



WINTERFARE
Localvores Dig In
Page 16



OWEN CLARKE
Benefit Concert at Pioneer
Page 3

LAKE PLEASANT MILLERS FALLS MONTAGUE CENTER MONTAGUE CITY TURNERS FALLS

The Montague Reporter

YEAR 6 - NO. 19

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THE VOICE OF THE VILLAGES

FEBRUARY 14, 2008

Gill Store May Reopen with Restaurant Focus

BY DAVID DETMOLD -

Owners Alden Booth and Lissa Greenough closed down the Gill Store last year toward the end of July, frustrated by endless detours during the reconstruction of Main Road that interrupted traffic to the Center of Gill from the north and south. With the loss of the only commercial establishment in the center of town - the place where for decades people had greeted one another and exchanged the news of the day as they bought newspaper, coffee, or necessary groceries - locals were left feeling a void had opened in the middle of their community.

Now, with the extensive Main Road reconstruction project more or less complete, Booth and Greenough are considering reopening the Gill Store, and have asked the zoning board of appeals to allow them to expand the restaurant section of the store. The ZBA will hold a hearing on that

see STORE pg 11



DETMOLD PHOTO

“Neither rain, nor snow, nor sleet, nor hail shall keep the postmen from their appointed rounds.”

Wednesday's weather gave Franklin County postal workers the full workout. With a foot of slush floating on the Avenue at noon, Christine Bates and her daughter, Rhiannon Carlton, navigated the ice floes to the Turners Falls post office, as Glenn Brown (right) sets off on his downtown route.

Montague Estimates \$1.5 Million Budget Shortfall for Fiscal '09

BY DAVID DETMOLD - “At this point, the picture does not look pretty. We are looking at a shortfall of one and a half million dollars,” said Montague finance committee chair John Hanold this week. Welcome to the Fiscal '09 budget process.

Reached at home on a slushy, sleety day, Hanold spoke of the challenges ahead, as the budget making cycle ramps up over the next few months for the town and for the Gill-Montague schools. The Gill Montague Regional School District (GMRSD) recently approved a pre-

ed in this year's school budget, coupled with the nearly \$600,000 increase in town operating expenses, Hanold said the schools could anticipate an increase in revenue (exclusive of town assessments) of merely two tenths of one percent, or \$17,000, according to an initial calculation performed by town accountant Carolyn Olsen. On the town side, in most years, new growth and property tax increases under the Proposition 2½ levy limit generally equal about \$300,000 in new revenue, Hanold said.

What's more, “The

5-YR BUDGET STUDY DRAWS SINGLE BID - PG. 7

liminary '09 operating budget of \$17,068,078, a 5.5% increase over last year's \$16,180,901 school budget. On the town side, the finance committee is looking at an estimated 8.7% budget increase for '09, up from last year's approximately \$6.5 million town operating budget, to more than \$7 million this year.

To offset the nearly \$900,000 increase expect-

work we have done so far does not include any cost of living increases for town employees, since we are in negotiations with all three employee unions now.”

Town accountant Carolyn Olsen made the provisional estimate of Montague's FY '09 budget shortfall for the town - school fiscal collaboration meeting on February 7th.

see BUDGET pg 10

Tavern Culture Comes To Life at the Erving Public Library

BY BRAD PETERS

ERVING - Nearly 20 guests went back in time to visit colonial-era taverns at the Erving Public Library Friday evening, February 8th. Innkeeper Kim Gregory and his “serving wench” Carol Gregory brought tavern culture to life with an hour of storytelling by the Innkeeper, and the opportunity to tell and hear more stories while enjoying a special drink of the era, “spirited or unspirited.”

In period tavern dress, the Gregorlys of Erving taught and entertained their guests. Kim Gregory is a scholar of Early American history and works as a regular re-enactor for Historic Deerfield. They have presented this program for 15 years throughout New England, and as far away as the Arlington, VA Historical Society. Kim Gregory researches local tavern history and culture for the location of each presentation.

Our Innkeeper related facts and stories about taverns in Erving and surrounding towns. “There were many taverns here in Erving, with one being at Grout's Corner, later renamed Millers Falls. In addition to keeping a tavern,

Martin Grout built sewing machines, and the family even built automobiles - the Grout Car.”

Innkeeper Gregory described another tavern contributing to the culture and politics of Erving. “The first ‘public house’ in Erving was established by Alfred and Caleb Alvord in Erving Center, on the lot that became the Country Store. It is recorded that the first meeting of freeholders in Erving was held at Alvord's Tavern on March 14th, 1816.

“Elisha Alexander came from Sunderland and took over the Alvord Tavern and renamed it Alexander Tavern,” said Gregory. “Taverns in Ervingside were: Gunn's, Kinsley's, Severance's, Taft's (later Durkee's) and Martin Root's Tavern. The Root's Tavern signboard, dated 1785, is now hanging in Old Deerfield Memorial Hall

see TAVERN pg 3

Innkeeper Kim Gregory and his serving wench, Carol Gregory in costume presenting an evening of Historic Tippling at the Erving Public Library



JAN ROSS PHOTO

PET OF THE WEEK

Dixie Bird Dog



Edward

My name is Edward, and I'm a 1½-year-old bird dog in need of a good home. I'm a clever boy, and I have been working on a genius plan to get myself a family. First, I plan on looking handsome and charming people into noticing me. (Sometimes I whine when another dog is getting attention — I know I should play it cool, but I really just love attention!) Next, when someone comes to visit me, I will invite them to play, and I will astound them with my athletic prowess and graceful moves. I am a Dixie Dog! For more information on adopting me please contact the Dakin Pioneer Valley Humane Society at 413-548-9898 or via email leverett@dphvs.org.

Great Falls Middle School Students of the Week

Grade 6
Kathryn Austin
Meghan Casey
Grade 7
Nate Cross
Grade 8
Sam Letcher
Haley Ozdarski



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MONTAGUE LIBRARY NEWS

Animal Tracking and Skulls

BY LINDA HICKMAN
MONTAGUE CENTER - An animal tracking and skull identification program for families will begin at the Montague Center Library on Sunday, February 17th, at 10 a.m. After a brief introduction and looking at 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 and youth of all ages and their families are invited to the free program. For more information, please call the Carnegie Library, 863-3214.

Knights and Princesses

TURNERS FALLS - A special school vacation program, Knights and Princesses, will be held at the Carnegie Library on Wednesday, February 20th, at 2 p.m. Children of all ages are invited to pretend to be knights and princesses. Costumes are encouraged, but not necessary.

Activities will include decorating shields and crowns and making princess hats. Craft materials and refreshments will be provided.

For more information, contact the Carnegie Library, 201 Ave. A, Turners Falls, 413-863-3214.

ERVING LIBRARY NEWS

Something to Curl Up With

The Erving Library will hold a used **Book Sale** on Saturday, February 23rd from 9:00 a.m. to 12:00 noon.

Are you looking for something to curl up with when those March winds start to blow? Or, maybe you're already thinking ahead for some great beach reads - you know, the kind you don't have to worry about if you

get a little sand or SPF 40 on them? It's time for us to make room for new materials, and you'll benefit by picking up some really great videos, audios and adult and children's books at bargain prices. The sale will also continue during the following weeks at the library, so stop in and pick up something new for spring and summer.

Friends of the Senior Center Seeks Members

The Friends of the Gill-Montague Senior Center is seeking new members. The purpose of this group is to raise funds for the Senior Center. This is a vital and necessary group in the operation of the Center. The annual Senior Center Christmas Bazaar, organized by the Friends, is the major fundraiser for the Center, and nets between fifteen hundred to two thousand dollars annually, and most of the proceeds are used to augment

the towns' budget to covering the Center's operational expenses. In recent years, the Friends have helped the Center purchase a new copier, kitchen stove, kitchen equipment and dining tables, along with many of the consumable supplies used at the Center. Meetings of the Friends are held at the Gill-Montague Senior Center, 62 Fifth Street in Turners Falls on the second Wednesday of each month, at 11:15 a.m.

SENIOR CENTER ACTIVITIES -- February 18th - 22th

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

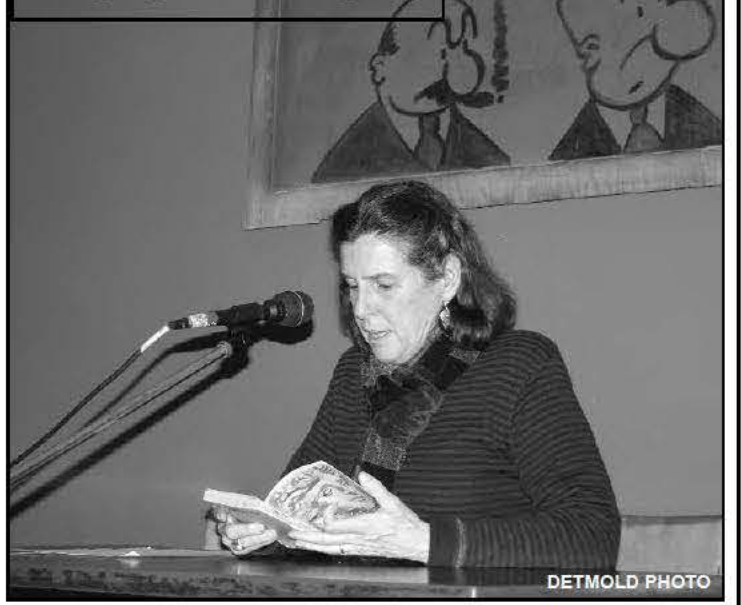
Monday, 18th
Closed for President's Day
Tuesday, 19th
9-2:30 p.m. AARP tax prep
Wednesday, 20th
10 a.m. Senior Aerobics
12:45 p.m. Bingo
Thursday, 21st
1:00 p.m. Pitch
Friday, 22nd

10 a.m. Senior Aerobics
11 a.m. Easy Aerobics

ERVING Senior Center, 18 Pleasant St., Erving (Old Center School, 1st Floor), is open Monday through Thursday from 9 a.m. to 2 p.m. for activities and congregate meals. For information and reservations call Polly Kiely, Senior Center director at 413 423-3308. Lunch daily at 11:30 a.m. with reservations a day in advance by 11:00 a.m. Transportation can be provided for meals, Thursday shopping, or medical necessity by calling Dana Moore at 413-422-2584.

Monday, 18th
9:30 a.m. Exercise
9:45 a.m. Library
12 Noon Pitch
Tuesday, 19th
9 a.m. Aerobics
12:30 p.m. Painting
Wednesday, 20th
9:00 a.m. Line Dancing
10 a.m. Weight Loss Group
12 Noon Bingo

FACES & PLACES



Patricia Pruitt at the *Montague Reporter* Love Poetry Reading at the Rendezvous, Tuesday night in Turners Falls. She read the following lyric by Sappho, as translated by Willis Barnstone:

Seizure

To me that man equals a god as he sits before you and listens closely to your sweet voice and lovely laughter — which troubles the heart in my ribs. For now as I look at you my voice fails, my tongue is broken and thin fire runs like a thief through my body. My eyes are dead to light, my ears pound, and sweat pours down over me. I shudder, I am paler than grass, and am intimate with dying — but I must suffer everything, being poor.

PRESIDENTS DAY

Town offices in Gill will be closed Monday, February 18th, in observance of Presidents Day. The select-board will meet on Tuesday, February 19th, at 5 p.m. Trash pickup will remain on Friday as usual.

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JOE GRAVELINE

Benefit for Owen Clarke

BY JOE KWIECINSKI

NORTHFIELD - They remember the late Owen Clarke in this town. The memories of his all-too-short life are deeply etched in the minds of his family, classmates and fellow students at Pioneer Valley Regional High School. And his memory will be kept alive at a benefit concert and art auction at the school Saturday, February 23rd, starting at 5 p.m.

"Owen loved life," said Steve Cahill of Turners Falls, who is helping spread the word about the memorial for his cousin. "Owen suffered from autism, but he led an active life. He loved the outdoors: riding his bicycle, walking in the woods, and going swimming. He also ran cross-country and loved to dance. And I've never seen anyone climb a tree as fast as he could."

At age 18, Owen underwent a seizure in his bathtub almost a year ago, in early March. The young man suffered severe brain damage and nearly drowned before being taken to Bay State

Medical Center where he died. When Owen was waked at the Kostanski Funeral Home, there was a non-stop line. "It was a massive outpouring of love," recalled Cahill. "All of Pioneer Regional High School was there."

Jed Clarke of Northfield, Owen's father, is the event's organizer. His nephew, Steve Cahill, is helping out however he can. Cahill said, "All proceeds will benefit the Owen Clarke Memorial Scholarship Fund for Pioneer Valley Regional High School students. We had a golf tournament last summer at Northfield Country Club as a fundraiser to benefit the scholarship fund. We want to make the tournament and the concert annual events."

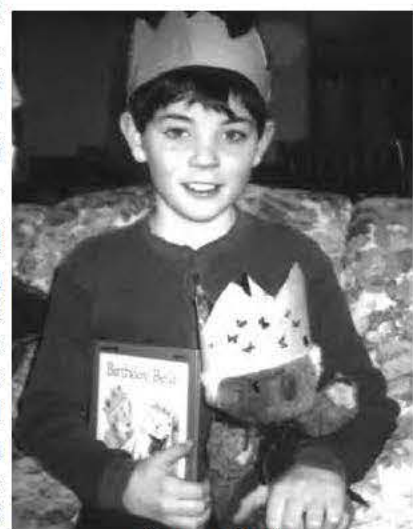
The concert and auction get underway with an art show and silent auction at 5 p.m. Attendees can signify their bids by listing them on a piece of paper hanging with all donated art work. The highest bidders will be

announced at 9 p.m.

The paintings are donated by family members of Owen: his father Jed, along with cousins John Clarke, Steve Cahill, and Katie Clark. Owen's mother, Janice Herlihey, has donated some of her late son's own paintings to the auction. "He was a good sketch artist," said Cahill, "and Owen also did amazing silly-putty sculptures." Also contributing art work is the talented Kerry Kazokas, a friend of the family who is an outstanding artist, well-known throughout the community.

The concert begins at 7 p.m. with a 45-minute appearance by the Move, billed as "Worcester's finest teen rock band." At 8 p.m., the Galloway and Kelliher Blues Band of Orlando, FL takes center stage for an approximately two and a half hour concert. This group is a national act featuring Tumbleweed & Friends, with guitarist Mark Emerick of Commander Cody, who has also played with the Greg Allman and

Marshall Tucker bands. Also featured is singer-songwriter Jed Clarke, Owen's father, who traveled with Tumbleweed in the 1970s around the East Coast and still plays gigs with the ensemble as its front man.



Owen Clarke

In addition, John Roberts of Simsbury, CT and John Clarke will play in the background at the opening of the art exhibit.

Cahill, who has devoted a lot of effort to pulling the benefit together, is known through Turners Falls as an extraordinary chimney builder and a self-employed brick mason. Cahill served a five-year apprenticeship in Uxbridge. When he isn't working as a mason, he expresses his artistic side, or sometimes combines the two, as when he built

the public brick sculpture in front of the Hallmark Museum of Photography on Avenue A. Cahill has also had numerous showings of his paintings in town.

"I've done some form of sculpture or painting for most of my life," mused Cahill, seated beneath one of his wall-length paintings at the Avenue A Cafe. "I try to mix my masonry work with the creative stuff." For example, Steve built a dry-laid stone wall, a mix of masonry and ornate art, in Leyden last summer.

Just now, next Saturday's benefit concert and art auction for Owen Clarke are uppermost in Cahill's thoughts. "A lot of people in the community are rallying in a common cause," said Steve.

TAVERN from pg 1

Museum."

Kim Gregory noted that prior to the American Revolution laws were established requiring each newly settled colony to have a tavern. This was usually a room in a large home in town, and primarily the kitchen. The innkeeper made his own beer. The first beers were made from the pumpkins growing abundantly in the area, due to their quick fermentation quality.

Innkeeper Gregory described the vital role played by taverns in our nation's history. "Since every town was required to have a tavern, it became the meeting place for community gatherings. It also provided the primary means of communication among the local residents and for strangers arriving in town. Any person traveling to or through a region would stop at a tavern to obtain information about the area. A



JAN ROSS PHOTO

Tavern guests Camilla Thatcher and Elaine Stafford served by tavern wench Carol Gregory

stranger also would bring news from where he came. Almost everything communicated in those times was by word of mouth, and a little bit of beer helped the stories to spill out at the taverns."

Colonial taverns made significant contributions to

American history. "The Green Dragon in Boston was described by some as the birthplace of America. More work was done by the Founding Fathers in Philadelphia's 122 licensed taverns than in Independence Hall." Gregory also noted that Deerfield Academy was founded in Barnard Tavern in Deerfield, in the second floor hall in 1795.

Innkeeper Kim Gregory, mingled among his guests after the presentation to answer questions and delight them with more stories as they imbibed the 'special recipe' made by serving wench Carol Gregory.

The program was made possible by a grant from the Erving Cultural Council, a local agency supported by the Massachusetts Cultural Council, a state agency.



Crazy Hair and Hat Night at Gill Elementary

BY ERICKA ALMEIDA - Gill Elementary students are still talking about last Friday night's Crazy Hair & Hats Family Dance. It was a family fun event sponsored by the Gill PTO. From blue hair to wigs and the silliest of hats, the Gill folks really took the theme to heart... or head in this case.

More than 60 families attended the dance held at the elementary school. The theme, which is chosen annually by the 6th grade class, is sort of a rite of passage for them. Sixth grade teacher Joanne Rabideau, along with parent volunteers and students, transformed the school's all purpose room into a boogie emporium.

Music and entertainment were provided by disc jockey Bobby C of WHAI fame. He kept things moving, teaching the families everything from

the Electric Slide to the Chicken Dance. At one point the conga line consisted of almost every attendee, including principal William McDonald who could not be missed wearing his super sized sombrero.

"This is great. The kids are having fun, the parents are having fun, and look at the turnout!" said Kim Sprankle, whose daughters attend the school.

The Gill PTO's next big family fun event - to which the public is invited - will be the annual Gill Elementary Carnival, held in May.



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Is it Time for a Community Land Trust in Montague?

After years of redevelopment efforts in Turners Falls, and millions of dollars of infrastructure improvements and renovation funds invested by state and local agencies in a number of key downtown blocks, Montague now seems poised for economic growth. At the same time, the town also appears ripe for gentrification. We have come so far in creating the conditions for a prosperous community, but by the same token we do not want to lose the community members who have waited for and worked toward that prosperity.

So now, in order to be proactive, we would like to initiate a townwide discussion about ways and means to preserve community control over the long-term affordability of housing in town. To this end, the Montague Reporter would like to invite readers to attend and participate in a discussion on the possibility of forming a community land trust in Montague, to take place at the second floor meeting room of town hall on Tuesday, March 4th, from 7:00 to 8:30 p.m. The meeting will be cosponsored by the Brick House Community Resource Center and Equity Trust, a national community land trust organization based in Turners Falls. Among the speakers will be Ellie Kastanapolous, director of Equity Trust, Mike Bosworth, business manager for the Brick House, and Dan Laroche, Montague town planner. We hope you all can come, but for those who can't make it, the proceedings will be broadcast live on MCTV, Channel 17, which also will feature an informational videotape on Community Land Trusts in the weeks to come.

For a brief overview on what a community land trust is and how it works, please read on.

WHY COMMUNITY LAND TRUSTS?

BY KIRBY WHITE - A Community Land Trust (CLT) is a non-profit organization created to hold land for the benefit of a community and individuals within the community. A common goal of most CLTs is to provide and preserve affordable housing on this land.

In Growing Communities

In many communities today, population growth and economic investment are driving up real estate prices so that fewer and fewer working people can afford to live in the communities where they work. Fewer still can afford to buy homes in those communities. Limited public funds are available to subsidize housing costs for lower income households, but the amount of subsidy needed continues to grow as housing costs soar.

To address this problem, community land trusts are being developed in a growing number of communities - in expanding metropolitan areas from Albuquerque, NM to Portland, OR; in university communities from State College, PA to Boulder, CO; in expensive resort communities from the Florida Keys to the San Juan Islands of Washington State and in many other communities across the country. These CLTs control housing costs by permanently limiting land costs and 'locking in' subsidies so that they benefit one homeowner after another and do not need to be repeated each time a home is sold.

In Disinvested Neighborhoods

The problems of low-income neighborhoods typically revolve around disinvestments and absentee ownership. As homeownership declines, older buildings are likely to be bought by

absentee investors who allow the buildings to deteriorate while charging high rents. The rent paid to these absentee owners leaves the community. It is not saved by the residents, not spent in local stores, not used to improve the community.

Even if residents organize themselves to improve their neighborhoods, it typically is the absentee owners who reap the benefits of increased property values.

Through a CLT, however, residents themselves can capture the value they create so that it benefits their own community rather than the absentee investors. For instance, when the residents of Boston's Dudley Street neighborhood organized to rebuild their community, they decided to establish a CLT so they would never lose control of what they had worked so hard to build. Their slogan, 'Take a Stand, Own the Land,' could be used by many other communities because it resonates for many CLTs.

Acquiring Land for the Community

Sometimes CLTs buy undeveloped land and arrange to have new homes built on it; sometimes they buy land and buildings together. In either case, the CLT treats land and buildings differently. CLT land is held permanently - never sold - so that it can always be used in the community's best interest. Buildings on CLT land, however, may be owned by the residents.

Access for Low-Income People

The CLT provides access to land and housing for people who are otherwise priced out of the housing market. Some CLT homes are rented, but, when possible, the CLT helps people to purchase homes on affordable terms. The land beneath the homes is then leased to the homeowners through a long-term (usually 99-year) renewable lease. Residents and their descendants can use the land for as long as they wish to live there.

Prices Stay Affordable

When CLT homeowners decide to move, they can sell their homes. The land lease

arrangement gives the CLT the right to buy each home back for an amount determined by the CLT's resale formula. Each CLT sets its own resale formula - to give homeowners a fair return for their investment, while keeping the price affordable for other lower income people.

Owner-Occupancy Preserved

The land lease requires that owners live in their homes as their primary residences. When homes are resold, the CLT ensures that the new owners will also be residents - not absentee owners.

Multi-Family Housing

A CLT can work with various ownership structures for multi-family buildings. The CLT itself may own and manage a building, another non-profit may own it, or the residents may own it as a cooperative or as condominiums. In each case, the CLT will have provisions to ensure long-term affordability.

Helping New Homeowners

CLTs can provide a variety of training opportunities and other services to first-time homeowners. They can provide crucial support if homeowners face

unexpected home repairs or financial problems. In these cases the CLT can often help residents to find a practical solution, and may help to make necessary financial arrangements.

Kirby White is affiliated with the Institute for Community Economics in Springfield, MA

Look for more information on CLTs - and how a CLT might contribute to the mix of home ownership opportunities in Montague - in next week's paper.

POETS WANTED

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LETTER TO THE EDITOR

Like a thief in the night, the night after the primary between dusk and dawn, some person (or persons) tore down most of the campaign signs for Hillary Clinton in Wendell, and some parts of Leveret and Montague. All that remains of some of those signs are the empty steel supports that held them.

A few Hillary signs remain - those positioned close to individuals homes or business that this brave person deemed to leave alone.

I wonder if Mr. Obama would approve of these methods, or was it some individual(s) that decided to act on his behalf on their own?

The right of all to express their preferences in a political campaign goes to the very foundation of our democracy. This is

a disgrace to Franklin County. Couldn't we all please try and respect each other?

Jeffrey Bauman, Esquire
Wendell, MA

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

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NOTES FROM THE WENDELL SELECTBOARD

Date Set for Annual Town Meeting

BY JOSH HEINEMANN - The Wendell selectboard tentatively set the dates for annual town meeting, starting Monday evening, June 2nd and continuing the following evenings, to accommodate a request by town moderator Kathy Becker to have the meeting finished by June 5th. Selectboard member Dan Keller said that would be an early date for annual town meeting, and board chair Ted Lewis said the finance committee still has not received any of the needed local aid numbers from the state. Lewis asked town coordinator Nancy Aldrich to have department heads submit articles for the warrant by April.

Tool Shed Placement

The February 6th board meeting began with Kate Nolan of the community garden committee meeting present to discuss placement of the tool shed she and board member Christine Heard had staked out with low orange flags. The spot they picked may intrude on the view from the meeting room, so Nolan agreed to have a garden committee member check the location again with any interested person on Saturday, February 16th at 8:30 a.m., in daylight.

Coffeehouse Wiring

Paul Richmond from the Full Moon Coffeehouse committee met the selectboard to discuss the wiring the coffeehouse uses at town hall for both sound equipment and the coffee machine. The low voltage wires for the sound system have been strung in a line hanging from the

ceiling, and Klondike Koehler has offered to run them through a conduit under the floor, with both ends terminating in a box that will accept a pigtail connection. Richmond said he would build the boxes. He also asked that the town replace the 120 volt outlets at the stage, which are old and look questionable, and put in two new code legal outlets at the entrance side of the hall to accommodate the sound board and the coffee machine. He said that some time in the future the coffeehouse would like to have outlets along the side walls of the hall so they can improve the stage lighting.

Keller said the plans for the Good Neighbors food pantry to use the hall already include installing new outlets on the stage, and on the entrance side wall. He said the selectboard could and probably should modify the work specifications to add outlets along both side walls as well, in order to get that work done while an electrician is already on premises. Those outlets would be useful to the holiday fair and many other groups using the town hall.

Richmond offered to have the coffeehouse committee help pay for the electrical work.

NMH Volunteers

Heard said that Eli Stiefel, a Wendell student attending Northfield Mount Herman School, has offered the town the volunteer help of up to ten Northfield Mount Herman students on Thursday, April 24th. Keller thought the students could paint the town garage, but Lewis

brought up the town's liability in the use of ladders. Heard suggested yard work around town buildings, washing windows or cleaning the cellar of the town hall. She said she would speak with town custodian Larry Ramsdell, and contact the library and see what else might be appropriate work for the NMH students. Keller suggested the town sign up for five volunteers, and keep the discussion open.

Plaques and Pins

Aldrich said she had confirmed the names to go on the

bronze Vietnam War memorial plaque to be mounted on the stone wheel by the bandstand. She and Lewis are scheduled to go to Athol and have the plaque fabricated on Tuesday, February 12th.

The old jewelry store that used to supply the pins to go along with the cane for the town's oldest citizen has gone out of business. Aldrich found a supplier that would help design a new pin, to sell to the town in lots of 100, but Heard said there might be jewelers in Greenfield that would supply the pins in smaller quantities. The board agreed the plain town seal would make a good design.

Aldrich read from and passed out to board members a letter from the New Salem selectboard to the commissioner of the Massachusetts Department of Education expressing dissatisfaction with the way the towns of Orange and Petersham have been pursuing a K through 12 Mahar school regionalization plan. State representative Steve Kulik has said that the process has not exactly been secretive, but has not been as open as it should be.

Aldrich passed out copies of a Pioneer Valley Clean Energy Plan for selectboard members to read and consider before the next meeting.

NOTES FROM THE ERVING SELECTBOARD

Cable Access Hearings Continue

BY NICHOLE CLAYTON - The town of Erving held a second public hearing on cable access issues on Monday, February 11th, as the town prepares to renegotiate a 10-year contract with Comcast, Erving's cable provider. This time the hearing was held at the town hall in Erving Center, miles from Comcast's nearest cable lines on the Erving side of town. The second meeting also saw a turnout of approximately fifteen residents, who voiced their support for the cable committee's effort to negotiate an extension of cable access to other areas of town, including the village of Farley.

Brad Peters and his wife Jan Ross, of Old State Road, were among those who spoke at the meeting. Peters said, "We are at a double disadvantage, as we cannot get Verizon service for

internet, nor can we get cable access. We have a small research, writing, and photography business we are trying to run out of our home, and we are very prohibited by not having cable access which will allow for high speed internet."

Sara and Janice Vega-Liros raised the topic of a different area code being issued to Erving citizens when they opt for the package option from Comcast. This is an inconvenience, as well as a cost concern for people who may want to call neighbors from just a few houses away. Erving has gone through several phone number changes in the past, and the community is not eager to change phone numbers again.

In other news, the selectboard received a letter inquiring about the rules concerning a departmental supervisor


enforcing the state's no smoking law within fifty feet of a public building.

Board chair Andy Tessier responded by asking administrative assistant Tom Sharp to put out a memo to town employees reviewing state law in this regard, which stipulates that "supervisors are responsible to make sure people are not smoking within 50 feet of the building, and that both the supervisor and the person smoking can be fined, and the town cannot pay the fines," according to Tessier. "In addition, there cannot be any smoking in town vehicles."

The meeting closed with a run-through of preliminary numbers for the FY09 budget.

The next meeting of the selectboard will be held at town hall at 6:00 p.m. on February 18th.


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ELEMENTARY SCHOOL STUDENTS IN ERVING READ AN AVERAGE OF 133 PAGES A WEEK!

Erving Paper Mill Owner Offers a Penny a Page

13TH ANNUAL READ-A-THON IN FULL SWING

BY DAVID DETMOLD - Every January, the start of the new year coincides with the annual Read-a-thon at the Erving Elementary School. Charles Housen, chief executive officer of the Erving Paper Mill, has once again sponsored the program, which runs through March 3rd for students and March 7th for adults in town. Housen generously donates a penny a page for students, and a total sum up to \$1,000 for all the pages read by adults.

According to Erving Elementary librarian Jane Urban, the theme of this year's read-a-thon is 'the United States of Reading,' emphasizing books about the land, the people, the history, folklore, music, art, and foods of America. When students read a fiction or non-fiction book with an American theme or setting, they earn extra points towards a special prize, though all students are receiving small incentives to keep up enthusiasm.

Each Tuesday afternoon during the read-a-thon, schoolwide presentations reflect the theme. One week, the school watched an animated version of the book *The Scrambled States of America*, by Laurie Keller, and on another, storyteller John Porcino, of Amherst, told traditional American folktales and stories about immigrants to this country. One Tuesday, painter Bob Marstall of Northampton, who illustrates picture books with science themes told students about his travels around the country researching his subjects. The read-a-thon kicked off with a visit from folksinger Roger Tincknell, who led the school in a singalong of American folksongs on January 8th.

"We're into our sixth week now," said Urban. "So far, the 190 kids at the Erving Elementary School have read [or have had read to them, in the case of pre-K and kindergartners] 126,429 pages!"

Asked what she will do with the more than \$1,264 Housen will turn over to the school at the end of the read-a-thon, Urban said the money will be split between materials for the library and the computer lab. She said that supplemental money will come in handy.

"We do have a budget for materials, but it's kind of bare bones," said Urban, who noted she just purchased a 2008 set of the *World Book Encyclopedia*, "because the most recent one we had before that was 2001."

The world changes, but some things stay the same. Urban said fantasy remains a big draw for younger readers, with books like *Harry Potter* and *Artemis Fowl* constantly in circulation. But with this year's read-a-thon focus on America, she said historical novels with American themes by authors such as Karen Hesse, (whose novel about Dust Bowl days: *Out of the Dust*, would make a nice complement to the seven town read-a-thon in neighboring Franklin County towns) are popular with the students. Biographies on George Washington, Abraham Lincoln and Martin Luther King have also been in demand, Urban said, as the read-a-thon coincides with these national leaders' birthdays.

Urban said even without the read-a-thon as an excuse to bring them there, the library at the Erving Elementary School is a main destination for students every day of the week. "They are in quite a bit. The library is centrally located in the building; it's really an enlarged hallway in the middle of the school. So kids are always seeing the books on display." She said the 5th and 6th graders come in whenever they need a book, at least once a day,

and the younger classes visit the library once a week on a regular schedule.

Each Tuesday during the read-a-thon, Erving Elementary features a special event focusing on the United States, to encourage the children in their reading. On Tuesday, February 12th, some of the teachers at the school will give a slide presentation of their trips to various parts of the country, including Florida, Wyoming, Montana, Utah and Hawaii. On Tuesday the 26th, the 6th graders will give a special presentation to

the entire school.

Urban said, "This will all culminate on Monday, March 3rd, (the day after another great national leader's birthday, Springfield's own Dr. Seuss) with Read Across America Day, when guest speakers, including a number of town officials, will come into school to read to the kids.

Urban said the penny a page challenge has definitely helped to focus students' attention on a pastime they already enjoy. "I like to think they're getting a message that somebody out there

in the community cares about their reading habits, someone pretty important at that. He's willing to put his money where his mouth is. That matters."

Urban said, "All residents of Erving are invited to participate by keeping track of the pages they have read throughout January and February. We hope this community event demonstrates for our students that reading is enjoyable at any age, and that adults and children alike can be good role models for literacy. Reading is truly a lifelong pastime."

Franklin County Technical School Completes Greenhouse Construction



PAUL COHEN PHOTO

Left to right, landscaping students Tyler Young from Turners Falls and Justin Bittner from Greenfield put the finishing touch on the new greenhouse at the Franklin County Technical School.

TURNERS FALLS - The landscaping and horticulture program at the Franklin County Technical School is nearing completion of its new 22 foot by 44 foot greenhouse, constructed by students under the direction of instructors

Mark Amstein and Michael Lamontagne.

The greenhouse will enhance their curriculum with its renewed focus on greenhouse propagated plants and vegetables. Students already gain significant

exposure to landscaping, turf management, soil science and arboriculture.

In addition to maintaining school grounds and athletic fields, landscaping students are often involved in a variety of community based projects.

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Singleton Sole Bidder on Five-Year Budget Study

BY DAVID DETMOLD

MONTAGUE - At Montague's special town meeting of October 11th, 2007, Article 16 asked the town to raise and appropriate \$10,000 "for the purpose of funding an analysis and five year financial plan for the town of Montague and Gill-Montague Regional School District." The main proponent of the measure was finance committee member Jeff Singleton, who introduced the measure and then took questions from the floor.

One of the first questioners was capital improvements committee chair Les Cromack, who asked, "How will this money be spent, and will it be spent on unbiased, outside expertise?"

Singleton replied, "This question was also asked by the school committee, and this concern was also raised by members of the school committee. When I originally proposed this idea it was back in June... It's really just one person's idea. I really can't impose it on anyone, on how I would do it. We would basically establish an oversight committee, is what I would recommend, and that committee [would] issue an RFP - it doesn't have to take forever - and have someone from outside basically - the research actually is about half or two thirds done - work on the study."

For the remainder of the discussion on Article 16, successive speakers referred to the intent of the article as hiring an "outside consultant," to conduct the five-year budget plan, as a review of the MCTV videotape of the October 11th meeting this week showed. And, although there was stiff opposition to the motion from members of the selectboard and the chair of the finance committee, the article passed after a final speech from selectboard member Patricia Pruitt, who supported the motion.

Speaking in favor of a budget analysis for the town and schools and the development of a five-year plan, Pruitt said in part, "I agree with Les Cromack; it would be good to have someone from outside who doesn't have any particular ax to grind either with the town or the schools and might be able to see something that we in our particular comfort zones overlook all the time." The

question was then called, and the motion carried.

Four months later, an oversight committee made up of school and municipal officials from Gill and Montague have issued an RFP (request for proposals) for the five-year budget plan, which was sent out to more than a dozen consultants who provide this type of service for municipalities, according to Montague town administrator Frank Abbondanzio. He said this week that due to time constraints, travel expense, and the dollar amount of the contract, none of the consultants solicited by the town turned in a proposal.

In fact, by last Thursday's deadline, the committee received only one proposal for the \$10,000 contract, from Jeff Singleton

To prepare the study and five-year budget projections, Singleton proposed to work with a CPA from Framingham named Mark Abrahams, an expert on the Massachusetts Chapter 70 aid formula for schools, to project anticipated state aid and net school spending for the GMRSD for the next five years. Abrahams has assisted numerous towns and cities throughout the state in similar projects. Under Singleton's proposal, Abrahams would receive \$3,500 for his work on the five-year plan.

Additionally, Singleton proposes to have Michael Bosworth, a resident of Brattleboro and the business manager of the Brick House Community Resource Center in Turners Falls, receive a total of \$540 to review data for the report for six hours a month, for three months. The rest of the money, just under \$6,000, would go to Singleton to assemble the data, write an analysis and act as liaison with outside experts.

Asked this week whether he thought town meeting would not be getting what they thought they were paying for - i.e. an outside consultant - if the committee hired him to do the bulk of the work on the budget analysis and five-year plan for the town and schools, Singleton replied, "There may be that

perception. The problem is, we didn't have a real discussion of an outside consultant. You can't restrict that. I realize I said that. I was thinking of that at the time. I'm not sure there's anyone with the skills out there, who can meet the time frame."

Singleton added, "The fact that people come from outside doesn't mean they'll be unbiased."

Indeed, in his proposal, Singleton included a "Note on Bias," which starts off this way:

"I would like to respond to some questions that have been raised with me about bias. I have served on the Montague finance committee for a number of years and have written frequently on public finance issues in the local press. As most of you probably know, I have expressed some rather strong opinions over the years about local budget issues. I am also a strong supporter of Montague Center School, a hot button in the town of Montague.

"My basic position on this is that this is the committee's report, not my report. I would hope that our central goal would be to find common data we could all agree on, analyze it, and present it in as compelling a manner as possible. We are searching for common ground and a plan to stabilize the financial condition of the towns and school district. But there will be issues, interpretations of the data, about which we disagree. The report, like all good research, should also reflect those points of disagreement. There is nothing wrong with that if it is done in a professional and collegial manner."

Singleton noted that the oversight committee did not

include as a criterion on the RFP a requirement for a consultant to live outside the community to qualify. "This will be the committee's report," he said. "It's not my report. I'm not going to try to slip my opinions into it." He added, "I think this is a really good proposal. I think they should consider it."

In fact, his is the only proposal the committee has before them. Mike Naughton, a member of the oversight committee who originally opposed the motion to fund the study on town meeting floor, said that after being asked to serve on the committee, "I did start thinking this could be a useful exercise. But are Jeff and Mike the people to do it? If we had received six proposals, from the Massachusetts Municipal Association, the Association of School Superintendents, I would have been more convinced. I have been trying to keep an open mind. Are these really the guys? I think that's an issue. Is this proposal really what town meeting agreed to spend \$10,000 on? I haven't made up my mind."

Although he has frequently said, as he did on October 11th last year on town meeting floor, "The reasons we don't have enough money are pretty clear," Naughton said this week he thought the real value of the exercise would lie in "producing a document we could use to lobby the state."

Cromack, reached this week, restated his opposition to the whole idea of another budget study, on top of the five-year plan Montague town administrator Frank Abbondanzio developed last year. "I have become even more

discouraged since town meeting when the size of the deficit the town is facing is even more apparent," said Cromack. "We're deep in debt. My feeling is, at this point, a \$10,000 study isn't going to solve the problem. We're not going to get anything new. I don't think the problem is solvable by the town alone."

Rather than study the problem further, Cromack said, "We need to determine what percentage of the total available money we are going to give to the town and what percentage we're going to give to the schools, even though it will not be an adequate sum for either the town or the schools. We have to learn to live within our means. It's a very simple equation."

Cromack also said he did not think Singleton's proposal would provide the town with "unbiased or outside expertise."

Selectboard member Pruitt, who co-chairs the oversight committee with GMRSD interim superintendent Ken Roche, acknowledged expectations may have been raised at town meeting that the consultant picked to analyze the town and school budget would come from outside the community, but she said, "The committee is in a tough spot right now. We received one proposal. We will review the proposal, and we will vote on the proposal. We have to go through all the steps. But Frank (Abbondanzio) sent out the RFP to 12 or 15 people, and based on his questions to the companies that received this, they replied it was inconvenient, it would be too expensive, and there was not enough time to complete the task."

HIGHLIGHTS OF THE ERVING POLICE LOG

Speeding, Erratic Driver, Bad Location

Tuesday, 2-5

7:28 a.m. Disabled tractor trailer unit on Route 2 at Mountain Road; gone on arrival
9:14 a.m. Medical emergency on Warner Street, assisted subject, who refused an ambulance.

4:39 p.m. Citation issued to [redacted] for speeding, possession of class D substance.

1:45 Walk-in to station regarding mail fraud; report taken.

Wednesday, 2-6

4:39 p.m. Arrested [redacted] on warrant.

Thursday, 2-7

4:23 p.m. Fire alarm on West Main Street

4:50 p.m. Disabled motor vehicle, owner requested tow.

6:20 p.m. Medical emergency at Prospect Street; ambulance transported.

8:00 p.m. Accident on Mountain Road.

8:30 p.m. Accident on Route 2, near Old State Road East.

Friday, 2-8

12:30 p.m. Report of erratic operator on Route 2 west; unable to locate.

5:30 p.m. Disabled vehicle on Route 2 at Forest Street; vehicle removed.

9:40 p.m. Accident at intersection of Moore and Forest Streets.

Saturday, 2-9

11:45 a.m. Arrested [redacted]

[redacted] for larceny of a motor vehicle, operating after suspension and possession of class B substance.

Arrested [redacted] for warrant and possession of class E substance.

4:20 p.m. Report of 911 misdial on River Road; no problem found.

5:12 p.m. Neighbor dispute on Lester Street; peace restored.

10:32 Assisted Montague police at Bridge Street, Millers Falls


Sunday, 2-10

4:15 p.m. Disabled vehicle on Route 2; vehicle removed.

Monday, 2-11

9:40 p.m. Disabled car along Millers River, Route 2 in bad location; vehicle towed.

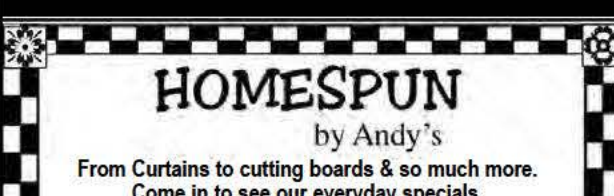
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It is difficult
to get the news from poems
yet men die miserably every day
for lack
of what is found there.

- William Carlos Williams

Poetry Page edited by
Christopher Sawyer-Laucanno,
Janel Nockleby and Jamie Berger

design by Boysen Hodgson

Readers are invited to send poems to the
Montague Reporter at 24 3rd Street,
Turners Falls, MA 01376;
or email us your poetry at
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The editors would like to thank the
following for their generous financial
underwriting of The Poetry Page:

Anonymous, Klondike Sound,
Carlin Barton, Montague Dental
Arts, Dr. Robert Koolkin, Harry
Brandt, Green Fields Market,
Michael Farrick, and Michael Muller.

Of Studebakers (A Modified Sestina)

He invited her into his Studebaker
and lifted her skirt.
From his father he got the belt,
the now-pregnant girl got a ring,
and together they waited for the baby,
which embarrassed family referred to as "the consequence".

After nine months of small-town whispers, "the consequence"
was born en-route to the hospital, in the Studebaker
It was a perfect baby.

He loved to slumber on her skirt;
when he started teething, he bit her ring-
and when he cried, boy, could he belt.

As he grew, he would sometimes be punished with the belt,
to learn the meaning of consequence-
like the time he stole his father's key-ring
and took a drive with the Studebaker.
It was a punishment he could not skirt,
despite being his mother's baby.

And soon enough, he no longer remotely resembled a baby,
began wearing his own belt
and chasing skirt.

He was still too young to know about consequence
in the context of the backseat of a Studebaker
but he liked to impress the girls, boxing in the schoolyard ring.

Then one day, he got a girl's number, picked up the phone and
gave her a ring.

He said: "Hey, pretty baby,
let's go out in the Studebaker."
when he watched her adjust her seat-belt
he was still a bit foggy about consequence
but, boy, did she look beautiful in that skirt.

After they had gotten serious, the skirt
quickly became a victim of consequence.

He bought her a ring,
and they waited for the baby.
And while his father didn't give him the belt,
he took away the Studebaker.

When she was old enough, the newest version of "the
consequence"
now preferred jeans over her mother's knee-length skirt.
She didn't need to, but just in case, when she learned to drive, she
went ahead and bought her boyfriend a ring.

--Anja Schutz
Turners Falls

Shrine (or The Shrining)

My heart inside is frozen space
Cut flowers arranged in a vase
Icons bearing that certain face
A shrine hushed and still

Inside my heart, time is frozen
This place is quietly chosen
Conjuring prayers
I clutch the earth
And wait, preserved by snow

To light this place by candlelight
You would find upon this night
My heart gushing lush roses
Upon frost white ground

Just in case, I save this place
A heart without thrums
Frosting with quiet grace
Bereft until Spring comes

--Katren Hoyden
Greenfield

sleep psalm

each
with
you
night

some
new
night
alone

--Christopher Janke
Turners Falls

Again?

deepening into shadow
even regret is broken
as a moment

^
thrillingly soft
it hurts

^
perfection speaks for itself
but it doesn't say anything

^
let it be that way again

^
she passes clearly
through the harvest

^
oh bang me to a goose head star

--Alan Davies
--New York City

It Used to Snow

It used to snow
when we were kids;
all day, waist deep, pure white.

It would start with a few flakes

here and there
and grow into a windy swirl.

When I saw you

for the first time in forty years,
I remembered the snow.

You waiting at the top of the hill,

my eyes fixed on yours
as I pulled the sled behind me.

--Joe Manning
Florence, MA



Let it Come

If off shore it gathers as it will,
comes thundering in or moving
like a great gray whale,
then let it come.

Let it shatter the sun,
scatter it in shards
across the horizon,
twist dawn into a long gaunt shadow.

Let it come
pummeling the breakwater,
drowning the jetty, become for us
a strange dark force shared.

--Christopher Sawyer-Laucanno
Turners Falls

first light

birds precede
steeping daybreak
intersections complete
with your cursive
question mark
shape asleep beside
me whisper in your
ear the sky is
the same blue of
yesterday but
each new day
is you my starfish
the lilting chorus
competes your flickering
eyes filter in
your smile matches
the nearly dissolved
crescent moon and
the pulsing day
cartwheels in the
throb of my heart

--Jess Mynes
Wendell



CONTRIBUTOR'S NOTES:

Raymond DiDonato resides in Wendell with his wife, Laurie, two boys, Liam and Aidan, and their Irish Water Spaniel, River. His poem "The Question" was a finalist in the 2006 Poet's Seat Poetry Contest.

Alan Davies is the author of RAVE (Roof), NAME (This), CANDOR (O Books), and SIGNAGE (Roof), among many other books. His BOOK 5, part of a long ongoing work, was

recently published by Katalançhè. He lives in New York City, where he practices zen and writes.

Writer, editor, teacher, fisherman, cook, **Robert Clawson's** had poems in The Southern Review, Beloit Poetry Journal, Poet Lore, Christian Science Monitor, Shit Creek Review, and The Lancet. He's a founder of the Robert Creeley Award, Acton Memorial Library.

Joe Manning, of Florence, Mass, is a writer, historian, photographer, poet and songwriter. He has published three books. He is also the creator of the Lewis Hine Project, a nationally-known effort to track down the descendants of child laborers photographed by Lewis Hine in the early 1900s. Manning's website is www.morningsonmaplestreet.com.

Christopher Sawyer-Laucanno co-edits this poetry page.

Janel Nockleby co-edits this poetry page and is working on her MFA in poetry at UMASS Amherst.

Anja Schutz is a graphic designer, knitter, fashion designer, photographer, and bartender extraordinaire.

Christopher Janke's book Structure of the Embryonic Rat Brain was published by Fence Books last year. He runs Suzee's Third Street Laundry in Turners Falls, is senior editor of Slope Editions, helps run the Rendezvous, and teaches creative writing occasionally at the University of Hartford.

Anne Harding is a fiber artist who lives in Turners Falls.

Jess Mynes is a poet, editor (Fewer & Further Press) and a presiding spirit over the All Small Caps reading series in Wendell. He wrote this poem for the occasion of Stephen Broll's wedding last year.

Katren Hoyden wrote this poem in high school as an expression of worship from afar. There is always someone somewhere, being worshiped without knowing it.

Curbside

Love at sight, first,
then what she says:
I'm double parked. Here,
take the keys. Such trust.

My fingers brush her wrist:
I sense her pulse. She whirls:
Chanel infuses morning air,
red heels snapping at cement.

I'm dying for her croissant,
her black currant jam,
her orange juice, her yellow egg...
bet I'd butter park her Jag.

--Robert Clawson
Acton



For Mom on the Occasion of her 80th Birthday

There was an old lady named Betty
Whose family and friends were all ready
To throw her a party
And all that malarkey
To rejoice that she made it to eighty.

We just wanted to honor our mother
Who's taught us 'bout life like no other
It's not just a rumor
Her good sense of humor
Gives us all great laughs with each other

But Betty is smarter than we are
And managed to outwit us by far
She opted to run
And spoil our fun
So we had to gather near Barrie

At times when we were leaving the nest
We balked at the lessons Mom addressed
Sometimes words could be sharp
Might even say she harped
And when she was right then we did stress.

(Though in truth, usually we stressed her more than ourselves)

The grandchildren are all wonderkin
Malcolm, Lain, Alex and Erin
Each one had their own time
To be the bright sunshine

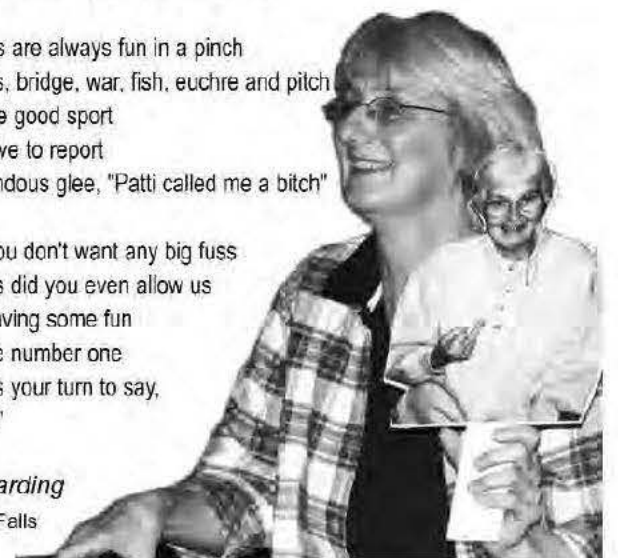
Especially when we dressed them in tartan.

As a mother-in-law she is fine
Unless you cross one very clear line
Just try and deliver
A very small sliver
"That's not a piece of pie," she will whine

Card games are always fun in a pinch
Cats, hearts, bridge, war, fish, euchre and pitch
You must be good sport
Or she'll have to report
With tremendous glee, "Patti called me a bitch"

We know you don't want any big fuss
No presents did you even allow us
So we're having some fun
To us you're number one
And now it's your turn to say,
"up yours!!!"

--Anne Harding
Turners Falls



You don't say

You're like the time
Manuel pressed me against
the hood of his neighbor's car
like I was part of his sandwich.

Everyone likes a sandwich.

I tell you,
you're the bread and I'm the cheese.

While I melt,
you and the bed
make Paninis.

--Janel Nockleby
Turners Falls

The Question

the implicit

answer

to my question

lies folded

somewhere

between

the opal sheen

of your pupil

and the

reflected

moonlight

shining

back

at me.

--Raymond DiDonato
Wendell

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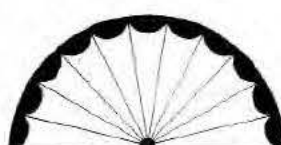


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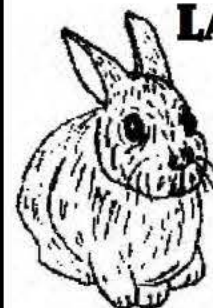
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BUDGET from pg 1
Hanold said, "While a number of assumptions of revenue sources were necessary, and may be revised later, the seriousness of the conclusion is inescapable."

Budget making in towns the size of Montague is hardly rocket science. Hanold broke down the available alternatives: "The avenues for dealing with the budget shortfall are three. You can cut budgets. You can use

reserves. Or you can increase revenues."

On the latter tack, Hanold said the only immediate remedy that might be available to the town would be passing an override of Proposition 2½, something the town has repeatedly tried and failed to accomplish over the last three decades.

As for relying on what Hanold called "the continued erosion of reserves," this was the method

the town resorted to bridge last year's deficit, tapping free cash, stabilization, the assessors overlay reserve, and proceeds from the sale of real estate at the industrial park to the tune of more than a million dollars. Since most of that sum was applied to operating expenses, rather than one time costs, the use of a million dollars from reserves last year has in fact compounded the difficulty facing the finance committee this year, since at least \$923,580 of those expended reserves are now built into the base of this year's budget, according to figures provided last fall by town administrator Frank Abbondanzio.

At that time, the total sum remaining in the town's cash reserves was \$2,643,131.

Consequently, Hanold said, this year, "Cutting or even eliminating town services entirely," is very much on the table. The finance committee and the selectboard intend to hold a public hearing on the budget, tentatively scheduled for Monday, March 17th at 7 p.m. in the second floor meeting room in town hall, to solicit ideas from town residents about what areas of the budget to cut.

Given the fact that town departments and school programs have been cut back or level funded for years, Hanold warned this would be a painful exercise. "We can't keep cutting back services," when many departments are made up of only a department head and one part time or shared clerical position. "You either cut the dog's tail an inch at a time," Hanold said, or you reach the point where you have to start hacking off limbs.

"Because of the size of the shortfall, you are looking at cutting back further on clerical staff, or eliminating whole departments, like the council on aging (senior center), parks and recreation, the planning department, or you close library branches." And Hanold asked rhetorically, "Do we really need a town nurse?"

He bowed to political reality by adding, "If you want to discover what fury really is, try advocating eliminating parks and recreation or the senior center."

Eliminating a department like parks and recreation, which Hanold referred to as one of the town's "core programs," would save taxpayers less than \$100,000. Eliminating the two positions in the department would also mean the town would lose all the recreational programs these positions support, and the user fees that help pay for them.

"In a time of declining economy, having a senior center, libraries, or park programs for kids may not be required, but they are part of our quality of life," Hanold said.

Any one of these cuts, taken by itself, would amount to no more than "a spit in the ocean," Hanold admitted, if the town is

facing a \$1.5 million shortfall.

While final state aid figures will not be available for some time, the overall budget outline is beginning to take shape. On the school side, the change in debt service is negligible this year. The main driver for the 5.5% increase in the school budget is the school committee's desire to restore needed programs and positions in the face of state scrutiny over test scores and educational quality, and a startling 22.9% dropout rate at the high school.

Since the GMRSD switched to the state GIC health plan, this year the schools are projecting a mere four tenths of one percent increase in health insurance costs, "and they are quite proud of that," Hanold added. The GMRSD hopes to apply the savings realized from joining the GIC to restoring programs.

On the town side, where departments other than the police voted down the opportunity to join the GIC last year, Hanold said health insurance costs will rise this year by an estimated 12.2%, as part of an overall 9.5% jump in step increases and benefits. Cost of living increases with town employees will not be negotiated until this spring, and therefore have not been figured into the anticipated deficit.

Hanold said this year state aid to the town is likely to be flat, or in the case of lottery aid may actually decline. He said the GMRSD is continuing to be hurt by rising school choice and charter school tuition payments, which last year cost the GMRSD more than \$1 million.

"Some people are advocating an override for the coming year. For myself," said Hanold, "I'm intrigued by the idea of splitting the added revenue [from the \$300,000 in new growth and annual Prop. 2½ levy increase] between the schools and the town, 50 - 50." Presumably, Hanold would then ask the town and the schools to cut their operating budgets and live with that increase over last year's figures.

If early projections hold up, that will involve major surgery on both sides.

Low Carbon Diet workshop Saturday, February 16th, 11a.m. - 2 p.m. at Green Fields Market, the Five Rivers Council will explore the 'Low Carbon Diet' study group model for lowering personal carbon emissions. We'll use a workbook that identifies how many pounds of carbon are saved by each lifestyle change described. All are welcome. Please bring several monthly electric bills or kilowatt hour usage, or call WMECO at 800-286-2000, give them your account or Social Security number and get the info to help calculate your present carbon footprint.

HOUSING REHABILITATION PROGRAM

The Franklin County Regional Housing and Redevelopment Authority (HRA) are currently applying for funding for the Towns of Erving, Bernardston, Colrain, Gill, Montague, Northfield Rowe, Orange, Shelburne & Whately. At this time we are establishing a waiting list for each town.

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6	\$66,550.00
7	\$71,100.00
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STORE from pg 1
request on Tuesday, February 19th at the town hall, at 7 p.m.

"At least we're looking at the possibility," said Booth, who together with his wife purchased the store from Phil and Susie Maddern in June of 2005 and remodeled it extensively. "The only way to make it work is to do a little bit more [food service] than we did before. But we would focus on the same things:

breakfast, lunch, baked goods, a little groceries, possibly more dinners, keeping the community focus."

On the latter point, Booth said if they do re-open the store, they would maintain their emphasis on local organic produce and local crafts, and mainly, "to be a gathering place for the community."

As he stressed at a community meeting held a week after the

store closed, on July 26th of last year, Booth, who also owns the People's Pint, a successful brew pub in Greenfield, said he and his wife, Greenough, would be seeking a manager to run the Gill Store for them. "We're looking to bring someone in. We don't have time to support it. Neither Lissa nor I is looking for another job."

About a dozen people turned out to the community meeting last July, and Booth said he had maintained email contact with people interested in reviving the store since then. He encouraged people who are interested in the store to come to the ZBA hearing on Tuesday to show support.

"Under the Gill zoning bylaws, the store falls into a retail category. Technically, if

applying for a pouring permit for beer and wine if they re-open the store, with more of a focus on the dinner crowd.

Susie Maddern said the Gill Store building was built in 1803, and, except for brief periods when it served as a printing press or an antiques store, has been a general store for



The Gill Store

the center of town for two centuries.

In September of 2005, the Northfield Mountain School consolidated its operations - and its 625 students - at the Gill campus, about two miles north of the center of town. Booth and Greenough had hoped to attract NMH students and faculty to their store, but delays and detours in the Main Road construction frustrated that plan. At the community meeting in July, Booth said the students had just begun to find their way to their store before he and Greenough decided to close the doors.

Call For Artists: Invitation to artists residing in Massachusetts to submit entries for The Barns of Franklin County, art show and sale, by the deadline, March 28, 2008. The opening reception will be April 26th, and will be part of a multi media event. Entry forms may be picked up in the lobby of the Greenfield Community College Downtown Center, An email version is available by contacting Beverly Phelps at edcp.bap@comcast.net

MCTV Schedule: Channel 17 Feb. 15th - 21st

Eagle Cam:
Friday 130P-5P
Saturday 1P-5P
Sunday 130P-5P
Monday 1230P-5P
Tuesday 12P-5P
Wednesday 1P-5P
Thursday 1P-5P
If We Have a Signal You Will Have a Picture

Friday, February 15
8:00 am Over the Falls Community Owned Retail
9:00 am Montague Selectboard (2/4/08)
10:30 am Peskeomskut Park Dedication
11:00 am Discovery Center: Woodpeckers
12:00 pm Coffee House: Jeff Martell
6:00 pm Wisdom Way Solar Village
7:00 pm GMRSD Meeting (1/29/08)
9:00 pm Chronicles of Czesochowa: Vol 26
9:30 pm Senses of Place
11:00 pm Windchanger: Ansley
Saturday, February 16
8:00 am Wisdom Way Solar Village
9:00 am GMRSD Meeting (1/29/08)
11:00 am Chronicles of Czesochowa: Vol 26
11:30 am Senses of Place
6:00 pm Montague Update
7:00 pm Independent Voices #43
7:30 pm Road to Recovery: Improving Addiction Treatment Services
8:30 pm Common Man: Stephanie Marshall
9:30 pm This is Montague
10:00 pm UN Panel
Sunday, February 17
8:00 am Montague Update
9:00 am RTR: Improving Addiction Treatment Services
10:00 am Common Man: Stephanie Marshall
11:00 am This is Montague
11:30 pm UN Panel
6:00 pm Sustainable Energy
7:00 pm Turkey Day Football Game 2007
9:30 pm Darker Image #4
10:30 pm Songs for Wee People

Monday, February 18
8:00 Sustainable Energy
9:00am Turkey Day Football Game 2007
11:30 am Songs for Wee People
6:00 pm The Western Mass Democrat: Chris Forgey
7:00 pm Montague Selectboard: (Live)
9:00 pm Underground Credits
10:30 pm Enjoy the Ride
Tuesday, February 19
8:00 am The Western Mass Democrat: Chris Forgey
9:00 am Underground Credits
10:30 am Enjoy the Ride
6:00 pm On the Ridge: Youth Pheasant Hunts
7:00 pm GMRSD
9:00 pm Physician Focus Weight Loss Surgery
9:30 pm Montague Update
10:00 pm Independent Voices 43
Wednesday, February 20
8:00 am On the Ridge: Youth Pheasant Hunts
9:00 am GMRSD
11:00 am Physician Focus: Weight Loss Surgery
11:30 pm Montague Update
12:00 pm Independent Voices 43
6:00 pm Living in the Shadow of Vermont Yankee
7:00 pm Montague Update
8:00 pm Elder Law
9:00 pm UN Panel
11:00 pm Windchanger: Jewels Rule
Thursday, February 21
8:00 am Living in the Shadow of Vermont Yankee
9:00 am Montague Update
10:00 am Elder Law
11:00 am UN Panel
6:00 pm Common Man: Stephanie Marshall
7:00 pm Montague Selectboard (2/18/08)
9:00 pm Underground Credits
10:30 pm Western Mass Democrat: Chris Forgey

HIGHLIGHTS OF THE GILL POLICE LOG

Car vs. Utility Pole

Thursday, 2-7
12:15 p.m. Assisted with medical on Grove Street.
7:12 p.m. Car vs. utility pole on Main Road, no injuries.
7:40 p.m. Assisted Bernardston police with head on motor vehicle collision on Rt. 10.
8:25 p.m. Report of motor vehicle accident on Rt. 2, unable to locate; later discovered in Erving.
8:40 p.m. Assisted state police and Bernardston police with closing Interstate 91 due to icy conditions.
9:34 p.m. Assisted Bernardston police with out of control youth on Eden Trail Road.
Friday, 2-8
5:50 p.m. [Redacted]

[Redacted], charged with operating a motor vehicle with revoked registration, uninsured motor vehicle, and unregistered motor vehicle.
9:55 p.m. Assisted Northfield police with operating under the influence arrest, and transport of subjects to Gill.
Saturday, 2-9
6:00 p.m. Two vehicle accident on Walnut Street, no injuries.
Monday, 2-11
2:31 a.m. Report of trees in roadway on West Gill Road, assisted with removal.
10:58 a.m. Checked Gill-Montague bridge for report of subject possibly attempting to jump from same, unable to locate.

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Red Flags Everywhere (or How the Patriots Lost)

BY DENIS BORDEAUX

BRATTLEBORO - Even though I've played sports and been a sports fan all my life, I have never been superstitious about sports. Well, maybe a tad. But even I could see the Red Flags that foretold the demise of the Pats. So, for all of you who wear amulets, old team shirts, good luck hats, and sit in a certain chair to watch every game, these are the real reasons the Patriots lost the Super Bowl

Red Flag #1: Randy Moss

He just couldn't keep his mouth shut one more damn week. With the big spotlight finally on him, Randy for Randy reared his ugly head. While saying all the modest, deferential stuff during the season, he burst out with, "I am the greatest and fastest receiver in the game," on media day. Asked again, he stuck his other foot in, saying he was the greatest of "all time"! Very Moss-like, but very un-Patriotic.

Red Flag #2: The Experts

In this case, expert meaning never being accountable for always being wrong and still getting paid for it. These experts picked the Pats, (strike one) and Terry Bradshaw got it right picking the Giants (strike two).

Red Flag #3: The Yankee Hat

Excusing Tom Brady for living in New York is easy by reasoning that if Giselle asked you to move to Greenwich Village, would you say no? But trying to blend in and not ruffle any feathers by donning a Yankee hat doesn't fly here. Any substitute like a John Deere, or even a Michigan hat would do. My choice would have been a Rocky Balboa hat, but I'm pretty fly for a white boy. Anyway, that was bad juju all around.

Red Flag #4: Showboating

These inane acts of posturing were like a little cancer that grew during the season as if Moss really was gathering. From Seau to Samuel, Bruschi to Wilfork,

pre-game celebrations were held that made the Patriots look like the Chargers, or egad, the Eagles. Samuel, especially after beating his chest all day for doing his job, could've been focused on his camera dance instead of making the pik that meant victory and 19-0.

Red Flag #5: Pre-game Parade Plans

Tom Menino couldn't have made a bigger gaffe. Idiot, numbskull, jerk! Only a multitude of epithets could do justice to this dimwit. The record for parade planning cities? Zero for a dozen, anyway. Tom's been living in a sportsless cave for 30 years! Bostonians should remember this one in the voting booth and send "I love a parade Tom" to the showers.

Red Flag #6: The Beards

The idea of uniting a team or a section of a team is always a good one. But the reason for this bonding can't be forced. It has to be something original and singu-

lar to the group.

Bill LaPointe's socks on our freshman football team were just such a rallying point. From day one Bill said he wasn't going to wash them for the rest of the season, and he didn't. As those socks got ranker, we did too, becoming a team down in the dirt. A will-eat-mud kinda team. For ninth graders, that was pretty inventive, but the beards the Pats offensive line grew were sophomoric at best.

Have you ever seen an all bald, or all mohawked, or all bearded team in a professional championship photo? Its lame and redundant in colleges, but in the NFL, puh-leeze! The Pats could have used Bill's socks, but I heard they were used to start a bonfire on the Plains.

Red Flag #7: The Red Hoodie

I knew it was doomsday when I saw this. Had Belichick gone over to the other side? The glitzy, flashbulb, dress like a pimp side of the hyped up game? There it was, a brand new, right out of the

box hoodie with blue racing stripes, and big Patriot letters on a red background. Red? RED? Imagine Bruschi, after a dozen or so seasons of looking over to get signals from the Gray hoodie, and then seeing this Red, look at me, blasphemy of a working-man's shirt. It had to be as dumbfounding as offensive coordinator Josh McDaniels' use of 25 seconds and three timeouts to end the game. Talk about losing a step!

The facts are lined up, and we can see that it wasn't that the Giants had a better game plan, or that they kicked the Pats up and down the scrimmage line, or even that they were hungrier. It's clear we must blame it all on a bearded, bragging, parading popinjay wearing a Yankee hat and a Red hoodie!!!

Now, if the Patriots take care of these few items and hold their mouths right, they should be back in the big one, toots sweet. But of course, I'm not superstitious.

HIGHLIGHTS FROM THE MONTAGUE POLICE LOG

Harassments & Animal Complaints

Tuesday, 2-5

8:00 p.m. Report of threatening/harassment on Turner Street.

9:00 p.m. Report of restraining order violation, summons issued, Fairway Ave.

Wednesday, 2-6

12:43 p.m. Report of threatening/harassment, report taken, Turnpike Road.

4:18 p.m. Animal complaint near Vladish Ave, services rendered.

5:15 p.m. Animal complaint, Turners Falls Road; returned animal to home.

6:46 p.m. Runaway, O Street, returned to home.

Thursday, 2-7

12:06 a.m. Report of burglar alarm at Turners Falls High School; services rendered.

2:07 p.m. Report of motor vehicle theft on Eleventh Street; report taken.

Friday, 2-8

12:00 p.m. Well being check on Gill/Montague bridge, no one found.

12:04 p.m. Medical Emergency at L Street location, removed to hospital.

12:15 p.m. Report of neighbor disturbance, Montague City Road, advised

of options.

7:16 p.m. Report of neighbor disturbance on Third Street; services rendered.

9:27 p.m. Report of unwanted person at Turners Falls Pizza; subject taken into protective custody.

10:33 p.m. Report of suspicious vehicle on Turnpike Road; services rendered.

Saturday, 2-9

10:45 a.m. Report of property found on Main Street, services rendered.

11:16 a.m. Assault report on Winthrop Street; services rendered.

2:00 p.m. Report of neighbor disturbance on Central Street; services rendered.

2:10 p.m. Report of neighbor disturbance on Montague City Road; services rendered.

2:37 p.m. Report of threatening/harassment on Avenue A; services rendered.

6:25 p.m. Report of animal complaint on L Street; returned to home.

8:16 p.m. Report of animal complaint on K Street; returned to home.

10:40 p.m. Officer wanted on Bridge Street. [redacted] arrested on default and straight warrants.

Sunday, 2-10

1:39 a.m. Medical emergency, K Street; subject transported to hospital.

4:50 a.m. Report of breaking and entering in alley between Pet grooming storefront and Jake's; investigated.

3:01 p.m. Report of disorderly conduct at Third Street laundromat; peace restored.

6:40 p.m. Report of robbery at Turners Falls Pizza House; investigated.

Monday, 2-11

5:44 p.m. Report of larceny on Stevens Street; services rendered.

Tuesday, 2-12

2:05 p.m. Report of burglary, breaking and entering on Federal Street; report taken.

3:42 p.m. Report of larceny on Thirteenth Street, investigated.

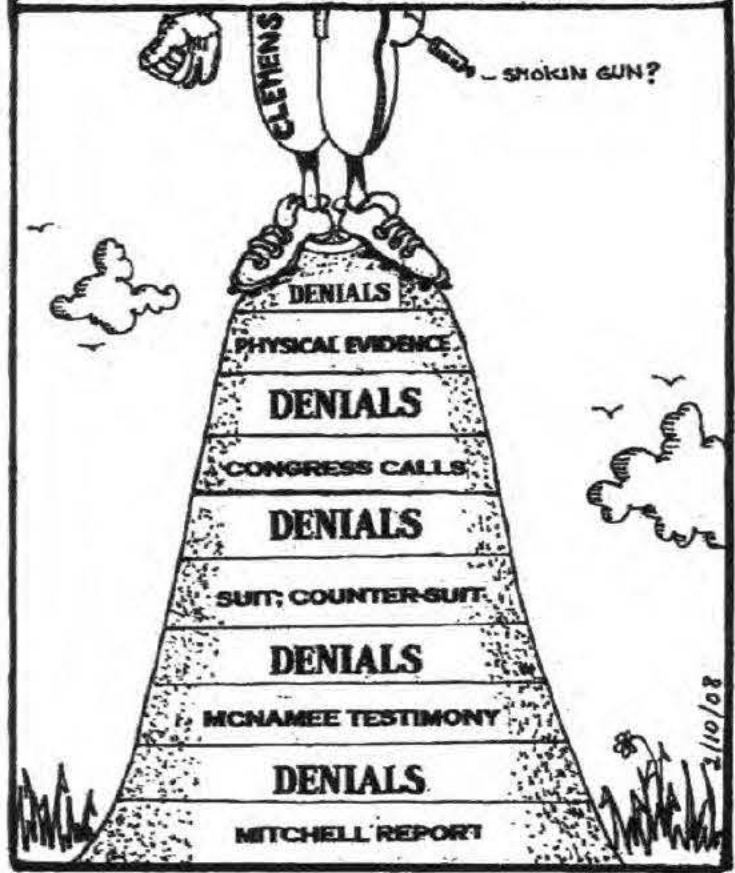
Wednesday, 2-13

10:59 a.m. Report of burglar alarm at Montague Center School, investigated.

11:50 a.m. Report of hit and run accident at Exxon, Third Street.

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Report on Franklin Hampshire Career Center Activities for January 2008

BY DEBORAH RADWAY GREENFIELD - At the three offices of the Franklin Hampshire Career Center, in the month of January, the Career Center served a total of 1126 customers, up from 783 from December 2007. Of these, 98 entered employment (up from 84 last month) at an average hire wage of \$11.55 per hour (down from \$13.50 last month). Our year-to-date hire rate is \$12.46, holding relatively steady, (last month's year-to-date average was \$12.55).

The Career Center also provided 43 employer services during the month, (down from 85

last month) and served 557 uninsured claimants (up from 529 last month). January is usually the single highest month of the year for UI claims.

For the year to date, 399 businesses have been served by the Career Center (up from 351 last month) with 248 of them posting job openings (up from 233 last month).

The Orange office served 74 customers (up from 50 last month), and had 17 enter employment (up from 8 last

Year on Year Comparisons (July 1st - January 31st):	FY08	FY07
	Total Customers	4096
Total entered Employment	616	786
Avg starting wage	\$12.46	\$12.39
Employers listing jobs	248	249
UI claims filed	1841	1984
UI Claimants getting jobs	200	326

month) at an average wage of \$12.08 per hour, (up from \$10.97 last month and higher than November's previous high of \$11.18). There is more activity at the Orange office, with Orange Jobs for Youth ramping up and expanded basic computer classes being offered. To date since July 1st, 2007, the begin-

ning of our fiscal year, 76 job seekers we have assisted in Orange have entered employment at an average wage of \$10.36 an hour.

The Greenfield office served 488 customers, (up from 405 last month) and had 57 enter employment (up from 34 last month) at an average wage of \$11.35 per hour, (almost a dollar less than December's average of \$12.28). Since the beginning of our fiscal year, 321 job seekers we have

assisted in Greenfield have entered employment at an average wage of \$12.20 an hour.

The Northampton office served 621 customers (a big jump from 372 last month), and had 55 enter employment (down from 64 last month) at an average wage of \$11.65 (steeply down from last month's average, \$14.51). Since the beginning of our fiscal year, 397 job seekers we have assisted in Northampton have entered employment at an average wage of \$13.15 an hour.

Deborah Radway is the operations manager of the Franklin Hampshire Career Center.

THE HEALTHY GEEZER

Behind Those Foster Grants

BY FRED CICETTI LEONIA, NJ - *Q. I know I should wear sunglasses to protect my eyes, but what should I look for when I buy them?*

The most important feature in sunglasses is the ability to protect your eyes from invisible ultraviolet (UV) light, which also causes sunburn.

Long-term exposure to the high-energy ultraviolet radiation in sunlight is linked to eye disease. Buy sunglasses that block 99 percent or 100 percent of all UV light. Look for a label that lists protection.

If you want to be extra careful, get wrap-around sunglasses because they keep out more light. Eye doctors also recommend wearing a brimmed hat when you're going to be in the sun for a long time.

If you don't protect your eyes from the sun, you risk getting cataracts, macular degeneration and cancerous growths on the eye. A cataract is a clouding of the lens, the clear part of the eye that helps focus images like the lens in a camera. The macula is at the center of the retina in the back of your eye. The retina transmits light from the eye to the brain.

Most of the eye damage caused by ultraviolet light rays is gradual and irreversible. People have different levels of sensitivity to ultraviolet radiation.

Some studies show that people with eye diseases such as macular degeneration may be at greater risk from UV rays. As a precaution, they should wear sunglasses whenever they are outdoors. This precaution is wise, too, for anyone who has

had cataract surgery.

If you take drugs that make your skin more light sensitive, discuss eye protection with your doctor. These medicines can make your eyes more sensitive to light.

There are other features in sunglasses that you should consider. None of these features is linked to UV protection. Remember, always check a pair of sunglasses for a UV rating.

SHADE

You'll need a dark lens if you are in bright sun frequently. However, a medium lens will suit you for most days. Sunglasses should be dark enough to reduce glare, but not dark enough to distort colors.

COLOR

Prevent Blindness America, a

volunteer eye health and safety organization, recommends lenses that are neutral gray, amber, brown or green.

BLUE BLOCKERS

There's a controversy over the possible harm done by blue light. There is blue light in the bright glare from snow or water. Lenses that block all blue light are usually amber colored. This color is supposed to help you see distant objects more easily. Amber sunglasses are used by many pilots and hunters.

POLARIZATION

Polarized lenses cut reflected glare and are especially helpful for driving.

PHOTOCHROMICS

A photochromic glass lens automatically darkens in bright light and becomes lighter in low light. These are convenient for people who are in and out of doors all day.



JESSICA HARMON ILLUSTRATION

GRADIENTS

Single-gradient lenses are dark on top and lighter on the bottom. These are great for driving. Double-gradient lenses are dark along the top and bottom and lighter in the middle. These are suitable for skiing.

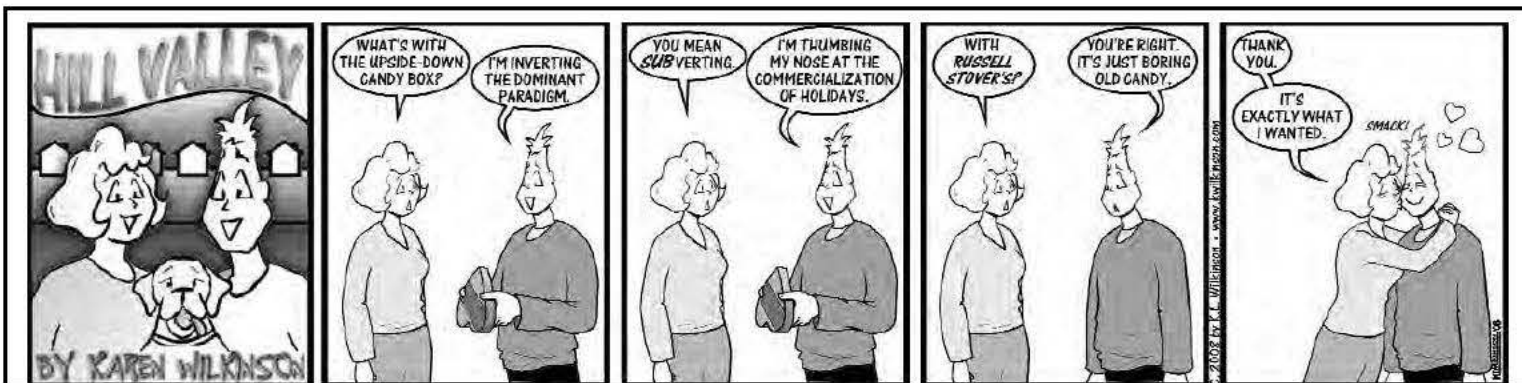
MIRROR COATING

Lenses with mirror finishes reduce the amount of light that passes through to your eyes. These make an emphatic fashion statement.

QUALITY

A good way to check the quality of nonprescription sunglasses is to look at a rectangular pattern such as tiles. You'll know the glasses are good ones if the lines stay straight when you move your head.

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



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JEP'S PLACE: Faith, Hope and Other Disasters Part LXVI

PETS AND DEATH

BY JOSEPH A. PARZYCH GILL - Bruncha turned her head and made little nicker sounds, "Mmmf, mmmf." She scrambled to reach her calf, trying to drag her useless hindquarters, front feet slipping on the barn floor.

"See? She wants to see him," Pa said. He showed me how to rub the calf dry with hay. He then picked the calf up in his arms and carried him within Bruncha's reach. She sniffed and nuzzled the calf, licking him, and making more sounds, "Mmmmf, mmmf."

The calf was as anxious to see his mother, as she was to see him. He stood up on wobbly legs and staggered towards Bruncha's udder, swollen with

milk. He tried to suckle but raised his head each time.

"He wants to pick his head up to reach her tits because the cow should be standing up," one of the men said. "Better take him to feed off another cow."

Pa tied a rope around the calf's neck and led him wobbling into the cow stable where the calf could nurse on a milking cow. Bruncha began to bellow. When Pa came back into the barn, he lowered the pulley block. I figured he was going to hoist Bruncha up with the sling so the calf could suckle. Instead, Pa set a whiffle tree next to Bruncha. He picked up a sledgehammer and swung it; "Bam," hitting Bruncha between the eyes. Her front legs collapsed and her head fell to the floor.

Pa stabbed a hole at each heel of her crippled hind legs with a knife, pushed the hooks of the whiffle tree in to catch her heel cords and attached the pulley block to the center loop of the whiffle tree.

The men grabbed the rope to help Pa hoist Bruncha up until her head was off the floor, hind legs spread wide by the whiffle tree. Her right hindquarter looked like polished leather where it had been worn smooth from dragging herself around on the floor. She looked dazed. Pa grabbed one of her horns to hold her head steady and swiftly slit her throat with a razor sharp knife. Blood poured out on the floor. I headed for the house.

I wished she didn't have to die. I wished I had not gone out to watch. I wished I'd never brought her treats, or petted her, or talked to her, or got to know her. Tears stung my eyes.

Seeing Bruncha die in such a

brutal way depressed me. I really loved that cow, and I knew she loved me. Irene tried to console me. "You've got to remember that, sooner or later, almost everything around here is going to be killed. You've got to stop naming calves, or chickens, or pigs or anything else. And don't go making pets out of the new calf."

But I couldn't resist the baby calf with the pretty blue eyes and the wavy hair on his brow, and I began calling him "Brownie," not having a lot of imagination when it came to names. I fantasized he'd somehow be spared. But, in the fall Pa opened the hay barn door and hung up the pulley block. "Bring the calf here," he said. I dreaded what was coming next.

"Hold him steady."

The big hammer struck a stunning blow to that forehead of wavy hair, sending him to his

knees. His beautiful blue eyes with the curved lashes looked dazed. Pa slit his throat. Blood spilled out in a torrent. It all seemed familiar, yet unreal - like a bad dream that keeps coming back. A stab at each heel made a hole for the hooks of the whiffle tree. And Brownie was hoisted aloft with his life's blood draining out on the hay barn floor and on out the door, already stained red from previous butchering.

A while after that the rabbits I had considered my pets met the same fate.

"Bring me a rabbit."

Pa struck a blow with a knife handle at the base of the rabbit's skull. The rabbit stiffened and quivered. Pa cut the rabbit's head off, and sliced open the stomach. The rabbit's guts spilled out. Pa laughed as he held up a long intestine with pellets of droppings. "Want some peanuts?"

I could hardly see through the tears.

Pa enjoyed slaughtering. He apparently felt he was fulfilling his role as provider, furnishing food for the family. His efforts to teach me about life only served to confuse me and make me increasingly frightened of him. He tried his best to toughen me, but I was a poor candidate. And there was no longer any Miss Pogoda to lift my spirits.

- Continued next week

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day (\$50) or week (\$300) lovely, newly constructed and fully furnished 1-bedroom bungalow with large living room/dining room, private bath & efficiency kitchen. Close to beach. Info @ <http://lacasaroja.weebly.com/> or call Luis 413-475-2982 or Jessica 413-475-2981.

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OPEN HOUSE - Pioneer Cooperative of Franklin County Open House, 308 Montague City Road, February 9th, 10 a.m. until 1 p.m. Building Community Through Affordable Housing.

PUBLIC HEARING

In accordance with the provisions of Chapter 138, General Laws, as amended, the inhabitants of the Town of Montague are hereby notified that The Montague Parks & Recreation Department will be discussing the future development of Unity Park. The meeting will be held on Wednesday, February 20 at 7:00pm, at the Unity Park Fieldhouse, 56 First Street, Turners Falls MA. Public participation is encouraged.

Brick House Fun!

Monday, February 18th
2-4 p.m. Bass/guitar help from Ian.
4-5 African drumming with Imani.
Tuesday, February 19th
1:30-3 p.m. Sledding/hiking*
Wednesday, February 20th
1:30-3 Juggling with Rob Peck
Thursday, February 21st
12-6 p.m. Movie Day
Friday, February 22nd
3-6 p.m. rock band with D'angelo Nieves
6 p.m.-9 a.m. Lock-in*
Upcoming Event: Concert 2/29 7 p.m.
(413) 863-9559
*permission slip required
The Brick House 24 3rd Street, Turners Falls

Upcoming at the Great Falls Discovery Center

www.greatfallsma.org 2 Avenue A, Turners Falls 863-3221

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

SATURDAY, FEBRUARY 16th
Special Exhibit Tours 11 a.m. & 2 p.m. Join Refuge staff on this special tour of the exhibits.

THURSDAY, FEBRUARY 21st
Water, Snow, and Ice: How does wildlife cope with changes in weather and water? Discover survival strategies. 11 - 12 p.m.

SATURDAY, FEBRUARY 23rd
Before There Were Stores: Join

Gini Traub of DCR to explore rocks and local plants to see how Native Americans and early settlers met some of their everyday needs, like making twine, dye, tasty tea, pot scrubbers, cutting and scraping tools and more. 1 to 2 p.m.

FEBRUARY 28, 2008
Film & Discussion: *An Inconvenient Truth*. Join the

Friends of Great Falls Discovery Center and Refuge staff to see and discuss this film on climate change. Refreshments available. Donations accepted, 7 to 9 p.m.

THROUGH FEBRUARY 28th
Green River Landscapes by Frank Gregory on Display in the Great Hall.

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FRIDAY, FEBRUARY 15th
Surviving the Dust Bowl
 Documentary film featuring interviews with witnesses and remarkable archival film footage and photographs, tells the heart-wrenching story of people who endured. 60 min., 7 p.m., New Salem Public Library.

Green Trees Gallery, Northfield: *Joe Graveline and the Ferne Bork - Dan Tinen - Bruce Kahn Trio* benefit concert for the Friends of Schell Bridge, 7:30 p.m. Suggested donation \$10 - \$20. Children welcome.

At the Rendezvous, Turners Falls: *Cheaters' Club*, DeAngelo Nieves, Spouse (rock, etc.) 9 p.m.

Rt. 63 Roadhouse, Millers Falls: *Lost in The Groove*, rock & roll covers, come to dance 9:30 p.m.

Deja Brew, Wendell: *Josh Levangie* - Johnny Cash covers, no cover. 9 to 11 p.m.

SATURDAY, FEBRUARY 16th
Seed Swap 2 p.m. - 5 p.m.

The Rendezvous

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 V-day Lovefest

Fri. 2/15 9pm \$3
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 Spouse

Sat. 2/16 9pm FREE
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upstairs meeting room of Green Fields Market, Greenfield. Free. melindamc-creven@hotmail.com.

At the Montague Grange, Montague Center: *The Joy of Qi Gong: Rejuvenating the Energy Field*, 10 - 4:30 p.m. Registration and info: contact Chris Marano 367-2781 or chris@clearpathherbals.com

At the Rendezvous, Turners Falls: *ROCK-ITQUEER 5 Dance PAR-TAY*, 9 p.m., free.

Rt. 63 Roadhouse, Millers Falls: *Turn It Loose*, come to dance 9:30

Deja Brew, Wendell: *Nexus* - Harmonic Electric Rock, no cover. 9 to 11 p.m.

All Out Adventure Winter Outdoor Recreation Programs: Wendell State Forest. Every Saturday til February 23rd. Cross-country skiing, snowshoeing, kicksledding, ice skating, sled hockey & snowmobile rides. Pre-registration (413) 527-8980, www.mass.gov/dcr/universal_access.

FRIDAY to SUNDAY, FEBRUARY 15th - 17th
 Ja'Duke Inc. performs Disney's *High School Musical* at the Shea Theater. 2/15 & 2/16 at 7p.m. and 2/17 at 2 p.m. Tickets at the Shea Theater box office 863-2281. Continues February 22 - 24.

SUNDAY, FEBRUARY 17th
 The Dead of Winter Film Series at the Montague Bookmill, Montague Center. Free film for the frozen: *Don't Look Now* (1973) Gorgeous, chilling tale of death and psychic phenomena in Venice. From a story by Daphne Du Maurier. 7 p.m.

Montague Grange, Montague Center: *The Tibetan Practice of Tonglen: Compassion, Integration and Healing*, 10 - 4:30 p.m. Registration: Chris Marano 367-2781, chris@clearpathherbals.com

Scandinavian Dance, Montague Grange, Montague Center. Music for traditional couples dancing will be played by Marilyn Butler, Andrea Larson, Amy Parker, and friends. Polska dances of Sweden taught by Andrea Larson and Gideon Morse. 3 to 6 p.m. All levels welcome! No partner necessary. Info. Scandia2ndSunday@aol.com or Gideon at (413) 253-0525.

Deja Brew, Wendell: *Adam Bergeron* - Classical Piano Improv, no cover. 7 to 9 p.m.



The Pangeans at the Wendell Full Moon Coffee House on Saturday, February 23rd at 8 p.m. Benefit for Temenos

MONDAY, FEBRUARY 18th
 Live jazz at Ristorante DiPaolo, Turners Falls, *Interplay Jazz Band*, 6:30 to 9:30 p.m.

WEDNESDAY, FEBRUARY 20th
The Plow that Broke the Plains, Historic documentary (made in 1934) depicts the social and economic history of the Great Plains from the settlement of the prairies by cattlemen and farmers through the WWI boom to drought and Depression; 30 min., 7 p.m. at the Wendell Free Library.

The Grapes of Wrath, based on the novel by John Steinbeck, the film tells of the migration of the Joad family to California from their dust-bowl farm in Oklahoma during the Great Depression, 128 min. 6 p.m. at the Sunderland Public Library and Sunday, March 2nd, 3 p.m. at the Leverett Library.

SATURDAY, FEBRUARY 23rd
 Benefit Concert and Art Auction for the Owen Clarke Memorial Scholarship Fund at Pioneer Valley Regional School, Northfield. Two bands: 7 p.m. *the Move* followed by *the Galloway & Kelliher Blues Band*. Local artists show and silent auction; 5-9 p.m. Info. 498-5747.

Wendell Full Moon Coffee House: *The Pangeans*. One of the Valley's favorite World Beat bands brings their high energy seven piece orchestra to Wendell Town Hall. Info at (978) 544-5557 or www.wendell-fullmoon.org Open Mike begins at 7:30, feature at 8 p.m.

SUNDAY, FEBRUARY 24th
 Textile History Museum of Historic Deerfield: Winter Lecture Series. *The Basics: Linen and Cotton*, 2 p.m., White Church Community Center, Deerfield. Diane Fagan Affleck, Director of Interpretation presents, free.

The Dead of Winter Film Series at the Montague Book Mill, Montague

Center. Free film for the frozen: *The Station Agent* (2003) The Station Agent (2003) If you haven't seen it, come be surprised; if you have, come see it again, 7 p.m. All films are free (with a passed hat); food & drink available at the Lady Killigrew and the Night Kitchen.

Family Dance at the Montague Grange, Montague Center. Brendan Taaffe leads simple, happy dances paced for little feet. 4 to 6 p.m. \$4/person, or families \$7 - \$12 sliding scale, snack too.

MONDAY, FEBRUARY 25th
 Live jazz at Ristorante DiPaolo, Turners Falls, *Chris Bakeriges & James Daggis*, 6:30 to 9:30 p.m.

TUESDAY, FEBRUARY 26th
 Book discussion led by Linda Hickman at Carnegie Library. *Omnivore's*

Dilemma, by Michael Pollan. Join Linda Hickman at the Carnegie Library, Turners Falls for the first of our Eating Local Series programs. 6:30 - 8:30 p.m. For ages 12 and older Copies of the book are available for loan at the library.

THURSDAY, FEBRUARY 28th
 Film & Discussion: *An Inconvenient Truth*. at the Great Falls Discovery Center. View and discuss this film on climate change. Refreshments available. Donations accepted, 7 to 9 p.m.

FRIDAY, FEBRUARY 27th
 Slate Roof poets Susie Patlove and Paula Sayword, along with guest poet Ann McNelly, will read from their work at the Leyden Town Hall,

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Saturday, Feb 16
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Sunday, Feb. 17
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SATURDAY, MARCH 1st
 Celtic Heels Irish Dancers Live at the Shea Theater, Turners Falls, 6 p.m. The unique choreography of this dance troupe beautifully blends the ancestral style of traditional Irish Dance with a toe tapping, hand clapping, vibrant modern flair! Information or reservations, call the Shea 413-863-2281 or Celtic Heels at (413) 475-3353.

ONGOING
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4. RAMBO R
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5. FOOL'S GOLD PG13
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 MAT FRI-THURS 12:15 3:15
6. THERE WILL BE BLOOD R
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Winterfare

BY JUANITA NELSON

GREENFIELD - In the wake of three successful Free Harvest Suppers, which took place with food donated by local farmers and some local business support on the Greenfield town common on the third Sunday of August for the past three years, a small committee of concerned citizens that put these events together felt it was time to expand our efforts to promote a local food diet. We spent much time last year working on details of this year's Week of Winter Harvest, emphasizing eating locally all year round. The week began with a Groundhogs Day indoor Farmers Market in Greenfield on February 2nd.

For a year, we met twice a month to flesh out details and to generate publicity urging folks to turn at least a part of their lawns into gardens of vegetables, as beautiful as flowers and nourishing to boot, to stockpile produce by preserving the bounty from local farms by canning, freezing, drying, and storing.

The opening event of the Week of Winter Harvest was the Winter Fare Market on Groundhogs Day at the Second Congregational Church, adjacent to the town common, site of free

summer meals and the yearly Farmers Market.

There was amazing publicity leading up to the event, including front page stories in the local daily, websites and radio interviews, and tons of beautifully crafted flyers by Aaron Falbel featuring talking vegetables.

Still, when we arrived at the church at 8 a.m. to set up, there was no way of knowing who would come out. We had plenty of vendors, had to turn a few away, but would there be enough customers to warrant not only their time but for some a rather hefty fee to the health department. Fortunately, I didn't have time to worry, since I was occupied putting up a display of samples of the food my friend Ellie Kastanopolous and I had canned, and the black walnuts I had picked and planned to have folks help me crack. (The kids loved this activity!) I was so involved that when I finally looked up, I gasped to see the hordes streaming through shortly after the doors opened at 10 a.m.

For those who had not prepared for the week, it was possible to purchase a week's worth of local groceries. The room was packed so tightly it was difficult

to move or hear the carolers with new groundhog lyrics to familiar Christmas carols. While some stood in line at vendor stalls, others enjoyed the free scoops of Bart's or Snow's ice cream.

Red Fire Farm of Granby offered produce ranging from celeriac to lettuce to rutabagas. Other farms with booths included Clarkdale, with apples and cider, West Branch Organic Farm with jams, sweet breads and pickled beets, the Benson Place with blueberry spread, Beaumont's Berries with jams, baked goods, relish, and piccalilli, Cheshire Gardens with preserves, mustards, sauces, and vinegars, Austin's Farm with beef, Chase Hill Farm with cheese and Warm Colors Apiary with honey and beeswax candles. Some vendors sold out before the event ended at 2 p.m.

But there was more than farm produce. There were also workshops on beekeeping, fruit drying, bicycle driven grain mills, backyard maple sugaring, and seed saving. And there was a Barter Fair for exchange of homemade and homegrown items. Throughout the following week, local potlucks with local food menus were held in Ashfield, Shelburne Center, Colrain and Turners Falls. The Sunderland library displayed books about local food.



MARY NELEN PHOTO

Juanita Nelson cracks black walnuts from her front yard at the Winterfare Farmers Market

Our hardworking committee was amply rewarded by the outpouring of interest, which included a clamor for more winter markets, at least one a month.

Our joyous but weary band is now seeking new volunteers to carry on and amplify this year's successful effort. Those who accepted the challenge to eat locally during the week are invited (implored?) to let us know what they served, including

recipes.

My hope is that this initial venture will inspire all of us to make it a habit to eat local food year round, every year. Such an effort will help us clean up the planet, provide ample food for the world, and be part of a lifelong pursuit of living sustainably and at peace.

Get in touch at :

www.riverlandfarm.com/winterfare

Celebrating the Year of the Rat

BY FRAN HEMOND

MONTAGUE CENTER - Our February 7th, 2008, was Chinese New Years, the first day of 4706, the Year of the Rat. For 15 days, a pattern of family holidays makes sure that the New Year is welcomed auspiciously and in style. This year's storms and canceled flights made the usual travel home to China a difficult trip for many. But holidays must happen.

Chinese years are dedicated to animals in a rotating schedule, starting with the Rat and continuing in a twelve-year sequence with Tiger, Dragon, Horse, Monkey, Dog, Ox, Rabbit, Snake, Sheep, Rooster, and Pig. Each tutelary being bestows their characteristics upon the year at hand, and those born in that time span are said to be touched by their offerings.

On the happy side, the year of the Rat is a bringer of material prosperity and a protector; its less favorable aspects are

not here noted. It seems the attributes cited are considered as they relate to the animal world, for some westerners might not concede the rat has worthy traits. But the year started out with a big bang in any

town displays. At expansive reunion dinners, a custom of the 'red packet' in which the younger members of the family are given monetary gifts in a red packet by older folks, is a popular tradition. The amount given has to be in a denomination considered a good luck number.

This certainly starts off the holidays on a happy note for the children.

After a series of days that feature such family activities as grave visiting and the common man's birthday, the celebration ends with the Chinese Lantern Festival. No decoration is more lovely than Chinese lanterns on a dark night. The parades with fabulous costumes and lion and dragon dancers have reached San Francisco, Los Angeles, New York, Vancouver, and other North American cities. The drums and cymbals are meant to drive away evil spirits, and the appeals to good fortune will start 4706 on a path of prosperity and protection from harm.



case.

New Years Eve fireworks that once, as in our country on the Fourth of July, were celebrated by individual groups, have now because of safety concerns become spectacular

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