more than one building permit every seven years. At the same time, the bylaw would allow for more housing to be developed on parcels, whether contiguous or non-contiguous, where at least 75% of the acreage is permanently conserved. Housing on the developable land would be allowed to be clustered more tightly than current zoning allows; common driveways would be permitted for these housing lots. Farming or forestry or recreational usage would be allowed on the conserved land.

Another warrant article would see if the town will vote to establish a municipal lighting plant in order to operate a telecommunications system, as allowed by state law. Approval of this measure at this town meeting and a subsequent town meeting will allow the town of Wendell to join with other underserved communities in Central and Western Massachusetts to band together under the Wired West municipal cooperative to provide high speed internet access to individual homes in town, or to take other measures to achieve that goal.

The remaining articles seek to appropriate \$22,000 to replace two furnaces at the fire department and highway garage; to spend \$40,000 to purchase a new wood chipper for the highway department; \$7,700 to purchase four sets of turnout gear and a cascade system for the fire department; \$9,400 to install gutters and a drainage system at the police station and town hall; and \$1,000 to pay for the completion of the town's revised open space plan.

nation's deficient bridges. Nine hundred billion dollars would cover the investment needed for the next 52 years.

We could fund a 'G.I. Bill' for the next generation, providing 18 million college scholarships for eligible graduating seniors.

Making a bold investment in the next generation, like we did with the post-World War II generation, would have enormous payback.

Almost every state in the union is facing huge budget deficits. The Great Recession has taken a hit against state tax revenues. A percentage of the \$900 billion could help strapped states maintain essential services, and employ enough police officers, fire fighters, and teachers to keep their communities safe and constituents educated.

Congress is truly in a bind. Should the nation borrow \$900 billion, primarily to help the wealthy? Or should we pay down the deficit, extend unemployment for workers at a time when five people are applying for each job opening, help ourselves at the state level, and invest in the infrastructure for future prosperity?

Congress is waffling. Lawmakers may need our help to make a wise decision.

Chuck Collins, a former resident of Montague, is a resident scholar at the Institute for Policy Studies. This article first appeared in Other Words.

U.S. Casualties in Iraq and Afghanistan as of 12/8/10

US FORCES Casualties in Iraq as of this date	
4430	
Afghanistan	1423
Wounded in Iraq	31,902
Wounded in Afghanistan	9256

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Poets Wanted!

to submit original poems. Please email: reporter-poems@montaguema.net for consideration in the monthly Poetry Page. Include 25-word bio. Poems may also be posted to Montague Reporter, 58 4th Street, Turners Falls, MA 01376. No prior experience necessary, as a poet.



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COOP from pg 1

It all started in June of 2009, when several citizens of North Quabbin towns got together to talk about the limited availability of local foods. Meet theme #1 of Orange innovation: 'get together'.

"There are a lot of great farms in the area, but no good way to get local food. We wanted our own venue," said Aimee Borezo, coordinator of the Coop. Residents of the North Quabbin region were driving to Greenfield, Brattleboro, or Northampton to purchase food grown by their neighbors, often at high cost, Borezo said. So a core committee of seven to ten people began to meet weekly. After a period of six months they had developed a unique marketing strategy they felt would work best for residents of the North Quabbin region, which has one of the highest poverty rates in Massachusetts.

"We wanted to create something that was right for our area. We try to keep costs low," Borezo said.

The core group started with a distribution model based on a traditional CSA share model (Community Supported Agriculture, where customers "buy in" to a farming operation with an upfront payment for weekly allocations of produce throughout the farm's growing season). They tweaked the model for affordability. Members of the Coop order their 'share' on a weekly, instead of seasonal basis. And there are several share sizes to meet different needs for different families.

Then, with weekly orders in hand, coordinators turn around

and purchase what they need wholesale from regional growers.

"The CSA model worked well for us because we didn't have to stock products," said Borezo. By purchasing only what members needed each week, the cooperative was able to avoid costly waste, and could afford to sell produce to customers at only 25% above wholesale.

North Quabbin Community Foods Coop sources as much produce as possible from farms in the North Quabbin region. With the goal being to provide local foods year round, they extend their sourcing radius to include farms in the southern Pioneer Valley during the winter months.

Grower Adam Zucker, of Isle of View Farm in Wendell, who was busy selling produce at eight different weekly farmer's markets this past season, was thrilled about the opportunities that a local foods coop created for his business. "I think it's so cool for so many reasons. It makes my job a lot easier. It fills a local niche," said Zucker.

Because he can rely on stable sales, and knows exactly what he needs to harvest for the Coop every week, Zucker had more time to focus on growing his farm. He's even considering expanding his season to provide for the Coop year round. "(The Coop) is part of the reason why I've decided to commit to this (farm) for another five years," said Zucker. "I think that every town should have one. It makes a lot of sense for community, nutrition, and economy."

The Coop also provides products such as Dean's Beans

Coffee from Orange, and cheese from Chase Hill Farm in Warwick. Even apples from Red Apple Farm in Phillipston. Members have also had the option of participating in a monthly bulk foods order, for low costs on beans, grains, herbs, spices, and ecological health and beauty products.

This month the Coop, which is already about 120 members strong, will be opening a storefront on the second floor of the Orange Innovation Center (131 West Main Street – the former Bedroom Factory) this December, where members and non-members alike can purchase bulk items, fresh produce, meat, cheese, poultry, eggs, cleaning, health and beauty supplies. The Coop will also offer wares made by local artists and artisans.

And here we find ourselves at theme #2 of Orange innovation: 'get creative'. There's a synergistic effort between artists, business owners, growers and consumers to bring downtown Orange to life. Art for Life, another local initiative cooked up around a table at the Millers River Café, a popular breakfast and lunch spot on the town's main intersection, is a collaborative effort to make "art for the community, and community for art," said potter and Art for Life member Lydia Grey.

By bringing together the North Quabbin Community Foods Coop, League of Massachusetts Artisans, Fostering the Arts and Culture Partnership, Cystic Fibrosis Pals and more, Art for Life is taking over three vacant storefronts in downtown Orange to create a place to grow the arts.

"There's so much talent here, but when you look at the downtown it's almost vacant," said Jeannie Miller. Miller co-owns of the Millers River Café and is an Arts for Life sponsor. Among many things, this multi-use space will create, "an opportunity for artists to have viable retail space and at the same time provide art education for the community," Miller said. The windows of the storefronts are already filling with art from established, emerging, and younger regional artists.

This Saturday, December 11th, Art for Life will host a pop-up art sale in a vacant storefront at 7 L East Main Street. Over a dozen local artists and artisans will be selling affordable gifts, and in lieu of a traditional booth fee will be donating their profits to the North Quabbin Community Foods Coop and local non-profit Cystic Fibrosis Pals.

This event takes buying local to a whole new level. Buying gifts at this event will not only put money into the pockets of local artists and artisans, it will strengthen a network hoping to train the next generation in the fine arts. Then, with the proceeds going to the North Quabbin Community Foods Coop, you'll be getting some serious social power with your purchases. Funds raised are guaranteed to be directly reinvested into the local economy.

After getting the storefront up and running at the OIC, the Coop steering committee's long-term goal is move to a storefront in the middle of downtown. But there is no time frame for that move as yet. "We'd love to strengthen our

local economy and help other business by bringing our traffic downtown," said Borezo. "We're gradually becoming a Coop like you'd see in other towns, but we're doing it slowly, without taking out loans." Borezo calls this "member driven" growth, which takes us to theme #3 of Orange innovation: 'pace for long-term, sustainable growth.'

The North Quabbin Foods Coop is just one sprout in a forest of efforts by community members to build an enduring foundation for the community. The Coop isn't just about strengthening the local food system and local culture — it's about seeing the unique strengths of the North Quabbin region, building community around them, and developing a local, self-sustaining economic base that honors the true value of this beautiful area.

Watch out for the Coop's new storefront opening later this month. It's just another sign of renewed growth coming to downtown Orange.



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NOTES FROM MONTAGUE SELECTBOARD**'Doomsday Budget' in Planning Stage for Town Departments**

JANEL NOCKLEBY - The message from town administrator Frank Abbondanzio to town departments about the upcoming fiscal year is: prepare for the worst before hoping for the best.

Abbondanzio is meeting with each department over the next several days to assess the budget possibilities for Montague, given that both the town and the state have structural deficits.

"We need to reduce our dependence on reserves," said Abbondanzio.

The capital improvements committee plans to look at all of the town's facilities in order to create a six year capital needs budget. The finance committee will begin deliberations on the FY '12 budget next week. The town's preliminary operating budget is due on December 29th, and the capital budget is due January 20th.

Fiscal projections based on state deficits will require the town to create two budget scenarios, Abbondanzio cautioned: one to maintain departments at the current level of services and one with a ten percent reduction from

current spending.

Abbondanzio reported there is a \$2.1 billion state budget gap, which will impact local governments, unless that gap becomes smaller through additional (and unlooked for) federal stimulus.

The town administrator said Montague had been forced to allocate \$172,255 from reserves to meet capital expenses this year, and will be asked to take another \$171,281 from stabilization to fund the school budget compromise at a special town meeting on January 6th, 2011. At that point, the town will have \$685,941 remaining in reserves.

If Montague continues to spend reserves at an amount close to what it committed to the budget this year, those reserves will be gone entirely by FY'13.

Abbondanzio said he is preparing "a doomsday scenario," interviewing each town department about possible cuts in the 20% range for FY'13, if the budget picture does not improve before then.

"What if we had to go cold turkey?" Abbondanzio speculated, referring to the town using up its

dwindling reserves.

In other news, the Shea Theater asked for, and received, three liquor licenses for future performances (December 31st, March 5th, and April 2nd). Suzanne Davis, president of the Shea's board of directors, also reported the Shea is doing well. "We're operating a little bit in the black," for a second year, said Davis.

The board is planning to start a resident Shea Theater Company, other companies are planning performances next summer, and recent PowerTown music performances have been very successful, Davis said. Valley Idol contestants come from as far as Springfield to participate in the Shea's annual karaoke contest and fundraiser, Davis said. The Shea will also be host a craft fair in Peskeompskut Park on May 14th, 2011 from 10 a.m. - 4 p.m.

The Montague parks and recreation department is planning a snow sculpture event on February 19th from 1:00 - 2:20 p.m. Let's hope it snows! Hot chocolate and coffee will be served.

NOTES FROM GILL SELECTBOARD**Gill Expects Cash Positive Energy Performance Contract**

DAVID DETMOLD - The town of Gill is on track to realize \$11,000 a year on average in energy savings from performance contracting work at the Gill Elementary School slated to begin soon; and the energy savings will produce a positive cash flow for the town even in the first year.

That was the word on Monday from Beth Greenblatt, a consultant from Beacon Integrating Solutions in Boston hired to represent the interests of the town of Gill, and other Franklin County towns that have agreed to enter into energy performance contracts with Siemens Building Technologies.

At annual town meeting this year, Gill voters approved borrowing and spending up to \$430,000 to pay for energy retrofits of town buildings, providing those costs could be covered by energy savings. Under the terms of the energy performance contract, mandated by state law, Siemens guarantees the energy savings it finds through initial investment grade audits of town buildings, and the towns agree to finance upfront costs for the retrofits on condition that those energy savings will be realized to pay for the work over the ten or twenty year period of the contract.

But due to the low overall usage of other town buildings relative to the amount of energy saving work that would have been undertaken, there was not enough energy savings to justify the work except at the elementary school. At the elementary school, where the town has long considered the

best means to remove and replace an aging boiler, a \$150,000 state grant will help bring down the cost of the work, along with utility rebates to replace inefficient lighting with energy saving fixtures.

Explaining why buildings like the town hall, the library, the safety complex and the Riverside municipal building had been eliminated from the performance contract, at least in the initial phase, Greenblatt told the selectboard, "The project has been optimized to ensure that on an annual basis energy savings coupled with grants and rebates will be available to pay off loans." Taking the \$4,000 cost of bond insurance, Greenblatt said, "Even in the first year, the project will have a positive cash flow."

Greenblatt said it might have been possible to design a cash positive project involving other town buildings over the course of 20 years, but only if the town had been willing to experience a negative cash flow on the overall project in the early years.

Selectboard chair John Ward said, "Being relatively new on the selectboard, and having a relatively new energy commission here, once this energy performance contract gets off the ground it will be good to point to the work completed, before we take on other projects, even if they are cash flow negative in the early years."

Greenblatt estimated the total cost of improvements at the elementary school - which will include removal and replacement of the old boiler with an efficient

model, relining the vent stack, installing energy efficient lighting fixtures, an energy management control system, and improvements to the building envelope - will cost the town \$121,234, after subtracting the DOER grant and utility rebates.

She said as soon as the town signs off on the contract, Siemens would get to work. The schedule will be complicated by having to work around after school activities, and the boiler replacement will wait until the end of the heating season.

In other news, the selectboard accepted a \$7500 annual emergency preparedness grant from Entergy Vermont Yankee. Town administrative assistant Ray Purington said that money would be used to train emergency personnel, in case the town needed to respond to an emergency resulting from a mishap at the nearby nuclear plant.

The selectboard approved spending \$12,500 to fund Tighe and Bond's design work on the pump replacement project at the Riverside water district's pump station. Construction is expected to get underway by the end of spring, 2011.

Gill will hold a special town meeting on December 20th, at 6:30 p.m., to decide how to spend or save an extra \$38,121 left over from the Gill-Montague school budget compromise in November.

Selectboard member Ann Banash joked, "We'll all go out caroling afterwards." Provided the meeting gets out early enough.

Leverett School Committee Discusses Changes at Middle School

BY DAVID DETMOLD - The Leverett school committee hosted principal Mike Hayes and assistant principal Betsy Dinger of the Amherst Regional Middle School and regional school interim superintendent Maria Geryk for a general discussion about the middle school on Tuesday night.

Hayes talked about how the middle school's image has at times been portrayed as too concentrated on the social and emotional development of students, rather than academics. Hayes said his vision is to place social development efforts in the context of a rigorous academic program. He described improve-

ments to the middle school curriculum made possible by the passage of the override in Amherst this year, including more offerings in the arts and technical education.

To foster better communication between member towns and the district, superintendent Geryk said she plans to return to a past tradition of holding regional school committee meetings at least once a year in Pelham, Leverett and Shutesbury, around budget season. Regional chair Rick Hood has endorsed the idea, which will be brought before the committee soon.

see LEVERETT pg 7

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NOTES FROM THE MAHAR REGIONAL SCHOOL DISTRICT

Orange Loses a Bid for \$75,000 School Assessment Refund

BY KATIE NOLAN - On Tuesday, the Mahar regional school committee voted six to four to deny the town of Orange's request for a \$75,000 reduction in its assessment for this year's school budget.

At the last school committee meeting, town officials said Orange is facing a budget deficit of approximately \$416,000, and asked the committee to return approximately \$100,000 from the school's excess and deficiency (E&D) account to the district towns. The E&D account receives any surplus or deficit in the district's general fund at the end of each fiscal year. If the money were returned, \$75,000 would have gone to Orange and the rest to the other towns in the region - New Salem, Petersham, and Wendell - based on the number of students enrolled from each.

Richard Baldwin, Wendell's representative, told the committee he had consulted the Wendell finance committee and the Swift River school committee about the town of Orange's request for a return of funds, and heard "a unanimous no. Basically, it's not OK for any town to go back to the school committee after we set our budget."

New Salem representative Michael Yohan said, "This is not the intent of the money. The money is for the school." He characterized the formula for reimbursement from the E&D account as unfair, because it is

based on enrollment, while the towns are assessed costs based on relative wealth. He added that 2011 "is going to be a tough year," and said it would not make sense to reduce the E&D account now.

Petersham representative Dana Kennan said he had discussed Orange's request with Petersham residents, and found, "If you talk to people one on one, the majority are opposed."

Orange representative Paul Gervais told the committee although there is no precedent for a town asking for an assessment reduction late in the fiscal year, "This is a very unusual circumstance, one time only, catastrophic for the town."

At the last school committee meeting, in November, Orange administrator Richard Kwiatkowski explained Orange's deficit is a result of closing out the trust fund associated with its former self-insured health plan for town employees. The town is changing to traditional premium-based health insurance, but still must pay claims "in the pipeline" - incurred before the change to traditional insurance.

"If we have the money, if we can help them, let's do it," Gervais pleaded.

Asked by Gervais about the effect assessment reduction would have on the next budget, superintendent Michael Baldassarre answered, "It will cause us to increase assessments next year." Baldassarre told the

committee if no unexpected costs come up that require the district to spend from the E&D account this year, the money left in it would "go on the revenue side and reduce assessments for next year."

Orange representative Peter Cross noted there was almost \$600,000 in the E&D account. He recommended returning the money to Orange. "In a family, if I had that much extra money, I would not mind giving 15% to a family member who needed it."

But this charitable impulse did not find favor with all members of the regional family. Wendell finance committee member Jim Slavav said, "Voting this reimbursement would set a dangerous precedent." He predicted next year would see, "an increase in the fiscal crunch in Massachusetts with less stimulus money." Taking the money from the E&D account this year "pushes the problem into next year," Slavav said. He also observed Wendell would lose a small amount of money from an E&D account disbursement, because of the differing formulas for assessing costs to towns and disbursing E&D funds to towns.

After the proposal was voted down, Kennan observed, "Sometimes you don't like the votes you have to take." Committee chair Maureen Donelan, of Orange, responded, "I know. This was hard for

everyone." Orange selectboard vice chair Robert Andrews told the committee even though he was not happy with the vote, "I commend you. That's democracy; that's how it is."

Baldassarre told the committee environmental consultant GZA has submitted the six-month inspection report for the dam at the school pond and was recommending an engineered breaching of the dam. The preliminary cost estimate for the dam breach is \$333,000.

According to Baldassarre, this is less than the cost of long-term repair of the dam. He said he will be meeting with GZA in January, prior to bringing the consultant to the February school committee meeting for a presentation on the dam project.

Kennan observed that only \$250,000 had been approved for the project.

Baldassarre said the district would apply for grants to help bring down the cost of breaching the dam, and that representative Chris Donelan (D-Orange) had contacted state agencies asking for permit fees to be waived.

The committee voted unanimously to recommend consolidating the Orange Elementary School, Petersham Central School, and Ralph C. Mahar central administrative offices and to recommend three-year contracts, until June 2014, for the superintendent and assistant superintendent. The Swift

River Elementary School (New Salem and Wendell) central administrative office remains in Union 28.

Baldassarre gave the committee an update on the school's electricity contract. Based on an automatic renewal clause in its 2004 electricity contract, Mahar has been charged 13.8 cents per kilowatt hour since January of 2009. Mahar is suing the supplier, New England Energy Partners/Constellation NewEnergy, saying the automatic renewal was invalid because Mahar was not notified properly.

The supplier recently offered the district a cost of 12.6 cents per kilowatt-hour if the contract is extended to 2016.

Baldassarre said the renewed contract is invalid and therefore couldn't be extended and that "12.6 cents is still not reflective of the market." He said Mahar would continue to try to get a preliminary injunction against the supplier's rate hike.



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LEVERETT from pg 6

Leverett school committee (LSC) chair Farshid Hajir raised the issue of Amherst forming a study committee to consider moving Amherst sixth grades to the middle school. He asked whether the regional school committee would also examine expanding the middle school to include sixth graders - which would have funding and administrative implications for the other towns in the region. Geryk said that topic is on the regional school committee's agenda.

Hajir said Leverett residents have consistently opposed moving Leverett's sixth graders to the middle school.

In other news, the LSC appointed seven members to the newly formed Leverett education study committee: Catherine Brooks, Sarah Dolven, Janice Telfer, school committee members Pam Stone and Dawn Sacks, Julie Shively from the selectboard, and Don Gibavic from the finance committee. One more community member is sought for this committee;

interested residents please contact farshidhajir@gmail.com.

The LSC discussed the FY '12 school budget, which is coming in at \$65,703 (3.9%) above last year's budget. Hajir said the increase stems from the loss of about \$24,000 in revenues, due to lower school choice enrollment and the loss of one time federal stimulus money, and increases in line items for maintenance and supplies, which have been cut frequently in recent years.

The Leverett elementary

school has been invited to fill out an application for the state's Green Repair program for the planned replacement of sections of the elementary school roof and windows in the gymnasium. All school districts that put in a request were invited to apply for the state program; Leverett received notification of a site visit in the near future.

The LSC voted unanimously to pursue the grant opportunity, which would reimburse the cost of roof and window repairs at the rate of 51.42%.

Cost estimates for that project were not available at press time.

Hajir said, "We will be working with the administration and selectboard to complete the grant application process and look forward to being in the competition."

This article was compiled through interviews with Leverett school committee chair Farshid Hajir following the meeting.



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Scenes from a Laundromat

Suzee's Sixth Annual Lost and Found Fashion Show was held Saturday, December 4th on 3rd Street in Turners, leaving All tongue Tide, til the Cheer went up: Fab! Dynamo! Wisk!

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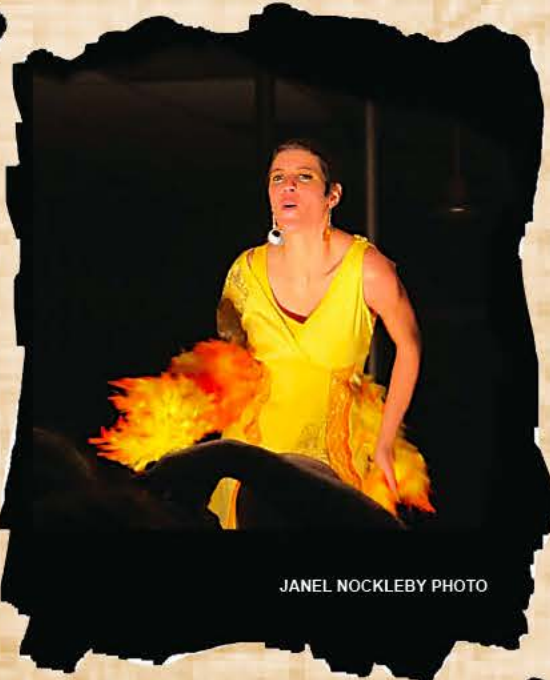
CHRIS WISE PHOTO

Maylea Spence and Gabriella Gibbons wear couture by Sarah Pruitt



CHRIS WISE PHOTO

M.C. Furry McNuggets looked smashing in a Sarah Pruitt



JANEL NOCKLEBY PHOTO

Laura Herbert set the place on fire in an Anne Harding-Matt Rogawski original



JANEL NOCKLEBY PHOTO

Chad Odwazny in a smokin' jacket by Raey Teumim & Hannab Fuller-Boswell



JANEL NOCKLEBY PHOTO

Mojie Crigler turned heads in an eye-popping outfit by Raey Teumim & Hannab Fuller-Boswell



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Of Cats and Epic Conquests

BY PATRICIA PRUITT

ISTANBUL - Today is December 7th; D-Day. I've been in Istanbul six weeks and two days, and in another six days I'll be home for the holidays. There is no place like it.

Far from Turners Falls, I have been walking through old places and times, through lost human stories and national epics, the loss of empire and the beginning of a modern nation, and into the evidence everywhere of the ongoing remarkable strengths and persistent shortcomings of human efforts at creating a human community. Just before Thanksgiving, Chris and I ventured out of Istanbul to the south coast to visit Troy, site of the Trojan War.

Celebrated by Homer in his epic poem *The Iliad*, it is a site

dear to both Turks and Greeks and the Western world. Our excitement at getting to see this epic place prompted us to reread *The Iliad* (Robert Fitzgerald translation) so as to "see" (restore) the fallen stones and pillars before us.

The vast plain of Iliion needed no literary assistance. One could easily see the black Achaian ships beached along the distant shore and imagine the 55,000 man Greek army preparing for battle, while the Trojans, led by Hector, rode out of the Dardanian Gate on the east in gleaming chariots, some 50,000 strong.

I remember being shocked to learn years ago that the average size of men in the time of Troy was about five feet tall. The remnants of their buildings and heft of materials such as marble and stone suggest much larger folk. Archeological works, begun in the 19th century most famously by Heinrich Schliemann, are still ongoing. The man peering out of the Trojan Horse is not Achilles, but my husband, Chris.

From Troy we ventured farther south along the Aegean coast to Assos, a gray



Chris Sanyer-Laucano (in window) visits a replica of Odysseus' sneak attack masterwork, in modern-day Troy.



Cats at Troy

From the *Iliad* - Fitzgerald Translation

"Shame, shame, you pack of dogs, you only looked well.

What has become of all our fighting words, all that brave talk I heard from you in Lemnos,

when you were feasting on thick beef and drinking

bowls a-brim with wine? Then every man could take on Trojans by the hundred! Now

we are no match for one of them, for Hektor.

He will set our black ships afire, and soon. O Father Zeus, what great prince before this have you so blinded in disastrous folly, taking his glory and his pride away? And yet

no altar of yours did I pass by, not one, in my mad voyage this way in the ships. On every one I burned thigh flesh and fat, in hope to take walled Troy by storm. Ah,

Zeus! Grant me this boon: let us at least escape the worst: do not allow the Trojans to crush the Akhaians as it seems they will!"

The father on Ida pitied the weeping man and nodded; his main army should be saved. And Zeus that instant launched above the field the most portentous of all birds, an eagle, pinning in its talons a tender fawn.

stone town high up on a hill where every house is made of square-cut stone and all the streets are cobbled in small blocks of hard gray stone. At the highest point in Assos is the temple of Athena, dating from circa 530 BC. Much of the excavation here was done by American archeologists from Boston, and their finds are part of the Museum of Fine Arts in Boston.

The view from here is spectacular; you can see all the way to the Isle of Lesbos, seven miles away, as well as far into the eastern distance. Assos, formerly a Greek town, became Turkish during the relocation of the minorities in 1923, when Greeks were sent back to Greece and Turks in Greece were returned to Turkey.

Because of the numbers of people travelling back to Istanbul, we cannot get a bus --

all seats are sold. We decide to take a combi to the coastal town of Bandirma, where we can get a ferry back to the city. In Turkey all small towns operate a combi, or van transportation system, to move folks from one small town to another. These constitute affordable and efficient means of local transportation. In Bandirma we learn the ferry too is sold out until the next evening.

So we visit Bandirma. It is mainly an industrial town, boasting both a Ford plant and a Fiat plant. The town looks prosperous with new pedestrian shopping streets in the downtown, and a beautiful large central plaza made of terrazzo tile (just like in our police station!). The plaza is bordered on one side by the sea and harbor, and on the other by cafes and restaurants. We get a beer in one cafe and sit outside, though the air is chilly. The waiter considerably offers me a jacket to put over my shoulders.

Back in Istanbul, we are greeted at our door by a persistent orange tabby cat who has convinced us to add cat food to our shopping list. In Turkey, cats rule. There are nice dogs here, but most of them have to work for a living guarding small shops.

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SK8 Park from pg 1
\$17,500 on design plans for the park out of program income funds. On the second of two public design hearings, the final plans (see schema at upper right) were unveiled on July 29th of 2010.

But the price tag, originally ballparked at about \$350,000, had grown to almost half a million dollars, due in large part to the difficulty of dealing with the high water table at Unity Park. So the parks and recreation commission sent Berkshire Design architect Peter Wells back to the drawing board to try

spokesperson Brian Dolan said he believes the town can shave an extra \$27,336 off those estimates, by subtracting site work features like bleachers, trees, and benches, reducing the amount of paved walkways, and other cost saving adjustments to the design. If the skate park committee can find a contractor to donate fill and trucking (perhaps in conjunction with a nearby construction project), that would save an additional \$15,000, Dolan said. In 2002, the town of Fitchburg built a skate park where the fill was entirely donated, Dolan said.

By the end of this week, Montague plans to re-apply for \$597,000 in Community Development Block Grant funding for the first phase of planned improvements to Unity Park. The town narrowly missed getting approved for Phase I Unity Park improvements this year, when a low score on an accompanying \$50,000 grant for the Montague Catholic Social Ministries dragged down the overall score for the 2010 CDBG grant, the second time in three years Montague has failed to win a CDBG grant. CDBG grants are offer one of the few regular infusions of discretionary federal funds to towns like Montague; those funds must be directed toward meeting demonstrated needs of low to moderate income groups, or removing slums and blight.

By this time next year, the town hopes to have secured

funding for the first phase of Unity Park improvements – to include playground and parking lot and accessibility improvements – and to apply for \$460,000 in CDBG funds for the second phase of Unity Park improvements. The second phase of improvements – not including any money for the proposed skate park – would feature improved ball fields, a volleyball court, a community garden area, additional parking, signage, a walkway around the entire park and new fencing.

Town planner Walter Ramsey, present at the December 2nd hearing, noted the town of Montague would qualify for up to 70% reimbursement up to \$500,000 if it applied for a Massachusetts Parkland Acquisitions and Renovations for Communities grant to build the skate park.

If the town decides to apply for a state PARC grant and is successful, the Franklin County Regional Housing and Redevelopment Agency's Bruce Hunter said Montague may be able to apply some aspects of the federal CDBG grant for Unity Park improvements – specifically the money spent on tearing up the asphalt on Williams Way – and perhaps the program income money already spent on designing the skate park – towards meeting the town's 30% local match.

Hunter has told the selectboard on more than one occasion that the skate park would

be a strong component of any CDBG grant for Unity Park improvements, due to the demonstrated support for the project from hundreds of petition signers, survey respondents, and hearing attendees, to say nothing of the decade or more of fundraising and work party efforts on the part of the skate park committee and area young people.

John Hanold, finance committee chair and Precinct 5 town meeting member, in a letter to the parks and recreation commission, said, "The history of enthusiasm and use for a skate park parallels the support for pre-school and team sports services [at Unity Park], and the skate park should continue to be part of the overall project. Like the other programs of Montague's parks and recreation department, the skate park will attract users from all villages of Montague in addition to drawing users from other towns. I hope you will retain this part of the planned scope in any Unity Park improvement plan under consideration."

Dolan, of the skate park committee, told the hearing, "I've been wracking my brain how to get the cost to where it would be palatable to everybody." He stressed that the current design, the product of numerous hearings, had gained a great deal of buy-in from the skaters in town, who held a rally last month on the site of the proposed park, and from the skate park com-

mittee as a whole. "Everybody's pretty thrilled with this basic design – it's pretty brilliant," Dolan said.

"Overwhelmingly, people are in favor of this design," added Ellen Spring, another skate park committee spokesperson. (To go to the official design website and comment on the Unity Skate Park design, see: www.pillardesignstudios.com and click on the services tab, log in with the word turnersfalls and the password skatepark.)

Wells said he had spent about \$9,000 of the \$18,000 allocated for design to draw up the plans.

Parks and recreation director Brian Dobosz, in the absence of a quorum of the entire commission, told the skate park committee and Wells that the plans would be "on hold," until the commission can meet again to review the final design. That meeting will likely take place sometime in January. He said at that time the commission would either approve the plans, or ask Wells to go back for a redesign.

"What would be the reason to go back and redesign?" asked Precinct 5 town meeting member Suzette Snow-Cobb.

Dobosz said, "If we went back to a redesign, it would be to bring the costs way down," presumably by cutting down the square footage of the skate park.

Wells said it might be possible to build the skate park in stages, to save initial costs. But he pointed out there would be additional costs incurred by bringing contractors back to town to build a second phase of the skate park.

Dolan said his committee will be active in fundraising in the months to come, and hopes to apply for up to \$25,000 from the Tony Hawk foundation, in a further effort to bring the cost of the final project down.

To find out more about winter skate park trips and activities, to donate or help out in any way with the skate park committee's efforts, search for Great Falls Skate Park on facebook.



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HIGHLIGHTS FROM THE GILL POLICE LOG

Suspicious Activity Investigated, Trespassing

Date	Time	Location	Details
Monday, 11/29	12:10 p.m.	French King Highway	Motor vehicle accident. Power lines down.
	4:48 p.m.	Myrtle Street	Domestic violence alarm.
	6:04 p.m.	Barney Hale Road	Tree on wires. Responded with fire department.
Wednesday, 12/1	6:04 p.m.	Barney Hale Road	Tree on wires. Responded with fire department.
Thursday, 12/2	5:31 p.m.	Oak Road	Trespass order served at station.
	6:21 p.m.	Main Road	Assisted resident with juvenile issues.
Friday, 12/3	9:41 p.m.	Main Street	Assisted Northfield police with disturbance.
	7:40 p.m.	Main Street	Assisted Northfield police with disturbance.
Saturday, 12/4	8:20 p.m.	Main Road and West Gill Road	Disturbance in vehicle investigated.
	9:10 p.m.	Mount Hermon campus	Lost dog recovered.
Monday, 12/6	5:30 p.m.	French King Highway	Hunting complaint. Trespassers.
	8:31 p.m.	Main Road	Suspicious person observed at business, looking inside building and vehicles.

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ZEN from pg 1

meditation programs, street witnesses with the homeless, pilgrimages to Auschwitz, peace circles in international war zones and the like.

The news emerged from communication between staff and participants in several programs headquartered at the property, and was confirmed in recent days by members of the Peacemakers board and staff.

Word came as early as October 29th from Karen Werner, the director of the popular Montague Farm Café, a soup kitchen centered at the Ripley Road property (*see MR IX#4: Montague Farm Café Provides many Forms of Nourishment*), that financial support had "dried up," and her position eliminated.

An email sent in mid-November, signed by the seven stewards of the Montague Farm Zendo — the center's worshipping community — said more: that the property itself "has been financially burdensome and unsustainable for the organization."

The programs aren't necessarily tied to the physical facility, though. This week, in an email, Steve Kanji Ruhl, Zen Peacemaker's director, offered words of reassurance. "We'll be continuing the programs - including our innovative and popular Café, which serves free, healthy meals to local people in need - in other Franklin County venues."

Ruhl emphasized, "All commitments to persons or vendors who have provided goods and services will be honored. The austerities now in place make it possible to pay the bills while seeking a new shape for the organization in the future."

In a telephone call, board secretary and zendo leader, Sensei Eve Myonen Marko said she and others are currently "working on figuring out what we are going to do, where we are going to meet."

Zen Peacemakers' mission is "to alleviate suffering" through "holistic social service proj-

ects," promotion of socially engaged Buddhism, and training new generations in "service as Zen practice." The Ripley Road property was intended to serve as a world center for engaged Buddhism. The zen center in Montague was first and foremost a product of the vision of Bernie Glassman, an internationally known leader of American Zen Buddhism, who served as the abbot of the Zen Community of New York in Riverdale for 16 years before founding the Grayston Bakery and Foundation in 1982 to employ, house, provide AIDS care and childcare for homeless people in Yonkers, NY.

Chris Queen, a Wendell resident and member of the Zen Peacemakers board, confirmed that, even as this next phase unfolds, the organization "is committed to serving the community as a non-profit," although he wryly commented the organization may have taken the concept of non-profit a little too far in this phase of its work. Queen, a longtime Buddhist scholar and author of several books on the subject of engaged Buddhism, said the board "has made a firm commitment" that the Farm Café and the Farm Zendo will continue, "possibly in rental space in the area, perhaps in Montague."

"Costs have exceeded income from programs," Queen explained. He listed "the costs of running the facility and the effort to make it a conference center, education center and retreat center," which entailed "the upgrading of the old cow barn." That effort, that began in 2003 and was completed the following year, cost \$1.1 million, according to earlier reports. "It's now a beautiful space for meetings in arts and zen practice," Queen said. "Nearly all religions have used it as space for meditation and worship."

For a large, beautiful structure like the renovated barn — with its formal entrance, re-engineered structure of huge chestnut beams, large windows and bamboo floor — to be part of a Buddhist undertaking

Queen called "anomalous." He considers the edifice as part of the organization's "aspiration to be a destination." He said the Maezumi Institute, the arm of Zen Peacemakers that taught socially engaged Buddhism, needed a facility, but said "maybe to stabilize that old building took more money than anticipated."

Queen insisted "the spirit of the organization was always focused on the programs and not on the display," and gave his experience as a volunteer during the Farm Café as an example. "I was there every week. As a driver, I got to know the parents, kids and single adults who came for lunch and music, magic shows and parades. The food and fun were great.

"It wasn't just four hours on a Saturday and \$10 of gas; it was new friendships and participation in the larger community. The summer garden ended, but donated food filled the gap. More people showed up every week, both to volunteer and to enjoy the fellowship.

"That's the spirit that will continue; that transcends the property. I hope it will go on."

Many long time local people say there's a certain spirit associated with the property, though, one that Zen Peacemakers assuredly reflects: to be at an edge, experimental, in transition. Dan Keller, also a Wendell resident and member of the former commune at the Montague Farm in the late 1960s and early 70s, said the farmhouse perched above a bend in the Sawmill River on the border with Leverett "was always a center of great flux, with different ideas coming together, philosophies, now religion. It's been in transition for the last 50 years.

"Even as a New England farm I guess it was an experiment," he said. "Certainly [it was] since 1968, when the Liberation New Service, and Marshall Bloom, moved there."

In the Montague farmhouse, Marshall Bloom, fleeing factional strife in New York City, set up the Liberation News Service, an alternative to the

Associated Press and United Press International that disseminated hard news of the anti-Vietnam War movement and social ferment bubbling up on college campuses and spreading across the nation and the world at that time. Bloom committed suicide near Cranberry Pond in 1969.

"A rural farm, wood heat," Keller mused, recalling the headquarters of the counterculture's short lived underground press, "it was sort of contradictory to begin with." The hard-copy dispatches rolled off "a photo offset press named Johnny and were sent out by mail," to 500 newspapers around the country. The effort died when the ink froze in the hard Montague winter.

"One of the things that came out of there," Keller added, "was Sam. It was where he launched his great act of civil disobedience, out of political convictions that were brewing at the Montague Farm."

Sam Lovejoy felled a weather tower erected on the Montague Plains in preparation for Northeast Utilities' planned construction of a twin reactor nuclear power facility. In the face of the ensuing opposition to commercial nuclear power, which spread globally from the epicenter in Montague, the reactors on the Montague Plains were first shelved, and finally cancelled. The Plains became a wildlife sanctuary, and Lovejoy, who went on to become a select-board member in Montague (like Keller in Wendell) played a key role in negotiating that transaction.

The old hand-carved sign "Better Active Today than Radioactive Tomorrow" still hangs from the renovated dairy barn on Ripley Road.

What happens next for the property may depend in part on whether an option held by three local people, Tony Mathews of Gill, Susan Mareneck of Leverett, and Keller himself is exercised. Explained Keller, the property was owned by "the Fellowship of Religious Youth, a non-profit set up by Bloom in

his will. Because the property was sold at below market value, the trust put a right of first refusal in the form of a first option to buy the property if it ever got sold." Keller said the option "only lasts a certain amount of time, and it requires that they notify these three people, and we have not been formally notified yet."

But Lovejoy, who has continued to play an advisory role at the Ripley Road property through the years, including in its present incarnation with the Zen Peacemakers, pointed out that it will be difficult for these old communards to exercise the option, since the value of renovations — that \$1.1 million barn rehab for example — would have to be calculated in. An extensive geothermal heating system, septic system, and other improvements to the property did not come cheap.

Movie actor Jeff Bridges once likened the role of acting in a movie to the experience of working as an individual in the wider world. "If you want to get anything done... you must give up and be willing to be the fool, to take the risk to be totally misinterpreted and fall on your ass." He said that in a visit to Ripley Road in 2006, to inaugurate the arts program at the Zen Peacemakers.

Hardly anything that's been undertaken at the Montague Farm has been less than wildly ambitious, and hardly anybody who's initiated anything there has failed to perform a slow crash landing onto the derriere — while managing at the same time to seriously create and inspire.



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AWARD from pg 1
 Mass Cultural Council funding and corporate matching donations, RiverCulture has brought in at least \$380,000 to develop arts and culture in the village. That money has had a demonstrable multiplier effect in the community, which has seen new startups in the business district, and the successful draw of events like the annual Avenue A block party, joined this year by the debut of the Montague Soapbox Races and the Franklin County Pumpkin Fest (which drew a crowd to Avenue A estimated by police at more than 8,000, roughly equal to the

entire population of Montague).
 "What the Turners Falls RiverCulture project has done is to really transform the image of the place, so that people want to come here and people who live here are proud of it," Sherman said.

Davol has done that not only by aggressively marketing Turners Falls on local media and sending out electronic newsletters detailing cultural events each week to fans and followers, but also by sponsoring and funding everything from brochures offering self-guided historical walking tours and geology tours of the village, to public art pieces that double as bulletin boards along the bike path and on the main drag.

Davol has helped with marketing brochures for the Shea Theater, successfully lobbied

for directional signage on the nearby interstate and Route 2, talked up the town on cable TV and public radio, sought and funded proposals for an art pathway to the Hill and a solar sound box display for downtown parks, and brought the first countywide juried fine art show to a downtown gallery in living memory. All that, along with the major statewide honor of the Commonwealth Award has surely boosted the town's prestige and profile. [Full disclosure, Davol is my domestic partner, but I would cheer the news of her award and acknowledge her hard work in earning it regardless.]

According to the Mass Cultural Council's website, the Commonwealth Awards, presented every two years, "are the state's highest honor in the arts, humanities, and interpretive sciences. On February 9th, 2011 the MCC will once again honor individuals and organizations that have made extraordinary contributions to the communities, economy, and quality of life in Massachusetts."

Awards in the category of Creative Community are given "for a city, town, or community-based organization that has demonstrated the central role of arts and culture in building healthier, more vital, more livable communities," the MCC says.

Sherman recalled the original spark behind the RiverCulture project. "There had been so much public and private investment in infrastructure in Turners Falls, in streets, in landscapes, buildings and parking lots to

create the conditions for economic growth to happen. Business people were taking risks; they were moving to town and setting up businesses here. But the image of the village really lagged behind the reality. This was true both for people who lived here and people who were outside the community – they really had an image of Turners that was ten years behind the times.

"The purpose of RiverCulture was to shift the internal and external image of what Turners Falls has become," Sherman said.

Sherman credited town administrator Frank Abbondanzio for his leadership role in upgrading the physical infrastructure of the village over the last 30 years, and in "recognizing the positive impact the creative community could play in transforming Turners Falls. And she credited business owners "who have been here for a long time, and never gave up, and new folks who have invested in Turners."

Abbondanzio recalled, "Back in 1980, when I first started working here on economic revitalization, people would tell me about these big events that used to happen in Turners with wall to wall people on the Avenue, and I thought, that must have been nice, because all we had then were the bars. The place was deteriorated. Obviously, it has been a long haul.

"I remember a professor of landscape architecture did a landscape study of Turners Falls in 1981, and he said, 'Turners Falls is a wonderful community.

It's just like a Hollywood set between takes: beautiful architecture, beautiful river, but nothing happening here."

Abbondanzio recalled an early economic development study of the village performed by Richard Gsottschneider, who had worked on redeveloping Quincy Market in Boston. "He said, 'You can't have tourism because there's nothing happening in Turners Falls.'

"I'd like to see him say that now," Abbondanzio added.

The town administrator said, "It doesn't come as a surprise to hear about the [Commonwealth] award. I know the impact RiverCulture has had, and I know the excellent job Lisa has been doing. It's a real feather in her cap, and for all of the people who have been involved in the cultural planning and organizing in town. We know the program is one of the more popular in the state, and it bodes well for getting funding from the state for even more people to find out what we're doing here in Turners Falls. Everybody likes to be part of the winning team."

Sherman concluded, "This is a very good example of how smart investment of public resources – private, state and federal – in the infrastructure of the village, and the money invested in the RiverCulture project, has paid off. There is economic activity happening here because of these investments, and it's a better place to live."



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HIGHLIGHTS FROM THE ERVING POLICE LOG
Vandalism, Sewer Backup

Tuesday, 11/30
 12:22 p.m. Report of large boulder in middle of Moore Street. Reported it was dragged by a tractor trailer from the corner of Route 2 and Semb Drive. State Highway removed same.
 9:30 p.m. Received a call from the railroad advising of vandalism to their property.

Wednesday, 12/1
 11:47 p.m. Suspicious motor vehicle at Box Car. Checked same and moved along.

Thursday, 12/2
 9:14 p.m. Assisted Northfield police with disturbing the peace, breaking and entering, and destruction of property incident.

Friday, 12/3
 11:10 p.m. Noise complaint at Weatherheads apartments on French King Highway. Upon arrival all was quiet.

Saturday, 12/4
 12:45 Report of stray dog on State Road. Owner located and dog returned.

Sunday, 12/5
 1:27 p.m. Report of sewer backup on Strachen Street. Treatment plant personnel notified.

4:04 p.m. Assisted

Bernardston police with suicidal subject. Same went to Franklin Medical Center.

9:44 p.m. Assisted Bernardston police with domestic situation. One subject arrested for assault and battery, and second for assault and battery with a dangerous weapon.

Monday, 12/6
 11:30 a.m. Report of loose animals on Mountain Road. Same taken in by owner upon arrival.

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JESSICA HARMON ILLUSTRATION

THE HEALTHY GEEZER: Rash Advice

BY FRED CICETTI

LEONIA, NJ – Q. What causes rashes?

The most common cause of a rash is contact dermatitis, an inflammation of the skin that comes from direct contact with irritants or allergens. A red, itchy rash from contact dermatitis isn't contagious, and usually goes away in two to four weeks.

The cause of contact dermatitis is direct contact with irritants or allergens. These include: detergents, soaps, makeup, deodorant, clothing, chemicals, rubber, metals, jewelry, fragrances, plants and medicinal lotions.

There are two types of contact dermatitis.

Irritant contact dermatitis is caused by a substance such as bleach that irritates the skin. Allergic contact dermatitis is caused by a reaction to an allergen, which is a substance that induces an allergy.

If the cause of a rash isn't obvious, you may have to get a 'patch test'. During one of these tests, small amounts of possible allergens are placed on patches that are attached to your skin for two days. If you are allergic to a tested substance, a bump will appear on your skin.

You should seek medical attention for a rash when it interferes with your sleep or normal daytime activities, if you are in pain, if you think you have an infection, or if home care hasn't worked.

If you scratch a rash for a long time, you can get neuroder-

matitis, a condition in which skin becomes thick. Persistent scratching can also lead to infection, scars or color changes in your skin.

To treat contact dermatitis you should:

- Avoid the irritants.
- Use topical creams containing hydrocortisone, and oral corticosteroids and antihistamines to reduce the inflammation and itching.
- Stop scratching.
- Apply cool, wet compresses.
- Cover the affected area with bandages to protect the skin and prevent scratching.
- Bathe in cool water with baking soda or finely ground oatmeal.
- Wear smooth-textured cotton clothing to avoid irritation.
- Wash with mild soaps without dyes or perfumes, and rinse thoroughly.

• Use plastic gloves to avoid contact with household cleaners.

• When laundering, use a mild, unscented detergent and an extra rinse cycle.

The following are some common allergens:

Skin products. Perfumes, lotions, and cosmetics may cause allergic contact dermatitis. Others are sensitive to the preservative chemicals needed to prevent skin care products from spoiling.

Poison plants. These include poison ivy, poison oak, and poison sumac.

Rubber. Chemical additives in rubber can cause a reaction. Rubber gloves can cause dermatitis. Synthetic gloves can be used instead. Women with a rubber allergy can wear undergarments with spandex if they do not have rubber-backed fasteners or edges. Bras without rubber are also available.

Hair dyes. Some people are

sensitive to paraphenylenediamine (PPD). This ingredient is found in permanent hair dyes that are mixed with another chemical, such as peroxide, before application. Most people allergic to PPD can use temporary dyes.

Nickel. Nickel is found in gold jewelry and metal alloys. Many chrome-plated objects contain enough nickel to produce a reaction in sensitive people. Buckles, zippers and buttons can cause dermatitis.

Chromates. Chromates contain chromium, and are commonly responsible for allergic contact dermatitis from cement, leather, some matches, paints, and anti-rust products. Chromates are also used to tan leather for shoes and can result in shoe dermatitis. Vegetable-tanned footwear can be used as an alternative.

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

THE NEIGHBORHOOD TOXICOLOGIST

An Unhealthy Nostalgia for Melamine

BY EMILY MONOSSON

MONTAGUE CENTER – Melamine is yet another cool '50s invention that failed to enter my mother's kitchen. While friends and neighbors stocked up on the nifty, new, light, durable and colorful plastic dishware, my mother filled her kitchen with white, pure white, simple, elegant, breakable ceramic. Her cupboards are still filled with the stuff - white, white, white. Not so at my in-laws, where the everyday dinnerware is red, blue and yellow melamine, pleasingly smooth, tough and virtually unbreakable.

Just a couple of years ago, Crate and Barrel, in an effort to appeal to boomers who recall dining off the colorful plastic, offered melamine in colors that harkened back to the fifties and sixties - bright orange, acid green and red (far better on plates than on the cabinets and counters) and, being deprived of the plastic

as a child, I pounced, buying a cute set of eight orange, green and red oval-shaped melamine dishes.

This is all to say that until about year later any thoughts I had about melamine were all pleasant and nostalgic. Now, when I think of melamine, I hear the rattlesnake sound of old westerns, the sound that happens just before something bad is about to happen. Just before the good guy is about to drink the tainted water, or the heroine is about to drink the poisoned wine.

Chemically, melamine is a pleasingly round molecule made up of hydrogen, carbon and nitrogen. It is used in the preparation and production of a range of items including house wares, flame retardants, and fabrics. When combined with formaldehyde and heated up, melamine is transformed into the dinnerware. Which by the way, when heated together with your favorite acidic

food, (reheated tomato sauce anyone?) can release upwards of 2.5 milligrams of melamine per one big round plate according to the National Toxicology Program.

By itself, melamine's acute toxicity is comparable with that of table salt. That melamine causes kidney toxicity following longer exposures to high concentrations in test animals (say 2 - 4 parts per thousand in feed) is well known and, until more recently, not considered highly relevant, because those concentrations were considered unrealistically high.

What first brought melamine under scrutiny here in the States was the toxic transformation that occurs when it combines with cyanuric acid, an FDA approved feed additive also used to produce dyes, herbicides, antimicrobials and pool water disinfectant. Cyanuric acid, a derivative of melamine is also a ringed nitro-

gen containing structure, and like melamine it is considered not acutely toxic. But when these two chemicals get together, mayhem begins. Following ingestion, the chemicals make their way to the kidney destined for simple excre-

tion. Unfortunately, should they meet up, melamine and cyanuric acid join together to form melamine cyanurate crystals, a toxic combination capable of lodging in kidney tubules where see MELAMINE pg 14

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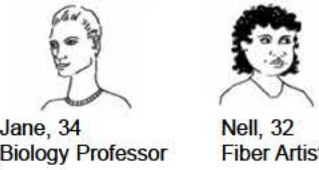
Episode 36: A Dream Come True

JEANNE WEINTRAUB-MASON

MONTAGUE CENTER – The day after Jane called WGBJ host Sam Lively he had her come into the station to talk about clean energy on air.

“Is it safe to say that you don’t agree with your fellow Go Green Family contestant and newly elected State Representative Rita

Robbins-Levine Family



Jane, 34
Biology Professor

Nell, 32
Fiber Artist

Tinker?” Sam asked.

“Yes, Sam, I do have a problem with Representative Tinker’s statements about clean coal and nuclear power because what

she’s said just isn’t true. There is no such thing as clean coal – it’s like saying there is a healthy cigarette – it does not exist! Operating coal plants emit mercury and other toxic vapors, and coal mining contaminates groundwater, rivers and streams. Don’t let anyone tell you that coal plants are carbon free—they are not even close to it. Those ads you see for ‘clean coal’ are put out by the coal industry to delay

taking action on climate change.”

“What about nuclear power? That’s a carbon-neutral fuel source,” Sam countered.

“Nuclear power has to be the most dangerous and dirty fuel of all. There is nothing clean or green about uranium tailings or radioactive nuclear waste. Plus, burning fossil fuels, gasoline and diesel, are essential to every stage of the nuclear cycle – and CO2 is given off whenever these are used. Frankly, I think it’s a bit disingenuous for Rita to call herself a ‘green’ candidate. Her unequivocal support for coal and nuclear energy indicates that she

is protecting the interests of the utility industry at the expense of our environment.”

Later that evening:

“Nell — I just got a call from Rachel Maddow’s producer at MSNBC!” cried Jane Robbins-Levine. “Somehow she found out about my interview — she’s planning to run a clip from Rita’s speech together with a clip from my interview on her show, and she wants to interview me! I think I’ve died and gone to heaven!”

Continued next issue...

MELAMINE from page 12 they can cause acute renal failure and death.

Several years ago contaminated pet food from China was implicated in the deaths of dozens of cats, and sickened

thousands of dogs and cats. The culprit was subsequently determined to be melamine tainted gluten. Gluten, derived from wheat or rice, is a common source of protein. Protein is sometimes estimated by measuring gluten nitrogen content. Given the high amount of nitrogen groups in both melamine and cyanuric acid (available as “scrap residue” from the melamine industry) it isn’t hard to imagine unscrupulous processors adding the stuff to their products to dupe purchasers or regulators into thinking they were selling a high-

er protein product. After a massive petfood recall, one would think that incident alone would deter anyone from trying the same thing again. At least, anyone with a conscience.

Then there was the 2008 incident in China when 50,000 infants became ill, and at least four died of kidney failure after drinking melamine laced infant formula. The scandal soon spread beyond formula to candy, milk, and other dairy containing products produced by dozens of companies. To date, only melamine has been implicated, leaving sci-

entists to ponder the mechanism of toxicity. (Recall with the pet foods melamine was mixed with its evil twin, cyanuric acid.)

The now-defunct Sanlu Group, one of China’s major dairy and infant formula producers, whose products were first shown to contain the chemical, quickly blamed the dairy farmers – suggesting they were the ones who added melamine to fool protein tests. According to a news article subsequently published in the journal Science, the adulterated infant formula was “nothing short of a wholesale re-engineer-

ing of milk,” a skill likely out of reach for dairy farmers. But perhaps not for milk collecting companies or corporations higher up the milk chain. Nevertheless, China’s responded by pledging greater transparency and vigilance – along with the execution of one dairy farmer, Zhang Yujun, for producing and selling adulterated milk, and Geng Jinping, who was accused of selling the tainted milk to Sanlu and dairy brokers.

But old habits die hard. Just a few months after the executions, another batch of tainted milk

powder turned up in China, followed by another discovery of melamine-contaminated dairy drink just last month.

At this rate, it’s far less risky to use those melamine plates than ingest dairy products imported from China (although my mother-in-law just informed me she replaced all her melamine dishes this past fall). Just don’t serve your reheated pasta marinara sauce on them.



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HIGHLIGHTS FROM THE MONTAGUE POLICE LOG
Break In, Peace Restored, Assist Fire Department

Thursday, 12/2
6:25 a.m. Breaking and entering into a motor vehicle on G Street. Report taken.
7:23 a.m. Burglary, breaking and entering on 15th Street. Report taken.
4:52 p.m. Domestic disturbance on Chestnut Street.
10:35 p.m. Officer wanted at Between the Uprights at 2nd St. Services rendered.

Friday, 12/3
1:02 a.m. Larceny at The Rendezvous on Third Street. No such person can be found.
7:30 p.m. Arrest of [redacted] on a straight warrant.

Saturday, 12/4
12:46 a.m. Suspicious auto on Dry Hill Road. Unable to locate.
12:55 a.m. Officer wanted at Between the Uprights at Second Street. Peace restored.
11:14 a.m. Illegal dumping on Dry Hill Road. Referred to other agency.
4:16 p.m. Disorderly conduct at F.L. Roberts on Third Street. Peace restored.

Monday, 12/6
9:48 p.m. Burglary, breaking and entering on Masonic Avenue. Report taken.

Tuesday, 12/7
11:30 a.m. Trespassing on Mineral Road. Referred to an officer.
8:31 a.m. Hit and run accident on Taylor Hill Road. Services rendered.
3:53 p.m. Structure fire on East Chestnut Hill Road. Services rendered.

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JACK COUGHLIN ILLUSTRATION

THURSDAY, DECEMBER 9th
Deja Brew, Wendell: *Free Range*, Classic rock and dance music, 8 to 10 p.m.

Rendezvous, Turners Falls: *Lisa D. & Steve A. & Friends' Holiday Spectacular*, 7:30 p.m. Free.

Bookmill, Montague: *Writers Read Their Work*, Sara Majka, Elaine Kahn, and Lauren Foss Goodman, 8:30 p.m. Free.

FRIDAY to SATURDAY, DECEMBER 10 to 11th
Shea Theater, Turners Falls: *Welcome Yule: A Midwinter Celebration*. 7:30 p.m. Additional showing Sunday, Dec. 12th at 2 p.m.

FRIDAY, DECEMBER 10th
Burrito Rojo, Turners Falls: *Stone Coyotes*, 8 p.m.

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

Route 63 Roadhouse, Millers Falls: *Tracy & Company*, 9:30 p.m.

Rendezvous, Turners Falls: *Smiley Bob* (rock/pop/funny!) Free. 9:30 p.m.

Montague Grange: *Dance of the Snow Queen*: A community solstice puppet show with dancers, actors, musicians and other performers, with a special appearance by belly dancer Attar & her troupe. 6 to 9 pm.



The Wendell Full Moon Follies will feature the multifaceted musician Richard Chase, above, in addition to bellydancer Hadama, virtuoso instrumental guitarist Francis Doughty, and poet Paul Richmond at Wendell's Historic Town Hall, on Saturday December 18th. Open Mic begins at 7:30.

5252. 9 a.m.- 6 p.m.

Rendezvous, Turners Falls: *Kurtyka Kills Christmas*, musical, pageant, 9:30 p.m.

Burrito Rojo, Turners Falls: *Zydeco Connection*. 8 p.m.

Echo Lake Coffeehouse, Leverett: *Si Kahn*, singer/songwriter. 7:30 p.m.

Route 63 Roadhouse, Millers Falls: *Turn It Loose*, awesome dancing rock & roll, 9:30 p.m.

SUNDAY, DECEMBER 12th
Montague Center Grange: *Make-It-Yourself Family Craft Fair*. Affordable, guided craft activities for all ages to make great gifts. Lunch, warm drinks & baked goods for sale.

Montague Bookmill: *Tim Eriksen Christmas Show*, an evening of seasonal music including singalong classics and lesser known songs from the American tradition, 7 p.m.

FRIDAY, DECEMBER 17th
Rendezvous, Turners Falls: *Superkart / Ed Vadas Blues Quartet*.

Deja Brew, Wendell: *The Equalites*, reggae, 9 - 11 p.m.

Sloan Theater, GCC Main Campus: New Repertory Theatre to perform, *A Christmas Carol*, 8 p.m.

Route 63 Roadhouse, Millers Falls: *Yarn*, 9:30 p.m.

SATURDAY, DECEMBER 18th
Rendezvous, Turners Falls: *Rockit Queer!* (THE dance party) 9:30 p.m.

Deja Brew, Wendell: *Nobody's Fat*, folk rock, 9 - 11 p.m.

Wendell Historic Town Hall: *The Wendell Full Moon Follies*, another evening of wonder, folly and amusement in support of the local library! Featuring: bellydance with Hadama, virtuoso instrumental guitar with Francis Doughty, the multifaceted musician Richard Chase, and poet Paul Richmond. Includes Dessert-O-Rama. Open Mic begins at 7:30. 978-544-5557.

SUNDAY, DECEMBER 19th
Rendezvous, Turners Falls: *Santa*, 4 p.m. and then Voo Caroling Night. Meet at 4:45 p.m.

Rendezvous, Turners Falls: *The Jones Family*, folk. 8 p.m. Free.

Deja Brew, Wendell: *Steve Crow, Peter Kim & Joe Fitzpatrick*, Acoustic Trio - Warped Americana, 8 - 11 p.m.

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SATURDAY, DECEMBER 11th
Deja Brew, Wendell: *Josh Levangie & The Mud, Blood & Beer Band*. Singing all your Johnny Cash favorites and many more. 9 to 11 p.m.

Great Falls Discovery Center, Turners Falls: *Outdoor Skills Workshop Series: Finding Your Way in the Woods*. 1 to 2 p.m. An hour long exploration of compasses. All ages and experience levels are welcome. Pre-Registration is Required. 863-3221.

Lisa's Handcrafted Soap, Turners Falls: *Grand Opening*. Come join the fun. Free beeswax candle rolling and soapmaking for kids, basket raffle and free soap samples. 413 863-

10 to 3 p.m. 367-9608.
Rendezvous, Turners Falls: *TNT Karaoke*, 8 p.m. Free.

Deja Brew, Wendell: *Traditional Irish Music*, pipes & fiddle. " 8 - 10 p.m.

WEDNESDAY, DECEMBER 15th
Rendezvous, Turners Falls: *Quizmaster Chad's Quiznite Quiz*, 8 p.m.

THURSDAY, DECEMBER 16th
Rendezvous, Turners Falls: *Robin Lane and the Interlopers*, 8 p.m. Free.

Deja Brew, Wendell: *Dave Robinson & Tommy Filault*, blues based roots music, 8 - 10 p.m.

FRIDAY TO SATURDAY, DECEMBER 17th - 18th

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KAREN WILKINSON ILLUSTRATION

BY NEIL SERVEN

GREENFIELD - Last year saw the release of a critically-acclaimed film from Romania in which the dictionary plays a crucial role. It's called *Police, Adjective*, and it's now available for viewing here in the States by way of IFC Films. I streamed it online via Netflix this week.

Police, Adjective centers around Cristi, an undercover cop assigned to investigate a boy who is suspected of dealing

hashish. It turns out that the teenager is only sharing the drug with two friends in a courtyard. Under Romanian law, however, that is still considered supplying, and it's punishable by up to seven years in prison.

Cristi's captain wants the boy arrested via a sting operation, but Cristi would rather go after the source of the drugs, which he suspects to be the boy's older brother. His conscience tells him to leave the boy alone, he explains. It is expected that Romanian drug laws will be relaxed in the coming years as, and Cristi sees no benefit in jailing a boy and ruining his future when he is only using recreationally.

In a scene towards the end of the film, his plea to the captain turns into an extended conversa-

tion on semantics. A dictionary is retrieved. Cristi is told to read out loud the definitions for the words "conscience," "moral," and "law" — the captain's point being that there is a bleak difference between the moral law Cristi wants to uphold and the legal doctrine that it is a police officer's job to enforce.

Then he looks up "police." In Romanian, the word for "police" is entered as both a noun and an adjective, the latter referring not to public safety but to the overseeing function of police states. Most English-language dictionaries do not treat "police" as an adjective, preferring instead to give "police state" its own entry; the fact that the Romanian language bestows adjective status to "police" is an indicator of how the word is treated more flexibly there. The decision of the director, Corneliu Porumboiu, to draw attention to this fact, by way of

The Rogue Editor

The Dictionary on Film in Romania



Dragos Bucur as plain-clothes cop Cristi in *Police, Adjective*.

this scene and the film's title, carries greater weight in a country like Romania, where the residue of abuses by state security forces and authoritarian rule under Nicolae Ceausescu still lingers. Such nuances of lan-

guage — freighted with history, pain, and moral ambiguity — rarely translate this well into film.

Neil Serven is an associate editor for Merriam-Webster, Inc.

JANEL NOCKLEBY PHOTO

There's more than meets the eye as Sarah Nolan models a daring dryer sheet dress by Mary Buckkey

CHRIS WISE PHOTO

Catbe Janke looks lovely in eveningwear by Anja Schutz

CHRIS WISE PHOTO

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