



**ARIEL JONES STUDIO CLOSING**  
See Jones at "Arts & Hearts"  
/ Pages 7 & 14



**HAYRIDE & BONFIRE**  
Feb. 19th in Montague Center  
/ Page 16

LAKE PLEASANT MILLERS FALLS MONTAGUE CENTER MONTAGUE CITY TURNERS FALLS GILL ERVING WENDELL

Year 3  
No. 17  
**50¢**

# The Montague Reporter

REPORTER@MONTAGUEMA.NET

THE VOICE OF THE VILLAGES

FEBRUARY 10, 2005

## Mariamante Study Group Outlines Goals

**BY DAVID DETMOLD GILL** - Sigrid Hughes and Cana McCoy, regional planning graduate students from UMass working with the town of Gill to plan for future use of the 12-acre Mariamante parcel, came before the selectboard to discuss their study group's proposed "scope of work" for the project. The town purchased the prime acreage on Main and West Gill Road last fall, and on December 13th held a community brainstorming "charrette" to gather the viewpoints of more than 60 residents on how best to use the parcel. An advisory committee was formed to guide the town's work on the Mariamante land; the 15 members of that committee will gather for the first time at the town hall on Thursday, February 10th at 6:30 p.m. The UMass grad students will meet

with them, and present their preliminary outline for the task ahead. McCoy told the board, "Along with the ad hoc committee, we hope to come up with three specific development plans [for the land] and decide which to pursue, so we can show the town, 'here's what the site might look like, along with the traffic impact and zoning changes required for each particular plan.'" The UMass study group's proposal calls for "any potential development [at the Mariamante property to] be in keeping with the character of the town as a rural, primarily farming community. Development on the lot should also not negatively impact traffic volume on Main Road.

The proposal also states, "A preliminary cost estimate and feasibility

see GILL pg. 11

## Town Meeting Authorizes Strathmore Purchase and Sale Feasibility Studies Will Be Pursued

**BY DAVID DETMOLD MONTAGUE** - Where before there had been unanimity, an odd sense of people working at cross-purposes with one

of both the selectboard and the finance committee offered strong dissenting opinions on the town's bid to purchase the Strathmore Mill. Still, a

ment in order to gain access to the 134-year old mill to conduct four months of feasibility work to determine whether the actual purchase would be

in a negative light, the town has reserved the right to pull out of the deal without penalty before June 3rd, under the terms negotiated. It was



MICHAEL MULLER PHOTO

Selectboard member Patricia Pruitt, left, speaks in support of the town's bid to purchase the Strathmore Mill at the February 3rd special town meeting. Her colleagues, (left to right) Al Ross, Pat Allen and town administrator Frank Abbondanzio listen.

another pervaded the stage of the Turners Falls High School auditorium on Thursday night, February 3rd, as members

declared two-thirds majority of town meeting members voted favorably on the proposed \$300,000 purchase and sale agree-

in the town's interest. Should the results of those studies cast the prospects for redeveloping the 250,000-square-foot mill

clear from the debate on the floor, and from the dissenters on stage, sup-

see STUDY pg. 9

## Farm Family Life Recalled in *A Legacy of Love*

Agnes Fitch Williams to visit Millers Falls Library

**BY PAM HANOLD SUNDERLAND** - When her children were young, Aggie Fitch Williams had the thought of writing the story of their grandparents' life on the farm, to "recreate for them this wonderful couple" who had passed on before they had the chance to know them. But she got busy with the work of running a farm and raising a family, and kept putting off the writing until she was in her 70s. Then, she felt she needed to "get on with it." The result is *A Legacy of Love*, a story of the life of the first generation of the 20th century on the family farm in Sunderland.

Aggie grew up in Wilmington,



HOYDEN PHOTO

Agnes Fitch Williams at home in Sunderland

Vermont. Her father had been the third son in a farming family, and so

see AGNES pg. 12

## Combined Sewer Overflow Work Will Cost \$5.7 million

**BY DAVID DETMOLD MONTAGUE** - On the average, 31 times a year heavy rains cause sewers carrying stormwater to spill over and join with sewers carrying human waste - in three locations in Turners Falls - to run off into the Connecticut River.

The selectboard heard these and other startling statistics from representatives of the engineering firm Camp Dresser McKee, who delivered results of the Combined Sewer Overflow study to the board on Monday, February 7th. CDM senior vice president Rob Weimar delivered a rapid fire PowerPoint presentation, explaining that two of the combined sewer overflow (CSO) locations - one at the intersection of

7th and L and one under Avenue A in the vicinity of Food City - drain into the Connecticut at a point where the river typically flows at low volume due to the diversion of water by the power canal. Though the annual total of untreated combined sewage and storm water entering the river from these two locations (3.56 million gallons) is not considered extreme for a river the size of the Connecticut, the fact the sewage enters the river at a point of low flow compounds the impact on the river's ecology. The third combined sewer overflow location, at Greenfield Road near Sherman Drive, is larger, responsible for 3.48 million gallons of untreated spillage directly to the river, annu-

ally. But below the canal the river can, perhaps, absorb the damage with less adverse impact. Still, under the mandates of the federal Clean Water Act of 1972, the town must abate all three combined sewer overflow locations, or face EPA enforcement proceedings and fines.

The other startling statistic is the total cost of the CSO abatement project. Weimar told the town it should expect to ante up at least \$2.2 million to reduce the overflow to the river from 7th and L and Avenue A from 3.56 million to .29 million gallons annually, and to fully treat 60% of the overflow at Greenfield Road by diverting it to the treatment plant, while

see SEWER pg. 10.



**PET OF THE WEEK**

Help, get me outta here!

**Misao**

Misao is a five-year-old tortoiseshell cat who wants you to be her Valentine! She is a very solid big cat, described as both playful and lazy. Surrendered because a family member had allergies to her, Misao is looking for a lap to call home.

To learn more about adopting Misao, please contact the Dakin Animal Shelter in Leverett at 548-9898 or via email at [info@dakinshelter.org](mailto:info@dakinshelter.org).

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## Carnegie Library News

# Valentine Party

**Y LINDA HICKMAN**  
**TURNERS FALLS** - There will be a Valentine Party at the Carnegie Library in Turners Falls on Saturday, February 12th from 2 - 3:30 p.m. Children of all ages and their families are invited to the free program. Fun activities will include decorating Valentines

with Bev Whitbeck. Refreshments will be served. For more information, please call 863-3214.

*Photo left:* Tanner Ames and his mother, Vanessa, of Montague model the Valentine hat he made at the Carnegie Library in Turners Falls during the preschool story hour on Wednesday, February 9th. The preschool story hour with Bev Whitbeck meets every Wednesday from 10:15 - 11:45 a.m. The free programs are designed for children ages 3 - 5. Siblings of any age are welcome.

For more information, please call 863-3214.



PHOTO BY LINDA HICKMAN

## Get on the Trail to Fight Hunger

Fight hunger on the trails of Stump Sprouts Cross Country Ski Resort in Hawley. The annual event "Ski & Feast" features reduced-price cross-country skiing and rentals from 1-5 p.m. on Sunday February 13th.

At 4:30 p.m. a delicious meal will be served at the lodge. This

scrumptious feast costs \$12 adults in advance (\$14 at the door) and kids under 12 eat for \$4. All proceeds from trail fees, rentals, and dinner will help The Food Bank of Western MA feed those in need in our community.

You can take advantage of half-priced cross-country skiing

and ski and snowshoe rentals even if you don't join us for dinner. This popular dinner event has sold out every year, so make your reservations today by calling The Food Bank at 413-247-9738.

## SENIOR CENTER ACTIVITIES Feb. 14th - Feb. 18th

**MONTAGUE** Senior Center, 62 Fifth St., Turners Falls, is open Monday through Friday from 9:00 a.m. to 2:00 p.m. for activities and congregate meals. Advanced registration at many of our activities is necessary. We need to know how many people will be joining so we can be prepared. A suggested donation of \$1 per exercise class is appreciated. Lunch reservations need to be called in by 11:30 a.m. the day before. Call Bunny Caldwell at 863-9357 weekdays between 9:00 a.m. and 2:00 p.m. (Leave message on machine at other times.) Transportation to the center can be provided. Trip coordinator is Jean Chase. Make trip reservations by calling 772-6356. Payment and menu choice is due three weeks prior to trip. All Hawthorne trips leave from the parking lot on First Street across from the Police Station.

**Monday, 14th**  
9:45 a.m. Aerobics  
11:00 a.m. PACE Aerobics  
**Tuesday, 15th**  
9:30 a.m. Tai Chi  
**Wednesday, 16th**  
10:15 a.m. Aerobics

11:00 a.m. "Save A Life: Heart and Stroke Community Education" program by Jean Simmons, R.N. This one-hour program will teach seniors how to prevent cardiovascular disease and stroke, the importance of 9-1-1 and getting emergency room treatment immediately. Pre-registration required by calling 863-9357.  
12:45 p.m. Bingo  
**Thursday, 17th**  
1:00 p.m. Pitch  
**Friday, 18th**  
9:45 a.m. Aerobics  
11:00 a.m. PACE Aerobics  
12:30 p.m. Relaxation Program focusing on "The Healing Power of Music." Learn how and why music can move the soul and influence our emotions. Hosted by Michelle Lucy of Harborside Healthcare.

Make appointments now for FREE TAX ASSISTANCE! Feb. 15th, 24th and March 8th, 15th, 22nd. Call center for an appointment.

**ERVING** Senior Center, 18 Pleasant St., Ervingside (Old Center School, 1st Floor), is open Monday through Thursday from 9 a.m. to 3 p.m. for activities and congre-

gate meals. For information and reservations call Polly Kiely, Senior Center director at (413) 423-3308. Lunch daily at 11:30 a.m. with reservations a day in advance by 11:00 a.m. Transportation can be provided for meals, Thursday shopping, or medical necessity by calling Dana Moore at (978) 544-3898.

**Monday, 14th**  
9:30 a.m. Exercise  
9:45 a.m. Library  
12:30 p.m. Pitch  
**Tuesday, 15th**  
9:00 Aerobics  
10:45 a.m. Senior Business Meeting  
12:30 p.m. Oil Painting  
**Wednesday, 16th**  
10 a.m. Line Dancing  
12 Noon Bingo  
**Thursday, 17th**  
9:00 a.m. Aerobics  
**Saturday, 19th**  
8:30 a.m. SHARE pick up

**WENDELL** Senior Center, located in the town offices on Wendell Depot Rd. Call Kathy Swaim at (978) 544-2020 for info, schedule of events or to coordinate transportation.

## FACES & PLACES



SARAH SWANSON PHOTO

*Sandy Miner (center) of Erving conducts the knitting class for Ladies' Night Out at the Carnegie Library in Turners Falls on Tuesday, February 8th. The knitted hats will be donated to the Survival Center. The craft group meets the second and fourth Tuesday of the month at 6:30 p.m. Join them!*

### DRAFT COUNSELING SESSION

At the Wendell town hall on President's Day, Monday, February 21st, from 2 to 4 p.m. There will be several speakers, a question and answer session, and literature from Traprock Peace Center about alternative ways to deal with the draft will be available. This event will be open to the public and it is free of charge.

### Ed's Barber Shop

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### Valentine Victory Fitness Challenge

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# Things that Go Chomp in the Night

**BY JOE PARZYCH GILL** - The deer, who had been browsing on our rose hips by the patio, are now coming to prune our yews for us. They come in droves to strip the shrubs a few feet from the house. We have heard strange sounds in the night, but attributed them to "things that go bump in the night." These are noises that go *Chomp* in the night.



*Having nearly completely stripped the shrubs in the backyard, the deer are coming to strip the shrubs in the front yard, just a couple of feet from the house. I am going to tack up venison recipes to ward them off.*

The deer have not set their cloven hoofs on Roger Bolio's property, right across the wa.y. He has shrubbery far lusher than ours - especially



PARZYCH PHOTOS

*This evergreen shrub was a solid mass of verdant foliage. Each night, more twigs are stripped.*

now. They must know that he is a deer hunter.

Bolio reports that John Smith recently spotted a herd of six deer on Pisgah Mountain. Those might be some of the culprits raiding our shrubs. But if there had been only six deer in the herd that's been feasting in our backyard, they would have to have been square dancing to produce the number of hoof prints these critters left behind.

# Local Youth Raises Cash for Tsunami Relief with Successful Read-a-thon

**BY KATREN HOYDEN**  
**TURNERS FALLS** - Sheffield School student Daisy Whitcomb Skelton enjoys reading. She put her pastime to beneficial use by soliciting funds for relief of the victims of the recent tsunami by conducting a read-a-thon, on her own. She got the idea from Sara Reid at Lady Killigrew Cafe in Montague Center, and solicited sponsors who committed themselves to donating a dollar amount for every book she read.



HOYDEN PHOTO

Whitcomb Skelton's sponsors were amazed to find that she'd read 23 books during the month of January. One pledged four dollars per book, but wasn't prepared to pony up the whole amount so she said she "let him slide."

*Successful read-a-thon fundraiser Daisy Whitcomb Skelton is a 10-year-old student in Amy Bernard's 5th grade class at Sheffield School in Turners Falls. She hauled in \$200 for tsunami relief by reading 23 books in January. Gadzooks!*

All of the books she read are chapter books, one being a collection of three full-length Nancy Drew mysteries. She counted that as one book. Her favorite is one of the two novels she read by author Tannith Lee called *Wolf Star*.

Whitcomb Skelton raised a total of \$200. She contributed \$40 to Hillcrest School's fundraising to purchase replacement supplies for schools in devastated areas, and gave the rest to Sheffield School's general disaster relief fund.



**Happy Birthday, Susie!**

Your smile lights up the center of Gill!

# Meet Local Authors at Millers Falls Library

**COMPILED BY SUE SANSOUCIE** - The Friends of the Montague Libraries will hold their second annual "Meet Local Authors Night" on Wednesday, February 16th, from 7:00 to 9:00 p.m. at the Millers Falls Library, 23 Bridge Street, Millers Falls. Local authors scheduled to attend include Ray Coppinger, Ann Feitelson, David James, Louise Shattuck, Christopher Sawyer-Laucanno and Agnes Williams.

original sweater designs. Feitelson is an accomplished quilter. Her work has been published in both national knitting and quilting magazines. Most recently, her work was included in the book *New Quilts from an Old Favorite*.

Ray Coppinger, a resident of Montague Center and professor of biology at Hampshire College, has done extensive research on animal behavior, especially the behavior of canines. Ray and his colleagues and students have published over fifty papers on his dog research. His latest book, co-authored with Lorna Coppinger is *Dogs: A New Understanding of Canine Origin, Behavior, and Evolution*. In his biography, Ray says while he travels around the world to speak about dogs, he is always looking for the perfect fish.

David James and Louise Shattuck are co-authors of *Spirit and Spa: A Portrait of the Body, Mind and Soul of a 133-Year-Old Spiritualist Community in Lake Pleasant, Massachusetts*. David also writes regular columns on the Religion Page of *the Recorder*. He lives in Greenfield and is a member of the National Spiritual Alliance based in Lake Pleasant. He is a self-employed writer and publisher.

books include *An Invisible Spectator: A Biography of Paul Bowles*; *The Continual Pilgrimage: American Writers in Paris, 1944-1960*; and most recently *E.E. Cummings: A Biography*. He is also well known for his literary translations. He has spent summers wandering the jungles of the Yucatan researching ancient Mayan stele and unlocking the mysteries of the Popol Vuh. Sawyer-Laucanno has taught writing at MIT since 1982.

Louise Shattuck, 85, is a third-generation resident of Lake Pleasant and a lifetime member of the National Spiritual Alliance. Her family roots go back to the beginning of Lake Pleasant as a Spiritualist resort in 1870. She has given several slide shows and presentations about the history of Lake Pleasant. Also, she is a nationally known animal artist and sculptor, and has been a longtime breeder and trainer of English Cocker Spaniels.

Agnes Williams was born and grew up in Wilmington, VT. She graduated from the University of New Hampshire in 1945 and taught high school for one year in Bethlehem, NH. In 1946 she married Jim Williams and moved to Sunderland, where they still reside. Not being able to manage a career, five children, and a farmer husband, Agnes became Jim's partner on the farm. She is the author of *A Legacy of Love: The Story of Walter and Ruth Williams and the Williams Farm*.

Ann Feitelson, a practicing fiber artist, has an MFA in painting from Temple University, and went on to study art history at UMass. She is the author of *the Art of Fair Isle Knitting*, a history of knitting in the Shetland Islands, including

Christopher Sawyer-Laucanno has lived in Turners Falls for 13 years. His numerous

works to exhibit and to sell. Donations to the Friends of the Montague Libraries will gladly be accepted. In the event of inclement weather this event will be rescheduled for Thursday, February 17th. For further information please call the Carnegie Library at 863-3214.

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David Detmold

## Assistant Editor

Kathleen Litchfield

## Circulation

Jean Hebden  
Julia Bowden-Smith

## Layout & Design

James Damon  
Boysen Hodgson  
Katren Hoyden  
Karen Wilkinson

## Photographers

Sarah Swanson  
Joseph A. Parzych  
Anne Vadeboncoeur  
et al.

## Technical Administrator

Michael Muller

"The Voice of the Villages"

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## Revive the Montague Business Association

Shortly after World War II, local business owners, many of them returning veterans, formed the Turners Falls - Montague Business Association. Leading figures included Chester Sokolosky, Ronnie Zchau, Samuel H. Couture, Larry Grimard, Eddie Pleasant, and many others whose names still grace storefronts around town. John Carey, former owner of the Shady Glen, was the last president of the Association, which saw its membership dwindle in the 60s and 70s as the number of locally owned businesses declined.

In the 80s and 90s, a smaller group of civic minded merchants banded together as the Montague Business Association. Their efforts to promote commerce in Montague were divided, as the town's economic center of gravity shifted from the downtown business districts to the Airport Industrial Park, mills closed, and malls opened to our south.

In recent years, the town has invested heavily, with the backing of the state and federal government, in renovations to the historic downtown of Turners Falls. This year, revitalization efforts in Millers Falls will continue with nearly a million dollars in streetscape improvements. Public investment and the preservation of architectural landmarks like the Shea Theater, the Colle Opera House, the Crocker Bank building, and the Ward Block in Millers Falls, have spurred an uptick in private investment, and new owners have lately purchased some mainstay Montague businesses. Artists have moved to town, renovating studio space, and quickening the pulse of economic activity. In Montague Center, the former Martin Machine Company mill, thanks to private investment, is now a

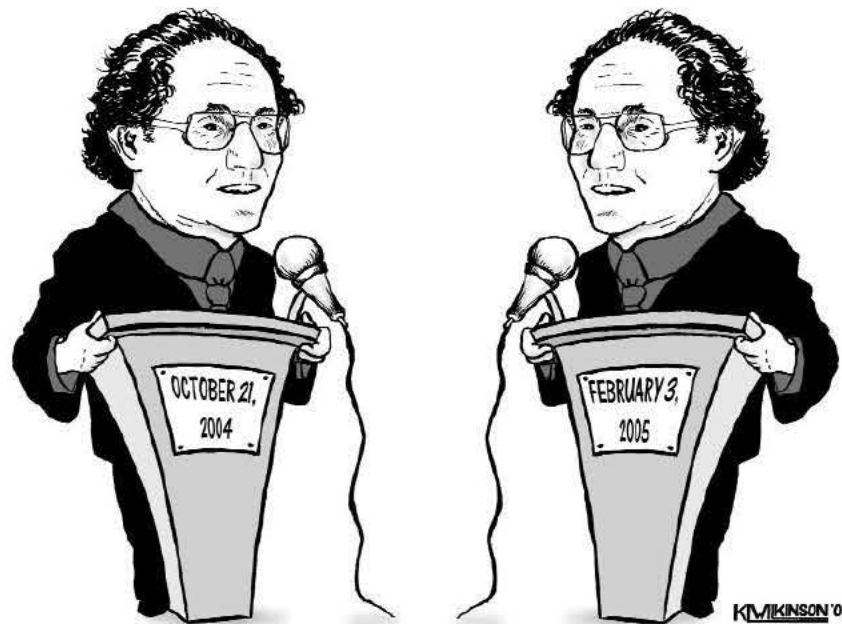
thriving hub of cultural activity and fine dining.

With the addition of tourist attractions like the Fish Ladder, the Canalside Bike Path, the Discovery Center, and the recently announced Hallmark Photography Museum, Montague will soon be a destination point for a growing stream of tourists, drawn by the beauty of Montague's natural surroundings and the handsome preservation of many of our historic structures. New places for them to wine and dine are opening. Most of the elements are now in place for a revival of our town's commercial life.

Looking only as far afield as Shelburne Falls or Brattleboro, it is not hard to measure the positive impact a town business association can have in promoting the growth and attractiveness of a downtown business district.

This is one element Montague sorely lacks at the present juncture. New entrepreneurs and established businesses can benefit alike from events like the recent open studio walk, last year's Cherry and Crabapple Blossom Days, foliage festivals, street clean-ups, flower plantings, and other promotional events and activities that build community pride and boost regional awareness of the positive features Montague has to offer. A business association could sponsor practical efforts to support the downtown business district, from basic measures such as a pooper scooper bylaw (sorely needed in Turners Falls these days!) to more ambitious undertakings, like backing the town's bid for the redevelopment of old mill buildings, and the new tenants and economic activity that would bring. It's high time to revive the Montague Business Association.

## STRATHMORE MILL the Debate Continues



KAREN WILKINSON ILLUSTRATION

"Property values would only increase. History is on our side. Look at the mill buildings in Easthampton and North Adams. Our site is better."

"The town purchasing the mill seems to me unwise. Is it part of a romantic vision of a center for the arts? These are complicated issues. I don't have the answers."

## Loving the Reporter in Florida

My husband and I are fortunate to be able to spend a couple of months in sunny Florida. But -- we are also most fortunate to receive the "Reporter" (it is sent

via mail) weekly to keep us in touch with the "happenings" in Montague. It keeps us in touch with HOME. We both read it cover to cover and as we do, we

are "right there." Thanks to you and your staff for the Reporter.

Sincerely,

- Peg Bridges  
Key Largo, FL

## GUEST EDITORIALS

## Reflections on the Counter-Inauguration Day, Washington, D.C.

BY JERRI HIGGINS

**MONTAGUE CITY** - A friend and I drove to Northampton on January 19th; we were there to catch the midnight bus to Washington, D.C. for the counter-inaugural demonstration. Despite hearing comments about our contingent being 'sore losers' unable to 'let go and move on', I felt it was significant and courageous for us to be going to this event. I tend to be a self-preserving person, and wasn't particularly relishing the idea of potential arrest, pepper-spraying, tasing, or any of the horrors I was afraid we might experience.

We didn't encounter any police brutality where we were, but we did hear (and later we watched on TV) of other areas in D.C. where crowd control tactics like these were used. The worst thing that happened to anyone on our bus was to an Arab-American man who was ordered to take off his Dastaar (a type of turban). When he refused a few policemen gathered around him and forced him to remove it.

I wasn't sure what group I wanted to stand with while I

was there, because I felt united with all of them in some way: the Impeach Bush people, the Turn Your Back on Bush people, the ANSWER (Act Now to Stop War and End Racism) and Arise for Social Justice people we came on the bus with, and many other groups. I wanted to turn my back on Bush, but when the moment came, I heard myself booing and wishing to stare him down (if only he would have looked at me).

Desiring to be seen - if not heard, and to show that all of America does not love the Bush administration policies, was my greatest hope that day. G. W. Bush seems to care little for the harm he causes, directly or indirectly, and believes himself to be 'God's chosen'. If he is, it's no God of mine, nor of many people I know, regardless of their religious affiliation.

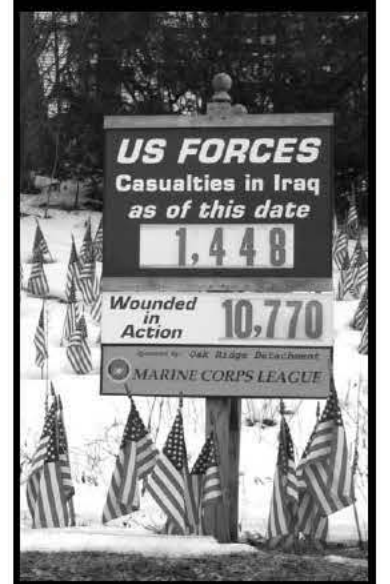
Knowing that the Weapons of Mass Destruction Bush had used as an excuse to attack a sovereign nation who could not attack us had turned out to be non-existent, we felt added urgency to assemble and intone some reality to the Bush parade. Even though our intended audi-

ence did not glance our way, at least the world was watching, and would know that some vestige of decency yet remains among our population.

We were there, held back from the street by battalions of militarized police in riot gear, because there was no al Qaeda -

see COUNTER pg 5

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Iraq  
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# Creating a Vision for Gill-Montague Schools

BY SUPERINTENDENT  
SUE GEE

*Remarks to the School Committee, Feb. 8th, 2005*

As you know, I have been here now for a little over one year, and I have had time to listen to the townspeople, the school committee members, the teachers, staff and the administrators. There are many concerns about the future, not only about public education in general, but also about the future of small, rural school districts, like Gill-Montague. It is no secret -- with the advent of School Choice and harsh cutbacks in state funds over the past three years, small districts like ours are losing enrollment. This shrinking process has caused a loss of state aid (Chapter 70) and also, correspondingly, a loss of quality educational programs for students, due to reductions in teachers and staff.

Although we have many dedicated teachers and paraprofessionals, each day they are working with students who have many educational needs... and, in some cases, the tools that they need are not being provided. Many think now that funds have been returned to the towns, the district is doing just fine. That is not the case. These funds were intended revenue for the schools, but due to decisions made by the legislature late last spring, we could not responsibly readjust the greatly reduced school budget at that point in time. The law states that funds in the Excess and Deficiency account at the end of a fiscal year that exceed 5% of the preceding year's budget must be given to the towns in the regional district to reduce assessments.

With the completion of the new middle school/high school complex, we have achieved a dream of an updated school facility that can offer state-of-the-art education to the children of this district. However, we must consider: How will we attract the students we now need to create a high quality educational program in that new facility, and enhance resources enough to keep the students we have in our elementary schools receiving the best possible education?

There is an Elementary Study Group that has been working since last year. The members have spent much time reviewing the history of the elementary schools in Gill and Montague and studying the research on best practices for enhancing the educational needs of children in the early years. This study group has surveyed community members, parents and teachers. The results of the survey have been reported to the school committee. The five things that people believe are essential for a high quality elementary education (and for all levels) are as follows:

- teacher effectiveness
- small class size
- academic programs that prepare students for high achievement
- a strong presence of the arts
- a climate of respect and a code of decency in the school

Keeping in mind the GMRSD Strategic District Improvement Plan, the national mandate of No Child Left Behind, and the Massachusetts Ed Reform Act, these overall goals will be addressed in my three-year education plan,

which should be completed by September, after input from all constituents.

- Improve student performance, using relevant data to guide curricular decisions
- Improve professional devel-



*"The first step in the planning process is to maximize our new building complex by bringing the sixth grade students into the middle school, making it a true middle school."*  
- Sue Gee

opment so all teachers have the skills and strategies they need to improve instruction and assessment

- Restore programs in an equitable manner district-wide
- Maximize the spaces we have -the facilities and the financial resources

To achieve these goals, first of all, we all need to work together. After receiving input

from the many groups in the community - parents, teachers, staff, community members - and using my almost 40 years of experience in public education, I can create the vision, but everyone must get behind it. There may be pieces of the vision that you may not individually agree with. There may be ideas that seem "outside of the box" and unclear at the outset, waiting to be filled in with the rationale and the data to back them up. The school committee, as a democratic body of people who represent all the students in Gill and Montague and Erving, will need to keep an open mind, ask clarifying questions, and then, hopefully, get behind the vision for our district's future.

There may be some reconfiguration of building use and restructuring of administrative services, as well as the addition of new programs. The first step in the planning process is to maximize our new building complex by bringing the sixth grade students into the middle school, making it a true middle school. Having been a principal of a sixth through eighth grade middle school, and working with middle schools for many years, I believe that the 11 - 14 age group is the best configuration for middle school students.

I realize there has been controversy about this concept in the past. But, given that we have new classroom space available at our new middle school, that the middle school is substantially separate from the high school, and that the program for sixth graders can be designed with all of the practices we know are best for their developmental level, we need to make

decisions that are philosophical and educationally sound, and that are also practical.

The primary focus of the vision I will propose for the district, will be:

- all students will pass the MCAS, and achieve at their highest potential;
- no schools in the district will be on the 'underperforming' list;
- all buildings will be maximally used, with manageable class sizes;
- funding, bolstered by optimum enrollment, will be increased, and
- GMRSD, as a high performing school district, will contribute to the vitality and viability of the community, drawing in new residents and new businesses.

We must always keep in mind the investment we are making in the future of the community - it is today's students who will make the leaders of the future. They must be served well and I am here to make that happen.

Again, this is a three-year plan to build enrollment and provide the resources needed to build a high quality school district. The education plan is a work-in-progress that will be finalized in September of 2006. The findings of the Elementary Study Group will provide valuable information as will input from all constituents. Creating a true middle school is only one facet of the plan. Please keep in mind that no changes will be made until September of 2007. I look forward to working with you to create a new vision for public education in our community.

## COUNTER continued from pg 4

claims there was (while insisting he never said that when directly questioned). Oh really Mr. Cheney? Which video clip would you like to see of you linking 9/11 and al Qaeda, or was that your evil twin?

We were at the tactless Inauguration because George W. Bush said Saddam was a bad guy, and the ends to remove him now justify the means. One hundred thousand-plus Iraqis are now dead because of us, and the dead are the lucky ones. Many more are maimed, sickened from depleted uranium weapons, and still have no clean water, electricity, or other essential services. What about us? Are 1,444 dead U.S. soldiers merely a sad footnote to the Bush administration's agenda? Our wounded mount to more than 10,000 casualties, by conservative estimates. But now those Iraqis 'have freedom, by gum, and that's good enough for me!'

We went to the Inauguration because Iraq doesn't have free-

dom. Iraq is an occupied nation, and that is so because our government lied to us about why we went, and why we are there. There are no plans to withdraw; in fact, new plans for invading Iran and North Korea are being bandied about like the stakes in some global board game.

The thought that being in Washington, D.C. with my sign held high may have made no difference to anyone other than myself certainly crossed my mind, but I have to believe what I've learned from listening to some of my heroes like Margaret Mead, Helen Keller, Eleanor Roosevelt, and others who gave us sage advice. It is in small acts that greatness can be found. It is in not believing you can do something, but doing it anyway that courage can be found. Changing the world happens on a small scale, through the actions of thoughtful citizens. Here is my favorite adage, from Benjamin Franklin, as appropriate to the times we live in as it was to his. "They that can give up essential liberty to obtain temporary safety deserve neither liberty nor safety."

## Central St. Barriers Removed

BY DAVID DETMOLD

TURNERS FALLS - The barricades have come down at the intersection of Central and Unity Street. Soon the public will have a chance to comment on MassHighway's design for a new bridge on Prospect Street.

In November of 1999, MassHighway closed the barrel vault bridge over Spring Street due to a widening "full width transverse crack in the concrete arch ring." With the bridge closed, and Prospect Street effectively cut in two, traffic from residences on the east side of the street could no longer safely enter or exit, due to poor sight lines for southbound traffic climbing the hill on Unity Street. So the highway department put up jersey barricades, forming a one-lane connector between Central Street and the Prospect Street cul-de-sac, and creating a maze for customers to navigate on the way to get their hair styled at Castine's Creations.

Nine of those barricades



SARAH SWANSON PHOTO

*Central Street open to through traffic again.*

were removed on Tuesday, allowing traffic again to enter and exit Central Street off Unity. East Prospect Street folks still have a short one lane alley of barricades to the corner of Central, but they too can take a left onto Unity if they want.

DPW boss Tom Bergeron said emergency vehicles will be able to serve the neighborhood more easily with Central Street open to through traffic.

On Tuesday, February 15th, at 7 p.m., MassHighway will hold a public hearing at the town hall to take public comment on their plans for a new Prospect Street bridge over Spring Street. The new bridge, which is at the 25% design phase, will be a single span concrete structure on new cement concrete abutments. The curb to curb width will be 23 feet with a 6-foot sidewalk.



## NOTES FROM THE ERVING SELECTBOARD

# CDBG Home Rehab Funds Sought

BY IVAN USSACH

**ERVING** - Included on the selectboard's agenda this week was a public hearing on the FY '06 Community Development Block Grant (CDBG) for Regional Housing Rehabilitation. The public hearing began at 7:30 and was attended by about a dozen people, most of whom were representatives of the various towns included in the grant application. Bruce Hunter, assistant director of community development for the Franklin County Housing and Redevelopment Authority (HRA) led the proceedings.

Hunter handed out information showing the Housing Rehabilitation Program provides zero interest deferred payment loans to eligible owners of residential properties. The program is "designed to improve housing conditions of low/moderate income households by addressing lead paint hazards, eliminating code violations and increasing the energy efficiency of their homes." The current seven-town joint application includes "four units of rehab,

for a minimum of \$120,000 per town." Hunter said the application totaled \$900,000.

The grant program uses federal money from the Department of Housing and Urban Development (HUD) and is administered by the state's Department of Housing and Community Development (DHCD). The current application is very similar to one submitted last year that was not funded.

The seven towns in the joint application include Erving, the lead town for the proposal, which has received \$113,000 in program funding for seven units in the last five years and has 18 units on the waiting list for FY '05; Warwick, which has received \$82,000 for four units and has seven units on the waiting list; Leverett, which has received \$153,000 for 10 units and has four units on the waiting list; Wendell, which has received \$93,000 for seven units and has 12 units on the waiting list; New Salem, which has received \$63,000 for three units and has four units on the waiting list; Northfield, which has

received \$216,000 for 15 units and has eight units on the waiting list; and Bernardston, which has not received any program funding in the last five years and has five units on the waiting list.

Eligibility for the program is based on income and an evaluation of the work needed. A ranking system is used to prioritize the most needy applicants. Under HUD limits, a family of four must have a gross annual income under \$49,350 to be eligible. The lower the income, the higher the ranking.

After Hunter's review, town representatives were invited to comment. John Columbus, Warwick's administrator, said he was sent by his selectboard to thank the HRA for its efforts, and he predicted the program would become more popular with homeowners as the word spreads. Rebecca Jurek, an administrative assistant from Bernardston, echoed those sentiments and said the number of applicants from her town could double. Sue Draves, Northfield's administrative assistant, said her selectboard is "very much in favor" of the pro-

gram, and that Northfield needs to "diversify" by balancing new housing with existing stock and "maintaining community character." Marjorie McGinnis, Leverett's administrator, said her town is very supportive of affordable housing efforts and formed a committee this year to address the matter.

Hunter said he had received letters of support from officials in Wendell and New Salem, who could not be present. Andy Tessier, chair of Erving's selectboard, rounded out the unanimous praise for the proposal.

The hearing was then opened to public comment, and a young couple from Erving, baby in tow, asked if the program is first come, first served. The house they recently purchased in town has turned out to have a long list of problems. "No," Hunter responded, "the ranking is determined by income and the assessment of the work needed."

Hunter said the current proposal will be submitted by March 1st, with funds available by July if the application is successful. Last year, he said, the

state awarded a total of \$23 million in program funds to 43 towns. 35 towns considered CDF-1 (Community Development Fund) received \$17 million, and eight CDF-2 towns received \$6 million. The Erving-led proposal is in the CDF-1, which has a greater need than CDF-2.

Interested homeowners are encouraged to apply, even after March 1st. Contact the HRA at (413) 863-9643, x 132.

The board voted to accept "It's a Great Place to Live" as the slogan for the new town welcome sign to be put up near the French King Bridge. The winning slogan, selected from about a dozen competitors, was submitted by Sydney Upham, a first grader at the Erving Elementary School.

The board went into executive session for performance and budget reviews with Fire Chief Mitchell LaClaire, Sr. and Mike Pierce, chief operator of the town's Waste Treatment Plant #1, located across from the police station.



## NOTES FROM THE MONTAGUE SELECTBOARD

## Fulltime Assessor's Clerk Proposed

BY DAVID DETMOLD

**MONTAGUE** - At the February 7th selectboard meeting, director of assessing JoAnne Greenleaf asked the board to consider expanding the hours of her assistant clerk's position (currently unfilled) from 22 hours to 35 hours a week, at \$13.00 per hour (up from \$11.24). The expanded hours would allow the clerk to assist in ongoing data collection to prepare for the state mandated update of data that takes place every nine years. Currently the assessors go out to

bid every nine years to update townwide data. The next update, in 2007, is expected to cost the town \$186,000, Greenleaf estimated. A fulltime clerk would be able to collect and update the data from residences and businesses on a regular basis, avoiding the need for outside assistance, and eliminating the spike in the assessors' budget every nine years. With other departments seeking to increase staff hours. The selectboard took Greenleaf's request under advisement.

**Easter Egg Hunt**

Parks and Recreation Director Jon Dobosz asked for the board's approval of his plan to hold the "First Annual Easter Egg Hunt" on March 26th, at 10:00 a.m. in Peskeomskut Park. Dobosz said children ages 4 to 12 would be invited to help find 2000 chocolate and toy-filled eggs. "It won't be a difficult hunt," he said. "It will probably only take 5 or 10 minutes."

The board endorsed the proposal.

**Tech Support Needed?**

With new computers, new software, and a new town website taking up a good deal of staff time at town hall, town administrator Frank Abbondanzio proposed adding \$2,000 to the budget to compensate selectboard secretary Wendy Bogusz for the extra time she is devoting to tech support. The board questioned whether Bogusz, whose hours have been voluntarily cut back recently, actually had the time to devote to tech support in addition to her regular duties. The idea of hir-

ing a town 'webmaster' was again suggested, and the matter was taken under advisement.

**Great Falls Land Transfer**

The board waved the 120-day notice period to transfer 4 parcels on the site of the Great Falls Discovery Center, including the museum itself, to the state Department of Conservation and Recreation. The Montague EDIC will retain ownership of the parking lot and the old Cumberland Farms building.

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# Ariel Jones Studio Closes

**BY KATHLEEN LITCHFIELD**  
**TURNERS FALLS** - When one door closes, another opens.

This is the sentiment of Avenue A studio artist Ariel Jones, as she closes the door on a four and a half year chapter of her professional story.

Jones, a portrait and fine arts photographer, opened Ariel Jones Studio at 106 Avenue A in August of 2000, a few months after moving here from Manhattan. This weekend, during the celebration of Turners' village-wide "Arts & Hearts" event on Friday and Saturday, Feb. 11th and 12th, will be the last weekend local residents and visitors can greet Jones inside her studio to have their portraits done or to pop in and say hello - something Jones has come to love about small town life here.

Jones will officially close her studio following Saturday's event, during which she will sell darkroom and camera equipment as well as host a sale on her distinctive artwork. Sale pieces will range in size from 5x7 to 12x18. She will also take orders for her popular "Turners Falls Doors" posters, priced specially during the event.

"I'm not stopping being a photographer in Turners Falls. I just couldn't maintain that studio. I didn't get enough commissions on a weekly basis to sustain me," she said, sipping coffee inside her downtown apartment. "While I feel sad about losing a spot I felt so invested in and enjoyed so much . . . you know, when one door closes,

another one opens. We'll see where it goes. And just because I didn't receive enough commissions to stay open doesn't mean I don't feel like I got support from people, both in the way of clients and people who gave me great feedback and were happy I was here. It's the kind of business that takes time to build and I guess it was a case of too little, too late. But I certainly feel very warmly towards people in town, and I hope to have time now to put more energy into town events."

Jones, who lived and worked in New York City for a dozen years before moving to Turners Falls, studied art history, painting and writing at the University of Michigan, before discovering her love of photography, and eventually branching into digital photographic work.

"At first I felt like a fish in a bowl on Avenue A because I'd always had a private studio. I felt very exposed." She smiled at the memory. "It took a while to meet people, but then I began to appreciate them popping in. It was much less isolating to be working that way, and it gave me a real opportunity to observe the Avenue on a daily basis and the changes I saw in these last two years particularly,

are just astounding."

On first glance she noticed trash-ridden streets, kids hanging out in front of her studio and an overall sense that "nobody was in charge." But she said she soon realized those were shal-

low first impressions. shift in people's attitudes toward this historical mill town, have fueled a personal excitement in Jones, which shows in her work as well as in the love for the community she now defends. She praised the recent revitalization efforts made by town officials, local artists, entrepreneurs, new restaurant owners, community residents and local teenagers.

"I have friends who come visit me from New York and they love it here. That's why I came here. I saw something here that I knew I couldn't find anywhere else. It was a nice mix of people and the longer I'm here, the change I see happening is huge," she said, mentioning the way the arts community has come together to create community events that draw people into town; the town's proposed bike path; the Brick House hosting numerous events for local teenagers including the clean-up days in spring and fall; the opening of the Great Falls Discovery Center and the Great Hall as a meeting and gathering space; the opening of the belly-bowl restaurant; and the renovation of downtown buildings including the Colle Opera House, now full of tenants including the planned development of the first floor into a museum by the Hallmark School of Photography.

"For me, part of what is a lit-

tle frustrating, right now when things are on the cusp of changing, it's a shame to close. But on the other hand, there's no way around it for me right now. At some point maybe I'll find another space," she said.

Jones also strongly insisted upon saying that she feels the *Montague Reporter* has played a "key role" in revitalizing the town through its "fabulous coverage of arts events and town news" as well as "opening the door for local people to write articles. And we've got an interesting array of writers and photographers right here.

"Whenever anything new opens up or happens in town, the newspaper is there. I think that is another one of the players in getting things turned around," she said.

What she likes most about what she sees happening in town is "the attempt to maintain the integrity of the town."

"There are consistencies of style that give (Turners Falls) real character. I think the people who are working on these renovations are really wise and looking forward, because they're preserving and not destroying," she said.

The "Arts & Hearts" open studio event takes place from 10 a.m. to 6 p.m. on both Friday and Saturday, February 11th and 12th. Stop in and share your well wishes with Jones as she begins writing the next chapters of her artistic lifestyle, or call her home studio at 863-9104.



*Ariel Jones in her apartment, amid some of her photographs*

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# Millers River Team Discusses Waste Management Issues

BY JOHN HENSHAW

**ATHOL** - Members of the Millers River Watershed Team met at the Millers River Environmental Center (MREC) at 100 Canal Street in Athol on Tuesday, February 8th to discuss solid waste issues in the watershed. The monthly meeting provides a forum for area residents and government officials to discuss pertinent environmental topics and strategies for efforts in the watershed.

Before getting to the main agenda item, talk first turned to the recent flooding of the Millers River into homes on Exchange Street and Pequigo Avenue in Athol. Citizens representing a group of affected homeowners said they do not feel they have been given adequate responses to their questions about what can be done to alleviate the problem and what will be done to prevent similar

flooding in the future. They said the flooding this year has been much worse than last year's flooding. Lifelong residents of the area said they had no recollection of any other flooding since the Army Corps of Engineers built the dams at Tully Lake and Birch Hill Reservoir. The spokespeople said they recognize this is a complex issue, but remain frustrated in their effort to determine how to resolve the problem. Members of the Watershed Team decided to approach the Army Corps and Athol town officials with an offer to hold a public meeting in the near future at MREC.

The meeting then moved on to the topic of solid waste concerns within the Millers River

watershed, a 392-square mile region that includes parts of 17 communities in south central New Hampshire and north central Massachusetts, including



The Millers River Watershed

Wendell, Erving, and Montague. The Millers River Watershed Council's mission as an advocate for the watershed includes efforts to reduce the amount of waste generated and disposed of in the watershed. A database containing information

about waste issues and practices in the area is being assembled. The team discussed the problem of small towns keeping abreast of solid waste issues and relevant laws, and talked of the benefit of towns joining together to gain leverage in the big business world of solid waste management.

Athena Lee Bradley, program director for the Franklin County Solid Waste Management District, presented how the organization she works for benefits local communities. Towns within the district can get competitive rates for hauling trash, sludge, and recycling. The district holds annual hazardous waste and bulky waste collection at four sites in the region. The FCSWMD also offers programs to help people properly

dispose of other items as a means to avoid illegal dumping in the area. Bradley also talked about her organization's program to collect unwanted medications, an issue that is becoming prevalent as the cumulative effect of disposal of antibiotics, hormones, anti-depressants and other drugs is recognized as a detriment to the ecosystem.

The final topic of discussion was a request for the volunteer group monitoring water quality on the Millers River to meet with other groups in the state to share ideas, experiences and possibly equipment. Ivan Ussach, a member of the local monitoring team, indicated interest in participating in that meeting and expressed the need for increasing the number of volunteers in the watershed.

Interested persons should call the MREC at 978-248-9491.

## HIGHLIGHTS FROM THE MONTAGUE POLICE LOG

# Thin Ice and Broken Windows

**Thursday 2-3**

8:18 p.m. Report of loud music from a Park Street address. Subjects spoken to.

9:30 p.m. [redacted] was arrested and charged with violating a restraining order.

**Friday 2-4**

10:15 a.m. Report of a larceny at a 2nd Street address. Under investigation.

11:20 a.m. Report of an assault in the alley by L Street. Kids were fighting. All advised of their court options.

**Saturday 2-5**

11:15 a.m. Report of snowmobilers in the road on Randall Road. Officer unable to locate.

3:52 p.m. Report of trash dumped on the Plains by the high tension wires. Under investigation.

**Sunday 2-6**

12:05 a.m. Report of windows broken at Sheffield School. Report taken.

3:56 a.m. Report of a breaking and entering at an L Street residence. [redacted] was arrested and charged with breaking and entering in the nighttime with intent to commit a felony and lar-

ceny from a building.

8:45 p.m. Walk-in to station brought a bike found in the road on Avenue A by Bob's Auto Body.

**Monday 2-7**

12:30 a.m. Vandalism reported at an L Street address. Someone was throwing ice and broke a window. Officer spoke to all involved and advised them of options.

8:46 a.m. Report of an assault at a 15th Street address. [redacted] was arrested on a straight warrant.

10:46 p.m. [redacted] was arrested on two default warrants.

**Tuesday 2-8**

8:42 a.m. Juvenile at TFHS was arrested and charged with disorderly conduct and disruption of school or assembly.

3:23 p.m. Report of person walking on the ice below the dam on the river. Told to move along.

3:28 p.m. Report of disorderly conduct on 3rd Street. Juvenile summonsed for disorderly conduct and throwing objects on a public way.

At 1:30 p.m. on Thursday, February 3rd, an unidentified elderly gentleman was driving a white Chevy sedan west on Third Street in Turners Falls and suffered a

sudden and severe undisclosed medical problem after passing L Street. Halfway down the block, in front of Suzee's Laundry, the driver collapsed onto the steering wheel and veered into the oncoming lane, striking a black Dodge Ram truck. The driver, [redacted] was unhurt.



Sgt. Williams of the Montague Police reported that when he arrived on the scene the elderly gentleman appeared to have been having trouble breathing and had a weak pulse. EMT transported the gentleman to Franklin Medical Hospital.

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**STUDY**  
continued from pg 1

port was weak for the town actually acquiring the mill, even for the stated purpose of holding it long enough to remove barriers for private development - like lack of access and parking - before turning it over to a competent private investor.

Notable for his shift in support for the town's proposed purchase of the mill was selectboard member Allen Ross. On October 21st, 2004, when a purchase and sale agreement for the Strathmore failed to pass town meeting by three votes, Ross was the only member of the selectboard to speak strongly in favor of the purchase. Although the agreement contained no provision for feasibility work or for a no-penalty escape clause, he told town meeting in October, "Property values have done nothing but increase," in recent years. "We are at the cusp of one of the most desirable places to live in the Northeast. If we can nurture (the Strathmore) properly, its value will only go up. History is on our side. Look at Easthampton and North Adams. Our site is better," Ross declared.

On February 3rd, Ross offered different counsel. "At this point, the town purchasing the mill, even if it is found to be sound structure-wise, seems to me an unwise move to make.... I will try to say why it would not be in the town's best interests to own the property." He spoke of the significant amount of time various town departments would have to invest in securing, maintaining, and marketing

of town.

Ross went on, "If we were going to develop that property, is it part of that romantic vision of a center for the arts, with coal trucks and ash trucks (going back and forth to the cogeneration plant, should it go back on line)? These are all complicated issues. A structural study is not going to provide the answers. I don't have the answers. Is the town's ownership going to

full of fear and trembling about it. I did not like the way it came before us in October. Now, I'm a little more comfortable because the purchase and sale allows us to do the investigation we need to do. If the owner hadn't come to us with an offer to sell, we probably wouldn't be discussing it now."

Still, Pruitt went on, "Several things cause me to stick with my decision (to support the town's

Pruitt pointed out the deal would afford the town access to real estate at around \$1 a square foot. The Strathmore was recently appraised at \$360,000. "Projects like this have succeeded in other communities. Can we take advantage of the site? It could turn into one of the great assets of the town.

"It's a gamble," said Pruitt. "We acknowledge that. But the specter of (the former) Railroad

Salvage building is a very sad sight. It could be one of the more spectacular sights, at one of the gateways to our town. Now the roof is falling in; the town bears some responsibility. I'm not eager to see the Strathmore go the same way."

Selectboard Chair Pat Allen asked for a positive vote on the motion.



PETER CLARK PHOTO

An interior of the Strathmore Mill

the mill. He talked of the "significant cost of liability" to insure the sprawling mill complex, and the "opportunity for a lot of legal fees and liability" with the present owners (Montague Energy Group) of the former Indeck cogeneration plant abutting the mill to the north. "Our town is going to get spread a little thinner, without revenue coming in, significant human energy and effort is going to be expended (on the mill). That's energy that's not going to get spent on other parts

change some of the larger dynamics?"

Ross also spoke to the possibility of the town purchasing the mill after the purchase and sale expires, potentially for less money. Still, he supported the motion to authorize the negotiated purchase and sale agreement, to allow the town to proceed with feasibility studies.

Last Thursday, selectboard member Patricia Pruitt spoke for the purchase of the mill, but tempered her remarks by saying, "I voted for the Strathmore

purchase of the mill). Seeing the development that's gone on in downtown Turners Falls for the past 25 years: It's not been fast; it's not been easy. But we can look at several projects that have been completed, successes that contribute to the quality of life in our town. We do have a responsibility to our historic past as it is represented by the buildings around us. The mill fostered a great number of lives in this town over a great period of time. I can not say, 'Tear it down.'

"You've heard steps we've already taken, you've heard from the town planner, the building inspector, the town administrator, and the EDIC chair why the process is so important, and you've heard strong reservations and concerns regarding those same issues. We can no longer use our speculative powers. We can only get this information from a feasibility study. We need you to support that actual agreement through actual numbers, to use

see STUDY pg 10

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**STUDY**

continued from pg 9

it to determine if the negatives outweigh the positives. We have a unique window of opportunity with the owner and with the mill. It's incumbent on us to use the four-month period and the feasibility study to get the answers we need."

Over on the finance committee side of the stage, the united front of October had melted somewhat by February. Committee member Marge Levenson, who advocated for the purchase in October, now urged a negative vote. "I've listened to Dr. Ross's remarks, and I've found them compelling. I feel at any point in time the town cannot afford carrying costs for this project, for the insurance, the liability of ownership or stewardship of that building. If you put money in place you put a momentum in place which is hard to stop." In the second warrant article, the town was asked to borrow \$40,000 for the feasibility study, \$30,000 to be reimbursed from a grant from the State Office of Environmental Affairs.

Countering her argument, finance committee chair Jeff Singleton called the town's bid to purchase and seek responsible private redevelopment of the Strathmore, "A rational path to improve our tax base. The renovation of old factories is some-

thing that has been done in other places, to the benefit of their communities." He defended the article on this basis, and for including "a detailed feasibility study." Besides, said Singleton, "The selectboard isn't going to jump into this with both feet, to say the least."

Leery, perhaps, of GCTV's hand held microphones, which nearly paralyzed debate with their snarling static, Art Gilmore strode to the podium at the front of the auditorium and took aim at the town's bid with both barrels. "I went to the pep rally on Tuesday at the Discovery Center," said Gilmore, referring to the February 1st economic development forum where town officials touted recent Montague success stories two days before the Strathmore vote. "I expect the Turners Falls Marching Band to come down the aisle next." But Gilmore said he was not impressed by the choreographed build-up to the vote.

"I polled the people coming out of my church in Millers Falls," said the former Turners Falls high school music teacher, who represents Precinct 2. Everyone I talked to in my church was against this." Gilmore said he had spoken with business people in his village, and to many other constituents who were against the plan to buy the mill. "I have no

recourse but to vote no," he said. "With the financial problems that will face the town in the future, the (need for a new) police station, parks and recreation and public works departments, how can we go ahead and buy an old paper mill?"

Les Cromack, (Precinct 1) chair of the Capital Improvement Committee, noted earlier that his committee had endorsed the motion to authorize the purchase and sale of the Strathmore. Mike Naughton, a member of that committee who represents Precinct 2, said, "I'm not at the moment in favor of buying the Strathmore. I'm in favor of getting answers to the many questions we don't have answers to. Move forward."

Despite a scattering of voices gainsaying this approach, the pragmatic approach spelled out in the purchase and sale agreement's four-month, no strings attached feasibility study easily carried the day. Just before moderator Ray Godin called for a vote on the motion, the third member of the finance committee present, John Hanold, gingerly took the microphone to sum up the case for an affirmative vote.

"Given the number of needs in other areas, why would we want to buy the mill? This is a part of building for the future, so the tax base will rise, so we can spread taxes across a broad-

er spectrum. We hope to hold that mill for a brief period, for a modest amount of money, to produce a real gain for Montague. It's to open the door to have a real developer develop the mill. Decisions have to be made under conditions of uncertainty. Since October, we have much less uncertainty (on this proposal)."

Looking down from the stage, Hanold said, "I am more recently arrived in town than most of you. One of the reasons I moved here is because I see the town as a town of potential. I hope the town will continue to develop that potential and improve its fortunes tonight."

The motion passed on a voice vote, as did the motion to borrow for the feasibility study, and a third motion requiring the town to set aside \$7,500 for liability insurance for the Montague Economic Development and Industrial Corporation should the town complete the purchase of the Strathmore. MEDIC is named on the purchase and sale agreement as a potential co-owner of the mill, with the town. Allen, speaking for the selectboard, promised to hold a public forum when the results of the feasibility studies on the mill's operating costs, structural integrity, parking and access issues, market strategy, and possible demolition costs were known.

Eighty-six town meeting members turned out for the meeting; sixteen were excused, and twenty-two were no shows, according to assistant town clerk Deb Bourbeau.

**TOWN MEETING  
NO SHOWS**

Here is the list of elected precinct representatives who failed to show up or notify the town clerk of their need to be excused from the special town meeting on February 3rd, 2005: Mark Bander (Precinct 5), Philip Brenner (2), Ernest Brown (4), Lucien Desbien (2), Stanley Kosciński (3), Thomas Kurtyka, Sr. (1), Barry Levine (3), Laurie Martin (3), Martha Pappas (2), Ginny Schneider (2), and Denis Superczynski (4). The following town meeting members failed to attend or excuse themselves at the February 3rd and October 21st, 2004 special town meetings: Arthur Evans (1), Lillian Fiske (1), John Fox (2), Darren Lenois (6), Jason Valley (5), Edward Voudren (4), and Lynn Wasielewski (6). The following town meeting members failed to show or excuse themselves at the last three meetings, including the annual town meeting on May 1st, 2004: Charles Choleva (5), Jason Clark, Sr. (4), Kathy Hyson (3), and Don MacPhail (3).

**Artspace's Pottery  
Seconds Sale**

The 26th Annual Pottery Seconds Sale, sponsored by Artspace Community Arts Center, will be held at Greenfield High School on Friday, March 4th, 6 - 9 p.m. and Saturday March 5th, 10 a.m. to 2 p.m. Over thirty area potters, glass-blowers, woodworkers and printmakers are participating in the sale. Once again there will be door prizes and a special sale on Saturday beginning at 12:30 p.m. The Pottery Seconds Sale is Artspace's largest fundraising event and generates funds to support Artspace's arts educational programs for children and adults.

There will be a drawing for the prizes donated by sale participants at 1:45 p.m. on Saturday March 5th. You must be present to win a prize. From 12:30 to 2 p.m. on Saturday, a 10% discount will given to all shoppers. Greenfield High School is located on Lenox Avenue off Silver Street and there is plenty of free parking.

"This sale would not be possible without the artists who participate and the dozens of volunteers who help with sales, wrapping, set up and clean up," said Ellen Villani, co-president of Artspace. "We are grateful to all, including our faithful shoppers, who make this event the great success that it is."

Contact Artspace at 413-772-6811 for more information.

**SEWER**

continued from pg 1

taking measures to screen and disinfect the remaining 40% of Greenfield Road overflow.

In addition, Weimar told the board, recommended upgrades at the Water Pollution Control Facility, to allow the 20-year-old facility to "retain functionality," would cost the town \$3.5 million, for a grand total of \$5.7 million.

Weimar estimated the impact of these upgrades and abatements to sewer users - if they end up paying the entire tab - at a 3% increase per year each year for 20 years.

However, Capital Improvements Committee member Michael Naughton estimated sewer rates might rise far more sharply. Total sewer user fees

for FY 2005 were \$1,367,629, Naughton said. Stretching \$5.7 million over 20 years at a 4% municipal bond rate would cost the town roughly \$420,000 per year. If this amount were tacked onto the sewer rates each year, it would mean about a 30% annu-

al increase over current rates over twenty years for sewer users, Naughton calculated.



SARAH SWANSONPHOTO

Weimar said the town had ranked fourth on a statewide list

to qualify for revolving loan funds to pay for the \$2.2 million in CSO abatements. Access to this fund would allow the town to borrow at approximately 2% to pay for this portion of the work. The town plans to reapply to see if the entire \$5.7 million project will qualify for the favorable rates through the revolving loan fund; and the selectboard will send a letter to Congressman John Olver to see if the project could qualify for federal grant funding.

The selectboard discussed the need to hold a public hearing on the CSO abatement and sewer treatment plant upgrades before this year's annual town meeting.

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**GILL**

continued from pg 1

ity study will be done of the possibility of extension of existing water and sewer lines to the site. Current approximations indicate that sewer lines extend to within a third of a mile and water lines to within a quarter mile of the site."

The study group will also bring forward information on how the town could go about forming a community development corporation, should it decide to use that method to develop the land. A collaborative effort with the UMass archeology department will attempt to survey the site to draw a "reasonable conclusion on the probability of [historical] Native American activity on the site, as a necessary precursor to development. Based on the priorities outlined by the charrette, the study group will suggest the town explore, in descending order of importance, specific types of development on the site including small commercial development, health-care related facilities, or tourism and recreation facilities.

Selectboard member Phil Maddern asked the students to expand their study group's focus somewhat by looking at the land abutting the western boundary of the Mariamante parcel. That land has topological challenges, with areas of exposed ledge, and high tension wires, but if added to the 10 acres of flat land on the corner of West Gill Road and Main, and the 2 acres of hillier sloped land further down Main Road the town purchased as part of the Mariamante deal, it would form a contiguous parcel, opening up more possibilities for development, Maddern said.

The study group plans to work with the town's ad hoc advisory committee to hone the plan for future use of the Mariamante site over the next few months. Maddern said, "I think it would be good if the town knew what we were going to do with it by the fall."

**Main Road Construction Moves Forward**

Good news for wood turtles and motorists alike came in the form of approval of modified designs for culverts under the three mile stretch of Main Road extending north from Wood Avenue to the Northfield line. Administrative assistant Deb Roussel told the board she had received word from the state Natural Heritage and Endangered Species Program signing off on Greenman Pederson's turtle-friendly redesign, with three recommendations: that "sub-drains shall be removed and no new culverted untreated storm water discharges into" the brook habituated by the rare wood turtles; that "the box culvert and retaining walls are constructed as shown" on the revised plans; and that "the bypass dewatering method for temporarily trenching and piping [the water of the brook] be conducted during the inactive period for the wood turtles, which occurs from late October to mid-March." The Gill conservation commission will consider adding these recommendations to the terms of conditions for the project at their next meeting.

Roussel said MassHighway has the \$3.7 million road reconstruction project ready to go out to bid on February 28th, in time for work to commence this spring or summer.

**Excess Funds Applied to Gill School Assessment**

In accordance with Massachusetts law, the Gill-Montague Regional School District has notified Gill of the return of funds in the excess and deficiency (E&D) account, in the amount of \$135,331.63, to be deducted from the town's quarterly payment for the '05 GMRSD school assessment. These funds result from unexpected increases in state reimbursements in fiscal '04 for regional transportation aid, special education, and charter school placements. By law,

school districts may not carry over funds in their free cash (E&D) account in excess of 5% of their operating budget, thus the return of funds to the GMRSD members towns. "It's not that the schools don't need that money," explained Superintendent Sue Gee, speaking of the E&D funds at the February 8th school committee meeting. "We do." But the unexpected state revenues arrived after the '04 budget process was complete, and the GMRSD, attempting to budget conservatively, used them to add back the equivalent of only 7.3 full time staff, after nearly 24 were laid off following a cutback in state aid.

The preliminary GMRSD assessment request for fiscal '06 would increase Gill's '05 school assessment by \$85,302, without debt payment for the TFHS/Middle School project included. Tentatively, the GMRSD school committee hopes to meet with Gill's finance committee and selectboard on March 7th to go over the '06 school budget.

**Cruiser Repair Bill: \$2,240.79**

Gill has received a bill for repairs to one of its police cruisers, damaged in a twilight accident, during heavy rain, on Route 2, on November 28th, 2004. The cruiser, driven by reserve officer Adam Sokolosky, attempting to pull a U-Turn to pursue a speeding vehicle eastbound in the vicinity of Barton Cove, turned on its flashing lights but did not give sufficient time for another eastbound driver, James Hays of Orange, to slow down to avoid colliding with the front of the cruiser. The insurance adjuster found Sokolosky to be more than 50% at fault, and awarded a sum of \$2,137.50 to Hays. The town's deductible for the cruiser repair is \$1000; the selectboard recommended that amount be taken from the NMH annual payment in lieu of taxes (\$10,000) fund. Roussel said some funds might be available from the town's insurance

agency to provide part time officer driver's training.

In other police department news, the board agreed to transfer \$2,000 from the NMH account to the police department to augment the line item for part-time police salaries, which has been drawn down to zero while Officer Kazmarczyk attends the Agawam police academy. Chief David Hastings estimated his department would need \$5,800 to provide 16 hours of reserve officer coverage for Gill for the next 28 weeks, but the selectboard would like the balance of that request to be brought to a special town meeting as a special warrant article.

**Snedeker Appointed to Assessors**

With two volunteers from the newly formed Riverfront property tax assessment district offering to fill the remaining vacancy on the board of assessors, the assessors met with the board to vote a new appointment. In the absence of an elected chair, assessor Fred Lutz told the selectboard his board had received letters from both Rick Regan and Greg Snedeker offering to serve out the remainder of the term for the vacant seat. "The only trouble is, I checked and Rick Regan is not a registered voter," said Lutz. "That's a glitch," agreed Maddern. "That's a big glitch," added board member Ann Banash.

Lutz said Snedeker "appeared to be a pretty fair guy." Roussel said Snedeker had contacted the state Ethics Commission to see if there would be a conflict of interest in his voting on matters pertaining to the new Riverfront district, and had offered to recuse himself from such votes until he received a ruling on that. Banash said, "I think having someone from the Riverfront at this point is a good thing."

Snedeker was voted onto the board of assessors, unanimously.

**CDC Microbusiness Loans Available**

Alan Singer, of the Franklin County Community Development Corporation, came before the board to advertise the availability of loan funds for small business start ups in Gill. "A lot of people in Northern Tier towns find themselves commuting 7 a.m. to 7 p.m., Monday through Friday, and never think there is a way to get out of that box." Residents of Gill, as members of a 10-town \$387,000 community loan fund established by the Massachusetts Office of Housing and Community Development in 1989, are welcome to apply for money from the revolving fund, to start or expand a business, including home-based businesses. Singer said he encourages applicants to take advantage of the CDC's other resources, such as business planning classes, and to bring their ideas to local banks first. But if banks fail to lend, or to fully lend, the loan fund can often help.

"Being self-employed is more than a job," said Singer. "It's a way of life."

"Tell me about it," said Maddern. His Gill Greenery took advantage of the CDC loan fund years ago. "So did my business," said Banash, referring to Haigis Broadcasting, which she sold some time ago.

"How come yours made the list and mine didn't?" demanded Maddern, looking at the list of nearly 200 local CDC loan fund beneficiaries. "That's cause I paid my bill," said Banash.

The towns of Wendell and Erving are part of the 10-town loan fund. Montague is part of an earlier, larger CDC loan fund with the towns of Greenfield, Shelburne and Buckland.

Singer said he is currently working with the WagonWheel Restaurant and the Box Car Diner in Erving, among other participants in the loan fund program. For more information on what the CDC has to offer for small business start ups, call Singer at 774-7204 ext. 105.

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## AGNES

continued from pg 1

had been sent off to business school. He became a banker but always kept his love of farms. As a teenager, Aggie used to stay in the car reading while her dad would visit farms - a fact that led to a lot of teasing when she grew up to marry a farmer. Although she speaks warmly of her memories of the close-knit community of Wilmington, she was happy to leave the Deerfield River valley behind her and head to the University of New Hampshire for college, where she met Jim Williams.

Jim and Aggie were married in 1946 after he returned from service in the Pacific. By then, Aggie had gotten to know her

future in-laws and had begun learning about farming by helping out when they were short-handed during the war. She and Jim moved into the second floor apartment of the original Williams home, above Jim's grandparents.

Life at the farm changed quickly with Jim's grandfather's death the same year they married, his father's the next year, and his mother's a few years later. The farm changed from being primarily a vegetable farm with increasing numbers of cows to becoming the first farm in western Massachusetts to switch to a milking parlor and loose housing arrangement.

Carrying out the plans made with their father the year before, Jim and his brother, Flash,

erected the new barn during the winter of 1948. Winter was not the best time, but it was the only time not devoted to crop-growing. That fall they dug the foundation, pouring concrete with angle irons imbedded. In January, the first of 41 laminated arch-shaped rafters went up. Despite temperatures falling to minus 17 degrees and two snowfalls, they got the rest of the rafters up using a pulley and several ropes. Once the 40-foot high arches were upright, the ropes were anchored while the rafters were bolted to the angle irons. Then short boards were nailed between the adjoining rafters at intervals, part way up the sides. This made a wobbly structure for the men, but resulted in a building with more open space for the cows than in a traditionally braced barn.

A gale force wind, late on the night of January 29th, roared down the river, hitting the new structure head-on and laying it flat. Thanks to the strength of the prefabricated laminated rafters, only two needed repairs as the snow had at last been helpful and cushioned the collapsing forms. Tackling the new problem of how to get the rafters back up and re-attached, the brothers had new irons made for the bases. Among the many interested observers was Bob Warner who brought his construction business's heavy construction cable over to help. With this aid the arches were raised and attached securely - withstanding another stormy night a week later. The 80-foot structure was quickly framed with a silo added in the back and a milking parlor and milk room in the front. No longer were the cows milked by hand into buckets with each bucket carried to be weighed and measured before being emptied. Now the milker stood in a pit while the cows entered stalls on the side. It was much easier attaching the suction machines without having to bend and reach under the cows, a benefit to Aggie who

needed to stay connected to the land because "the land is what feeds us. If we don't take care of it, what will happen?"

*A Labour of Love* ends with the death of Jim's mother, which was when Aggie's intense involvement with the farm and farm life began. One of the organizations important for farmers was the Farm Bureau. In the 70s, Aggie became the first female president of the Franklin County Farm Bureau. The Farm Bureau was very active in getting legislation passed to establish the APR (Agricultural Preservation Restriction) Program. Jim Williams' "greatest goal is to preserve farm land," which they are doing through enrollment in this program. APR land must remain in agricultural production. Local land trusts are very supportive of this goal, making bridge money available for farmers until they are reimbursed by the state.

Almost 60 years later, Aggie's love of the farm and the land and the life of farming lights up her eyes. Being a part of a farm worked by the same family since 1775 is very important to her. There have been Williams family reunions at the farm since 1958, with much interest from the younger generations. She feels the farm provides them a sense of their roots and a history that connects them to the community and the land.

The farm was the "center of her life and always took priority," but Aggie sees a need for change for today's farmers. While each generation likes the idea of continuing the tradition, they don't necessarily see their friends making the same sacrifices, being tied down in the same way. The farm community has changed. Sunderland has become a university bedroom town. Where there were 53 dairy farms some years ago, now there are just two. No longer is Sunderland a farming town with shared experiences and common concerns. Yet Aggie is convinced that people

need to stay connected to the land because "the land is what feeds us. If we don't take care of it, what will happen?"

Aggie feels time spent on a farm, such as the school visits the Williams' sponsor, provide an opportunity to begin to understand farm life, especially for those who come "open and interested." But visits don't allow for the experience of the times when you wonder, "How can I keep on going - but you do." Or to know the long hours of hard physical labor driven by the demands of the seasons, the weather, and the needs of animals and plants. Or the learning through the "tight times" that you can't have everything you want - an important lesson for young people. All of these experiences are part of the legacy of farm life Aggie finds so valuable.

She spoke with surprise of the warm reception she had last week at the Sunderland library book reading she and another author gave. "People were so warm and appreciative." She understands that for many this story is the history of their town. That the newcomers were also interested pleases her as a sign of their interest in local history and of their intention to stay. She wonders if people in Montague will feel the same way when she takes part in the Meet Local Authors night at the Millers Falls Library on Wednesday, February 16th at 7 p.m. Will the details she gives of farming and daily life allow them to see the connection between the worker of the land and the "land which feeds us"?

Aggie describes her writing as "A gift which has been given to me to be able to do this. I am a spiritual person and feel it comes from somewhere else." By going beyond her original impulse to share a heritage with her children, she has extended to us the gift of her knowledge of the land and her love of life on a farm.



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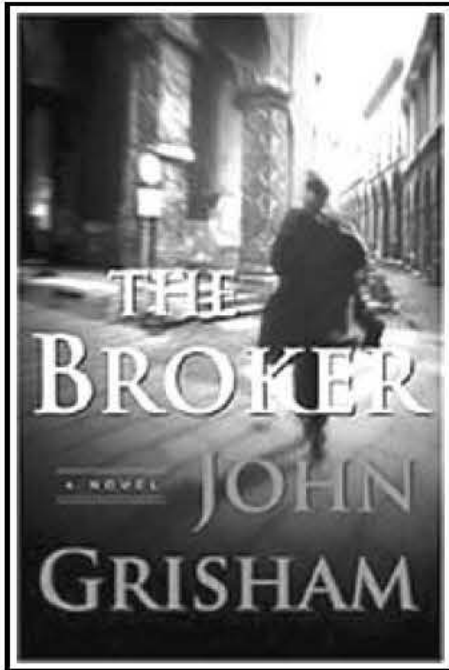


**BOOK REVIEW**

# Grisham Does It Again

BY KYLE SCOTT

John Grisham, fresh from his most recent blockbuster, the Last Juror, has done it again with the Broker, a fast-paced thriller with exciting action at every turn. Grisham never lets his readers down. His newest offering, sure to become the latest in his long line of best sellers, offers his trademarked multilevel plot-line, full of energy and excitement.



The main character is Joel Backman, the broker, the hunted one. Who is hunting him? Sometimes we don't really know, but he is a marked man for sure. On his own and on the run, will he survive? Read on. The president of the United States is being prodded by the CIA's head spymaster, Ted Maynard. Maynard believes Backman knows too much about top secret satellite surveillance. The CIA hopes once Backman, their former spy, is released, he will be hunted down and assassinated by an

agent of one of the United States' many enemies. A presidential pardon comes through, and Backman is back in circulation. He proves to be no easy mark.

The reader is taken on a wild and exciting international game of cat and mouse, with our protagonist on the lam in Italy, mainly in the picturesque city of Bologna. Grisham's knowledge of the geography, from time the author spent in Italy, pays big dividends to the reader. The book offers in gritty detail the cobblestones and back alley cafés and coffee shops of Bologna with such a flair for detail the reader can almost smell the aroma of the freshly brewed espresso, and, of course, the ever-present tang of garlic. While some of the text regarding electronic surveillance is complex, the story line carries the reader right along as the plot unravels.

Backman, on the run, shows a cloak and dagger cleverness, as well as a high degree of intelligence. We can see just how Backman became such a powerful man. The question is, will he survive to carve out a new life for himself, and, by the way, will the man who has emerged from the wreckage of three marriages find his true soul mate? Who can he trust?

The Broker is an exciting, non-stop read. Pick up the Broker today, and be prepared for one wild ride.

**THE PERSISTENT GARDENER**

# Starting Seeds

BY WOODY BROWN

**MONTAGUE CITY** - Very shortly it will be time for starting some plants from seed. Personally, I always start tomatoes, melons and peppers, but there are varieties of not only vegetables but also flower seeds people can start indoors. I started my onions and leeks about ten days ago, and they're already up showing cute little tips of green.

If you plan to start seeds on your own, I suggest you use a prepared seed starting mix as opposed to a soil mixture. The reason for this is because seeds started in soil are apt to be killed by damping off. Damping off is the result of too much moisture held in the growing medium. Seed starting mixtures are soilless and therefore moisture dissipation is more reliable. In my opinion, more garden plants are killed by over-watering than under-watering.

An essential ingredient in starting your own seeds is plenty of sunlight. Start your seeds in a sunny window. If possible, start your seeds in a place where the soil is kept warm to enhance germination. Soil heating mats are available, but warming of the soil can also be achieved by putting your seeds in their medium on the top of the refrigerator. After germination, sunlight is very important. Plants grown without adequate sunlight will be spindly.

It's really a little late to start onions and leeks, but it will soon be time to start tomatoes, melons and peppers. I generally start my peppers and melons in mid-March and my tomatoes towards the end of the month. The goal is to have plants ready to put out sometime between the fifteenth of May and Memorial Day. I start my peppers, tomatoes and melons in individual cells of seed starter, usually six cells to a container. This is not

essential, just what this grower does. I generally try to transplant tomatoes twice before I put them out. A couple of weeks after germination, when true leaves are emerging, I relocate the plants into two- or three-inch diameter pots. Now is the time for regular potting soil. I generally add a little vermiculite



or perlite to lighten the soil; just a sprinkling mixed in is enough. About two or three weeks before the plants are to go outside, I put them into six-inch pots. Each time I transplant I put the tomato plant a little deeper into the soil because tomatoes are one of the few plants that produce roots along the stem. The gardener's goal is to produce as many roots as possible. Melons and peppers are treated essentially the same

way, except the stem is not buried. The stems of melons and peppers do not produce roots, and burying them only encourages damping off. As far as supplemental food is concerned, it's only after the final transplant into six-inch pots that I add compost, a seaweed fertilizer or a well-diluted plant food.

It's fun to start your own plants, so try a few. Happy gardening!

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# Arts & Hearts

Friday and Saturday, February 11th and 12th

Arts & Hearts are popping up all over Turners Falls on Friday, Feb. 11th and Saturday, Feb. 12th! Come with the one you love and spend the day, and evening too! Have your portrait done at Ariel Jones' Studio. Find heart bowls to fill with "Love" and "Be Mine" wishes at Jack Nelson's studio. How about a

massage for you, or for two! And what would Valentine's Day be without a beautiful box of chocolates, a special bottle of wine and a delicious dinner for two, or more!

Come to Turners Falls. Spend the whole day and evening too! Shop, eat, and have a great Valentine's Day

## It's the Turners Falls Open Studio and EatsTour

Celebration. Arts & Hearts takes place Friday from 10 a.m. to 8:30 p.m. and on Saturday from 10 a.m. to 9 p.m. Brochures available at Jay K's Liquor Store, Equi's Candy and the bellybowl Restaurant, all in Turners Falls.

For more information about the Festivities contact Eileen Dowd at 863-9499 or carriage-house@canalstar.biz.

# Valentine Card Fund-Raiser to Benefit Local Programs

Think romantically and act locally! Want to express your goodness of heart this weekend, both to your sweetie and your community? Make a contribution and choose a valentine during the Arts & Hearts Studio & Eating Tour in Turners Falls on Friday and Saturday from 10 a.m. to 6 p.m.! All valentines handmade by local community agencies, who will benefit from your generosity.

There will be special Valentine's Day boxes at the four stops along the Arts & Hearts tour this weekend: Carriage House Designs at 65 Canal St., Ariel Jones Studio at 106 Avenue A, the bellybowl restaurant at 104 Fourth St., and Equi's at 125 Avenue A. There will be a limited supply of valentines made by the teens and staff at The Brick House and by the kids and staff at Montague Catholic Social Ministries.

All proceeds from this fund raiser will go to services and programs of the Franklin Area Survival Center, Montague Catholic Social Ministries, and The Brick House Community Resource Center.



Heart Bowl by artist Jack Nelson

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#### Help Wanted

**Montague Parks & Recreation Department • Lifeguards • Swimming Instructors**  
The Montague Parks & Recreation Department is accepting applications for certified Lifeguards for the public Open Swim sessions held at the Turners Falls High School indoor pool. These positions involve morning, afternoon, evening and weekend hours for winter/spring season. Positions require appropriate certifications, which must be current and valid throughout the employment period. Applications are available at the Montague Parks and Recreation Department, 56 First Street, Turners Falls, MA. For more information, you may call us at 863-3216. The Town of Montague is an EOE and does not discriminate against disabilities. **Deadline: Closed when filled.**

**EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR.** Brick House Community Resource Center. Part time, 21-25 hours/week, \$18-21/hour. (Separate Business Manager handles business duties.) Send cover and resume to Director - Brick House, P.O. Box 135, Turners Falls, MA 01376. Job description available on request. AAE/OE

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#### For Sale

**SEE EVERYTHING YOU MISSED** in the Montague 250th Anniversary Parade: every float, every band, and all the crowd. Are you in this video? Call MCTV 863-9200 to order. Also for sale: Turners Falls Girls Softball Championship Game videotape. Both tapes on sale now Greenfield Savings Bank in Turners or by calling MCTV at 863-9200.

**'Finding Treasures at the Gill Store** Skeleton 33" tall on Metal base (Smithsonian) \$175.00, Newspaper Bundling Box (Plowhearth) \$45.00, Pair of Porcelain Dolls 10.5" (American Family 1986) \$50.00, Aluminum Roof Snow Rakes, B.O. 863-9006 after 12:00 noon

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## Valentine's Day Wishes... Won't You Be Mine?



**Annamutsiki,**  
*I love you standing on a snowy path waving at the silent deer. And all your night clothes. And the way we laugh so easily. I love you swimming naked on your birthday.*

*And all your passion, grief, and joy. And the way we kiss. . . I love the goodness in your heart. And your obedient hair. And the way we are animals and birds together. your valentine,*  
**-Sitikisu**

Ms. Boobay: Of all the Persian beauties, you are the Queen of the hareem. Your beauty mark enchants me. And those whiskers! Can't wait to get Frisky with you on Valentine's Day. I'll bring the catnip.  
**-Morris**

**Dear Kendra,**  
*The best things in life sometimes come in small packages. You're the best. I love you.*  
**-Boysen**

Sweet Tomato,  
You rise to the top of the heirlooms in my garden. I'm so glad to have picked you from among the beautiful weeds in the compost heap of life. With love, from your Sweet Potato.

*To my sweetest of all possible Putchke Ples, Happy Ups and Valentine's Day. Love, Lulu*

## Tracking Event at Skyfields Arboretum

Saturday, February 26th from 9 a.m. to noon. Paul Wanta, local tracker, will lead the third annual Wildlife Tracking Hike at Skyfields Arboretum in Athol, MA. This hike will consist of tracking wild animals in the conserved fields and forests surrounding Mount Grace Land Conservation Trust's headquarters. We will travel through hemlock and deciduous forests to discover what wildlife is active on the land during these winter months. In prior years deer, coyote, fox, fisher, weasel and mice tracks were spotted. This is the mating season so that many animal tracks may be observed in pairs. We will discover some of the mystery of their lives by what they have left behind.

This tracking program is suitable for adults, as well as adults with children. Wear waterproof footwear and warm, layered clothing. Snowshoes are welcome if needed. Hiking will be light to moderate. Workshop is limited to 20 participants. Please call (978) 248-2043 or email landtrust@mountgrace.org to reserve a space.

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# ARTS & ENTERTAINMENT



# CALENDAR

**FRIDAY, FEB. 11TH**  
 Second Friday Contra Dance with *David Kaynor & Greenfield Dance Band* at the Guiding Star Grange Hall, 401 Chapman St., Greenfield. 8:00 p.m. to midnight. 413-367-9380.

**SATURDAY FEB. 12TH**  
**Walking on Water: Marsh Mammals**

Winter is the perfect time to visit marshy areas in search of mammal sign. Walk on water in search of beaver food caches, muskrat push-ups, otter slides and more. At Northfield Mountain Recreation Area, Route 63 in Northfield. 1:00 to 4:00 p.m. Suitable for ages 10 and older. Pre-registration required (800) 859-2960.

Second Saturday Contra Dance with *Tophill Music* at the Guiding Star Grange Hall, 401 Chapman St., Greenfield. 8:00 to 11:30 p.m. (413)-773-1671.

**Tsunami Relief Benefit Concert**

A Benefit Concert for Tsunami Relief efforts will be held, 7 p.m. at Temple Israel, 27 Pierce St. Greenfield. Artists performing include Michael DiMartino and World Beat, The Wholesale Klezmer Band, Charlie King and Karen Brandow, and Morningstar. Tickets are \$10 at World Eye Books. All proceeds will be sent to Jewish World Services which is providing humanitarian aid to the people affected by the worst natural disaster in history. For more info call Ruth Witty at (413) 774 2136 or email [rwitty@crocker.com](mailto:rwitty@crocker.com).

**Tsunami Relief Benefit Dance**

Warm up to some Salsa dancing while helping others: Saturday February 12, 7:30-11:30 p.m. at Buckland Public Hall, Upper St., Buckland, MA (snow date Sunday February 13). Suggested donation \$10. Bring a dessert and drinks to share, hot coffee provided! Beginner instruction from 7:30-8:30pm by D.J. Chico

**Hot Spot Teen Center**

**Friday, 11th** - Drop-in hours, 3-5 p.m.  
**Thursday, 17th** - Technology Drop-in, 3-5  
 Movie Night, 6-8  
**Saturday, 19th** - Open Mic, 6-9  
**Tuesday, 22nd** - Drop-in hours, 12 - 8  
**Wednesday, 23rd** - Field Trip to Eric Carle Museum of Picture Book Art, 1-5  
**Thursday, 24th** - Technology Drop-in hours, 3-5

Jimenez. For more info. Contact McCusker's Market 413-625-9411.

**SUNDAY, FEBRUARY 13TH**  
 Exhibit showing at the Mall at Moore's Corner, Leverett, MA: *Wunjo*, a black and white fine art photography thesis exhibit by Susan Paquet. Opening reception on Sunday from Noon 'til 6 p.m. The gallery is located across the street from the Leverett Village Co-op and will remain open from 3-5 p.m. February 14th through 18th. For directions, please call (413) 477-8283 or email [shoeshinemama@yahoo.com](mailto:shoeshinemama@yahoo.com).

**THURSDAY, FEB. 17TH**  
 Hilltown Folk Presents: Greg Brown and Griffin House. To characterize his music as simply folk or blues is to miss the magic of Greg Brown. He's a finger-pickin' poet and a song-writing sage whose music seems to strike a chord in everyone. Held at Memorial Hall located on Bridge Street in Shelburne Falls. 7:00 p.m. 413-625-2580.

**ONGOING EVENTS**  
**Now through February 19th**  
 Talent Brewing: Annual Teen Exhibit. Students from local public and independent high schools will exhibit 2D and 3D work in a variety of media. Artspace Community Arts Center, 15 Mill St., Greenfield. 413-772-6811.

**Now through April 1st**  
 Photography exhibit at PureLight Gallery in Turners Falls. Robert Farber's Photographs on display, opening reception and book signing Mon., Feb. 7th from 5 to 7 p.m. at PureLight Gallery of Fine Art, 37 Third St., Turners Falls, MA 01376. For more info or directions call (508) 885-6048 or visit [www.purelightgallery.com](http://www.purelightgallery.com), email [jan@purelightgallery.com](mailto:jan@purelightgallery.com). Gallery Hours: Fri. 4 - 6 p.m., Saturday 10 a.m. - 12 p.m. or by appointment.

**UPCOMING EVENTS**  
**February 26th at the Wendell Full Moon Coffeehouse**, It's the Reggae Allstars. Local reggae



**MARDI GRAS PARTY**  
**FRIDAY, FEB. 11TH**  
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musicians perform, to benefit Friends of Wissatinnewag. For more info visit [www.wendellfullmoon.org](http://www.wendellfullmoon.org). *FYI, Mark Erelli's performance, which was cancelled due to a good old New England Nor'easter has been rescheduled for June 25th, again to benefit the Wendell Open Space Committee*

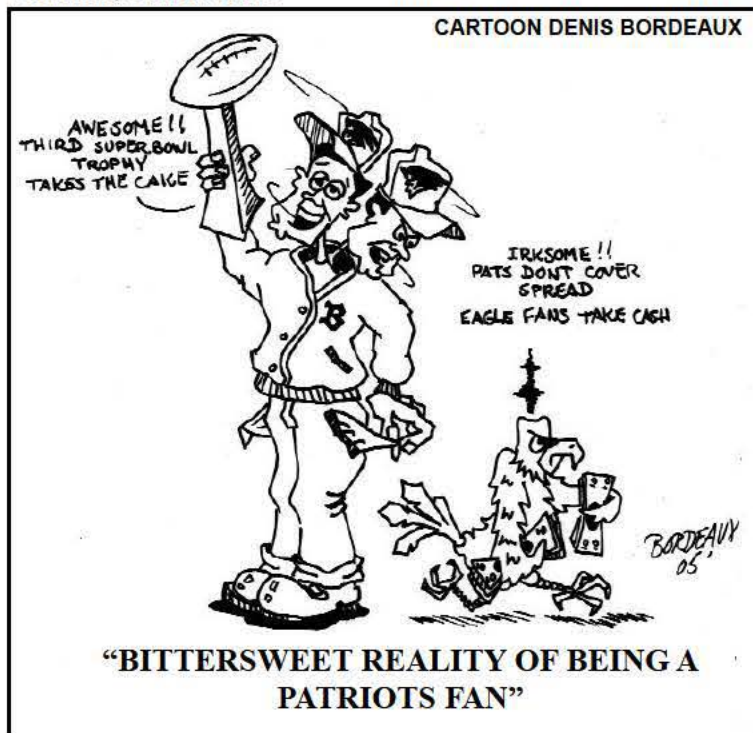
**Saturday, February 12th**  
 Nature's Beauty: The Order Odonota Exhibit Opening 11 am  
 Nature photographer Glenn Corbiere will introduce visitors to the damselflies and dragonflies of the valley. Come learn the stories behind the camera and see these bright beauties on display through April 16th.

**Saturday, February 19th**  
 Valley Rocks  
 10:30 - 11:30 am

Our valley was shaped by volcanoes, earthquakes, and glaciers! Schoolchildren with adults are invited to examine rock samples and act out how rocks arrived

**Great Falls Discovery Center Calendar of Events**

NOTE: All Programs listed below are free and open to the public. Facilities are accessible. Great Falls Discovery Center, 2 Avenue A, Turners Falls.



here with Gini Traub, Regional EE Coordinator for the Mass Department of Conservation and Recreation.

**Saturday, February 26th**  
 Valley Birds  
 11 a.m. & 2 p.m.  
 Visitors are invited to join Sue Cloutier, of the U. S. Fish and Wildlife Service, on either of these guided tours of birds in our habitat displays, videos and the Eagle Cam.

**BOOK MILL**  
 Sunday at 7 All films free donations accepted  
**DEEP FREEZE FILMS**  
 Feb. 13th, Double Feature  
**VALENTINE NOIR**  
 Sweet Smell of Success (1957) (With Burt Lancaster as the craven gossip columnist)  
**Double Indemnity** (1944) (With a sexy Barbara Stanwick)  
 Projected upstairs with refreshments by the Lady Killigrew Café  
[www.montaguebookmill.com](http://www.montaguebookmill.com), (413) 367-9206

**Showtime 7:30 p.m.**  
**Friday/Saturday Feb. 11/12th**  
**CROUPIER**  
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- POOH'S HEFFALUMP MOVIE G DAILY 6:00 8:00 MATINEE SAT,SUN,&WED 12:00 2:00 4:00
- ARE WE THERE YET PG DAILY 6:15 9:15 MATINEE SAT,SUN,&WED 12:15 3:15
- HIDE AND SEEK R DAILY 6:15 9:15 MATINEE SAT,SUN,&WED 12:15 3:15
- BOOGEYMAN PG13 in DTS sound DAILY 6:30 9:30 MATINEE SAT,SUN,&WED 12:30 3:30
- HITCH PG13 in DTS sound DAILY 6:30 9:30 MATINEE SAT,SUN,&WED 12:30 3:30

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**Friday, Feb. 11th**  
**Mem Shannon & the Membership**  
 live funk from New Orleans, Mardi Gras Party, Mask contest, beads, drink specials, 9:30 p.m.

**Saturday, Feb. 12th**  
**Four on the Floor**  
 Rock and Roll

**Sunday, Feb. 13th**  
**Karaoke with T-N-T**  
 8:30 p.m.  
**Wednesday, Feb. 16th**  
**Open Mic with Mark Herschler**  
 8:30 p.m.

32 Federal St., Millers Falls



## OFF THE BEATEN TRACK

# Keeping the Rhythm of Life in the Sonoran Desert

BY FLORE

**ARIZONA** - Is that the sound of a heart beating, or the beating of a planet drum? Anyone traveling to Arizona can step foot directly onto the soil of its amazing past. Were you aware that for at least the last 12,000 years the Sonoran Desert has sheltered native people? How could anyone pass by the elaborate richness of their heritage? Their culture, certainly, had thrived, until the arrival of the missionaries. The Hohokam People, in the central part of the state, had a highly developed agricultural society. They constructed the largest web of irrigation canals in Pre-Columbian North America.

With their knowledge of hydraulics, think how they were able to irrigate between 30,000 and 60,000 acres of crops, using only basic tools. This alone, would leave one speechless. Many of these canals are still in

use today. The tribe lived in the Sonoran Desert for more than 1000 years. Nearly half a million Hohokam inhabited this land, but by the 16th century, after the arrival of the Spaniards, all traces of them had



*The Fort Mc Dowell Yavapai Nation presents hoop dancers, drummers, and Indian singers in Native Trails.*

vanished. If you plan to visit any reservation of the present day Southwest tribes, remember the etiquette of being a guest. Check the time when one is welcome to enter and depart. Listen. Do you hear, from the

distance, the howling of coyotes? Do you see the sweeping of birds' wings above your head?

Photos are not permitted on any reservations or at ceremonials taking place there. Plan to be there for the Easter Feast of the Yaqui. Drive up to the Hopi mesas, to

the rain dances. They are usually held in September at either Oraibi or Walpi. The dates are announced at short notice, depending on the decision of the medicine man. On Navajo land, avoid entering an empty hogan,

as it might be housing the spirit of a deceased person. Most of the tourist offices carry an informative pamphlet on Indian gatherings and powwows, welcoming travelers. Being immersed in the land and its native people will make you aware of their deep spiritual commitment to the delicate balance that maintains life in these arid regions, and, indeed, around the globe.

Wandering suburban Phoenix, you might forget!

Walking the Havasu Canyon, it would need very little coaxing for us to dance again, where among the Blue Water people you will hear the beating of the planet's heart.

## The Breakfast Club

BY FRAN HEMOND

**MONTAGUE CENTER** - The breakfast club crew survived a streak of winter weather that would have discouraged a lesser group. Two feet of snow smothered their natural food supply, and they brought their friends to the feeder at Cold Brook. The ubiquitous juncos, God bless them, moved over for regular

visits from the resident cardinals, a him and her who behave in the manner of an earlier generation. He cases the area for dangers, while she hops around in the rhododendron thicket. Her yellow brown coloration, which generally blends her in with the woody surroundings, does nothing to hide her this day, for snow has encompassed

the world. She seems to give him the best pickings, move in when appropriate, and follow respectfully when he decides to leave.

Back in the rhododendron thicket, the brilliant white snow clinging to leaves and branches reveals aspects not apparent in the usual green and brown shade. Snow has settled in the



took his sunflower seed off to the catalpa tree, and the song sparrow settled for food from the ground. A downy woodpecker deigned to join the group this challenging morning, but has not returned.

In early winter, warmer weather and open water had brought four black ducks to the north pond daily. They were sleek handsome drakes with good red feet and white underwings that shone in the afternoon sun when they flew back to the river. The four mallards who generally came to the south pond seemed a little heftier, less wary, well settled in.

Now more than halfway through the calendar winter, an undulating brook channel has opened through the snow-covered pond. On its banks the big white oak still clings to tattered brown leaves and the lingering robin in its branches must wish it had gone south.

bird nest made more obvious by a small bright red object, a mitten perhaps? The very denseness of the bushes gives safety to birds from the danger of larger animals, and exploration by children, but the squirrels seem to maneuver among the branches well. The nest is only four feet above the ground, and apparently offered some bird haven last summer.

This morning, seven species stopped by. The chickadees, for whom the feeder seems to offer the best perches, came and ate efficiently and left. The nuthatches (one tries to make a tree trunk out of the slippery tube) used their sharp bills to threaten any bird who thought to hurry them off; the titmouse

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Please join us in celebrating

## Northeast Foundation for Children's

new offices in the historic Colle Opera House

# Open House

Thursday, February 17, 4 to 6 PM

85 Avenue A, Turners Falls, Massachusetts

See [www.responsiveclassroom.org](http://www.responsiveclassroom.org) for directions

### HAYRIDE & BONFIRE in MONTAGUE CENTER

Saturday, February 19th, 4:00 p.m. - 7:00 p.m.

Mark your calendars! Let's pick up where we left off from this year's Winter Carnival! We won't let a little snow take our annual tradition away.

**HAYRIDES** - Departing from the NEW Montague Center Firehouse on Old Sunderland Road every 25 minutes. Coffee, cocoa, mulled cider and hot dogs will be provided courtesy of the Montague Center Firemen's Association. Hayride Fee: \$2/adult & \$1/child per trip

**BONFIRE** - Montague Center Park, warm yourself after a hayride or skating, chat with friends and enjoy a fun winter evening outside. Courtesy of the Montague Center Fire Department.

**ICE SKATING** - The Pond @ Montague Center School, Bring Your Own Skates, Activity status dependent upon ice conditions.

MONTAGUE PARKS & RECREATION DEPARTMENT  
56 First St./Unity Park Fieldhouse  
Turners Falls, MA 01376  
Phone: (413) 863-3216/Fax:(413) 863-3229



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