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LAKE PLEASANT MILLERS FALLS MONTAGUE CENTER MONTAGUE CITY TURNERS FALLS

The Montague Reporter

YEAR 7 - NO. 19

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THE VOICE OF THE VILLAGES

FEBRUARY 12, 2009

Turners Falls High School Alumni Lend a Helping Hand

– Survival Center Food Drive in Full Swing –



Nancy Holmes (left) and Cathy Webber collected donations for the Franklin Area Survival Center's food pantry at the 2nd Street Bakery last Saturday.

BY NANCY HOLMES

TURNERS FALLS - The idea came up as eight classmates from the TFHS Class of 1969 were having dinner together at the Gill Tavern, then down to the Rendezvous for an after-dinner wine. We are planning our class reunion (40 years!!) and the discussion got around to helping others.

The next day I was dropping some things off at the Survival Center and saw the pantry, very low on food. I

thought how we all ate a nice dinner the night before, and went home to full cupboards. So I made up some flyers and emailed the group and said, 'This is what we are doing.'

You can do that to friends you have had for 40 years.

Many names for the drive came to mind, some I can't print. We wanted a name that would include many people. Several local grads – including Seth & Eva, Laura, who co-owns 2nd Street Baking Co., and Sharon at Scotty's –

offered their shops as drop-off points for food pantry items. So 'TFHS Alumni' was the best fit for this 'Food Drive'.

On Saturday the 14th, Valentines Day, TFHS alumni will be at Scotty's and 2nd Street and Seth & Eva's from 11 a.m. to 1 p.m. so people can drop off donations and chat with alumni and make the whole thing a bit more personal. These stores all offer a cozy atmosphere; 2nd Street Baking Co. will have coffee and pastry, of course, along with great local artistic photos and cards. At Scotty's you can chat with the locals coming in and out through the day for the papers and the lottery, and also find coffee and snacks. At Seth and Eva's there are some great buys, not only on musical instruments and clothing, but also for great local paintings, locally-made jewelry for your sweetheart, and of course you can get your "I Love Turners Falls" button there.

What started out with a few 1969 classmates now has the support of the Turners Falls High School Alumni Association.

Hopefully, and with your help, we can fill the food pantry for our neighbors.

Four pounds of food feeds one person three meals a day for one day. Most requested items are peanut butter, macaroni & cheese, and canned tuna. Monetary donations for the food pantry are more than welcome, as they are more than doubled by the Survival Center shopping at the Food Bank of Western Massachusetts. Drop-off sites are also located at the Turners Fire Station and the Water Department offices. For pickup of food items, call Nancy: 863-2213, Kathy: 863-8308, or Lesley at 863-3120.

County ESOL Programs Stretched to the Limit

BY FARRAH ALEXANDER
GREENFIELD - Educational resources and services are stretched to the limit for almost everyone in Franklin County, unless you happen to be from – or serving someone from – somewhere very, very far from Franklin County.

In that case, the educational resources and services are very, very stretched, to the limit and beyond.

That was the consensus on Wednesday, February 4th, as educators, advocates, and representatives of Franklin County social service agencies gathered at Greenfield Community College's downtown center for a meeting of the Family Literacy Collaborative. The discussion focused on the growing lack of support and resources, and the challenges in providing educational services to the

immigrant population in Franklin County.

"I am highly qualified, but I am only one human being," said Rebecca Wright, the Gill Montague Regional School District's ESOL, (English speakers of other languages) instructor. "I am also informally the Spanish speaking liaison, the coordinator of the program, and the teacher. It's exhausting, but the children are amazing, brilliant and fabulous. But that doesn't mean that things are fair."

Wright teaches 36 students from Mexico, Guatemala, El Salvador, Ukraine, Moldova, China, Tibet, and Puerto Rico. No Child Left Behind and state legislation have specific requirements regarding services these students should be receiving. However, Wright is concerned they are not receiving

the mandated services, due to a lack of funding.

The Collaborative, a broad-based group of about 20 institu-

see ESOL page 6

Grupos de Conversacion en Inglés

The Center for New Americans (El Centro Para Nuevos Norte Americanos) ya tiene gratis dos grupos de conversacion en inglés en la Biblioteca Carnegie cada miércoles desde las 6:00 p.m. hasta el 7:30 p.m. Hay dos niveles: rudimento y avanzado. Hay mas o menos ocho personas en cada grupo. Los participantes son tambien los lideres y deciden cada semana los sujetos para practicar. Si está interesado llama al Centro 413-772-0055 o 587-0084.

Ross will not Run Again for Selectboard

BY DAVID DETMOLD

MONTAGUE - It's a demanding job, the pay is bad, people call you at home at all hours to complain, and just when you think you have things reasonably under control, the governor comes along and pulls the rug out from under your budget.

After six years in office, Montague selectboard chair Allen Ross is laying down the gavel and heading back to private life. But he has no regrets.

"I think it's a real important job. I'm very happy that I've done it," said Ross.

And to those who might come after, he offers this: "For people who want to see government succeed, if they can take the position, it can be very gratifying."

Ross has been identified with efforts to improve the prospects for economic development in Montague, particularly regard-

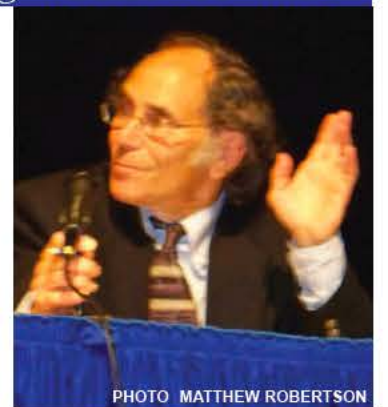


PHOTO MATTHEW ROBERTSON
Al Ross

ing the potential for establishing a landfill at the Department of Environmental Protection-approved, town-owned land off Turnpike Road, or finding an alternate productive use for that 17-acre site.

He has been a centrist on budget matters, seeking solutions that could potentially satisfy both the school committee and most town departments, pushing for the eventual closure
see ROSS page 13

PETS OF THE WEEK

My Brother & I



Jagger

My name is Jagger and I'm a five-year-old male brown shorthair cat in need of a good home. I came in with my brother, Tucker. I'm more outgoing.

When you meet us, I'll come to talk to you first. We love to be with people.

We might occasionally jump on a table or counter, but then what cat hasn't done that? We like each other, but don't like other cats!

Have you got room for one of us in your heart... Or even both of us?!

For more information on adopting me, please contact the Dakin Pioneer Valley Humane Society at 413-548-9898 or via email: leverett@dpvhs.org.

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MONTAGUE LIBRARY NEWS
Animal Tracking and Skulls at Montague Center

BY LINDA HICKMAN MONTAGUE CENTER - An animal tracking and skull identification program for families will begin at the Montague Center Library on Sunday, March 1st, at 10 a.m. After a brief introduction, and after examining various skulls inside the library, environmental educator Dawn Ward of Montague Center will lead a nature walk looking for animal signs in the

Montague Center Conservation Land. In the case of unpleasant weather, the program will be held inside the library.

Children of all ages and their families are invited to the free program, which is sponsored by the Gill-Montague Community Partnerships for Children.

For more information, please call the Carnegie Library, 863-3214.

MONTAGUE LIBRARY NEWS

Mother Goose on the Loose

BY LINDA HICKMAN MONTAGUE CENTER - Mother Goose on the Loose will be held Saturday, Feb. 28th, at the Carnegie Library at 10:30 a.m. The program is an interactive mix of guitar and banjo music, rhymes, stories, puppets, and other visuals. The free ses-

sions are designed for babies through preschoolers and are performed by Children's Librarian Linda Hickman and musician Michael Nix. Monthly Saturday programs will be held thru April. For more information, call 863-3214.

A Tale for Eight Towns

BY SHARON SHARRY GREENFIELD - What if everyone in Deerfield, Erving, Greenfield, Montague, New Salem, Shutesbury, Sunderland and Wendell read the same book?

The idea behind "A Tale for Eight Towns" is to create a kind of community-wide book club throughout our eight towns. Reading great books provokes us to think about ourselves, our environment and our relationships. Talking about great books with friends, family and neighbors adds richness and depth to the reading experience. We hope you will read and enjoy *The Ha Ha* by Dave King and...

- Talk about it with your friends and neighbors.
- Attend the book discussions and related programs.

• Meet new people and share thoughts about communicating across barriers.

• Read for pleasure and encourage your children to do so.

An unforgettable first novel about silence, family and the imperative of love, *The Ha Ha* is a moving story about the cost of war and the infinite worth of human connection.

Be sure to stop by any one of the eight town libraries until February 21st, pick up a program brochure for all events and register for "A Tale for Eight Towns" and pick up a copy of *The Ha Ha* in hardcover, paperback or audio. Discussion guides will also be available.

Programs will take place at each of the eight libraries, and include:

SENIOR CENTER ACTIVITIES -- Feb. 16th to 20th

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

- Monday, 16th**
Presidents Day the center will be open for activities, no meals
10:00 a.m. Senior Aerobics
10:45 a.m. Easy Aerobics
Tuesday, 17th
9:00 a.m. Walking, weather permitted
Tax assistance by appointment
Wednesday, 18th
10:00 a.m. Senior Aerobics
12:45 p.m. Bingo
Thursday, 19th

- 1:00 p.m. Pitch
Friday, 20th
10:00 a.m. Senior Aerobics
11:00 a.m. Easy Aerobics
AARP Tax-Aide volunteers will be providing free tax return preparation for Montague and Gill Seniors at Montague Senior Center. Please call to make an appointment. A few openings are still available on March 24th. AARP Tax-Aide volunteers work in conjunction with the IRS to bring you this service. If filing a joint return, both spouses should attend the appointment unless impossible. Call the center for details.

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



JOE A. PARZYCH PHOTO

At a budget-crunching meeting in the Gill Selectboard office on Monday, police chief David Hastings said, "You took \$30,000 from my department when you took an officer. The Governor took another \$12,000 out of community policing. If you cut another 10%, I guess you'd be laying another guy off." The selectboard has asked each department to present budget scenarios with 0% increases and 10% decreases this year. The Gill police department now has only two fulltime officers.

- Community Book Discussion, at the Carnegie Library on Wednesday, March 11th, at 7 p.m. in Turners Falls;
- A conversation with Tyler Boudreau, Iraq War veteran and author of *Packing Inferno: the Unmaking of a Marine*; Tuesday, February 25th, at the Wendell Free Library, 7 p.m.
- Boudreau will also speak at the Greenfield Public Library on Saturday, February 28th, at 10 a.m. and at the Deerfield Public Library on Monday, March 2nd at 6:30 p.m., and at the Sunderland Town Hall on March 4th, at 7 p.m.
- Dave King, author of *The Ha Ha*, will give an author talk at the Shutesbury Town Hall on Wednesday, March 18th, 7 p.m.
- Community Book Discussion, will also be held Wednesday, March 11th,

Wendell Free Library, 7 p.m. All these and many other related programs are free and open to the public, and will take place at the libraries between February 23rd and March 21st. Attend any event at any of the eight participating libraries and be entered to win: two tickets donated by Jon Trenholm of Trenholm Electric, in Gill to the Sunday, October 4th, Boston Red Sox vs. Cleveland Indians game at Fenway Park, or an autographed copy of *The Ha Ha*.

Great Falls Middle School Students of the Week

Grade 6
Amber Caouette

Grade 7
Kathryn Austin

Grade 8
Leslie Kozma, Mike Conant

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medical necessity by calling Polly Kiely at 413-423-3308.
Monday, 16th
9 a.m. Exercise
12 Noon Pitch
Tuesday, 17th
9 a.m. Aerobics
12:30 p.m. Painting
Wednesday, 18th
8:45 a.m. Line Dancing
12 noon Bingo
Thursday, 19th
9:00 a.m. Aerobics.
Friday, 20th
9 a.m. Bowling
11:30 a.m. Lunch:
12:30 p.m. Embroidery

WENDELL Senior Center is located at 2 Lockes Village Road. Kathy Swaim is the director: (978) 544-2020. Call for hours and upcoming programs.
Upcoming writing workshop Monday, February 16th, (snow date Feburary 23) 7 - 9 p.m. This first meeting of a series is to explore the direction of interests for the program. Please register for the workshop with meeting chairperson Nina Keller at 978-544-2857.



CLAUDIA WELLS ILLUSTRATION

BY BRIDGET SWEET
TURNERS FALLS - The Ice Age on The Avenue has given way to slightly warmer days (32 degrees feels like a heat wave), and those crazy robins have returned six weeks early, who knows why? They've been flocking round the Round Here café since the middle of last week, waiting for crumbs, even when the thermometer was stuck at 12 degrees, and the shopkeepers

Who Knows Best? Some Dumb Groundhog, or all the Robins on Avenue A?

were to be seen each sunny day hacking at the slush, snow and ice with garden tools to make the sidewalks just a little more user-friendly.

We need a good thaw. Or at least three sunny days in a row.

For now, Sweet B. sez: Take it from Chris C.

"Perseverance, umpteen hours." That's how Chris Couture describes the secret of survival for Couture Brothers over the past 99 years. He is the third generation of Couture Brothers at 187 Avenue A.

Variety. That's key. And being a reputable paint contractor, that's key too, he added, especially since "the economy is making it harder [to compete] with the 'Big Box Stores'."

A Sweet Biz Profile: Couture Brothers store sells art supplies

and paint supplies, and does custom framing, wallpaper, brushes/rollers, paints and stains. Oh, and they "work in a half-hour to forty-five minute radius for contracting."

Want certificates? Chris attends trainings and earns certificates for the latest techniques in working with industrial and municipal customers.

Chris is also president of Turners Falls Athletic Club. And, believe it or not, he has a family life.

Chris's son is in the store now. Perhaps a fourth-generation Couture will help plan the 100th anniversary celebration! The store's phone number is 413-863-4346 for more information.

That's perseverance for ya'.

And perseverance is what Acupuncturist Karen Adams is

all about, too. Adams moved her Four Directions Healing Arts from 296 Avenue A to 25-27 Bank Row, recently.

3rd Floor.
 Greenfield.
 01301.

"[I'm] very sad to leave but I'm not that far away," she noted.

It was a sudden move, and we on The Ave will miss her needlessly chipper self. Then again, The Ave goes on and on. You can live in the great state of Dubuque, and still be on The Ave.

Karen, by the way, can be reached on The Ave via Greenfield, or by cell at 413-768-8333 for appointments.

Persevering too is "Arnie" Houle of 102 Avenue A. Arnie has new red-lettered posters up advertising his new Auction Barn. His thrift store closed the last day of January. He can be reached at 413-863-3704.

Meanwhile, thinking of the economy (And money. And taxes): "Bunny" Caldwell, director of the Gill-Montague Senior Center, said, "[Seniors] can call to be put on a waiting list for filing taxes, starting the 17th of February." The Senior Center is located at 62 Fifth Street; phone number 413-863-9357.

Caldwell added, "Or they can call the Volunteer Income Tax Assistance program in Greenfield at 413-376-1136," where Carolyn Bellany of Community Action, Inc. will answer the phone.

For those who fit the profile, Bellany will tell ya', "Schedule an appointment with me for Tuesday nights or Saturday mornings."

She told me, "It's based on income. I ask a couple questions and decide if you're eligible. 80% are medium-income [people]." What fun!

OK. My brain froze in last week's Gill-Montague School News. The Sheffield fourth graders will go on February 13th to see Tomáš Kubínek perform at the Fine Arts Center at University of Massachusetts, Amherst. Perhaps it was superstitious me, wary of Friday the Thirteenth!

The Great John D. Rockefeller said, "I do not think that there is any other quality so essential to success of any kind as the quality of perseverance. It overcomes almost everything."

Anyway... long may the robins run. Only a few weeks more. You can do it. Ta-ta, and for now my dears, persevere!

An Undercover Account of the Cardiac Care System

BY JOSEPH A. PARZYCH
GILL - Seven or eight attractive young ladies surrounded me as I lay on the bed.

"Where's your wallet?" one of them demanded.

I handed it to her.

"Do you have any money?"

"Yes," I replied.

"Take off your pants."

"My mother warned me about women like you."

A bevy of the ladies descended upon me, stripping me to my shorts.

"Do you want to take off your shorts?"

"Maybe I better not."

Apparently they were just taking a survey, because they whipped those off, too. Soon I was dressed in a johnny with my bare backside open to the breezes.

Someone stuck a clipboard in front of me. "Sign here," she commanded.

"What am I signing?"

"This is a form that states that you understand the privacy laws."

It all started when I awoke at three o'clock one morning with

my hands hurting. It felt like chilblains, the pain of thawing half-frozen hands too quickly.

At about six o'clock, I could no longer stand the pain and I drove to the Franklin Medical Emergency room.

The ER waiting room was empty. The receptionist did not seem particularly concerned that my hands hurt. The nurse asked if I had chest pains, neck pains, arm pains or back pains. "Nothing, just pains in my hands that I can hardly stand," I said.

"Well, come on in, we'll take a look."

A blood test detected enzymes, indicating a heart attack. They gave me a clot buster shot and loaded me on an ambulance for Bay State Medical.

One of the first doctors to greet me there was Dr. James Arcoleo in the cath lab.

"I know this guy," he said.

"Oh, oh," I thought. "It's pay-back time."

The last time I'd seen Dr. Arcoleo was in his office, when I scolded him about his bedside manner. He'd given my wife an

honest assessment of her medical condition. That threw her into a fit of despair, requiring a series of retail therapy sessions at Wilson's to bring her around.

I was able to convince Edna that she'd misunderstood the doctor and that with all her fancy new clothes, we were going to go places and do things.

Back at the cath lab I assured Dr. Arcoleo, "You've mistaken me for my evil twin."

"I didn't know you had a twin brother."

"Oh, yes. And we're both named Joe."

"Do you have any misgivings about me performing this procedure in view of my treatment of your wife?"

"You performed a minor miracle in keeping my wife alive in this lab, and I feel confident that you'll do as well for me." I did not mention his bedside manner lapse.

Arcoleo's exploration of my heart indicated I needed an immediate bypass operation.

The surgeon, Dr. Flack, worked from 9 a.m. to 6 p.m.,

see **CARDIAC** page 14

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Bare Bones Budgeting

"For as much as government can do and must do, it is ultimately the faith and determination of the American people upon which this nation relies. It is the kindness to take in a stranger when the levees break, the selflessness of workers who would rather cut their hours than see a friend lose their job, which sees us through our darkest hours. It is the firefighter's courage to storm a stairway filled with smoke, but also a parent's willingness to nurture a child, that finally decides our fate."

—President Barack Obama
from his Inaugural Address
January 20th, 2009

In ancient Athens, the first legislator to write down the code of law was named Draco. The laws he established have not, by and large, survived the test of time, but they were famous in the sixth century BCE for their harshness. The death penalty was imposed for most crimes — including, it is said, stealing cabbages — and the sentence for people who fell in debt to anyone of a higher social class was slavery. Draco, according to the biographer Plutarch, was supposed to have defended the severity of his code by saying he felt the death penalty was justified for even minor crimes against the social order, and if there were a harsher sentence than death he would have gladly imposed it for more serious crimes.

These days, Draco and his code live on mainly in the form of an adjective describing excessively harsh government action, (though we can certainly think of a few examples in modern jurisprudence he would have been proud to author). The budget cuts we are facing on the state

and local level to close a billion-dollar budget gap here in Massachusetts may well earn the title Draconian, as dedicated public employees and the services they provide our cities and towns find themselves once again on the chopping block.

Let's take the town of Gill for example. On Monday, in an effort to close a \$26,000 budget gap created in the town's balance sheet when Massachusetts governor Deval Patrick slashed \$128 million in promised aid to local governments more than halfway through the current fiscal year, the Gill selectboard sat down with department heads and commission members to ask for their help on coming up with ways to balance the budget.

The first suggestions were to close the library — "How many people really use it?" asked police chief David Hastings — or suspend funding for the recreation commission, which subsidizes summer camp for the children of lower-income residents in town. Selectboard member Lee Stevens said the town may have to look at cutting out the senior center, as well. The building that houses the historical commission will be on the agenda for annual town meeting to consider selling this year.

By the end of the day, the Slate Library and the recreation

commission were spared, — for now — although the library gave back most of the money it would have lost just a month ago if the voters had not approved a \$35,000 override of their property taxes. The fire department, which already lost \$5,000 of their \$70,000 budget this year, was asked to come up with another \$5,000 Monday, and to propose 10% cuts beyond that for next year. The police department lost one of three fulltime officers even before the latest call for reductions. The highway department has offered to cut back the annual grading of dirt roads from twice a year to once a year to save on gravel, and to clean catch basins less frequently, saving a few more thousand dollars. The cemetery commission will give back a few hundred dollars of their meager budget, setting aside just enough to deal with the possible erosion of graves at the cemetery in the center of town. It's come to this.

This is "bare bones" budgeting at its starkest. Gill is offering a preview of the kind of choices most localities will be facing if the stimulus planners in Washington fail to restore adequate funding for the states, to avoid massive layoffs of teachers, police and firefighters in the present economic downturn.

But what the collective effort to trim budgets in Gill also offers is a civics lesson that could have

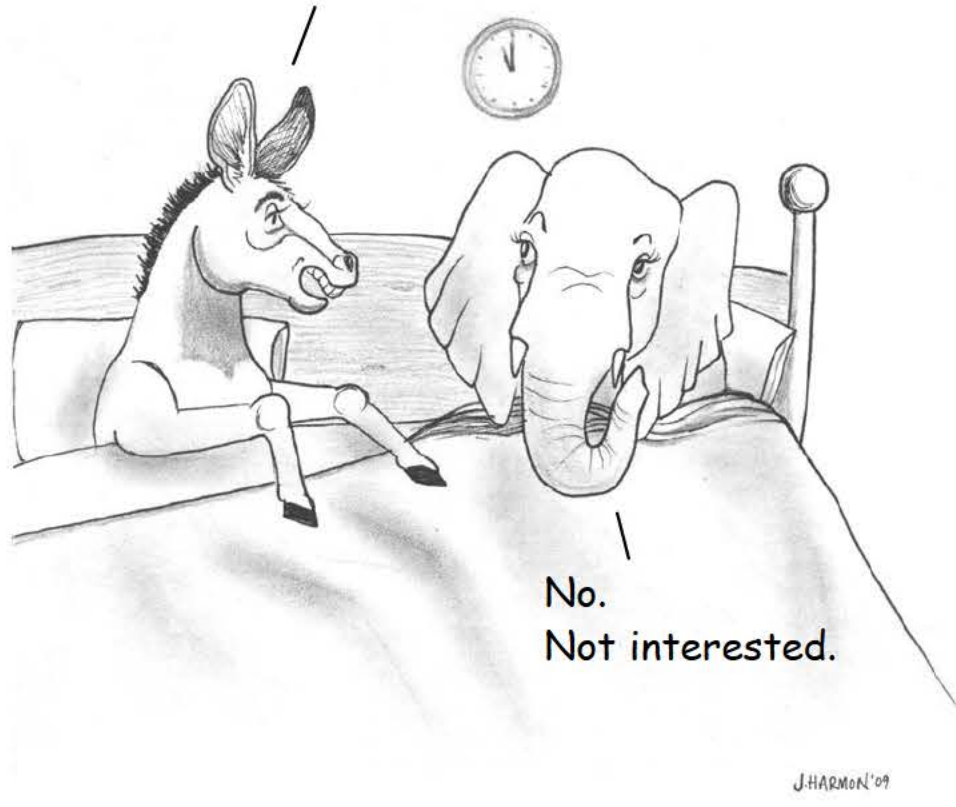
taught the ancient Greeks a thing or two. Small town democracy is about more than preserving the conditions of our roads and the safety of our private property. It is about preserving the well-being of the entire community, old and young alike. It is about giving poorer citizens the same opportunity for their kids to enroll in structured play as better off residents may enjoy. It is about giving their children the opportunity to take advantage of educational materials and creative programs at the library and in their classrooms, so the entire community can enjoy a more prosperous future than their forebears faced. At the same time, it is about preserving newer citizens' ability to understand the heritage of their town by visiting a historical society, or researching the genealogy of their ancestors, and finding their gravesites still intact. It is about rich and poor alike being able to separate their trash and have it collected, affordably, at their curbside, rather than dumping it off their back porch into a streambed that feeds into our larger watershed. It is about all the things that together make a town more than a yearly tax bill and a plowed road to work.

It is about all the collective effort that goes into making a town a mutually supportive community, handing on a better world to our children.

In difficult economic times — and from our standpoint we've seen little else in Western Massachusetts for far too long, with more of the same looming for years to come — it is only by pulling together that we can maintain the kind of community our forefathers and mothers handed down to us. This applies to all aspects of local government, from the volunteer firefighters to the highest-paid administrators in the regional school department.

In this Draconian budget season, we have to find a way to preserve all the vital aspects of community life in our towns, even if that means foregoing raises for our teachers for a year, at a time of widespread unemployment (a suggestion we have reluctantly made before, yet to be acted on). Or laying off a principal, to reflect the decline of the school district's population and the recent closing of one and a half elementary schools. (It has not escaped attention that as towns like Gill ask for and receive 0% increases to 10% cuts in all departmental budgets, the Gill-Montague school committee has come back instead with a 2.7% preliminary increase above a baseline the towns demonstrably could not afford last year.) Or cutting back the hours of everyone working in town hall so that jobs and core services can remain — as far as possible — intact.

Come over here. I have a stimulus plan for you.



JESSICA HARMON ILLUSTRATION

LETTER TO THE EDITOR

Walk for World Peace

This Saturday, February 14th at 9:00 a.m., the American Friends Service Committee will be hosting the opening of the "Walk for a New Spring" of the Peace Pagoda at First Churches in Northampton. This annual event is undertaken in the spirit of abolishing nuclear weapons, ending war, and moving to a peacetime economy.

At 9:00 a.m. we will have breakfast, a community circle, and at 11:00 a.m. we will join the vigil of the Northampton Committee to Stop the War. After the vigil, at approximately noon, we

will begin the walk towards Amherst. We will be briefly stopping at the First Congregational Church of Hadley for lunch, and then ending the walk with dinner at 5:30 in Amherst.

Please join us! If you are willing to bring food to either the breakfast or lunch, please email jnapolitano@afsc.org or call (413) 584-8975. For those willing to bring food for dinner, please call (413) 587-0743

— Jeff Napolitano
Northampton

American Dead in Iraq and Afghanistan as of 2/10/09



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

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GUEST EDITORIALS



Lower Resources, Higher Assessments

BY JOHN HANOLD

MONTAGUE - At the end of Tuesday's 45-minute public hearing on the Gill-Montague school district's budget for Fiscal Year 2010, the school committee has met two requirements of the district agreement: they chose a total figure by the end of January (\$17,074,774, an increase of \$448,899 over last year's budget) and they held a hearing for public input.

The budget document distributed on Tuesday was 33 pages long and showed every FY '10 line item at 2.7% above FY '09. I regard this expenditure of paper and ink as unnecessary, but at least it was printed double-sided.

I acknowledge the school committee's reminder that the total figure is only a "placeholder," and subject to revision, but the uniform increases indicate that the hearing accomplished little, beyond meeting a date requirement and highlighting the inconsistency between district inflation rates and the reality of town resources.

The committee's justifications for the percent increase included a reference to "typical" annual increases of 3%, an expected 2.7% increase in Montague's town departments, and the fact that it is lower than an Education Department inflation index of 4.5%. None of these justifications reflect district forecasts of expected revenue, which is the typical starting point when a household - or a town - begins its budgeting process.

Here is my digest of the evening's message:

- State aid to the district is quite likely to be the same as FY '09. Since this aid covers about 40% of the school budget, the increase in town assessments will be closer to 4.8% (\$345,000), unless school choice, charter school, and district reserve use rises faster than 2.7%.

- State aid to the town of Montague, plus local fees and earnings, is projected to be roughly 3% (\$94,000) lower than in FY '09.

- Compliance with Proposition 2½ means the dollars raised by tax levy will be roughly 3.5% (\$393,000) above FY '09, including 1% for the effect of whatever new growth may occur in our fragile economy.

In sum, the prospect is for notably higher school assessments in the face of notably lower resources. In addition, Montague departments have prepared budget requests reflecting the same fixed-cost pressures mentioned by the school committee, and we see a serious shortfall even if the district assessment number is the same as last year, as the town meetings of both Gill and Montague have strongly recommended. Our selectboard and finance committee are examining budgeting assumptions and discussing what service reductions to recommend to cover this shortfall, and the atmosphere of the school committee's budget hearing, calm though it was, leaves me very concerned about the direction of the district's parallel discussion.

John Hanold chairs the Montague finance committee. The opinions stated here are his own, and do not necessarily reflect those of any other member of the committee.

Focus on Long-Term Fiscal Stability, Please

BY JEFF SINGLETON

MONTAGUE CENTER - There has been much concern about the 2.7% budget increase voted by the school committee a few weeks ago. It has been called "unaffordable" and even "irresponsible" in the current economic climate. While there is little doubt that such an increase cannot be financed given current state and local revenues, I think these criticisms miss this point.

The main problem is that there is no basis for the 2.7% number. It seems to be based on a misreading of a very preliminary estimate of the town of Montague budget. This makes no sense to me. Shouldn't the preliminary school budget be based on an estimate of school spending trends? Otherwise it appears as a "tit-for-tat" game with the towns, not a good way to start things off this year.



It seems to me that both the towns and the school district should begin the process with a rough estimate of a "level services budget." This is a budget that maintains the current level of services and only includes so-called "fixed cost increases" to maintain those services. This is essentially what the town of Montague has done, although we know full well we will not be able to afford such a budget this year.

A GMRSD level services budget would probably be higher than the arbitrary 2.7% number that the district has floated. That is certainly true with the current town "level services" estimate. But it would be a sound basis for making reductions to bring school spending into line with revenues. Both the oversight boards and the public in general need to know what it costs to maintain existing levels of services, and what causes school budget increases. This can only be done with a level services budget estimate.

I do not accept the argument that it is impossible for the school district to come up with such a rough estimate by the beginning of February, as the school leadership seems to be suggesting. Obviously one must make assumptions, but as long as these are reasonable and clear I do not see a problem.

Finally, it seems to me that right now we need to focus more on the assessment process, the role of the state, and proposals for long-term fiscal stability, spending less time bickering over this year's school budget "number."

Jeff Singleton is a member of the Montague finance committee. The opinions stated here are his own, and do not necessarily reflect those of any other member of the committee.

A Better Plan for Economic Revitalization

BY WARD SMITH

WENDELL - Even if the economy holds together, which I doubt, a relatively minor event like the recent ice storm in Wendell shows us just how vulnerable we are. If losing power for a week in the winter is an "emergency," then we need a better plan, and government is not going to provide it.

I'm not saying that town-wide planning doesn't have its place. It's just that in an actual emergency, any governmental services will be quickly overwhelmed.

Therefore, our "emergency shelter" needs to be our own homes. In addition, we need to strengthen our social and economic ties with each other, at the local level.

Here are my thoughts on how best to accomplish this. Others will no doubt have additional ideas:

First, we should become as self-sufficient as possible. No matter what happens, it doesn't hurt to be more self-sufficient as a household, and it is only by being self-sufficient that you can really help others. Have a big

garden. Save your seeds. Learn to can and store what you grow. Build a root cellar. Have at least a backup woodstove and a cord or more of dry wood under cover. Have a hand pump on your well, or meet a neighbor with one.

Second, stockpile a few months' worth of food. If you have a garden and can, you are already ahead of the game. If not, buy extras of stuff you normally eat, stuff that will keep, every time you go shopping. Aim to have at least a week's

worth of food on hand at first, then a month's worth, and more if you feel like it. (I do.)

Third, get to know your neighbors. Maybe you can't afford a hand pump, but your neighbor has one. Maybe they don't have a garden, but could help you with yours.

Fourth, shop locally and pay cash. If you spend money in Wendell, the cash gets re-circulated in town. Buy wood in town. Buy food at Diemand Farm. There are lots of other people who have services to offer in

town - use them! Drop the credit card. If you eat at the Deja Brew, paying with a credit card costs the owner about 3%. Instead of giving that to Chase Megabank, why not give it to the local owner, and the local economy?

Clearly, this approach won't solve all our problems. But if everyone in Wendell did something like this, it would surely make us stronger as a community, in the face of whatever is coming.



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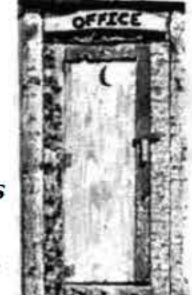
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LETTER TO THE EDITOR

Eagle Watch

I saw this Bald Eagle last Thursday afternoon near the center of Wendell, and thought your readers might like to see it too.

You guys do an incredible job. The *Montague Reporter* is the best community paper ever. Thanks so much for it.

From the wonderful, wild, winter woods —

— Molly Kaynor
Wendell



Montague Fire Department Wins Homeland Security Grant \$48,484 Will Pay for Hose, Air Packs, — WASHER-EXTRACTOR FOR TURNOUT GEAR —

BY JOHN GREENE

MONTAGUE CENTER - On February 6th, the Montague Center Fire Department received notice they have been awarded a 2008 Assistance to Firefighters Grant from the Department of Homeland Security.

The department will receive \$48,484 for specific fire equipment. Part of that will pay for replacement of 4000 feet of four-inch hose. The current hose is now 20 years

old, and at the end of its life.

The replacement hose will allow the department to pump water up to a mile from designated sources to buildings or wildland fires. Additionally, the grant will allow us to add 18 new air breathing bottles, and a commercial washer extractor for cleaning the expensive fire gear. The washer should remove any toxins, and yet be gentle enough on the gear to maintain its expected life. The

grant will also allow the department to purchase a hose washer and several hose appliances.

This grant is the third the department has received. We received \$70,950 in 2001, and \$77,536 in 2007. This program has allowed Montague Center to keep abreast of technology and training in a difficult financial climate.

John Greene is the Montague Center Fire Chief

ESOL from 1



Standing at the easel, Margaret Soussloff, director of Family Support Programs at Community Action, makes a point at the meeting of the Family Literacy Collaborative in Greenfield on February 4th. Seated left to right, Jim Ayres and Diane Worth, of the Center for New Americans, Rebecca Wright, ESOL teacher for the Gill Montague Regional Schools, and Kit Carpenter from Greenfield Community College.

tions, organizations, and programs in Franklin County, including the Gill-Montague Regional School District, the Center for New Americans, and Community Action, meets quarterly to address the emerging literacy and school-readiness of young children, as well as access to language learning, higher education and employment success for adults.

The Gill-Montague school district has a high Hispanic drop-out rate, as well as a high overall drop-out rate. In the 2007 graduating cohort at the Turners Falls High School, which contained 96 students, of whom six were Hispanic, the overall drop-out rate was 22.9 percent. Only two of the six Hispanic students graduated, for a drop-out rate of 66 percent.

In 2008, with seven Hispanics in the cohort of 116 students, only two graduated, a dropout rate for the Hispanic students of 71% over four years.

Wright also pointed out the almost complete lack of teachers in the GMRSD who have training or background teaching ESOL students.

There may be some relief in the near future. According to Wright, the state will be reviewing the district's ESOL program, or "lack thereof," which she hopes will bring the issue to the forefront.

Despite the lack of funding and resources, Wright's students show up with a positive attitude. "They have come from educational backgrounds where you respect the teacher, and you don't swear. There's a lot of regard. [Their attitude isn't] 'What can you do for me?' but rather, 'I'm really appreciative of this opportunity'."

Under the No Child Left Behind legislation, Franklin County is considered a 'low incidence' area due to the low number of ESOL students here; however, the students' needs are the same as in higher incidence areas.

The meeting included panel presentations by Andrea Sears of Community Action's Parent Child Development Center (PCDC: Head Start and Early Head Start), Rebecca Wright of the Gill-Montague Regional School District, Diane Worth and

Jim Ayres of the Center for New Americans, and Kit Carpenter of Greenfield Community College. Each spoke about gaps in services they had identified during the course of trying to deliver services to the recently arrived immigrant population in Franklin County.

Sears said there are 14 PCDC center-based sites in Franklin and Hampshire Counties, serving a total of 199 children. At six of those sites, there are at least 62 children who speak 14 languages other than English. Several staff members speak Spanish, and one speaks French, but the staff is fluent in no other languages. Most written materials are in English, which makes it a challenge to communicate with both the children and their parents, who may have low literacy skills in their native languages as well.

Sears also emphasized the difficulty she encounters placing undocumented immigrants in fulltime slots due to state required paperwork, although Head Start half-days are more flexible.

Panelists Worth and Ayres of

the Center for New Americans (CNA), in Greenfield, also cited funding as a major obstacle to delivering services to the immigrant population. Specifically, a lack of transportation and childcare, and only 20 slots to serve beginning and high-beginner English language learners. Additionally, a lack of funding prevents them from being able to offer the 30 hours of instruction required by the Department of Transitional Assistance (DTA) for education. CNA receives the same allocation from the Department of Education as they did in the year 2000.

To address some of these concerns, CNA recently started conversation groups at the Carnegie Library in Turners Falls, which meet at 6:00 p.m. - 7:30 p.m. each Wednesday. These English Immersion groups are peer-led, with beginner and advanced levels, each with about eight members. The groups focus on topics suggested by their members, such as interviewing for jobs. At the moment, only Spanish speakers are attending, but Ayres said the groups are open to anyone trying to learn English.

Anyone interested in joining the conversation groups are invited to first call the Center for New Americans at 413-772-0055 or 587-0084 to get involved. CNA hopes to be able to make more resources available to meet the needs of these ongoing groups.

GCC's Kit Carpenter cited housing as a major impediment for newly arriving immigrants. According to Carpenter, the college has seen an increase in the enrollment of international students, partly due to lower tuition rates as compared to four-year colleges, and more students are learning about the college on

the internet. The college doesn't offer housing, and some students have been encountering discriminatory practices when they start their own search.

Next, the panelists held a roundtable discussion with the 20 professionals in attendance to identify solutions. Among the ideas generated to address the lack of childcare at CNA were the possibilities of writing a grant, utilizing Women's Centers, and recruiting volunteers. To improve service delivery to immigrants, some suggested developing an immigrant center for Franklin County, a service to help students prepare to take the GED in Spanish, distributing a Latino coalition dictionary, writing a letter to DTA, and offering a conversation group on Wednesdays with CNA at the North Amherst Head Start/PCDC.

To address transportation issues, those attending suggested organizing a ride-pool service for immigrants, similar to those arranged for elders, and to offer oral driver's license tests. To address what attendees regarded as a vital need to raise public awareness about the different cultures in the community, there was a discussion about organizing an Immigrant Day in Greenfield on July 4th, as CNA has done in the past.

The next Family Literacy Collaborative meeting will be held April 15th from 1:00 - 2:30 p.m., at 90 Federal Street, in Greenfield.

A Massachusetts New Americans Agenda public hearing with representatives from Governor Deval Patrick's office will be held on February 18th, from 5:30 - 7:30 p.m. at St. Mary's Church in Springfield.



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Three Seats Up for G-M School Committee

BY ELLEN BLANCHETTE - Nomination papers are available for pick-up in the Gill-Montague Regional superintendent's office for school committee positions. The Gill and Montague annual elections will be held on May 18th. School committee completed nomination papers are due back in the superintendent's office no later than 4:00 p.m., on March 27th.

There is one three-year Gill school committee seat up for election. There are two three-year Montague school committee seats up for election.

Reached by phone, Linda Kuklewicz, who holds one of the two Montague seats up this year, said she had not yet made up her mind whether she will run again for that seat, or not. But Kuklewicz said she planned to make a decision

within the next few weeks, and would inform the school committee of her plans then.

Committee member Kristin Boyle answered affirmatively when asked if she planned to run again for a three-year seat from Montague. She said she feels very committed to the schools, is working on the negotiations over the teachers' contract, will soon be working on negotiations with the service employees, and wants to serve another term on the committee to continue the work she has been doing.

Valeria 'Timmy' Smith, who holds the three-year seat from Gill that is up for election this year, has not yet decided whether she will run again.

For more information or questions about the school committee nominating papers, contact Robin Hamlett at 413-863-9324.

Montague Dems Hold Town Election Caucus April 8th

BY JAY DIPUCCHIO MONTAGUE - Democrats will hold their caucus to select candidates for town office elections on Wednesday, April 8th, from 7:00 p.m. to 8:00 p.m. in the first floor meeting room in town hall, 1 Avenue A, Turners Falls. Successful candidates will receive the party nomination to appear on the May 18th town election ballot. Voting is by paper ballot.

Only registered Democrats may run in this, which amounts

to a primary election for local offices. Democrats who wish to run in the caucus must deliver their intention in writing to Democratic town committee chair Jay DiPucchio by 5:00 p.m., Friday, April 3rd. Notice may be by mail, email or in hand. Verbal declaration cannot be documented and is not acceptable.

Individuals choosing to run without Democratic party nomination should check rules with the town clerk. Occasionally, candidates for

the caucus nomination also gather signatures for nomination through the town clerk process, so that they can still appear on the May ballot if they are defeated at the caucus.

By the Democratic town committee's vote following the 2003 caucus, registered un-enrolled voters also may vote in the Democratic caucus. No absentee balloting is allowed.

The first floor meeting room of the town office is wheelchair accessible.

Below are listed term expirations

OFFICE	TERM	INCUMBENT	PARTY
Selectman	3	Allen Ross	Dem.
Moderator	3	Raymond Godin	Dem.
Assessor	3	Betty Waidlich	Unenrolled
Bd. Of Health Member	3	Christopher Boutwell	Dem.
Library Trustee (3)	3	Suzanne Kretzenger	Unenrolled
	3	Karen Schweitzer	Dem.
	3	Barbara Stewart	Dem.
	3	Barbara Kuklewicz	Dem.
Park & Rec. Comm.	3		
Soldier Memorial Trustees (2): Veteran	3	Al Cummings	Dem.
Non-Vet.	3	Donald Girard	Dem.
Montague Housing Authority(2) (fill unexpired term)	5 2	Robert Martin Bev Cadran	Dem. Dem.

Questions and letters of intent may be directed to: Jay DiPucchio, 35 Central Street, Turners Falls, 01376; or by calling: 413-863-8656, or by emailing: here.now@verizon.net

Energy and Landfill Committees Meet

BY DAVID DETMOLD MONTAGUE - The Montague Energy Committee met on Tuesday, February 10th, upstairs at town hall, while the Montague Landfill Committee met downstairs. By the end of the evening, their agendas appeared to have found some unexpected common ground.

The energy committee focused on preparing for a conference call next week between town officials, officials from the Gill-Montague Schools, and Beth Greenblatt, the owner's agent hired by the Franklin Regional Council of Governments to assist with regional energy service performance contracts (ESCOs) designed to pay off investments in energy savings in municipal buildings and infrastructure through cost savings on town and district energy utility bills, over a 20 year period. The FRCOG has tapped Siemens Corporation as the Energy Saving Company (ESCO) for 16 Franklin County towns and three school districts, and representatives of that

corporation have already conducted initial audits of town and school buildings in Montague and Gill. The conference call with Greenblatt will give town and school officials a chance to ask questions of Greenblatt, an expert on ESCOs, about how such an energy savings contract could be best structured to meet the needs of the town and the school district. Members of the Montague energy committee will be attending that meeting, Wednesday, February 18th, at 3:30 p.m. in town hall, to lend their expertise to the discussion.

Members of the landfill committee will also sit in on that conference call, according to Patricia Pruitt, who attended the second meeting of the recently reformed landfill committee meeting on February 10th.

"We set our monthly schedule," (the landfill committee will meet again on March 10th at 7 p.m. in town hall). During the course of discussion, Pruitt said, "The group came to consensus that the idea of using the landfill for

trash was sort of the least interesting option for us." Now, the committee is interested in looking at alternative energy development for the 17-acre landfill site off Turnpike Road, instead.

Pruitt said she was using the word "trash" to include materials such as incinerator ash and contaminated soils along with municipal solid waste, which the town had already ruled out in the last round of proposals for use of the site.

She said the idea of a solid waste landfill at the DEP permitted, town owned acreage near the town's former landfill, to the rear of Judd Wire, had not been entirely ruled out. But conversation between committee members and at least one of the firms that had formerly expressed interest in bidding on the landfill site

indicated that the market for developing new landfill space - even for incinerator ash - is weak right now.

Committee member Greg Garrison, of Randall Wood Drive, presented the group with research he had done about the possibility of leasing the site to an alternative energy company to establish a "solar farm" to produce photovoltaic electricity.

While all this was being discussed downstairs, the energy committee continued to work upstairs to plan neighborhood meetings on home energy conservation, tentatively set for the afternoon of March 14th at the Maezumi Institute on Ripley Road, for the Chestnut Hill neighborhood, and again in Montague Center on March 21st, in the morning, either at the library or the fire station. More details on these

meetings will follow in next week's paper.

The energy committee is seeking one or two new members. If interested, call Chris Mason, chair, at 367-9923.

FinCom Votes Against Mid-Year Cuts

MONTAGUE - On February 2nd, the finance committee recommended, by a vote of 3-2, against mid-year cuts in town departments. To make up for the \$153,000 in cuts Governor Deval Patrick imposed on the town's lottery aid, to help close the state's billion dollar deficit for '09, the committee hopes to realize about \$60,000 in new reimbursement for Medicaid expenses. The majority of the committee felt the remaining \$90,000 could be found in year end reconciliation of departmental spending.

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Banish Winter Fundraiser a Rollicking Success



ANJA SCHUTZ PHOTO

Leo Hwang-Carlos (bass), Lisa Davol (piano), and Emily Brewster (vocals) delivered a choice sampling of up tempo standards at the benefit bash.

BY LYN CLARK

TURNERS FALLS - On January 29th the *Montague Reporter's* board of directors asked its friends and supporters, "Will you Rendezvous with us?" And they did, in great numbers, a boisterous, happy and generous crowd that gathered in support of their nonprofit community newspaper at the Voo for an evening of fun and frivolity, music and theater.

First to be presented (following some delectable Rendezvous hors d'oeuvres) was a one-act play written and directed by our own irrepressible editor David Detmold, titled *The Phantom of the Strathmore*. It starred, with great energy, Court Dorsey, Suzy Polucci, Steven Snow Cobb, Rob Whitcomb and Meghan Green, and it dealt with the mysterious goings on at the

Strathmore Mill - which were rendered even more mysterious to the audience by play's end. It mixed comedy and creepiness, and had some great sound effects. If you missed this gem, MCTV will be providing a videotape rerun during the coming weeks,

we hope.

Next, tucked into the program, was a fundraising event for the skate park of a quite different nature, but every bit as hilarious. You've heard of the old, county fair activity of raising money by selling kisses (out of favor now in an age of germ-phobia), or dunking your least favorite school principal in a water tank by hitting the bull's-eye with a well-placed ball. In response to a recent challenge in the letters to the editor column calling for a good public spanking of Turners Falls Sk8 Park landlord Tim deChristopher for raising the rent on the skate park, deChristopher volunteered to get spanked, and dragged Detmold into the bargain with him, for a buck-a-whack. Who would have guessed how many people wanted the honor, or with

what verve the paddles were wielded - sometimes to cheers, sometimes to sympathetic groans as a particularly vigorous swing found its mark. Ouch. Our congratulations to both Tim and David for their good humor and sportsmanship. This event was a great crowd pleaser!

Next on stage: Lisa Davol on keyboard, Emily Brewster, singer, and their backup players: Leo Hwang-Carlos on bass and Steve Alves on guitar. First Emily, and then Lisa, sang me right back to when dancing was an activity done in sync with one's partner - more often than not cheek-to-cheek, with a fragrant camellia gently squashed between one's bosom and his tuxedo. Ah, don't wake me up, let me relish the moment! Who knew that such talent existed in those we already knew simply as friend or neighbor?

Following their set we were instantly transported to an Irish pub by Banish Misfortune, a group consisting of fiddles played by David Brule and Walter Carlip, mandolin and vocals by Sean Burke, concertina and vocals by Tim

Donahue, with Dave Meuser on guitar. At times rollicking, at others plaintive, with songs and tunes such as Road to Lisdoonvarna, Father Kelley's Reel, I'll Tell Me Ma, and Si Beag, Si Mhór, they conjured up visions of frothy Guinness, the green, green grass of Ireland's rolling hills that stretch to sheer cliffs above the Atlantic Ocean, and stepdancing freckled-faced lasses - visions far-removed from Turners Falls... yet, perhaps not. Many in Franklin County come by their Celtic roots and ancestral memories from across the pond in the land

who participated in providing a thoroughly entertaining and profitable evening: The Rendezvous for sponsoring the event, our board members - especially Jen Audley - who brought it all together, MCTV's Don Clegg, John Duda and Robin Mide for video recording, all the musicians and thespians for their magnanimous participation, and of greatest importance, our many dedicated readers and supporters who came and opened their wallets in support of local independent media.

There were others whom we

honor who, although not able to participate, nevertheless sent in sizable contributions to 58 Fourth Street in Turners Falls. As you hear on PBS, their (and our) continued viability is "... m a d e possible by contributions from viewers (substitute



Banish Misfortune will play at the Northampton Brewery on St. Patrick's Day. Catch them if you can!

of Eire. Banish Misfortune will play at the Northampton Brewery on St. Patrick's Day, if our readers want to catch up with them again.

Our heartfelt thanks go to all

'readers') like you." We hope that those of you who continue to enjoy the *Montague Reporter* will also contribute when able and moved to do so.

Zen Puppetry: 'Gentling the Bull'



Mik Muller videotape, Gentling the Bull; still courtesy of Robin Mide & MCTV

The hand of one puppet, clapping.

BY JEN AUDLEY

MONTAGUE CENTER - Karen Werner of Montague Center combines spiritual practice with puppet performances at the Zen Peacemakers' Maezumi Institute, just off West Chestnut Hill on Ripley Road.

A group of Zen students were watching a puppet show when suddenly the curtain fell, exposing the performers. One said, "Oh! There are people back there?" and a master replied, "That is enlightenment - when the curtain falls down."

"Then two kind audience

members lifted the curtain and held it up by hand for the remainder of the show," recalled Karen Werner of Montague Center, the organizer of a series of puppet shows based on the Zen parable "Gentling the Bull" being presented this winter and spring at the Institute's beautifully restored dairy barn, now a fully equipped conference center.

Werner has challenged herself to produce five versions of this classic, enigmatic story of a herder who goes into the wild, seeking, finding, and taming a bull before returning, transformed, to the world. She and an evolving crew of puppeteers and musicians will present the story using five

different styles of puppetry.

The first version, shown in January, employed hand puppets and featured Court Dorsey, Jiko McIntosh, Ike Eichenlaub, and Ari Pliskin.

The second version will be in a style called "crankie," which Werner described as "kind of a low-tech, moving scroll, where the scenery changes and the puppets can stand still." That performance, featuring Werner, Dorsey, Ike and Nancy Eichenlaub, and Clemens Breitschaft, with scenery by artist Sarah Bliss, will be presented at the Maezumi Institute's House of One People on Sunday, February 22nd at 1 p.m.

"Gentling the Bull" is a Zen parable that's "850 years old, at least, and it's a really neat story to spend time with," said Werner, who is a member of the Montague Farm Zendo and a student of its head teacher, Eve Marko. Ten carved-wood panels illustrating the tale adorn the entryway to the Zendo at the

Peacemakers' Ripley Road headquarters.

Werner explained that the earliest known versions of the story were Taoist, and had only eight scenes. They ended with the tamed bull vanishing.

In the twelfth century, the Zen master Kakuan extended the story by adding two more scenes, when he retold it in a series of ten paintings and poems.

The additional episodes - a panel Werner described as "the world re-emerges," followed by one in which "the herder goes to the marketplace" - make the story particularly potent for the Zen Peacemakers' organization, which emphasizes combining study and practice with social engagement.

Werner said the upcoming performance, which will be about ten minutes long, is suitable for all ages.

"It's not made specifically for children, but it's not inappropriate for them."

She welcomed anyone interested to attend.

"I'd love for people to come and see the show, and I'd love it if this could also be a way for people to get to check out the Maezumi Institute. There are so many things going on here - meditation classes, lectures, retreats, and workshops on topics ranging from 'Women, Power, and Spirituality' to 'Becoming a Mensch.' It would be great if coming to the puppet show helped people learn more about this fantastic place."

Watch version one on YouTube (search for "gentling the bull") or on MCTV, Channel 15, at frequent intervals over the next seven days (see page 10).

Version two will be presented next Sunday, February 22nd, at 1 p.m., at the Maezumi Institute, 177 Ripley Road, Montague.

Email Karen Werner at kwerner@montaguema.net or call 413-367-2858 for more information.

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Rocke Pitches Combined Technical and Academic Programs to Reduce Turners Falls High School's 19.9% Dropout Rate



Superintendent Kenneth Rocke

BY ELLEN BLANCHETTE GILL - MONTAGUE - Superintendent Kenneth Rocke introduced some bold new ideas to the school committee on Tuesday evening. At a time when the schools are feeling great pressure to tighten their budgets, Rocke suggested, rather than cutting educational programs, that growing the educational value of the school district through innovative programming would benefit the district financially and provide the greatest reward – an education that provides students with the skills they need to succeed in the 21st century.

In response to pressure from state officials advocating collaboration and super-regionalization to achieve cost savings for local districts, school committees and superintendents have been holding meetings and looking for ways to cooperate. This has inspired debate, and a rare opening for schools and districts to discover new ways to provide a range of educational opportunities for their students.

The centerpiece of Rocke's plan is the idea of allowing students to enhance their academic studies aimed at college preparation with technical programs that would allow students to graduate with a way to earn a living. Rocke, who once taught at the Franklin County Technical School, suggested it

would be wisest to offer this combined academic and technical approach to junior and senior high school students. Students at this point in their education may not yet know if they want to go on to college, but they need to be prepared to meet that opportunity. At the same time, they may feel, if they don't decide to go to college, the things they are studying have no relevance to their lives.

Rocke said much of the impetus for his proposal comes from the numbers recently released showing the GMRSD with a high school dropout rate of 19.9%, down slightly from last year's 22.9% figure but still double the state average. Turners Falls High School has the lowest 2008 graduation rate in Franklin County, at 64.7% of the students who entered the high school as freshmen in 2004.

In contrast, the Franklin County Technical School has the highest 2008 graduation rate in the county, 93%.

Rocke felt the success of the technical school could be brought to TFHS by integrating some technical programs, not necessarily the same technical courses offered at the nearby Tech School (he mentioned computer programming, early childhood ed training, and emergency medical technician training, as examples) into TFHS course offerings. This could be done by collaborating with other schools in the county to provide more opportunities to students than just one school alone could afford to offer.

Comparing this concept with the approach of using regionalization for cost savings, Rocke stated, "Collaborating to save tax dollars is a survival strategy. Collaborating to deliver better education – to graduate higher numbers of students, to better

prepare students for college and, for entry into the job market – is a growth strategy."

He expressed concern that the focus on meeting federal academic standards has narrowed the opportunities for students to explore a wider variety of career opportunities. In his presentation to the school committee he stated, "In each of our high schools there are students whose future careers will span the whole range of society's occupations: we have future doctors and lawyers and college professors, to be sure. But we also have engineers and artists, carpenters and nurses, accountants and performers and writers and plumbers and farmers. If we imagined the ideal high school, students could begin to follow their professional and career interests while still in high school, without forsaking rigorous academics."

In reflecting on the alarmingly high dropout rate at TFHS, Rocke said he was most concerned about the future of students who fail to graduate from high school. "The dropout rate is urgent," he said. There are students who leave the district to go to other public schools or go on to complete their education in private schools but, "What happens to the students who just drop out?" he asked. He emphasized that this is not the world of the past, where a student could quit high school and still go out and get a good-paying factory job. In today's economy, students need to have skills and training. That is what his collaborative program would aim to provide.

While there was no specific request for the school committee to approve them at this time, Rocke's ideas were met with a great deal of interest and enthusiasm.

"In rethinking high school education," Rocke stated, "we

can create schools where all students can be engaged, productive," and go on to lead successful lives. In spite of the national economic crisis, or perhaps because of it, Rocke said, "conditions have never been better for opportunities to improve education."

New Scholarships

Two new scholarships will be available to students, district treasurer Peter Roy-Clark reported to the GMRSD school committee this week. A donation of \$5,000 has been made in honor of Harriet Tidd, former librarian and town clerk for Gill and former vice-chair of the GMRSD school committee, to provide scholarships for students at TFHS. These scholarships will go to students from Gill who have been most active in community service, in government or in "helping people." The recipient does not have to be a top student academically, and financial need could be a factor.

A bequest of \$20,000 from Gertrude "Trudy" Pollard, a former principal of Sheffield School, will be held in trust as a scholarship fund. The interest from this fund, to be known as the "Leonard Pollard Family Music Scholarship Fund" is to be used to help students who want to major in music in college.

Preliminary Energy Audit

Siemens Building Technologies completed their preliminary energy audit of school buildings and presented the results to the school committee. Their audit shows a potential for a 17% reduction in energy costs for the district, looking at all the schools including Sheffield, TFHS and middle school, Hillcrest and Gill elementary. The audit was done at no charge to the district.

The next step, if the school committee decides to go forward, would be for Siemens to do a more detailed audit and develop a plan for implementing the recommendations.

If the committee approves the plan, Siemens would work as a general contractor on the project. Work would be done at no up-front cost to the district. Cost savings on energy are guaranteed to the district or they do not have to pay anything for the work done. Payment would be made through savings on energy costs. Siemens would work with the district to find investors for financing and help the school committee find the best deal.

The GMRSD has joined with 16 Franklin County towns, including Montague and Gill, and two other school districts to explore the possibility of using Siemens, contracted by the Franklin Regional Council of Governments to provide guaranteed performance contracts as the county's Energy Saving Company (ESCO). FRCOG will provide legal and technical support for the towns and districts that choose to go ahead with the energy-saving contracts.

Annual Chocolate Festival
Saturday, February 14th
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MCTV Afternoon/Evening Schedule 2/13 - 2/19

Visit www.montaguema.net for complete listing

Friday, February 13

2:30 p.m. The Katie Clarke Band
 4:30 p.m. Living Along The River
 6:30 p.m. MCTV Video Camp 2007
 7:00 p.m. GMRSD 2/10/09
 11:00 p.m. Memorial Day Parade & Ceremony 2008
Saturday, February 14
 2:30 p.m. Women Girls & HIV:Services
 3:00 p.m. UNpanel1
 5:00 p.m. Town Forum-Unity Park Hearing
 6:30 p.m. TWB Urinary incontinence
 7:30 p.m. Tiny Tim
 8:30 p.m. This is Montague Dec 06
 9:00 p.m. White House Chronicles: 1003 and 1004
 10:00 p.m. The Western Mass Democrat Thomas Merrigan
 11:00 p.m. The Rise and Fall of Lake Hitchcock
Sunday, February 15
 2:30 p.m. Common Man Cowbell

Prescription

3:30 p.m. Darker Image
 4:00 p.m. Discovery Center Birds of Prey.
 5:30 p.m. Carlos Anderson Gospel Choir Celebration
 7:00 p.m. Physician Focus Domestic Violence
 7:30 p.m. On The Ridge: Coyote Hunting
 8:00 p.m. Peoples Harvest1
 9:30 p.m. Physician Focus Young Athletes and Sports Injuries
 10:30 p.m. Poetry Music Jam for Montague Reporter from the Vou
Monday, February 16
 2:00 p.m. Recovery in The United States
 3:30 p.m. Reconciliation Ceremony
 4:00 p.m. Softball
 6:00 p.m. Red Cross Prevent Home Fires
 6:30 p.m. Refusal 15
 7:00 p.m. Select Board 2/9/09
 8:00 p.m. Carlos Anderson Gospel Choir Celebration

9:30 p.m. Common Man Denise Grendan
 10:30 p.m. Darker Image
 11:00 p.m. Denmark The View the Vision

Tuesday, February 17

3:30 p.m. TWB Sky Awareness
 4:30 p.m. Underground Railway Concert 07
 6:00 p.m. Women Girls & HIV:Role Models
 6:30 p.m. GMRSD Budget Meeting
 9:30 p.m. TWB Ergonomics
 10:30 p.m. Turkey Day Game 2008

Wednesday, February 18

2:00 p.m. Living in the Shadow of VT Yankee
 3:30 p.m. Keep Warm Keep Safe
 4:00 p.m. Journey to Wissatinnewag
 4:30 p.m. Independent Voices 46
 5:00 p.m. Into the Way of Peace
 6:00 p.m. Living Along The River
 8:00 p.m. Physician Focus

Domestic Violence

8:30 p.m. Preachin the Blues
 9:30 p.m. The Looming Crisis in Oil Depletion
 12:00 a.m. Encore Body Art #4
 12:31 a.m. Encore Body Art #10
Thursday, February 19
 2:30 p.m. Senses of Place Draw Down
 4:00 p.m. Power Canal
 4:30 p.m. Physician Focus Domestic Violence
 5:00 p.m. On With The Show
 5:30 p.m. On The Ridge: Coyote Hunting
 6:00 p.m. Naturalist Laurie Sanders
 7:00 p.m. Select Board 2/9/09
 8:00 p.m. Mik TV with Joe Landry pt1
 8:30 p.m. Franklin County Matters Community Based Banks
 10:00 p.m. Fate of the Stallion
 10:30 p.m. Carlos Anderson Gospel Choir Celebration

HIGHLIGHTS FROM THE ERVING POLICE LOG

Breaking and Entering at Laurel Lake Camp

Tuesday, 2/3
 9:45 a.m. Assisted Gill police with warrant arrest at a French King Highway address.
 1:48 p.m. Report of breaking and entering at a Laurel Lake Camp. Under investigation.
Wednesday, 2/4
 12:05 p.m. Report of domestic disturbance at a West High Street address. Verbal only, one subject left for the day.
 4:34 p.m. Arrested [redacted] for a default warrant.
Saturday, 2/7
 11:56 a.m. Citation issued to [redacted] for unlicensed operation of a motor vehicle.
 2:05 p.m. Assisted Gill police with an unwanted male subject at a Peterson Way address.
Sunday, 2/8
 9:24 a.m. Report of open doors at a Mountain Road residence. Checked same, all secure.
 5:15 p.m. Report of domestic disturbance at a Northfield Road address. Verbal only.
Monday, 2/9
 10:30 p.m. Report of an injured deer off of Route 2 in Erving Center. Found same, deer deceased.



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NOTES FROM THE WENDELL SELECTBOARD

Wendell Expects to Lose \$55,000 in State Aid

BY JOSH HEINEMANN - Some expected bad news first: At its February 4th meeting, town administrative coordinator Nancy Aldrich informed the Wendell selectboard the state will cut aid to the town by \$20,000 for the remainder of fiscal year 2009, and \$35,000 for the fiscal year that begins July 1st. PILOT money (Payment In Lieu Of Taxes) for state land in Wendell will, as usual, be adjusted (down) to reflect the state's ability to pay, regardless of the town's needs or the terms of the original PILOT agreement. Reimbursement for Wendell's tornado cleanup expenses has been reduced by the state several times, and so far the town has not seen any of it.

Searching for Sears Road

Treasurer Carolyn Manley opened the February 4th selectboard meeting with an unscheduled consultation about a Sears Road property the town sold at the September 20th auction of town-owned properties. Manley had researched town meeting minutes and found only one town meeting, in the mid-1980s, at which roads had been discontinued, and Sears Road was not listed among the roads discontinued at that meeting. Assessor Paul Sullivan found no "R" to indicate property off a town road on the card pertaining to the Sears Road property the town sold at auction.

The Department of Conservation and Recreation has two gates on the road, but they were put up to reduce vandalism, and people who own property beyond the gates can get keys. Sears Road is not maintained by the town, but that does not necessarily mean it has been discontinued, and if the people who bought the property are allowed to build on it, the town may be required to begin maintaining the road. The building inspector is unwilling to grant or deny a building permit for the property without more complete information.

Selectboard chair Ted Lewis recalled that in the 1960s the

town may have discontinued roads one at a time, but he did not think there were any documents to provide information on those decisions.

Selectboard member Christine Heard said it would be a good idea to check with town counsel, not only about the status of Sears Road, but also if the town is required to resume maintenance if a house is built with frontage on the road. Supplying counsel with the research Manley has done would save some attorney expense.

Changing subjects, Manley said the town quilt, stitched together with squares contributed by many residents to commemorate the town's 200th anniversary, which has been in storage for a number of years since, will finally be mounted in the town office building on February 14th.

Aldrich passed out a letter from the state to town police departments about the recent referendum that decriminalized possession of small amounts of marijuana. Charges can be dropped if a police officer arrests a suspect and, on being weighed, the marijuana turns out to be less than an ounce, and the charges can be filed later if the amount of marijuana turns out to be more than an ounce. She had already forwarded a copy of the letter to police chief Ed Chase.

Special Town Meeting

Selectboard members set Wednesday, February 25th as the date for a special town meeting, if both the town clerk and moderator are available. The warrant, which would have to be posted by February 11th, will include certifying \$234,000 in free cash and money to buy and install backup generators for town buildings. The highway garage has an old generator that served during the ice storm, but it is not terribly reliable. During the ice storm, vibration loosened the clamp that holds the pipe that directs exhaust outside, and the pipe fell off. The highway garage and fire station began to fill with

exhaust, unnoticed by fire chief Everett Ricketts who was working in his office, but caught by selectboard member Dan Keller when he came into the building from outside.

The construction accounts of the town office building and the library still have enough money to pay for generators in those buildings, so the warrant article will ask for money for generators for the town hall, the senior center, the highway garage and the well bulkhead, which is above ground and needs a small electric heater to keep any water that is above ground from freezing.

If approved by town meeting, the generators will run on propane, will self-test weekly, and will automatically disconnect their electricity from the grid (to avoid accidentally electrocuting linemen working on repairs during a power outage). They will be mounted outside their respective buildings. The draft warrant article calls for using pothole money to pay for the generators that cannot be paid for with construction account money.

Aldrich gave the board a draft resolution for inclusion in the annual town meeting warrant written by Union 28 Superintendent Joan Wickman, opposing the state Department of Education's push for super-regionalization of school districts, presumably to include moving Wendell and New Salem into a K-through-12 district with Orange and Petersham.

School Regionalization

The finance committee met with the selectboard to discuss the special town meeting warrant, and to go over the most recent information regarding school regionalization. Finance committee member Jim Slavas suggested including warrant articles to establish a medical insurance reserve fund and a pension reserve fund.

Finance committee member Michael Idoine said the Department of Elementary and Secondary Education would like

to move forward on super-regionalization, but they are running into opposition. Keller said they are getting resistance from other districts besides Union 28. Selectboard member Christine Heard said some of the cost savings super-regionalization proponents project are more like wishful thinking.

Slavas said that state representative Donelan pointed to Warwick Center School, which is now in a K-through-12 region with Pioneer High School yet has managed to maintain most of its unique town character. He also suggested sending emails to state representative Steve Kulik, and senator Rosenberg, stating that the continuing disparity in per pupil cost for Wendell students at Mahar High School, in comparison with other district towns, is not sustainable for Wendell. Changing Mahar school committee representation to reflect one person/one vote would increase the representation for Orange from 9 to 11, and leave Wendell, New Salem and Petersham with one representative apiece.

Heard made a formal motion to designate the board of health as the trench-permitting authority. Lewis said that would just add another fee to the cost of building a septic system, and he voted nay, but the motion passed.

Cemetery Bylaws

Richard Mackey, chair of the

cemetery commission, came in to check on board members' response to the proposed cemetery bylaws he had shown them previously. The bylaws are based on those of surrounding towns, but do not require a burial vault, allowing for 'green' burials. Copies of the proposed bylaws are going to the board of health, the planning board, and the highway commission, and Lewis said there should be a public hearing before the bylaws are brought up at a town meeting.

Mackey had received two estimates for cleanup of the center cemetery, one for \$850 a day for two days, and the other for \$1,000 a day for two days. The cemetery commission does not have enough money in an account to cover this expense.

Highway commission chair Harry Williston suggested that some of the cemetery cleanup might be included in a general townwide cleanup that may be performed by the Army Corps of Engineers after snow melts. Although hanging branches remain a threat, Mackey agreed that few people will be passing through the cemetery before snow melt. He thought the branches should be removed before Memorial Day.

Amid the prevailing budgetary gloom, Aldrich reported the Massachusetts Interlocal Insurance Association has awarded Wendell a dividend of \$36,000.

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NOTES FROM THE MONTAGUE SELECTBOARD

Prospect Bridge Replacement Coming Soon



The Prospect Street Bridge

BY DAVID DETMOLD - The Montague selectboard signed off on legal paperwork for three temporary and five permanent easements with landowners abutting the Prospect Street bridge in Turners Falls, to clear the way for Mass Highway to begin construction of a new bridge, to replace the graceful barrel vault structure which has been closed due to decay for over a decade.

The closing of the bridge has led to a serious bottleneck for the neighborhood on the east side of Prospect Street, where residents have had to use a one-lane Jersey barrier 'chute' to get in and out of Prospect Street ever since. The one-lane requires residents (and delivery vehicles) to head the wrong way against oncoming traffic heading up Unity Street, with poor sight lines, in order to enter the chute.

This has presented a serious problem for the one business located at that end of the street, Castine's Hair Creations, whose

customers have reportedly found it difficult to drive there, for the last ten years or more.

Once the old barrel vault is taken down and replaced with a new, rectilinear, \$3.35 million single concrete span on concrete abutments, residents will be able to travel Prospect Street continuously from 7th and L Street again, and the Jersey barrier chute will be dismantled. Some residents, including Precinct 5 town meeting member Chris Sawyer-Laucanno, say they would not mind if the town then blocked off the east end of Prospect Street to vehicular traffic, since it is too dangerous to use as an entrance or an exit under normal circumstances. "You can't tell whether anyone is approaching up 3rd Street," said Laucanno. "You would take your life in your hands, entering or exiting from that end of the street."

The new bridge will have a curb-to-curb width of 23 feet, with a six-foot sidewalk. The

project goes out to bid in March, and construction is expected to get underway this spring or summer.

Selectboard chair Allen Ross said, since the town is in need of new sources of revenue, "Maybe we could make it a toll bridge."

Board member Patricia Pruitt, who also lives on the east end of Prospect Street, said, "We've been very fortunate there have been no collisions there. A few people have gotten stuck in the chute during winter storms. People are very tired of it."

Despite the difficulty of the last ten or twelve years, since the old barrel vault bridge has been closed, many in the neighborhood will be sad when it is torn down.

"It's a gorgeous bridge," said Laucanno. "But I think the collective feeling on Prospect Street is we'll be very glad not to have to go through Suicide Alley anymore."

In other news, water pollution control facility supervisor Bob Trombley reported the retirement of lead operator Dale Andrews, who is leaving the WPCF after a total of 15 years of service. The board voted to extend the temporary employment of operator Michael Little for 30 days, while Trombley posts the opening.

But Trombley said he is not planning to replace the lead operator's position. Instead, he hopes to get all the plant workers, including the new hire, to get the training necessary to obtain operators' licenses. In the process, he plans to cut half a position.

Trombley said this plan for reorganizing the department came from a suggestion from the staff. At the staff's request, Trombley has already instituted a split shift scenario, where two workers come in from 6 a.m. - 2 p.m., and two come in from 7 a.m. - 3 p.m., working more efficiently and providing an extra hour of coverage. The staff has also reduced the stipended use of pagers from two to one, cutting \$6,000 out of the expense budget annually. With the reduction of a half a position, Trombley hopes to save \$19,000 more.

On another matter pertaining to waste handling, Ralph Kimball came before the board

to suggest the town cut down curbside recycling from once a week to twice a month, as a cost-saving measure. He said that up on the Hill, where he lives, many neighbors put no recycling out, while others put out half a bag, or half a bin.

"To me, there would be no bother if we kept our recyclables two weeks or three weeks, or brought the bins to the town dump ourselves."

The board thanked him for his suggestion and invited him back to a hearing on the subject of recycling and curbside trash pickup, which will be held on February 23rd, during the regular selectboard meeting.

HIGHLIGHTS FROM THE MONTAGUE POLICE LOG

Unwanted People and Assaults

Wednesday, 2/4

4:09 a.m. Officer initiated report of vandalism on Davis Street at Charron Street.

Thursday, 2/5

7:35 a.m. Report of vandalism at old Williams Garage location on Second Street.

Friday, 2/6

10:15 a.m. Report of hit and run accident at a Grand Avenue address. Investigated.

4:52 p.m. Report of domestic disturbance at an Oakman Street address. Services rendered.

5:46 p.m. Report of an unwanted person at a Fifth Street address. Services rendered.

8:38 p.m. Report of neighbor disturbance at a Fifth Street address. Services rendered.

10:06 p.m. Report of assault in the area of ExxonMobil, Third Street. Investigated.

Saturday, 2/7

2:52 p.m. Report of suspicious activity in the Third Street alleyway. Arrested

[Redacted] Charged with open and gross lewdness, subsequent offense and disorderly conduct.

11:49 a.m. Report of assault at Millers Pub, East Main Street. Investigated.

Sunday, 2/8

1:50 a.m. Following officer initiated investigation of a disabled motor vehicle. arrested [Redacted]

[Redacted] Charged with operating a motor vehicle while under the influence of liquor.

7:35 p.m. Report of an unwanted person at a Greenfield Road address. Advised of options.

8:04 p.m. Report of domestic disturbance at an Avenue A address. Investigated.

10:37 p.m. Report of an unwanted person at an H Street address. Arrested [Redacted]

[Redacted] Charged with assault and battery, domestic and threat to commit a crime.

Great Falls Middle School 2nd Quarter Honor Roll

Grade 8

First Honors

Meredith Brown
Katelyn Dodge
Shawn Englehardt
Jasmine Farr-Marcum
Emilee Felton
Nicholas Fisher
Troy Langknecht
Brandon Lenois
Timothy Meyer
Christian Sawicki
Dakota Smith-Porter

Second Honors

Katie Brunell
Summer Forest-Bulley
Lindsay Luippold
Connor Roberge
Abigail Rubin

Nala Vaughn
Kelsey Yolish
Brittany York

Third Honors

Wyatt Bourbeau
Breanna Breault
Cody Brunelle
Carolyn Campbell
Kelli Doel
Kayla Drumgoool
Sean Howard
Riley Howe
Cassandra Huppe
Mitarho Kelly
Bethany Laramie
Brendan LeDoyt
Brooke Martineau
Daniel McCormack
Andrew Peters

Rebecca Smith
Tyler Whipple

Grade 7

First Honors

Courtney Eugin
Chase Fuller
Jessica Fuller
Lauren Grimard
Emma Johnson
Ian Lang
Sophie Letcher
Heather McKenna
Katri Mizula
Morgan Ozdarski

Second Honors

Meghan Casey
Samuel Danford
Kaylannah Frost

Deonise Gheorghita
Meaghan Horan
Danielle Loynd
Jonathan Rawls
Hayley Westfall
Shelbi Williams

Third Honors

Shayna Aubrey
Daniel Costa
Ashleigh Lovett
Kolbe Martineau
Rayanne Mercure
Tyler Peters
Tyler Richardson
Nicholas Wells

Grade 6

First Honors
Trenton Bourbeau

Amber Caouette
Danielle Conant
Liam Ellis
Spencer Hubert
Emily Kells
Jacqueline MacConnell
Ian MacPhail
Mackenzie Salls
Gabrielle Santucci

Second Honors

Zachary Battistoni
Hayley Black
Kathryn Burek
William Carlton
Tyler Douglas
Alexander Fitzpatrick
Jessica Gaines
Teagan Glenn

Matteson Heath
Ken Leng
Alexandra Nicotra
Jasmine Richotte
Rachel Savinski
Nicholas York

Third Honors

Walter Botelho
Sara Bradley
Brandon Camara
Felicia Craver
Samantha Currier
Zachary Demars
Halle Harvey
Jade Linscott
Stephanie Robertson
Alaisiah Russell
Liam Theis
Zachary Wright

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THE HEALTHY GEEZER:

The Lowdown on Knee Replacements

JESSICA HARMON ILLUSTRATION

BY FRED CICETTI

LEONIA, NJ - Q. *I'm having a knee replaced and I was wondering what it's going to be like when I get home after surgery.*

More than nine out of ten patients who have a total knee replacement have positive results. They experience reduced pain and improved ability to perform common activities.

Within the first year after your operation, you should increase your endurance gradually. One of the key pitfalls is trying to do too much too soon.

You'll be given physical therapy exercises for at least two

months. These are designed to help you bend and extend your leg. In addition to your prescribed exercises, you can walk as much as you like. Stationary bicycles are recommended for muscle tone and flexibility.

Other acceptable activities after knee surgery include dancing, golf with spikeless shoes and a cart, and bicycling on flat ground. After the wound is healed, you can swim.

Don't do anything that puts stress on the knee such as racquet sports, football, baseball, basketball, and skiing. And don't lift anything heavier than 40 pounds.

Depending on the type of work - or play - you do, it could take six to eight weeks before you are back in action.

If your left knee was replaced and you have an automatic transmission, you may be able to

begin driving in a week. If your right knee was replaced, you shouldn't drive for six to eight weeks.

Your new knee will probably not set off metal detectors. However, carry a medic alert card indicating you have an artificial knee just in case.

Here's a list of modifications that can make your home easier to navigate during your recovery:

- Create a complete living space on one floor.
- Remove all loose carpets and electric cords.
- Rearrange furniture so you can maneuver with a walker or crutches.
- Install a shower chair, gripping bar, and toilet-seat riser in the bathroom.
- Use assistive devices like a long-handled shoehorn, a long-handled sponge, and a grabbing

tool to avoid bending too far.

• A stable chair with a firm seat cushion for your early recovery (18 to 20 inches high), a firm back, two arms, and a footstool for intermittent leg elevation

About 300,000 knee replacements are performed each year in the United States. Most patients who undergo total knee replacement are between the ages of 60 and 80. This surgery was first performed in 1968. There have been substantial improvements in technique and materials since then.

Some anatomy.

The knee, which is the largest joint in the body, is made up of the thighbone (femur), shin bone (tibia) and the kneecap (patella). Surfaces of this joint are covered with cartilage, a smooth substance that cushions the bones and enables them to move easily.

The lateral meniscus and medial meniscus are pads of cartilage that further cushion the joint, acting as shock absorbers between the bones.

In addition, surfaces of the knee are covered by a thin, smooth tissue liner called the synovial membrane. This membrane releases a special fluid that lubricates the knee, reducing friction to nearly zero in a healthy knee. Ligaments help to stabilize the knee.

A knee replacement takes about two hours. Your orthopaedic surgeon will remove the damaged cartilage and bone and then position the new metal and plastic joint surfaces to restore the alignment and function of your knee.

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

ROSS from pg 1

of the elementary school in his own village, Montague Center, as being in the best interest of the town and district, and suggesting Montague may no longer be able to afford branch libraries, among other services that find vocal supporters at budget hearings.

He worked against the move to re-assign the local cable television access contract to MCTV in his first term, but has come to be a proponent of that organization since. He traveled to Nashville, TN, at the invitation of the Narragansett Indian Tribes to attend a conference with the United Southern and Eastern Tribes where the possibility of making Montague a center for 'preservation tourism,' for Native American heritage was on the agenda. He backed and won an expansion of the Turners Falls Airport commission, to include representatives of broader constituencies, even if they live in other towns.

"It's not an easy job," said Ross, sitting down for an interview after a lengthy finance committee meeting and a short selectboard meeting on Monday night. "I found it challenging. Clearly

the issues we've had to face are frustrating, and go far beyond Montague to the national scene.

"You hear a lot about trickle down economics," added Ross, wryly. "It doesn't."

But on the plus side, Ross said, "The town is very fortunate to have dedicated people at town hall. It's a beautiful town, with a beautiful landscape and riverfront, as well as some of the best farmland in the world," which, by the way, he has been instrumental in helping to preserve.

"We have historic buildings in diverse villages, filled with a lot of creative people."

Ross said he has found the job of selectman to be "like an applied liberal education," involved with the technical, financial, environmental and personnel issues of local life, often all in the same evening.

One regret he did mention was the reduction of the already meager stipends given to selectboard members, who need to be prepared to work "at least 10 hours a week," to handle all the aspects of town governance that arise, a workload that seems to magnify each January until town meeting wraps up the budget season in

May. Or June. Or December.

"It's unfortunate, given the fact there's very little stipend, it's more likely to attract people who are independently wealthy, and not likely to attract the cross-section of leadership the town deserves. The reality is, it's people who are retired or don't need an income who could consider the job," Ross said.

Last year, in an effort to head off cuts to local services, town meeting trimmed back the stipends for the board of assessors and the selectboard.

In the past, selectboard members received \$3271, and the board chair received \$3561. Now, all three members receive

\$1000 per year.

Ross mentioned the possible redevelopment of the Strathmore Mill as one item on the town's agenda that could prove exciting for whomever comes along to take his place on the board.

"It's got incredible potential, based on a lot of hope, and at the same time very difficult. But should even parts of the project succeed, it would be very important," for the future of the town.

He encouraged anyone who might be interested in taking a crack at running for selectboard to attend some meetings, and talk to current members of the selectboard, and other town officials.

Town clerk Deb Bourbeau said nominating papers are available at her office for the three-year selectboard seat, along with

a number of other positions, from precinct town meeting representatives to town moderator to library trustees or health board.

For townwide office, the valid signatures of 32 registered Montague voters are needed to nominate a candidate. Nominating papers can be taken out until the 26th of March, and must be returned by the 30th of March.

Another avenue to elective town office runs through the Democratic Caucus, which will meet to nominate candidates on April 8th, at 7:00 p.m., at town hall (see page 7 for more info). As of this writing, no Republican town committee is known to be organized in the town of Montague, although spring is always the season of hope.

HIGHLIGHTS FROM THE GILL POLICE LOG
Default Warrant

Tuesday, 2/3
 9:45 a.m. Arrested [redacted], on a default warrant.

Thursday, 2/5
 8:31 p.m. Report of suspicious vehicle on Boyle Road, unable to locate.

Saturday, 2/7
 2:05 p.m. Family disturbance at a French King Highway residence, peace restored.

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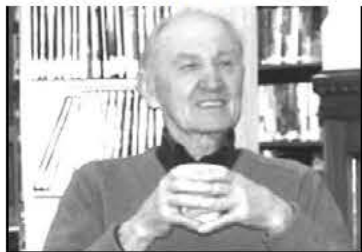
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JEP'S PLACE: Part CX

"The Land was Ruled by the Romans, who were Mighty but..."



...Wicked..."

BY JOSEPH A. PARZYCH GILL - The next year I transferred to a bigger school, where the seventh grade was now taught. My old classmates – including my tormentors – went

along. But there were kids from other schools there, too.

One of them, Hugo, joined in the abuse. Worst of all, the teacher who nearly flunked me was there to torment me all over again.

The bed wetting didn't start again, but I gnawed my nails to the quick, and my grades took a nosedive.

When the Christmas play began, I asked for a part.

"Are you sure you can learn it?"

"I always did before."

"I'll give you a part, but you better get busy and start memorizing it better than your

other work."

I really worked at memorizing the part, practicing it, over and over. There was one line that I sometimes got confused with a similar line. But I thought I had it down.

The night of the play, Pa decided to attend. With him in the audience watching and the teacher following every word I said, I got nervous and stopped reciting my lines about three quarters of the way through. I stopped dead. My mind went blank. There was utter silence in the room.

I was paralyzed, not sure of the next line. No words would come out of my mouth.

After an eternity, the teacher prompted me with a word. After

that, even though I knew the rest of the lines, I repeated her prompts, word by painful word, to the bitter end.

My father sat in embarrassment. I wanted to die.

No one said much on the way home. I rode with my head down.

The next Monday, the boys at school teased me about it. The gang from the previous school got together with the guys at the new school and started holding me down; spitting in my mouth.

Hugo, who weighed about twice what I did, stood a foot taller. He helped hold me down. I began hiding in the school building at recess and noon hour.

The teacher kept an eye on the playground from the window

and noticed me missing. She found me hiding in the basement and ordered me out to the playground.

"Don't be such a sissy. You've got to learn to fight your own battles."

The school and yard were on a small plateau with a farmer's field below. I strode out of the school and felt a rage building up inside.

A feeling of calm came over me. I was no longer in fear of the bullies. I felt a surge of power. Strength filled my mind and body. My muscles seemed to swell. I was determined to end their bullying by any means possible, once and for all.

— Continued Next Week

CARDIAC from page 3

sewing in six bypasses.

In recovery, my relatives all gathered. Only two at a time could visit. They'd come in for a while and announce they were leaving. "Goodbye," I'd say as they left.

After they had all seen me, the first two returned, only to soon announce they were leaving again, followed by two more arrivals.

"What am I playing here?" I asked my brother, Louis, "Whack a mole? This is the third time I said goodbye to you. Everyone says they're leaving and pretty soon they pop up again."

Louis said when he heard me say that, he knew I was going to be O.K.

The intensive care cardiac unit gave me excellent care. It was in a regular room I ran into trouble.

My first roommate had violent mood swings, from states of extreme happiness to fits of foul temper. "I have a constitutional right to lose my temper," he'd announce at the top of his lungs, and proceed to demonstrate his rights.

At midnight, I asked him if he didn't think it was time to quiet down and go to sleep. He threw such a tantrum that the nursing staff and security escorted him to

a single room.

Meanwhile, they had me sitting in a chair. When I pushed the call button to tell the nurse's aide I was going to throw up, she gave me a little tray. I erupted all over myself. I told her I needed a bigger container. She gave me one, but I overshot that, too. After the third eruption, I was soaked, sick and shivering. The smell wasn't that great, either. The aide repeatedly said she could not get me cleaned up and put to bed by herself.

My room was next door to the nurses station.

"What about getting one of those people I hear talking to help?"

"They are socializing. Is it against the law to socialize?"

"It might be, if a patient is being neglected."

"Well, you're just going to have to sit there."

"You think so?" I thought.

NOTICE OF HEARING
The Town of Erving board of selectmen will meet at 7:00 p.m. on Monday, February 23rd, 2009 at Town Hall, 12 East Main Street, Erving, MA to hold a public hearing on the application from Erving Properties, LLC d/b/a Tim's RV, requesting a Class 1 License to sell, buy and exchange Motor Vehicles, RVs, Trailer and Campers at 15 East Main Street, Erving.

I picked up the telephone and dialed 911, giving them the room number and the circumstance of the lack of available help, asking if they could spare someone to help me back into bed.

That got results in a hurry. The people socializing were able to tear themselves away to respond in a twinkling. The first thing that they did was to yank the telephone wire out of the jack and give me a lecture. "Don't you ever dare call 911 again!"

After the 911 call, response to the call button was prompt. I even got other nursing personnel coming in to view me. A pleasant technical assistant came in to praise me for my resourcefulness, stopping by to chat from time to time.

"I'm going to miss you," she said. "You make me laugh."

At Buckley, I lucked out. My roommate was a former associate editor of *Newsweek*. We both watched TV on a very limited basis, both liked to read, and we could carry on a conversation. Sadly, not many residents are able to, though I got to meet a number of them in my walks on all four floors.

The laundryroom operator twice asked me to read to her crew from *Jep's Place* at their morning meeting. They especially liked the gasoline washer story.

I guess doing a lot of walking enabled me to be discharged

from rehabilitation early, so I didn't have to use my break out plan. My physical therapy trainer said he'd never seen such a fast recovery.

When I got home, I discovered I had shingles. This is the second round of shingles. But I got antiviral medication at a cost of \$151 for a seven-day supply. The sticker shock was probably as effective as the medication.

I want to thank all the people who sent me cards and letters. I even got one from a *Montague Reporter* reader in Illinois.



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FRIDAY, FEBRUARY 13th
Great Falls Discovery Center Coffeehouse: *Shingle the Roof*, Tim Woodbridge, Jerry Devokatis, and Kate Spencer, 7 p.m. Donations appreciated, baked goods available, and the Great Falls Discovery Center is accessible. Door open at 6:30 pm

Rt. 63 Roadhouse, Millers Falls: *Dan Lawson Band* at 9:30 p.m. Back by popular demand! Check out: <http://cdbaby.com/cd/dan-lawson>.

Deja Brew, Wendell: *Blame It On Tina*, Wendell's fav's, Jen Spingla, Bob Rosser and of course Tina, 9-11 p.m.

At The Rendezvous, Turners Falls: *Night Train* with DJs Andujar, 12XU, and B-Coming (eclectic vinyl), free.

Fine Arts Center, UMASS Presents Tomáš Kubínek: *Certified Lunatic and Master of the Impossible*. A self-described fool, clown, visual poet, solo performance artist, multi-talented vaudevillian, and comic genius! At the Concert Hall at a special time for families: 7 p.m. Call 1-800-999-UMAS or www.fineartscenter.com/tickets.

SATURDAY, FEBRUARY 14th
American Heritage Chocolate Celebration at Historic Deerfield. Learn all about cacao, taste chocolates and make decorative Valentines. Adults \$14/\$5 youth, under 6 yrs. free.

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of homemade chocolate. Jewelry and wooden roses for sale and a teacup auction. Sponsored by Turners Falls Chapter, Order of the Eastern Star. 9 a.m. to 1 p.m.

Great Falls Discovery Center: Artists' Reception for photographer Tom Stratford. 1 to 3 p.m. View photos of local flora, fauna and landscapes.

Jazz at DiPaolo's, Turners Falls: special performance with NYC world class guitarist *Freddie Bryant*, 6:30-9:30.

Rt. 63 Roadhouse, Millers Falls: *Valentines Bash* with Dan Lawson Band 9:30 p.m. Plus free raffles/party favors and of course the "Good Food" Kitchen will be open...bring your heart, no matter what shape it is in....

Deja Brew, Wendell: *Acoustic Gluestick*. Playing 60's and 70's jam-grass with a "Garcia" influence, 9 to 11 p.m.

At The Rendezvous, Turners Falls: *Valentines Day Aphrodisiac Massacre Dance Party*, 9:30 p.m., free.

SATURDAY & SUNDAY, FEBRUARY 14th & 15th
Shea Theatre, Turners Falls: Ja'Duke Productions Presents *Willy Wonka*. 2/14 at 8 p.m. 2/15 at 2 p.m. Tix 413-863-2281, continues 2/20-2/22.

SUNDAY, FEBRUARY 15th
Free Films For The Frozen, Montague Bookmill, Montague Center: *Roman Holiday*. Written by Dalton Trumbo, directed by William Wyler, 1953. One of the black-listed Hollywood 10, Trumbo used his friend Ian McLellan Hunter as a front to write this. Though the luminous Audrey Hepburn was almost unknown, Gregory Peck insisted on putting her name above the title with his, knowing a star when he saw one. She won an Oscar for this, her first starring role. 7 p.m.

At The Rendezvous, Turners Falls: Family Dance, 4 to 7 p.m. Donations for charity.

TUESDAY, FEBRUARY 17th
Rt. 63 Roadhouse, Millers Falls: Texas Holdem League every week, 7:30 p.m.

WEDNESDAY, FEBRUARY 18TH
Mardi Gras Masquerade

Wear a costume of your choice to this festive bowling bash! Super Fun Bowling Club - noncompetitive bowling club open to all abilities and ages! 7:30 p.m., French King Entertainment Center, Erving. www.superfunbowling.com.

Deja Brew, Wendell: Knitting & Crafts Night, every Wednesday until summer from 7-10 p.m. Any skill level welcome!

At The Rendezvous, Turners Falls: QUIZNITE with Quizmaster Chad, 8 p.m.

THURSDAY, FEBRUARY 19TH
YouTube Video contest! Decide on your favorite Youtube video submission and we'll show them all over the big screen! At the Brick House, Turners Falls, 4 to 6 p.m.

Jazz at DiPaolo's, Turners Falls: *Disciples of Cool Duo* with Chris Bakriges, piano and Mike Caruk, trumpet, 6:30 - 9:30 p.m.

Free Film Series at Traprock Center for Peace & Justice, 24 Miles Street, Greenfield. Presented by the Peace & Social Justice Club of Greenfield Community College: *This Is What Democracy Looks Like*, a filmed account of the street protests against the World Trade Organization Summit in Seattle, Washington in 1999. Free refreshments too! 7 p.m.

At The Rendezvous, Turners Falls: Jim Olsen's Rendezvous Ramble, free.

FRIDAY, FEBRUARY 20th
Rt. 63 Roadhouse, Millers Falls: *The Instigators w/Sturgis Cunningham*, classic rock \$5 cover, 9:30 p.m.

February Vacation *Predator/Prey Tracking* for Families at Northfield Mountain Recreation & Environmental Center, 1 - 4 p.m. Ages 8 and older, \$6/person, \$11/snowshoe rentals. Registration required (800) 859-2960.

SATURDAY, FEBRUARY 21st
4th Annual Mardi Gras celebration at All Souls UU Church, Greenfield. Doors open at 5:30, jazz pianist Bob Cummings, a full Cajun meal of Jambalaya or Vegetarian Gumbo, wine & beer, children's activities; costume

contest; crowning of the King (WRSI's Monte Belmonte), auctions. Rocking Cajun Dance party with the *Magnolia Cajun Band*. Instruction 9 - 9:30, dance till 11 p.m. (Snow date 2/22, 3 - 5 p.m.) (413) 773-5018 or www.uugreenfield.org. \$15 Adults (\$17 at door); \$5 children 12 and under. \$10 for just the dance. RSVP for dinner: (413) 773-5018 or administrator@uugreenfield.org.

SUNDAY, FEBRUARY 22nd
Montague Grange, Montague Center: Family-style contra dancing with caller Tim Van Egmond and live music from traditional contradance band *Shingle the Roof*, 4 to 6 p.m. Simple contras, circle dances, and singing games with easy instruction. \$4 or \$10-15/family. Info (413) 367-9608 or www.montague-ma.net/montague_grange.

Free Films For The Frozen, Montague Bookmill, Montague Center: *Coal Miner's Daughter*. Written by Tom Rickman, directed by Michael Apted, 1980. Sissy Spacek won the Oscar for her magnificent and adorable portrayal of Loretta Lynn. 7 p.m.

Deja Brew, Wendell: *A Night of Spoken Word*. Deborah Poe, Joel Sloman & Chris Janke. Open mic at 7 p.m. Featured poets at 8:30 p.m.

TUESDAY, FEBRUARY 24th
Film series, *Movements for Self-Determination*, hosted by Undergrowth Farm: *Gaza Strip*. At The Brick House, 7 p.m. free. A poignant and timely documentary film on the Israeli occupation of Palestine. With Lana Habash, of the New England Committee to Defend Palestine and Qawem Coalition, providing historical context and answering questions. Filmed in 2001, *Gaza Strip* pushes the viewer headlong into the tumult of the Israeli-occupied Gaza, examining the lives and views of ordinary Palestinians, especially those most affected by the violence: children.

SATURDAY, FEBRUARY 28th
Chili Cookoff! Come to taste some of the best chili in Gill and maybe even be a judge. The Friends of Gill are looking for Gill residents who would like to enter the contest. Held at the Gill Congregational Church. Call Bill Burnham, 863-2970. The chili tasting is open to the public, \$5, 6 p.m.

THROUGH FEBRUARY
On display in the Great Hall of the Great Falls Discovery Center: Landscapes and Nature Photography exhibit by Thomas L. Stratford. Hours are Fridays and Saturdays, 10 to 4 p.m. www.greatfallsma.org.

FRIDAY, MARCH 6th
Poet's Seat Poetry Contest deadline! Adult and Young Poet (ages 12 to 18) categories. Submit up to three of your poems. Send entries to Greenfield Public Library, Greenfield.

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

THROUGH MARCH 29th
Hallmark Museum of Contemporary Photography: New Orleans photographer Josephine Sacabo, featured in Gallery 56, displays work from three distinct projects on exhibit: "A Geometry of Echoes," "The Nocturnes," and "El Mundo Inalcanzable De Susana San Juan."

Also on display work by Susan Bozic: *The Dating Portfolio* in Gallery 56. Regular museum hours: Thurs-Sun, 1 to 5 p.m.

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FRI, SAT, SUN 12:00 2:00 4:00
- HOTEL FOR DOGS PG**
MATINEE 12:00 2:00 4:00
- MILK R**
DAILY 6:30 9:20
- PINK PANTHER 2 PG**
DAILY 6:40 9:20
MATINEE 12:15 2:15 4:15
- TAKEN PG13**
DAILY 6:40 9:20
MATINEE 12:15 2:15 4:15
- HE'S JUST NOT THAT INTO YOU PG13** in DTS sound
DAILY 7:00 9:30
MATINEE 12:30 3:30
- SLUMDOG MILLIONAIRE R**
DAILY 7:00 9:30 in DTS sound
MATINEE 12:30 3:30

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MARY AZARIAN WOODBLOCK

BY LESLIE BROWN

MONTAGUE CITY - By my count, I've already shoveled forty inches of snow this winter. More than enough. I'm tired of putting on my snowshoes to bring in stove wood or even just to make the trek to the compost bin. I want to sink my hands into the dirt.

So I'm eagerly awaiting the arrival of my seed order, hoping to bring spring along by starting my early plants.

The general rule of thumb is to start your plants six to eight weeks before planting time. Here by the river, that means starting cold crops any time now. I've ordered onion, leek, spinach and lettuce seed, all of which can be planted in the garden as soon as the soil can be worked. Other cold crops like root vegetables are best started

as seed in the cold ground of the garden. Carrots, parsnips, beets, radish and the like do not appreciate being disturbed by transplanting.

Once the small, dry seeds - that honestly look like nothing that will ever grow, let alone produce food - arrive, I will need only some flat growing trays, a bag of sterile seed starting mix, and a bottle of liquid fertilizer.

Starter mix is lightened with perlite or sphagnum moss to provide a root-friendly growing medium. While it does little to nourish the emerging seed, it encourages vigorous root development, while at the same time holding water.

Once your seedlings are showing leaves, you should thin them out about an inch around each little plant, and start them on a bi-weekly diet of well-diluted food, like seaweed or fish emulsion.

Your emerging seedlings will need warmth, sun and steady levels of moisture. I like to use a warming mat under the seed trays to keep the soil tepid, but you can also put your trays on

top of the refrigerator or on a warm windowsill until the plants emerge. Until the seeds germinate, you can help to keep soil moisture steady by covering the trays with clear plastic overnight and then removing it in the daytime.

There is a delicate balance, when starting seeds and tender young plants, between keeping them moist and allowing them to get too wet, which encourages "damping off". More plants are lost to over-watering than not, so if you forget to water now and then, you needn't worry.

Tender plants like flowers and heat loving plants like tomatoes, squash and peppers should not be started yet, as it won't be safe to put them out until late May or early June.

There was a crush of folks all looking hungrily for local organic produce at the Winter Fare Farmers Market held last Saturday at the Greenfield High School. Truth be told, by the time I got there an hour and a half before closing time, the root vegetables and fresh greens were pretty well picked over, but I did see a large, mouth-watering display of one of the

simplest and most delicious winter crops we can all grow in our own homes.

Sprouted seed like clover, alfalfa, mung or soy beans and radish make a high protein addition to salads, stir fry and sandwiches. Growing your own sprouts is quick and easy and makes a wonderful project to introduce young children to the joys of gardening and eating your own fresh foods. Be sure to purchase seed labeled for sprouting, which can be found at health food stores or through the garden catalogs.

In addition to the untreated seed, you will need only a large mason jar and a perforated cover. You can make your own with fine wire mesh or a perforated metal lid, or you can buy plastic screw tops calibrated for large or small seeds. Place a few tablespoons of small seed like clover or radish or a half-cup of larger seeds like soy or mung bean in a well-cleaned jar. Rinse with cool water and drain. Fill the jar with twice as much lukewarm water as the amount of seed and soak overnight. Drain and rinse thoroughly again. Lay the jar on its side and put in a dark place. Rinse the seeds

daily until they sprout, and then green them up in a sunny window.

These crispy treats are a great source of protein and vitamins. Store them in plastic bags in your refrigerator to keep them fresh. It's best to grow small amounts and use them right away, as these plants are fragile and will brown up quickly.

I'm grateful for this day of thawing, for the chance to chop the ice from the driveway, dry my sheets on the clothesline in the frisky breeze, and for the leisure to chat with the chickadees as they swoop, first up, then down to the bird feeder. Groundhog predictions notwithstanding, spring is on the way.



Preparing seeds to soak overnight in warm water



KAREN WILKINSON ILLUSTRATION

BY NEIL SERVEN

GREENFIELD - The inauguration of President Barack Obama on January 20th will be remembered for many reasons, but for those interested in language, no part of the day's solemnities may have been more compelling than the administration of the oath of office by Chief Justice John Roberts.

As you have probably seen or read by now, Roberts, in his first administration of the oath since becoming Chief Justice, changed around some of the wording, sprinkling a dash of confusion into the proceedings.

Here's how the oath is worded in the Constitution [Article 2, Section 1, Clause 8]:

"I do solemnly swear [or affirm] that I

will faithfully execute the office of President of the United States and will to the best of my ability preserve, protect, and defend the Constitution of the United States."

When Roberts first stated the oath, he switched the adverb "faithfully" from its prescribed position before the verb "execute" to a new position in the sentence, following "United States." When Obama recited the oath back to Roberts, he moved "faithfully" back to its correct place. Some commentators called it a case of nerves on the part of the chief justice; others, a full-blown conspiracy intended either to embarrass the new president or perhaps render his inauguration technically void. (To keep things copacetic, Roberts and Obama had a do-over the following day.)

The episode provided an interesting lesson about the functionality of adverbs in the English language, and specifically, their interchangeability. If you took the sentence "The boy ran to school" and wanted to insert the adverb "quickly," you would have no fewer than four choices for where to put it without altering the basic meaning of the sentence:

Quickly the boy ran to school.

The Rogue Editor

Parsing the Oath of Office

The boy quickly ran to school.

The boy ran quickly to school.

The boy ran to school quickly.

Similarly, when the founding fathers wrote the oath, they had three choices for where to insert the adverb "faithfully" around the clause, "I will execute the office of President of the United States": before "execute" (as the Constitution dictates); after "execute"; and at the end of the clause (as Roberts tried to do).

The linguist Steven Pinker (author of *The Language Instinct*, among other works) provided his own theory behind Roberts' flub in a January 22nd op-ed in the *New York Times*. Pinker conjectured that Roberts was letting his internal editor get in the way, taking pains to avoid the phrasing "will faithfully execute" because it contains a split verb. (Roberts, incidentally, while regarded as a strict textual interpreter of the Constitution, is also known as a stickler for proper grammar.)

The injunction against split verbs is probably an accessory to the more frequently cited injunction against split infinitives. You were likely taught in grade school to avoid constructions like, "She tried to quickly hide the note," in favor of,

"She tried to hide the note quickly." But there is nothing semantically wrong with a split infinitive. Early objection to it arose from grouches who wanted English to adhere closely to the rules of Latin, a language in which split infinitives are impossible, because infinitives in Latin are single words, such as *amare*, "to love." We run into them all the time anyway; the most famous example is in the prologue to *Star Trek*, ("to boldly go where no man has gone before").

In Roberts' case, he was not avoiding a split infinitive, but rather the separation of a verb ("execute") from its auxiliary ("will"). What makes the choice curious is the fact that the oath of office contains two other similar split-verb constructions that Roberts did not alter: "do solemnly swear" and "will to the best of my ability preserve, protect, and defend" (with "to the best of my ability" serving as an adverbial phrase). Of course, it's also possible that Roberts wasn't mentally correcting anything at all, and simply misremembered his lines - not unusual for an actor on opening night.

Neil Serven is an Associate Editor for Merriam-Webster.

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