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# The Montague Reporter

YEAR 9 - NO. 20

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THE VOICE OF THE VILLAGES

FEBRUARY 17, 2011

## Gill Will Need to Make Do with Less in FY'12

BY DAVID DETMOLD

Initial projections show the town of Gill will have about \$38,000 less to spend on town and school departments this year than last. That was the take-away from administrative assistant Ray Purington's update on FY'12 revenues for the selectboard on Monday afternoon.

"It's hard to look at this and not have the expense side to look at too," cautioned selectboard member Ann Banash, who pointed out the town socked away an equivalent amount of money left over from the budget compact with the Gill-Montague schools in December of 2010.

"We put [\$38,121] into an education stabilization account because we knew we were going to get nailed," with declining state aid and higher assessments for the Tech School and the GMRSD, Banash said. That money is now available for the town to draw down to help balance the FY'12

budget.

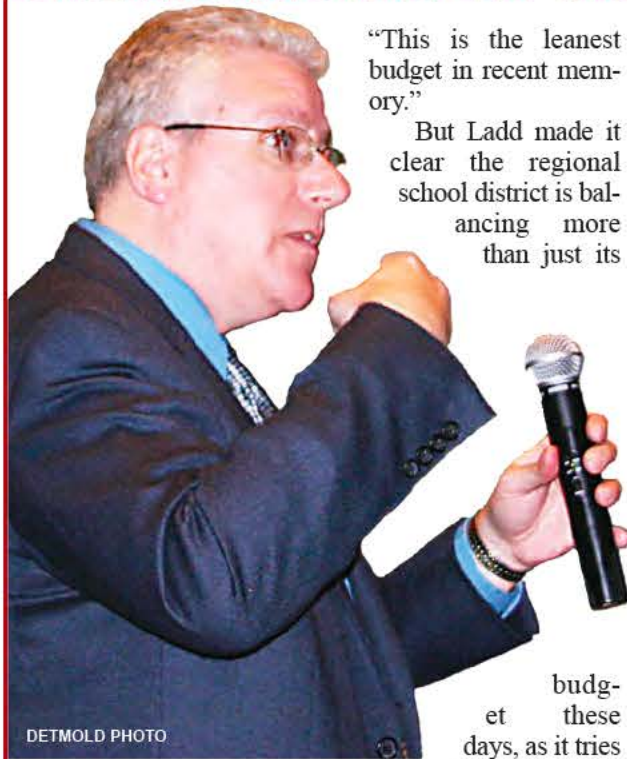
Purington said the budget Governor Deval Patrick recently proposed called for a drop of about \$17,000 in state aid to the town of Gill. Purington said that number could dip further into the negative once the two houses of the legislature go to work on the FY'12 budget. "That could take an additional \$7,000 off," the town's state aid numbers, equal to a drop of 10% in state aid, Purington cautioned.

Moreover, the town's administrative aide said new growth will likely come in at its lowest level in many years - he projected a figure of \$13,000, half of what the town saw for new growth last year - and local receipts will drop about \$7,000.

"We need to adjust to what the economy is going to do and live within our means," said selectboard chair John Ward.

The town can expect to add \$51,480 from the see GILL pg 11

## Carl Ladd: "We Will Turn This District Around for the Students"



DETMOLD PHOTO

Gill-Montague Superintendent Carl Ladd

BY DAVID DETMOLD

GILL-MONTAGUE

"We're doing our level best to get a level funded budget," Gill-Montague superintendent Carl Ladd told the regional school committee at a budget hearing on Tuesday night.

"This is the leanest budget in recent memory."

But Ladd made it clear the regional school district is balancing more than just its

budget these days, as it tries to pull out of its designation as

one of just four Level IV 'Needs Improvement' districts in the state.

"It's kind of a double edged sword," Ladd said. "If we don't have educational and financial stability we won't keep families in the district. We need to

deal with both sides of it simultaneously."

Toward that end, Ladd said the \$16,408,162 level funded budget he is proposing for FY'12 (down .78% from FY'10) will focus on maintaining classroom size is his number one priority. With nearly a quarter million dollars in contractual steps for teachers and staff driving the FY'11 budget number upwards, along with a \$39,000 uptick in utility costs, \$120,000 in health insurance costs, and nearly \$30,000 in transportation, retirement, Medicaid, and heating costs, Ladd said he had only two places left to look for cuts: central office staff and other personnel.

"We've taken all the low hanging fruit already," he said.

The axe will fall heavily on central office administrators, where Ladd will cut \$241,000 by eliminating the director of grants and technology (Marty Espinola's position), the

director of early childhood education (Chris Jutres's position), along with a business office manager position, the special education team chair, and a grant management administrator.

Ladd said the district would be able to continue receiving the bulk of the \$1.8 million in annual grant funding it has come to rely on, even without Espinola to oversee and write those grants.

"About \$1.3 million of those grants are entitlement grants. We're going to receive them regardless, with a fill-in-the-blank application form, for Title 1 and Title 2 grants," among others, because the district's poverty levels match the demographics for those federal grants, designed to improve the academic achievement of disadvantaged students.

Next, Ladd said he would seek to cut the equivalent of about three staff positions, once the accelerated school turnaround plan is established with the assistance of the Department of Elementary and Secondary Education see LADD pg 9

## How has the World Changed



The Hilton Hotel in Istanbul, Turkey, was the scene of an interesting business meeting this month.

BY PATRICIA PRUITT

ISTANBUL

Returning to Istanbul on January 2nd after a too brief stay with family in Montague was a rather mixed and emotional affair which included sadness at departure, a growing familiarity with our new

surroundings, and continuing excitement over the experiences ahead.

It is fair to say the world has changed considerably since then, though we claim no credit for it.

Since we have been back, even prior to the

Tunisian and Egyptian revolutions, we found ourselves hearing publicly declared regard for Turkey as a secular democratic state existing on reasonably good terms with both the Arab and western world, while

see WORLD pg 10

## Kenney Retires From GMRSD After 32 Years

BY ALI URBAN

GILL-MONTAGUE

For Jeffrey Kenney, being an educator is all about the kids.

"There's something about every kid that makes them special. If you can find that, then working with those students can be extremely rewarding," said Kenney, who will retire from the Gill-Montague Regional School District on February 24th after 32 years of service.

"I can tell you that having done a lot of things in education in the same district, that the higher up you move in administration, the further you get from kids," he said.

Kenney, a Greenfield resident, has served in several roles at Turners Falls High School and Great Falls Middle School, teaching seventh and eighth grade science between 1979 and 2001 before becoming assistant principal at the upper school, and in 2002 taking the position of middle school principal.



ALI URBAN PHOTO

Jeffrey Kenney

Beginning in 2006, Kenney was tapped for principal of the Turners Falls High School, until July 2010 when he became assistant to the superintendent for special projects, a position from which he will retire on his 60th birthday.

In this role, he has overseen several initiatives including implementing a

grant to fund more advanced placement classes and establishing a more vocational-style early childhood education program at the high school.

"Jeff has been in the district for 30-plus years," said Carl Ladd, superintendent of schools. "He's one of those guys who has such

see KENNEY pg 10

## PET OF THE WEEK

### Independent



### Moo Cow

My name is Moo Cow and I'm a three-year-old domestic short hair female cat in need of a good home. My last family reported that I am sweet and loving. They got that right. I'm generally independent and quiet. My favorite things in the world are hanging with my family, lounging on the couch, and getting long body strokes from head to toe. I have a condition called FIV. It's a cat-only immune condition—humans and other animals can't get it, and it's even hard for other cats to get (usually through a bad fighting bite—and I am not like that at all.).

Most likely I'll live a long, healthy normal life with no problems, although it's best for me to be an indoor-only girl. To find out more about adopting me, please contact the Dakin Pioneer Valley Humane Society at 413-548-9898 or via email: info@dpvhs.org.

### ERVING LIBRARY NEWS

#### Washington Presentation

In celebration of President's week, "Town Crier" Kim Gregory, Erving resident and Historic Deerfield docent, will visit as a friend of young George Washington on Wednesday, February 23rd at 7:00 p.m. Gregory will share stories about the first President's early childhood from his birth to age 22 when he became a Colonel in the British Army. It's a lesson for children of all ages. All welcome! Refreshments served.

Pokemon enthusiasts will gather at the library on Wednesday, March 2nd at 3:00 p.m. This is an "open session". Drop in and bring cards to trade pr play.

## The Montague Reporter

Published weekly on Thursday, (Every other week in July and August. Wednesday paper fourth week of November. No paper last week of December.)

PHONE (413) 863-8666  
reporter@montaguema.net  
Postmaster: Send address changes to  
The Montague Reporter  
58 4th Street  
Turners Falls, MA 01376

Advertising and copy deadline is Tuesday at NOON.

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Local Subscription Rates:  
\$20 for 1/2 Year

### WENDELL LIBRARY NEWS

#### Call for Art, Film and Talk

The Wendell Free Library is announcing a call for local artists to submit work for possible exhibition at our Herrick Meeting Room Gallery. A committee appointed by the Library Trustees reviews all submissions. Exhibits run for two months, and there is no charge for the use of the space. Please stop by when the library is open to see the present show and pick up a copy of the two page Gallery Policy/Application form. The application is available on line as well. Go to [wendellmass.us/index.php/wendell-free-library.html](http://wendellmass.us/index.php/wendell-free-library.html). Select Policies, then scroll down to "Wendell Free Library - Herrick Meeting Room: Application For Exhibit". Library Hours are Tuesday 3:00 to 6:00 p.m.; Wednesday 10:00 a.m. to

8:00 p.m.; Saturday 9:30 a.m. to 3:30 p.m.

On Friday, February 25th, at 7 p.m., presentation by filmmaker Ted Timreck and Narragansett tribal preservation officer Doug Harris titled *Hidden Landscapes: the Ancient Stone Ruins of New England*. The evening includes Timreck's recent film, *Great Falls*, which investigates and reinterprets the relationship among many ancient stone ruins in our area. Discussions before and after led by Harris and Timreck. The presentation is offered in connection with Wendell's annual Book Connect event, this year focusing on the book, *King Phillip's War*, by Eric Schultz and Michael Tougias. The book is available to borrow.

### CARNEGIE LIBRARY NEWS

#### Large Crowd in Attendance at Valentines Party



LINDA HICKMAN PHOTO

TURNERS FALLS - The annual Carnegie Library Valentine's Party drew a large crowd on Saturday, February 12th. The chocolate fondue fountain was especially popular. Many of the children went home with bags of valentine cards and crowns, tissue paper flowers and other valentine crafts they made.

### MONTAGUE LIBRARY NEWS

#### School Vacation Week Programs and Hours

BY LINDA HICKMAN  
MONTAGUE - There will be a variety of children's programs at the Montague Public Libraries during school vacation week. On Tuesday, February 22nd, 10:15 a.m. at the Carnegie Library there is a special program: Beads and Crafts. Children of all ages are invited to join Ruth for beading and other fun projects. Tuesday afternoon at 3:30 p.m. is the Millers Falls Library Club with Ruth that includes thematic books, crafts and snacks for children of all ages. On Wednesday, February 23rd, 10:15 a.m. is Story Hour at the Carnegie Library. The program is designed for children up to five years old, with siblings of any age welcome. Join Ruth for thematic stories, crafts, songs and snacks. On Thursday, February 24th, 10:00 a.m. at the Carnegie Library is Music and Movement with Tom Carroll and Laurie Davidson. This is a very popular program for young children of any age.

All week at the Carnegie Library is Art-To-Go. Look for the silver box in the children's room and take home the materials for a fun art project.

The Carnegie Library in Turners Falls, 863-3214, is open Friday and Saturday 10 a.m. - 2 p.m., Tuesday and Wednesday 1 - 8 p.m., and Thursday 1 - 5 p.m. The Montague Center Library, 367-2852, is open Wednesday 2 - 5 and 6 - 8 p.m. The Millers Falls Library, 659-3801, is open Tuesday and Thursday 2 - 5 and 6

### SENIOR CENTER ACTIVITIES - February 21st - 25th

GILL-MONTAGUE Senior Center, 62 Fifth Street, Turners Falls, is open Monday through Friday from 9:00 a.m. to 2:00 p.m. Congregate meals are served Tuesday through Thursday at noon. Meal reservations must be made one day in advance by 11:00 a.m. The meal site manager is Kerry Togneri. Council on Aging Director is Roberta Potter. All fitness classes are supported by a grant from the Executive Office of Elder Affairs. Voluntary donations are accepted. For more information, to make meal reservations, or to sign up for programs call (413) 863-9357. Messages can be left on our machine when the center is not open. Please note that Wednesday afternoon Bingo has been cancelled until further notice.

Monday, February 21st  
10:00 a.m. Senior Aerobics  
10:45 a.m. Chair Exercise

12:00 noon Pot Luck & Bingo  
No Knitting Circle  
Tuesday, February 22nd  
10:30 a.m. Yoga  
Wednesday, February 23rd  
10:00 a.m. Aerobics  
10:30 a.m. Health Screenings  
Thursday, February 24th  
9:00 a.m. Tai Chi  
1:00 p.m. Pitch  
Friday, February 25th  
10:00 a.m. Aerobics  
10:45 a.m. Chair Exercise  
1:00 p.m. Writing Group

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



JOSEPH A. PARZYCH PHOTO

*All Roof Shovelers Goof Off Sometime*  
It's hard to find roof shovelers who do not lay down on the job.  
Here's one caught napping at 180 Main Road in Gill.

### Historic Bridge Facts

PROVIDED BY ED GREGORY, OF GREENFIELD - from documents relating to the original construction of the Gill-Montague Bridge in 1937-38.

- Excavation work to prepare for the erection of island piers three and four began early in June of 1937. A large steam shovel was brought in to remove the rocky ledge and river bed.
- By July 13th, the first cement was poured into two foundation forms. These forms extended parallel from the north end of Avenue A up to and over the bank that led to the railroad tracks along the canal.
- This In September of '37, W.C. Bearce, superintendent of construction for the Phoenix Bridge Company, arrived to begin the preliminary groundwork for the erection of the steel skeleton of the bridge. Railroad cars loaded with the steel and other supplies were sent in via the railroad spur located along the canal's south side, a most convenient location.
- This spur met its terminus where today the Turners Falls pier of the old upper (Red) suspension bridge is located. Presently, the bike path occupies the space of the old New York, New Hampshire and Hartford railroad line.  
*More bridge facts next week!*

### SLATE LIBRARY NEWS

#### Annual Valentines Party



JOSEPH A. PARZYCH PHOTO

(l-r) Josephine Bonaceto, Anna Hendricks holding her daughter, Vita Luna Briggs-Hendricks, and Maia Castro-Santos, daughter of the librarian, all busy crafting Valentines on Saturday, February 12th.

- 8 p.m. None of the libraries will be open on President's Day, Monday, February 21st.

GILL - Librarian Jocelyn Castro-Santos hosted a Valentine making session at the Slate Memorial Library on Saturday.

There was a great response. Some of the persevering artists stayed late, absorbed in their works of art.

### Great Falls Middle School Students of the Week

Grade 6  
Patrick Salls  
Grade 7  
Mackenzie Phillips  
Seth Leamy

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JESSICA HARMON ILLUSTRATION

## Local Briefs

**COMPILED BY DON CLEGG** - Katie Sachs and Brooke Brown Saracino will perform a **benefit concert** for the Zen Farm Café Community Meal at the Montague Zen Farm, 177 Ripley Road, in Montague Center on Saturday, February 19th, starting at 8:00 p.m. A sliding donation scale of \$5.00 to \$15.00 is encouraged to help support this free meal, which drew large crowds during the summer and fall of 2010.

The Shea Theater, 71 Avenue A, in Turners Falls has a new theater group added to their venue. The **"New Renaissance Players"** will be performing for the first time at the Shea with a production of the Jungle Book. Show times are February 25th and 26th at 7:00 p.m. with matinees on February 26th and 27th at 2:00 pm. For ticket info call 413-863-2281 or go to the [www.theshea.org](http://www.theshea.org)

The **cedar waxwings** are back on Avenue A and side streets in Turners Falls, feasting on the berries produced by flowering crab trees. This is a sure sign spring is approaching. These flocks of birds travel from as far south as Central America, and stop by for their annual visit to the Avenue on their way to breeding grounds in southern Canada.

Come celebrate **George Washington's 279th birthday** with a performance of Town Crier Kim Gregory at the com-

munity room of the Greenfield Savings Bank, 282 Avenue A, in Turners Falls on February 22nd at 10:00 a.m. Gregory will talk about our first president's early childhood from his birth to age 22, when he became a colonel in the British Army.

Congratulations go out to the **Turners Falls High School cheerleading team**. The team of 16 girls placed first in a Division IV meet on Saturday, February 12th, at Holyoke High School. The team followed with another first place finish at South Hadley High School on Sunday, February 13th. Keep it up, girls!

A collection of **native artifacts** found in this area will be on display at the Wendell post office until the end of March. A program to discuss King Phillip's War is being planned for later in March at the Wendell Library and the artifacts are part of collection from William Deforest "Boo" Pearson.

A seed swap will be held on Sunday, Feb 20th, at the Wendell Free Library from 10:30 a.m. to 1:30 p.m. Bring leftover seeds if you've got them, switch them for something new, or get seeds to grow for the first time! Gill farmer Dan Botkin will be on hand to talk about seed saving and to sell local varieties.

Send items for local briefs to: [reporter-local@montague-ma.net](mailto:reporter-local@montague-ma.net)

### Wendell History Meeting

In the last few months, a lot of local interest has been expressed in gathering information about the history of the town of Wendell, and in re-establishing the Wendell historical society. Toward these ends, a meeting will be held this coming Saturday, February 19th, at the Wendell Free Library from 10 a.m. to noon. Residents are invited to come share interest and information.

### Early Education & Care Expo

**GREENFIELD** - The Franklin County Early Education & Care Expo will be held Saturday, March 5th from 1:00 to 3:00 p.m. at First Church, 43 Silver Street, Greenfield.

Great resources for families with young children. Special visit with Rae Griffiths of Teaching Creatures. See details at [www.gmrds.org](http://www.gmrds.org), click on Early Childhood Programs.

## Montague Democrats to hold Town Office Election Caucus April 7th

Montague Democrats will hold their caucus to select candidates for town office elections on Thursday, April 7th, from 6:30 to 7:30 p.m. in the 1st Floor meeting room of the town offices, 1 Avenue A, Turners Falls. Successful candidates receive the party nomination to appear on the Monday, May 16th town election ballot. Voting is by paper ballot.

Only registered Democrats may run in this, what amounts to a primary election for local

offices. Democrats who wish to run in the caucus must deliver their intention in writing to Democratic town committee chair Jay DiPucchio by 5:00 p.m., Saturday, April 2nd. Notice may be by mail, email or in hand. Verbal declaration cannot be documented and is not acceptable.

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

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

By the Democratic town committee's vote following the 2003 caucus, registered un-enrolled voters also may vote in the Democratic caucus. No absentee balloting is allowed. All caucus candidates must be present at the end of balloting or may not be certified.

*Below are term expirations. Individuals so far having filed intention to run in caucus \*\*.*

OFFICE	TERM	INCUMBENT	PARTY
Selectman	3	Pat Allen**	Dem.
Assessor	3	Paul J. Emery**	Dem.
Bd. Of Health Member	3	Michael M. Nelson**	Dem.
Library Trustee (3)	3	Alice J. Armen	Dem.
	3	Sharon E. Cottrell	Dem.
	3	Veronica A. Phaneuf	Unenrolled
Park & Rec. Comm.	3	Dennis L. Grader	Dem.
Soldier Memorial Trustees (2):			
Veteran	3	Brian Sansoucie	Unenrolled
Non-Vet.	3	Christopher M. Boutwell**	Dem.
Montague Housing Authority(2)			
	5	Matthew M. McMullin	Unenrolled

The first floor meeting room of the town office is wheelchair accessible by elevator entrance at the rear of the building, or by the front door

Questions or letters of intent: please contact Jay DiPucchio, Democratic town committee chair, 35 Central Street, Turners Falls, MA 01376-1326, (413) 863-8656 home.

### Sundays Timebank at the Brick House

Interested in local alternative currency, community building and skills share? Monthly Timebank Orientation and potluck mini-workshops will be held on the third Sunday of each month at the Brick House Community Resource Center, 24 3rd Street in Turners Falls.

This Sunday, February 20th, bring a dish to share if you can. Nobody is turned away. This is a free community event.

Schedule: Potluck dinner, 6:00 to 7:00 p.m., mini-workshop, 7:00 to 8:00 p.m., orientation for new members, 8:00

to 9:00 p.m.

For more info or ways to get involved contact [Katie@Brickhousecommunity.org](mailto:Katie@Brickhousecommunity.org) or call (413) 863-9559. Also visit [valleytimetrade.com](http://valleytimetrade.com).

*"When tillage begins, other arts follow. The farmers, therefore, are the founders of human civilization."*  
~~ Daniel Webster

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"The Voice of the Villages"

**Circulation**  
Janel Nockelby

**Founded by**  
Arthur Evans Harry Brandt David Detmold  
August, 2002

# Miles to Go

The snow slides off the roof in the middle of the night, and comes crashing to the driveway with a sound like muffled thunder, waking us from sleep. An unearthly wind howls around the eaves. Are the cats all right?

Why do we think about the cats at a time like this? It's two-thirty in the morning. Of course the cats are all right. They're sleeping by the wood stove, noses tucked into tails, dreaming of mice.

Within inches of the wood stove is the preferred spot for all of us these days, as the earth lies shivering beneath blankets of snow and ice. The streets of Turners look like the fjords of Norway, with pathways plowed between icebergs of old snow heaped up by far too busy plow drivers, and cars maneuvering like barges blinded by the heaped up mounds on every alleyway and corner.

Old people are hesitant to walk the narrow tracks where their wide sidewalks used to be. When they do venture out for essential errands in the middle of the day, they are careful to thread their way around the ice, the watery slush, and the half frozen droppings of too many dogs left by careless owners.

If there is more and more CO2 building up in the atmosphere – and we do not doubt it – and last year was tied for the warmest year on record – and we do not deny it – still you could not prove the fact of global warming by the streets of Turners Falls this winter. It's been quite a doozy.

But on Monday we saw the first robin, hobnobbing in the hawthorn tree with wayfaring cedar waxwings, and we know somewhere beneath the drifts the sap is rising. People are sorting and swapping seeds and shoveling the snow off their greenhouses, and thinking bold thoughts of fiddleheads to come.

Our town councils are torpid with the sluggishness of sclerotic budgets and deficits in the snow and ice accounts. But still, Wendell has hired the first local food coordinator in the county (maybe in the country). Gill is

replacing the ancient boiler in the elementary school, the energy commission is preparing for a Winsert workshop at the town hall next Saturday, the 26th at 1 p.m. (What's a Winsert, you ask? Go find out.)

And a group of citizens in Leverett is working hard to bring issues of world peace and world war to folks at the local level. They have the idea of forming a town peace commission, to help mediate local disputes, work against domestic violence, good causes, but also to keep our attention fixed on how the majority of our tax dollars are being spent – on current and past wars.

Why are we having such a hard time affording enough police protection for our towns, enough teachers for our schools? Could it have anything to do with the trillion dollars we have already poured into the sands of Iraq and Afghanistan, with the ticker still running?

Well, maybe we should hold a bake sale and let it go at that.

It was inspiring to see the citizens of Tunisia and Egypt rise up and overthrow their U.S. backed dictators in recent weeks. The fever seems to be spreading. We wonder, in the odd hours of the night, whether it might be possible for the people of Iraq or Afghanistan to find a nonviolent way to solve their troubles, too, if the U.S. forces followed the example set by other countries in the Coalition of the Willing and simply packed up and came home.

Defend our borders, sure. Defend the flow of global oil? We're less impressed with that as a reason for fighting and dying in foreign deserts, or propping up foreign dictators.

The flow of oil leads to the flow of CO2 into the air, and weather patterns we can no longer predict, and deep trouble with the world's food supply.

Maybe Leverett is onto something.

Anyway, spring is coming, and the world will change. We can still take comfort in these simple truths, as we sit by the wood stove and think.

"Tritium in the Well... Tritium in the Well...  
Hi, Ho the deri-o, there's Tritium in the Well."



JESSICA LARKIN ILLUSTRATION / CLAUDIA WELLS COLLAGE

## LETTERS TO THE EDITOR

### Town Selectboards Voice Concern on Vermont Yankee

**BY RANDY KEHLER COLRAIN** - At the request of town residents, the selectboards of 13 Vermont, New Hampshire, and Massachusetts towns in close proximity to the Entergy Corporation's Vermont Yankee nuclear reactor in Vernon, VT, have recently written to state and federal authorities expressing concerns about possible ways Vermont Yankee's shutdown in 2012 may impact their towns. In most cases, these selectboards have voted to send a letter drafted by the Safe & Green Campaign, a three-year-old grassroots education and outreach project based in towns within 20 miles of the reactor.

The letter, which is being sent to "Those with Authority Over the Vermont Yankee Nuclear Power Station in Vernon, including the Entergy Nuclear Corporation, the Vermont

Legislature and Public Service Board, and the U.S. Nuclear Regulatory Commission," begins as follows:

"As of February 24th, 2010, when the Vermont Senate voted 26-4 in opposition to the extended operation of Vermont Yankee's original 40-year license on March 21st, 2012, the plant is now scheduled to cease operation on or before that date. This scheduled closure is likely to affect nearby towns and cities in the tri-state area in a number of ways. Because it is the responsibility of local selectboards and town or city councils to protect and enhance the safety and well-being of our towns and cities, we are writing this letter to urge all the appropriate authorities to take whatever steps may be necessary in order to minimize any negative impacts that Vermont Yankee's closure may have on its workers,

local residents, and the environment."

The letter calls for Vermont Yankee workers to be given "first preference when workers are hired for the multi-year decommissioning and site cleanup process," as well as "opportunities for re-training for available jobs at decent wages, including jobs in the rapidly expanding 'green energy' sector."

In addition to voicing public and environmental health concerns related to decommissioning and site cleanup, the letter also addresses Vermont Yankee's last year of operation:

"During this final period as the reactor continues to age and minor accidents and radioactive leakages continue to occur (if they do), residents and officials of nearby towns and cities [shall] be assured that there will be extra  
see TOWNS pg 5

### Thanks to the Highway Crew

I just want to thank the Gill highway department for going above and beyond the call of duty and doing such a wonderful job plowing these past snow storms.

- Joseph M. Parzych  
Gill

### Not a Sign, but a Symbol of Faith

I noticed a recent letter to the editor in the *Montague Reporter* about North Leverett Baptist Church and our cross. I'm not really sure why all of a sudden this has become an issue, for that particular cross in front of our church has been there for years. Unless of course there are still some ill feelings concerning the painting incident involving the Village Coop a few months ago.

So I'm not really sure if this is a legitimate concern or just another antagonistic attack on Jesus Christ and his Church. The letter contained a significantly misguided statement as the premise to the whole argument concerning the cross of Jesus Christ.

Know this with earnest, the people of North Leverett Baptist Church don't worship the cross. We worship the one who carried

the cross. Furthermore it is not fair nor is it accurate to associate the Christians of North Leverett Baptist with those who have abused the symbol of the cross over the course of history. True there have been acts of unprecedented inhumanity and injustice done in the name of Christ throughout history which unfortunately still occur in our broken world of today. But the accusation that the people of North Leverett Baptist Church worship a symbol that represents death and destruction is not only historically inaccurate but theologically misguided.

Is it right to lump all peace loving, law abiding Muslims in with the senseless murderous acts committed by radical Muslims? Of course not! So why do it to all Christians and the people of North Leverett Baptist Church?

In response to the questions is the cross a sign? And why do they worship the cross? The cross is not a sign but a symbol; in fact it is a universal symbol of hope because it represents the greatest hope for all mankind. For we do not worship the cross but we worship the one who died on the cross! The cross is a symbol of death for Jesus Christ, but for  
see SIGN pg 5

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**U.S. Casualties in Iraq and Afghanistan as of 2/16/11**

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Casualties in Iraq as of this date  
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Afghanistan **1476**

Wounded in Iraq **32,009**

Wounded in Afghanistan **9971**

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

**OP ED**

**Traffic and Grocery Component are Concerns with Big Box Store**

BY PAT ALLEN

**MONTAGUE CITY** - I recognize the City of Greenfield and its planning board have the right to determine what is in the best interests of Greenfield in terms of development. However, there are times when particular projects proposed have a much greater impact on the surrounding communities than might be realized at first. This should be taken into account if the region as a whole is to prosper. No doubt many of the retail customers and employees will be from the Turners Falls and Montague area.

I believe a discount retail store could be an asset to Montague as well as to Greenfield. Rich's, Ames and earlier such businesses are long gone, but their services are needed now more than ever by many of our citizens.

As a Montague resident and

office holder, I need to share with you two specific issues I personally feel impact our citizens and our businesses.

The first issue is the effect of traffic, particularly on the Turners Falls Road connection to Montague. This is a troubled area for both Greenfield and Montague and is in need of improvement under the current level of service, particularly the turn onto the 5th Street bridge from Turners Falls Road in Greenfield. Montague needs to know what effect the proposed development will have on this important gateway to Turners Falls.

The 2007 VHB proposal lists the land use in the vicinity as "residential homes," while in fact the area is industrial and office space. In the 2010 VHB study the

traffic impacts on Turners Falls Road were not considered easterly of the intersection with Loomis Road.

Because of missing information and misinformed assumptions, we simply do not know if this critical connection between our communities may be overburdened with traffic resulting from the development. The Montague planning board sent a letter to your board addressing these concerns.

The second issue is the inclusion of a grocery component. You have stated that that issue is not one you will be dealing with; however, in the MEPA report, July 2007, EIR #13929) 30-24 the applicant stated:

"Furthermore, this project does not include a grocery component, and it will be written as

such in the lease agreement between the Proponent and the future tenant... Also, as mentioned in the MEPA meeting... if a grocery component is introduced, trip generation for this project will need to be modified and the traffic impacts associated with the change will need to be discussed and reviewed through MEPA."

If there is now a grocery component included in the project, has there been a more recent review as stated in the MEPA report? If not, when will that happen? I would hope that report would take into account a true and accurate study of the real traffic traveling over Turners Falls Road, in both directions.

In addition, the Montague business most impacted would, of course, be Food City; however

several other businesses in the downtown have struggled to build and maintain their base in order to provide necessary goods particularly for our downtown population, many of whom do not have cars. A smaller scale development without a grocery component would partially address the regional concerns while providing our area with an excellent source for affordable products.

While the board may not be required by legislation to review impacts on neighboring communities, I respectfully request that you fully consider the impact.

Thank you for your attention to the concerns of your neighbors.

*(In this letter, Montague selectboard chair Pat Allen specified she was speaking as an individual, based on 12 years experience as a member of the Montague selectboard and past Montague planning board member.)*

**SIGN** from page 4

anyone who comes to a truthful understanding of the cross it is a symbol of life! For it was on the cross that Christ died for the sins of mankind and three days later rose from the dead to open the way for sinful man to have access into the presence of a holy God. That is the true

meaning of the cross. It is a demonstration of God's love. "For God so loved the world that He gave His only begotten Son that whoever believes in Him should not perish but have eternal life." John 3:16. The cross is a symbol that there is hope beyond physical death, the hope of eternal life. So

when you drive by North Leverett Baptist Church and see the cross, remember it is a symbol of life, an icon of hope to those who will receive the message of the cross by faith.

Furthermore, it is the heart of the people of North Leverett Baptist to extend this hope using very tangible means,

such as reaching out into our community with ministries like our free health care clinic and food pantry, but also to share the glorious message of God's love for the world demonstrated through the cross of Christ!

- **Pastor Douglas MacLeod**  
North Leverett Baptist Church

**TOWNS** from page 4

attention to maintenance and repair of all systems associated with the reactor, coupled with heightened inspections, monitoring, and testing to minimize the possibility of a major accident and ensure that people, animals, and the environment are not exposed to any additional risks of breathing, drinking, or otherwise ingesting radioactivity."

The letter goes on to say that: "Any tendency to delay or cancel needed maintenance and repairs during the reactor's final months of operation [shall] be strenuously resisted, and that if circumstances warrant, Vermont

Yankee [shall] be shut down permanently before its scheduled retirement date."

Finally, the letter requests that "all local selectboards and town/city councils be kept informed in a timely way... of all relevant plans, decisions, and other developments related to Vermont Yankee that might affect our towns and cities."

And it proposes that a "citizens advisory board" be formed, with its members appointed by local selectboards and town or city councils, so as to facilitate ongoing, two-way communication regarding all of these matters."

The towns whose selectboards

have signed the letter as drafted by the Safe & Green Campaign include: Putney, Westminster, and Dummerston, VT; Richmond, NH; and New Salem, Wendell, Warwick, Montague, Leverett, Colrain, and Buckland, MA. Also, the Marlboro, VT, selectboard approved the same letter but added an addendum. The Winchester, NH, selectboard approved the spirit of the Safe & Green letter but preferred to send their own letter expressing similar concerns. The letter is currently under consideration by the Keene, NH, city council. And the Gill, MA, selectboard approved the letter with a few minor changes. Two town selectboards

have declined to sign the letter, in Newfane, VT, and Chesterfield, NH.

Copies of the letter are being sent to the board of health in each town, the Windham County Regional Commission (VT), the Franklin Regional Council of Governments (MA), the Southwest Regional Planning Commission (NH), and elected local, state, and federal officials representing Vermont, Massachusetts, and New Hampshire towns within 20 miles of Vermont Yankee.

*Randy Kehler is a coordinator of the Safe and Green campaign.*

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- The volunteers and the Board of Directors of the Franklin Area Survival Center  
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**NOTES FROM THE ERVING SELECTBOARD****Usher Mill Boiler Building May Come Down**

**BY KATIE NOLAN** - Usher Mill re-use committee member Linda Downs-Bembury reported to the Erving selectboard on February 10th that Bob Leet of Whetstone Engineering has inspected the boiler building at the Usher Mill and would soon submit a report on its structural stability.

Selectboard member James Hackett said, referring to the entire mill complex, "We want to see rubble coming out of there before annual town meeting."

In discussing the potential to save and restore the 1918, 1000-square-foot boiler room building among the rest of the arson damaged mill complex on Arch Street in Erving Center, Hackett said while it might be morally and historically responsible to save that building, it might not be economically responsible.

Selectboard member Eugene Klepadlo remarked he didn't think it would be feasible for the boiler building to be saved. But he added, "Honestly, I would like to see the boiler building stay. I would like to see a micro brewery in there."

Downs-Bembury said the committee plans to meet March 7th with the conservation commission to determine "how close to the river we can go" with any redevelopment of the Usher Mill proper-

ty.

The seven acre Usher Mill is still owned by Patriots Environmental, a salvage firm out of Worcester, which has already removed salvageable material from the property, and has since defied orders from the county building inspector to clean up and secure the abandoned mill. The boiler building, a free standing brick structure, retains perhaps more structural integrity than any of the buildings on the site. Patriots has not paid any taxes on the property since they closed on it in 2007; the property is currently in tax title.

"The town can take action in summer," to begin claiming the property, according to town administrative coordinator Tom Sharp.

Erving town meeting last year approved spending \$500,000 from stabilization to clean up to secure the property, with the intent of placing a lien on the deed for the same amount if the town carries out the work while the site remains in private hands.

The selectboard voted to extend the "third party" revenue sharing agreement with Erseco until March 31st. Erseco operates the town-owned Erving Center water treatment plant that treats wastes from Erving Paper Mill, Erving Center residents, and fee-paying

"third party" septage haulers. The agreement, which expired in December, was previously extended until February 28th, to allow continued negotiations between Erseco and the town.

Rebecca Hubbard, chair of the recently formed Friends of the Library, told the selectboard the group intends to support the library through volunteerism, financial support beyond town appropriations, and promoting the services and programs the library offers. The Friends of the Library is now in the "very involved process of applying for tax exempt and non-profit status," she said.

The Friends held the first of a series of monthly craft sessions in February, creating heart-themed and President's Day decorations for the library. Hubbard said that as part of the President's Day observance, Kim Gregory will appear at the library in costume as a friend of young George Washington on February 23rd.

The Friends of the Library are soliciting donations of used books they can sell at the town-wide tag sale. Hubbard said additional information about the Friends is available at the library website.

see ERVING pg 13

**NOTES FROM THE LEVERETT SMALL TOWN MEETING****Leverett Takes First Step toward Last Mile Internet Access**

**BY TANYA CUSHMAN** Moderator Gary Gruber called a quorum at two minutes past seven, saying it was the first time he could remember getting a quorum so early for a special town meeting. Perhaps the warrant article to speed the creation of a municipal cooperative to provide home hook-up for high speed internet service had something to do with the crowd.

Article One would allow the selectboard to create "a municipal lighting plant for all purposes allowable under the laws of the Commonwealth, including without limitation the operation of the telecommunications system," was called "dear to us all" by the moderator. The article required passage by a two-thirds majority in a ballot vote; and it must be passed again at the subsequent town meeting.

Representatives of Wired West, the new municipal cooperative working with underserved communities in Western and Central Massachusetts, and Rob Brooks, a member of the ad hoc committee working to provide internet access for Leverett, were on hand to answer questions. The first question, short but to the point, was yelled out, "When?"

Being out of order, the question was ignored.

After some silence and

the comment there must be some questions, a lawyer asked about the potential liability to the town. Brooks stated the goal in joining with Wired West, or going a different route, to provide "last mile" internet access is to have zero liability to the town budget or the town's credit rating.

Once the state, through the Massachusetts Broadband Initiative, installs the middle mile cable to town centers and landmark institutions in towns like Leverett, estimates for building out the last mile of connectivity to private homes range from \$50,000 to \$100,000.

Peter d'Errico said the vote on Tuesday was only a first step, and was not about the nuts and bolts but about creating the institutional structure to provide universal high speed internet access. Voters then stood in line to cast paper ballots, and when the votes were counted the decision was unanimous in favor of passage.

Article Two sought \$40,000 from town reserves to pay for an owner's project manager and architectural designs to repair or replace all or part of the elementary school's slate roof, and to replace the rest of the old windows installed at the school in the 1950s, and to remediate any asbestos or PCBs in the caulking at

the school and also perhaps to install solar panels on the south roof.

The town will eventually have to approve all the money for the job, which has a preliminary price tag of from \$500,000 to \$600,000 in order to become eligible for up to 51% reimbursement from the state School Building Authority's Green Repair program.

In order to get in line for the MSBA grant, the town needs to first hire a project manager and an architect, which was the purpose of Tuesday's vote. However, it was noted that none of the architects or project managers on the state's list of allowed contractors are from the local area, so whomever the town hires will be from Eastern Massachusetts. So much for stimulating the local economy.

The grant requires fast action; there will probably be a second special town meeting called in March.

When asked, the finance committee said they had not considered this article.

A resident who oversees buildings at UMass said because of the economy it is a very good time to go out to bid with building projects.

The article passed unanimously. Town meeting ended at 7:59 p.m.

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**NOTES FROM THE MAHAR REGIONAL SCHOOL COMMITTEE**

**Teachers Get 1.5% Raise over Two Years**

**BY KATIE NOLAN** - William Curtis, Mahar Massachusetts Teacher's Association president, told the regional school committee that MTA members voted 64 to 4 to approve the faculty and staff contract proposal for the next two years. The proposed contract includes no cost of living raise for FY'12 and a 1.5% raise for FY'13.

Although original language in the proposed contract reduced the region's share in retiree health insurance costs from 85% to 80% in FY'12, and to 75% in FY'13, the committee amended these provisions. Under the amendment, current retirees will see no change in the percentage of health care costs, but those who retire after July 1st, 2011 will pay the percentage paid by active employees as of the year they retire.

The committee voted to accept the contract and voted separately to accept the retiree percentage amendment.

At its February 9th meeting, the Mahar regional school committee voted to approve a three-year contract for Michael Baldassarre as the consolidated central office superintendent for the Mahar, Petersham elementary, and Orange elementary school districts starting July 1st, 2011.

Dana Kennan of Petersham reported the Petersham school committee had approved the three-year superintendent contract earlier in the evening.

The Orange school committee approved the superintendent's contract on Monday, February 15th.

New Salem and Wendell remain in the Union #28 superintendency union for Swift River Elementary School, and in the Mahar district for grades 7-12.

New Salem member Michael Yohan reported that Kenneth Roche of Massachusetts Association of Regional Schools (MARS) and Patricia Martin, current superintendent at Petersham Center School, presented an overview of the Mahar K-12 central office consolidation to the Wendell and New Salem school committees at their February 3rd meeting.

Roche told the New Salem and Wendell committees that the three districts will share central office personnel: a superintendent, an assistant superintendent for elementary education, and a part-time assistant superintendent for teaching, learning, and accountability.

Roche said, "This central office consolidation is seen by DESE [Department of Elementary and Secondary Education] as a stepping stone to fuller (hybrid) regionalization." His presentation also indicated that cost sharing would be based on enrollment, number of schools and good-faith estimates of time and duties.

Roche explained to the Wendell and New Salem committees that key provisions in the draft amended regional agreement are:

"Mahar K-12 regional district school committee members will be elected at large, with a residency requirement.

"New Salem and Wendell will each have two seats on the committee of twelve.

"Only Orange and Petersham school district members will vote on matters affecting Mahar elementary schools (Orange and Petersham).

"Towns will have the option to direct additional funding to their town elementary school(s).

GZA Geo-Environmental, Inc. engineers Derek Schipper and Greg Hunt told Mahar Regional School committee members that permitting, engineering, and construction for removal of the school's Gulf Brook dam will cost approximately \$330,000, and can be completed by the current project deadline of January 2012.

The dam was inspected and evaluated as required by the state Office of Dam Safety, and received a rating of "significant hazard" to downstream properties.

The school committee had voted previously to remove the dam rather than repair it, because repair and continued monitoring and maintenance of the dam would be more expensive. GZA will oversee engineering design, removal of the existing spillway, and restoration of the Gulf

see MAHAR pg 12

The move to spend

more on math tutoring comes a year after the committee agreed to drop a Spanish language immersion program, saving about \$18,000 a year. Asked whether the two decisions together could be interpreted as a move by the school committee toward "teaching to the test," to accommodate the state's emphasis on Math and English MCAS scores as a means of measuring student achievement, Hajir said the committee intends to take up a discussion of "teaching the whole child," at their next meeting.

This year, the Leverett Elementary School took in about \$135,000 in school choice sending tuition. That number will decline next year, as the number of school choice students declines from 27 to 24 out of a total school population of 160. Several school choice students will graduate from sixth grade this year; there were no open seats for school choice students in the kindergarten, and there will be no room for school choice students in kindergarten next year.

The school committee maintains a policy of not allowing school choice students to enroll in classes with at least 15 students, K-3, or 18 students in grades 4-6, Hajir said.

Leverett maintains a revolving fund with

about \$60,000 from school choice funds that accumulated in past years in excess of the school's annual operating budget needs, but Hajir said that account has only been drawn down, not added to, in recent years, as the percent of school choice students at LES declines. The school committee plans to use about \$15,000 from that fund to help bring the FY'12 operating budget into balance.

Last year, when he was chair of the Leverett school committee, Kip Fonsh initiated a discussion of whether Leverett would do well to eliminate school choice entirely, comparing the use of school choice funds to a drug addiction, and calling the policy harmful to the sending districts in neighboring towns.

Last Monday, Fonsh backed Hajir in suggesting a line item for MCAS tutoring be placed in the regular school budget, saying, "It's a need. The regular program is not getting students to the point of proficiency."

LES has adopted a new basic math curriculum this year, called Everyday Math, to help deal with lagging test scores. Committee member Pam Stone cautioned it was too soon to measure the impact of the new curriculum.

Ross said the addition

see LEVERETT pg 13

**NOTES FROM THE LEVERETT SCHOOL COMMITTEE**

**Math Tutoring Added at Leverett Elementary, Subtracted from School Choice Funds**

**BY DAVID DETMOLD** On Monday, February 7th, the Leverett school committee decided to spend \$1610 from the school choice revolving fund to pay for an eight week after school math tutoring program. Last month, elementary school principal Ann Ross told the committee Leverett Elementary School (LES) MCAS math scores had shown 58% of students testing at or above proficiency in math for their grade level. She said 25 children could benefit from the after school math tutor, if they all took advantage of it. Eighty percent of the LES students who were offered the opportunity to take after school math tutoring did so last year, Ross said.

School committee member Kip Fonsh said he favored, "any possibility to help kids out, even if it's MCAS, which I am not partial to. If they improve, the school's numbers improve. It's an investment in the kids and the school."

School committee chair Farshid Hajir said, "We need kids to be prepared for middle school. We do have some data to show the targeted intervention worked last year." He also said, "Where there is a systemic need, it's better not to allocate from school choice" funds.

The move to spend

more on math tutoring comes a year after the committee agreed to drop a Spanish language immersion program, saving about \$18,000 a year. Asked whether the two decisions together could be interpreted as a move by the school committee toward "teaching to the test," to accommodate the state's emphasis on Math and English MCAS scores as a means of measuring student achievement, Hajir said the committee intends to take up a discussion of "teaching the whole child," at their next meeting.

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# The Destruction of the Northfield Chateau

**BY JOSEPH A. PARZYCH**  
**NORTHFIELD** - Last month, we ran out of space for the Northfield Chateau story. We continue, this week, with a few tidbits and the ultimate fate of one of New England's most elegant buildings.

Francis Schell insisted upon the five story chateau standing as high as possible so that nothing could obstruct his view. He had a neighboring hill leveled for that reason, and the earth brought to the site by way of a narrow gauge railroad track laid from the building site to the hill.

Forty-two Italian laborers filled dump carts by hand. A locomotive hauled the string of dump carts over the track, to the building site. Temporary barracks in a field in back of the

Northfield Hotel housed the Italians. A team of horses fell into a deep ditch being filled on the site of the future Chateau. Getting them out presented a problem, so the horses were "dispatched," buried where they lay, and the Chateau built over them.

Italians have long been prominent on the construction scene in the U.S. They worked building the power canal in Turners Falls, and dug deep sewers by hand in Montague Center. Italians also built the transcontinental railroad until Chinese laborers were imported for excavating tunnels through the rocky mountains. Since Italians are proficient at masonry dating back to the Romans, the brick Chateau, with mortared stone foundation and walls of brick,

was most likely built by Italian masons.

Since both Mr. and Mrs. Schell considered themselves above the working classes, it is doubtful that Schell ever laid eyes on the Italians who wrought the work of art the Chateau became. After the Chateau was completed, Mr. Schell decided he wanted to use some flagstones for landscaping. He summoned a farmer



JOSEPH A. PARZYCH PHOTO

August Brown admires a ceramic replica, made by Turners Falls artist Jack Nelson, of the Northfield Chateau, in the lobby of the Greenfield Savings Bank last month.

# Can You Guess When this Pile of Snow will Finally Melt?



CLAUDIA WELLS PHOTO

The Carnegie Library has started a contest to see when the Snow Mound on the corner of Ave A and 7th will melt.

**TURNERS FALLS** - You can tell the winter has overstayed its welcome when folks begin making a contest out of when it will finally go away. Mary Ann Packard, who staffs the desk at the Carnegie Library most weekdays, said the idea arose this week to have patrons try and outguess one another on the departure date of Old Man Winter. And what better measuring stick to judge the day he finally leaves town than the huge pile of snow heaped up across the street from the library by the Mackin snow plows clearing (and clearing, and clearing) the Food City parking lot?

Move over, Lake Pleasant, the Snow off the Avenue contest is here!

Children's librarian Linda Hickman said the response to the contest has been enthusiastic so far, and not just from children. "Everybody loves a raffle!" she said. A jar on the front desk is filling up with slips and dates. Winner gets a \$20 gift certificate at the 2nd Street Bakery. Can't wait for spring!

who had such stones. When Schell saw a horse and wagon turn into his driveway, he

ordered the man off his property. Later, he sent word to the farmer, see **CHATEAU** pg 12

**KENNEY** from pg 1  
loyalty to the district. He's willing to do whatever is necessary and whatever is required. And that's a pretty rare quality."

Since 2007, the Department of Elementary and Secondary Education has classified GMRSD as a "Level 4," underperforming district. Later the same year, a three-member team of independent evaluators examined the district's leadership capacity and governance practices, assessing the strengths of the superintendent, the school committee, key central office staff, and building-level leaders.

When asked if this classification had any connection to recent shifts in administrative framework in the district, Ladd responded, "The big connection, at least for me, is that Jeff had indicated that he was getting ready to retire. I planned to have one principal for middle school and high school, as we needed a more seamless approach to education."

It was Ladd's decision, with consultation, with the Department of Elementary and Secondary Education, that he would implement that change a year early, rather than waiting until Kenney retired. The department provided the district with a

grant to allow Kenney to work on specific projects.

A native of Bernardston, Kenney graduated from Springfield College with a bachelor's degree in physical education and health. He continued his studies at the UMass Amherst, where he obtained a masters in education.

When he became an administrator, Kenney said he realized the benefit of having had experience in the classroom. "I think the thing you draw from moving from teaching to administration is you know what teachers are going through in the classroom. It's a tough job," he said of teaching. "It seems to get tougher by the year."

Kenney added that his relationship with staff and faculty clearly shifted when he transitioned from fellow teacher to administrator.

"What I always thought about is that we are colleagues with different responsibilities," he said. "I found that in making that transition, I had to be very aware about what my job was. It is necessary to fulfill the responsibility of administrator and still maintain the respect of your colleagues."

When asked to comment on Kenney's contribution to the dis-

see **KENNEY** pg 10

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**LADD from pg 1**

(DESE). Those personnel cuts are will be determined following the turnaround plan's guidance on the district's core priorities, but Ladd made it clear he will have to juggle a number of variables as he makes that decision.

"We need to be focused on student achievement as part of this plan," he said. In order to support MCAS scores, Ladd said "half a dozen critical positions" in English Language Arts and Math coaching now being paid by federal stimulus funding will have to be absorbed into the regular budget in the coming year.

And Ladd pointed out the district is having real success in gaining back young families at the pre-K and K level, with 100 youngsters expected in the kindergarten class this fall. "That harkens back to kindergartens of old," said Ladd. "But we'll need four kindergarten teachers. We certainly don't want to send the message that we'll have kindergarten class sizes of 33 or 34," next year.

"The key for us is going to be in keeping those families," said Ladd in a follow-up interview. "We can attract them, but we have to be able to meet their needs."

He noted a survey on school choice showed the teacher cuts during the budget crisis of 2003-04 caused some local families to feel, "scared to death about class size, and many of them 'choiced their kids out' at that time."

Less than a year ago, on March 16th, 2010, Ladd outlined a sweeping vision of change to turn around the school district that among other things called for establishing the GMRSD as a countywide leader in early childhood education. Asked how that

squared with his decision to eliminate the director of early childhood education in next year's budget, Ladd said, "The emphasis on early childhood is absolutely critical for the long term success of this district. Early childhood has to be more than just one person. We have a very strong core preschool to kindergarten and first grade staff that has taken the 'Tools of the Mind' curriculum and embraced and implemented it, and we're starting to see really good results. We have kindergartners who are writing. I mean really writing. That's tremendous. That emphasis is going to continue."

But the vision may have dimmed somewhat since last March.

"We tried, but we really couldn't make the director position fiscally viable in a district of this size," admitted Ladd. "I had big dreams of becoming a lab site, with a vocational component for the high school, and Chris Jutres tried really hard to make that work. We had a very short window of opportunity, but the economy is working against us. We couldn't make it work," he said. "We just can't continue that position."

Ladd told the committee Tuesday, "I don't know of any other district in the area with as many challenges as we have, trying to do it with as limited resources. One out of district placement [special education student] will bust the budget this year."

Ladd said he is expecting more from all staff as he seeks to turn around the district, while adhering to the committee's budget compact with member towns to hold to level funding in FY'12.

"There have been no salary

increases outside union staff [i.e. for administrators] for three years, and I'm asking increased responsibility from these folks."

But pressed on whether teachers are also being asked to step up, now that they have gained their contractual demand for a 1.75% raise over three years, Ladd would only say, "The message I've received from the association and the rank and file teachers is, 'We have been committed, and we remain committed.'"

Ladd noted the graduation rate at the high school is "not increasing," and appears to be stuck at about 68%, even though the dropout rate is declining from its double digit highs in 2006 and 2007.

"We have students who are not progressing through the system in five years," said Ladd. "That's unconscionable. We have got to create alternative paths to graduation."

In March of last year, Ladd minced no words on this point. He said then, "We need to have high expectations for all students. Too often, I've heard, 'These students can't achieve to the same level because they come from poverty, they come from broken homes.' That is crap. We have a moral and ethical responsibility to all students in our district to provide excellence in education."

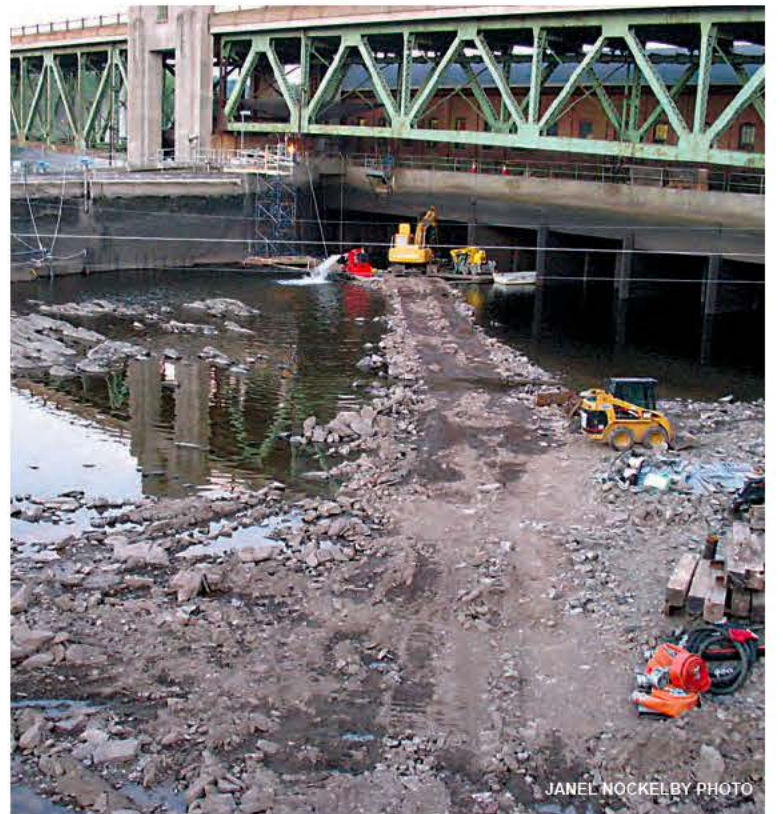
It is obvious this part of Ladd's vision statement from last year remains fully in effect.

"When we can put together a really focused improvement plan, we'll have people on board. I won't say there won't be some jockeying for position and turf, but I do think at the end of the day we will unite to turn this district around for the students."



**NOTES FROM THE MONTAGUE SELECTBOARD**

**A Perfect Day for Mud Puppies**



Earth Moving in the Empty Power Canal - 2006

**BY JANEL NOCKELBY** - A letter to the selectboard from First Light Power states that the power canal in Turners Falls will probably be drained for annual maintenance between September 12th and 17th this year. "So if you've never seen a mud puppy, September 13th would be a good day," said selectboard member Mark Fairbrother at Monday's meeting.

By September, there will be two years of detritus built up in the canal, since the canal was not drawn down at all last year. You may also see shopping carts, bicycles, mattresses, and old tires. Selectboard chairperson Pat Allen reported First Light is holding open the possibility of cancelling the draw down, but wanted to notify interested parties of their activities. Keep an eye out for possible canal critter viewing activities planned through Northfield Mountain.

In other news, in light of the Greenfield planning board hearing this evening, February 17th, at 7 p.m. at the Greenfield High School, on a proposed 135,000-square-foot combined grocery and discount retail

super store on the French King Highway, Allen reported back to the selectboard that 7 out of 26 businesses associated with the Montague Business Association responded to an informal poll last week on the topic of a big box store in Greenfield. All seven opposed having a big box store sited on the French King Highway as proposed, but Allen noted, "A lot of the comments reflected concerns about competition, and that's not something the planning board has any control over." Traffic was also mentioned by the respondents, and additionally Allen wrote a detailed letter to the Greenfield planning board outlining her concerns, as a resident of Montague, about lack of studies on the potential traffic impact between Greenfield and Montague, especially along Turners Falls Road in Greenfield and over the White Bridge to Turners Falls.

The selectboard signed documentation approving a Public Health District Initiative grant to study the possibility of Montague joining a regional health district. Town administration see **MONTAGUE pg 12**



Gill-Montague school committee members Michael Langknecht, Jen Waldron, Kristen Boyle, Joyce Phillips, Jane Oakes, and Jeff Singleton, are among those who will be working to implement the district's turnaround plan in months to come.

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WORLD from pg 1

managing better economically than many Arab and western countries. We had an odd adventure that I think underscores the pivotal nature of this period for Turkey, and the United States.

After attending a wonderful concert of the Turkish classical musical form called Macams, we wandered into the nearby Hilton hotel, ostensibly to see some famous ceramics made expressly for the Hilton when it opened in the 50s. We didn't find them, but on the way to the facilities, my husband Chris happily found a 10 lira bill (later determined to be his own) and an announcement of a famous Indian Sufi dancer appearing at the Hilton in three days' time.

We already had a plan to hit a photography opening, with food and drink, earlier on the same night, so we added the Sufi dancer to our evening. I will skip an account of the photography and get to the Sufi dancer at the Hilton.

When we arrived at the Hilton we were surprised to find a huge meeting room full of Indian and Turkish men and some women all seated at round dinner tables. On three sides of the hall there were long tables laden with chafing dishes and other arrays of food. So the Sufi dancer was entertaining a group of— we guessed— businessmen.

There was a stage, and on either side of it a group of

Indian musicians. The first announcement made was that the Sufi dancer had strained her back severely during rehearsals and, therefore, would not be dancing. Lacking the dancer, but still curious, we stayed for dinner to see what the meeting was about. After a too brief interlude of music, none other than the minister of commerce for India was introduced, a young man of between 35 and 40 years old, son of India's minister of railroads, who said he had first accompanied his father to Turkey as a young teenager.

During his talk he described the "bond" between his country and Turkey as one made of (I am paraphrasing) ...a long, rich cultural tradition, a trading history that dates back to the Silk Road, and a mystical connection through shared beliefs such as the Sufism. He went on to say that countries such as India and Turkey were now in a better position than ever to trade with each other.

"The West," he said, "is over."

At that point we deemed it was time to leave.

As many governments were responding to the protesters in Tahrir Square, Turkey's prime minister, Recip Erdogan, also added his voice in support, advising Mubarak to listen to his people, and reminding the Egyptian president he would not live forever, but needed to do the right thing here to enjoy paradise later.

I have been wondering how

to balance the Indian commerce minister's final judgment about the West's prospects. One thing came up today. Apparently, the Turkish government has jailed three highly placed generals in the military, including one ranked as its next commander. In Turkey, as in Egypt, the army is the go-to institution in time of trouble, protecting the reforms brought in by the Reformer, Kemal Ataturk, at Turkish independence in 1923.

The concern expressed by Turks hearing this report is twofold: that the government is jailing people without bringing charges or holding them innocent until proven guilty. The story is that the three were accused by "terrorists" of plotting to overthrow the present Turkish government. A third and fourth concern for citizens here is that their government may be lying to them and that they are not conducting legal business in a democratic fashion by upholding habeas corpus and accountability to the citizenry.

Yesterday the government shut down the one remaining anti-government press and arrested its journalists, who are also not officially charged. This past year has seen other journalists fired for expressing views the government did not like. It may be that Turkey is trying to get ahead of the curve in more areas than just business.

KENNEY from pg 8

loyalty to the district, teachers' union president Karl Dziura, a TFHS English teacher who worked with Kenney during his time as principal stated that as a matter of policy, he does not make public comments on the performance of GMRSD employees.

As an educator, Kenney considers some his proudest accomplishments his work in the formation of Great Falls Middle School. "It took a lot of people and a lot of effort and I'm proud to have been a part of that," he said. "Also the building project, as difficult as it was, to be able to say you were a part of that was a highlight."

TFHS student council president Daniel Skarzynski said, "Mr. Kenney had a positive impact on the school community of Turners Falls High School. He was always warm and inviting, and his retirement will be a loss."

GMRSD school committee chair Emily Monosson agreed that Kenney's relationship with students has been a strong point.

"It seems like Jeff really helped to create a positive atmosphere within the school for students. I think students felt comfortable going to Jeff if they had issues — and that's a really good thing."

In addition to his positions as science teacher and principal, Kenney has been known for his enthusiastic participation in extracurricular activities. Whether it was playing the guitar at the school talent show, appearing as Santa at fundraising breakfasts, singing in school concerts, coaching middle school football, or appearing in a cameo in the school play, Kenney has always "let kids know you're a human being and that education can be fun."

"At this point, I've got only a few weeks left, and I'm beginning to think I'm running out of time," said Kenney of retirement. "When you put your whole life into something, it's scary, leaving," Kenney said. "But I feel comfortable knowing that the people who are here are fine people and terrific educators."

As Kenney looks to retirement, he plans to travel and spend time with his wife, who is also retired. He has two daughters in

Virginia and three grandchildren and one great-grandson. He plans to visit them for a few weeks, and also travel to San Antonio to visit his brother.

"My wife and I plan to buy a camper and do a little traveling," he said. "The Grand Canyon, as an amateur geologist, is something I always wanted to see."

But Kenney does not expect to be out of education for a long time. "I'm too young to not be involved," he said. He said it is certainly in his vision to continue to be involved in education.

He said he wouldn't be opposed to doing interim work. "I honestly would look seriously if there was a middle school science teacher opportunity; getting back in the classroom sounds like fun to me," he said.

He added he and his wife would also look for opportunities to volunteer.

"One thing I know is that I'm not going to be sitting around," he said. "I can't imagine not working or doing something. Everyone needs a purpose, and mine's been pretty defined until now. I'll be looking for a new purpose. It will be an adventure."

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HIGHLIGHTS FROM THE MONTAGUE POLICE LOG

Break In, Assault, Trespassing

Tuesday, 2/8

6:40 p.m. Burglary, breaking and entering on Randall Road. Services rendered.

Wednesday, 2/9

2:56 p.m. Burglary, breaking and entering on Second Street. Investigated.

8:10 p.m. Arrest of

for possession of a firearm without a license, unlawful possession of ammunition, possession of a class B drug, and disorderly conduct.

Thursday, 2/10

3:21 p.m. Arrest of at Scotty's Convenience Store, for assault and battery with a dangerous weapon and disorderly conduct.

7:13 p.m. Loud noise disturbance on Third Street. Verbal warning.

7:51 p.m. Domestic disturbance on L Street. Verbal warning.

Friday, 2/11

8:47 a.m. Suspicious auto at Our Lady of Peace Rectory on Seventh Street.

Domestic disturbance on K Street. Investigated.

Saturday, 2/12

1:42 a.m. Suspicious other on Turners Falls Road. Referred to other agency. 7:02 a.m. Burglary, breaking and entering at Millers Pub on East Main Street. Report taken.

Sunday, 2/13

4:31 p.m. Trespassing on East Mineral Road. Citation issued.

Monday, 2/14

10:02 a.m. Annoying,

Referred harassing phone call to an Equi's Candy Store on officer. Avenue A. Services rendered.

5:31 p.m. 11:38 p.m. General disturbance at Between the Uprights at Second Street. Services rendered.

Tuesday, 2/15

10:27 a.m. Domestic disturbance on Dell Street. Peace restored.

2:40 p.m. Report of hit and run accident. Services rendered.

5:28 p.m. Arrest of on a default warrant.

9:20 p.m. Loud noise disturbance on East Main Street. Services rendered.



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# Gill-Montague a Focus at School Committee Caucus

BY DAVID DETMOLD

**GREENFIELD** - "We should be embarrassed and angry," at the 68.4% graduation rate of the 2010 cohort of Turners Falls High School students, said Gill-Montague superintendent Carl Ladd on Saturday. "I'm not seeing the recognition that we need to do things differently."

Ladd spoke two days after the Department of Elementary and Secondary Education (DESE) released graduation and dropout rates for all schools and school districts in the Commonwealth last week. He made his remarks during a pause in the Franklin County School Committee Caucus's school finance seminar at the Greenfield Middle School, where he addressed about three dozen school committee members from around the county.

Ladd gave a short talk on "the Gill Montague Challenge," and focused his remarks on the recent compact for fiscal stability hammered out with the finance committees and selectboards from the

member towns of Gill and Montague. That agreement, in which the school district agreed to hold their operating budget to level funding for the second year in a row in FY'12, won unanimous backing from the Montague town meeting in December of last year, following earlier approval from the town meeting in Gill.

Subsequently, the Gill Montague Regional School District (GMRSD) reached a labor agreement with teachers and staff, granting 1.75% salary increases over the three years of the contract, which begins with FY'11.

The sustainability of the budget compact in light of the new labor contract was called into question by Pioneer school committee member Jed Proujansky.

Proujansky said in his district, "level services equals five percent budget hikes each year," due largely to contractual wage hikes and benefit increases.

The Gill-Montague compact calls for holding GMRSD

budgets to no more than a 2.5% budget increase for the next three years. Singleton said in recent years, a level services budget in Gill-Montague has hovered in the 3% - 4% range, due to "fixed" personnel costs.

Proujansky said the contradictory factors of providing for fixed personnel costs within a budget constrained by Proposition 2½ would lead to double digit staff layoffs by the end of the five year compact, all other things being equal.

Montague school committee member Jeff Singleton, who voted in the minority against the new GMRSD labor contract in January, warning it had the potential to "blow the compact out of the water in year three," told Proujansky, "You have to put the brakes on wage and benefit increases."

Proujansky asked if the Gill-Montague labor union had been involved in the discussions leading up to the approval of the fiscal compact.

"No," said Singleton, who added, "You've got an identified problem. If you have 5%

budget increases, 3% increases in state aid, and no more than 3% increases in town contributions, you've got to go to benefits."

Proujansky asked, "How do you resolve that issue?"

Gill finance committee chair Tupper Brown, who questioned the accuracy or relevance of Proujansky's 5% personnel inflation figure to Gill-Montague, also said, "Maybe you're talking about a statewide campaign to get more money into education."

Singleton said, "School districts cannot survive with 5% increases in budget."

However Ladd told the caucus on Saturday that the Gill-Montague budget compact can be managed with the new labor compact in place.

With a budget deal now in hand with member towns, and a three year contract with teachers and staff recently ratified, Ladd was asked what the district needs to do now to pull the regional school district out of the Level IV "needs improvement" category and

increase the stubbornly low graduation rate (68%) for students at the Turners Falls High School.

Gill-Montague remains one of only four districts statewide in the DESE's Level IV category, along with Holyoke, Randolph, and Southbridge.

"One of the things the DESE talked about very clearly in the report was the lack of support from certain partners," said Ladd, who immediately segued to talking about the "school committee dysfunction," highlighted by the DESE's recent district review team.

Ladd noted "pockets of improvement," in MCAS scores, particularly at Sheffield (now Montague Elementary).

Sheffield has done an incredible job," said Ladd. But Gill Elementary is "slipping," Ladd said, in terms of MCAS scores, and the "middle school is drifting."

And Ladd called the dropout rates at the high school "frustrating."

"The trajectory on average yearly progress is way too slow," said Ladd.

## GILL from pg 1

growth of the levy limit under Proposition 2½. Gill has about \$149,361 in free cash at the moment, and about \$111,000 in the town's regular stabilization account, an amount selectboard member Randy Crochier called "a pittance."

On the expense side of the town's ledger, Purington said two new students from Gill will be attending the Franklin County Tech School, leading to a proposed increase in the Tech School assessment of \$23,057. Meanwhile, an upward shift in the percentage of Gill students attending Gill-Montague schools from 14.8% to 15.0% of the total student population means the town of Gill may expect a proportional increase in its FY'12 assessment this year.

On the other hand, Purington said the town will pay about \$20,000 less this year for building inspection service from the Franklin County Cooperative Inspection

Service, due in part to the lack of building or renovation of private homes in the last year, and also due to the completion of major building projects at Northfield Mount Hermon.

Purington said he will have rough draft of town departmental spending in two weeks, but cautioned all figures will be preliminary, as another tough budget cycle gets underway.

In other news, the town tested a reverse 911 emergency phone system last week, prompted by fire chief Gene Beaubien.

The test, which reached 222 phone numbers in Gill (and found no answer or busy signals at 90 other numbers) was coordinated with the emergency preparedness planner for the Vermont Yankee nuclear power plant in Vernon, VT.

The test calls, which relied on a data base of phone numbers provided by Entergy Vermont Yankee, left the message on answering machines, "This is a test of the town of Gill's phone notification sys-

tem; no action is required."

If you did not receive such a message last week, and would like to be added to the phone notification system, call the Gill fire department at 863-8955 or the town administrative assistant at 863-9347.

"We know there are more than 312 telephone numbers in Gill," said Purington, who noted there is no free data base available with all town phone numbers, including cell phone numbers.

After some discussion and a few revisions, the selectboard signed a letter to the Nuclear Regulatory Commission and other state and local agencies and officials concerned with the Vermont Yankee nuclear power plant calling for the safe closure of the nuclear plant on schedule by March of 2012, and the preferential hiring of current employees for the expected lengthy decommissioning process.

The board opted to change parts of the letter, prepared by the grassroots Safe and Green

campaign, referring to a guaranteed "generous severance package of pay and benefits" for workers who chose not to accept continued employment during decommissioning. That section was omitted in the Gill board's final draft, and a section calling for notification of local officials in the event radioactive components from the dismantled reactor are carried over town roads or rails was strengthened, calling for such notification to be mandated.

The board also signed a letter to the town's cemetery commission in support of providing a 'Green burial' option in town.

The planning board is working to present a change to town zoning to town meeting that would allow 'by right' approval of green energy research or manufacturing in town, in order to help the town qualify for Green Community designation, and the state grant funding that would follow.

Crochier asked whether the

board would be as quick to sign a letter from a group supporting the continued operation of the nuclear plant, and wondered whether the matter would more properly be put to a vote of town meeting. But Ward recalled the town meeting in Gill had voted unanimously in 2008 to support the safe decommissioning of the nuclear plant in Vernon when its 40-year operating license expires in March of 2012.

The board appointed Scott Minckler as a part time police officer. The board agreed to send a thank you letter for "a remarkably generous donation" by Doug Smith, of Doug's Auto Body, of \$2500 in labor for the retrofitting of the town's new brush truck. Rebuilt from an army surplus five quarter ton pickup, with a new flatbed installed on its chassis to accept the skidder unit for the brush truck's tank, Crochier said the fire engine red truck now "looks gorgeous," thanks to Smith.



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PERSONAL INJURY, WILLS & ESTATES, WORKER'S COMP

**MAHAR from pg 7**

Brook stream channel and its adjacent wetland.

Superintendent Michael Baldassarre recommended the committee borrow money to pay for the dam project under a low-cost loan program from the Department of Conservation and Recreation, rather than absorbing the entire \$330,000 cost in one fiscal year. Because the loan fund is not in place yet, an additional extension for completing the project would be required.


The committee voted unanimously to ask Baldassarre to apply for an additional year extension, and for a loan once funds are available.

Yohan reported he and Wendell member Dick Baldwin ate lunch at the Mahar cafeteria and were "impressed" by the food quality and choices, which included two entrees, a salad bar and a fruit bar. He praised cafeteria manager Jacki Dillenback for being "very conscientious" and seeking ways to reduce sodium and sugar in the menu items.

In her monthly cafeteria update, Dillenback noted hazardous winter weather throughout

the United States may prompt shipping delays and issues with availability and quality of tomatoes, lemons, oranges, lettuce, and more. She concluded, "Anyone interested in building greenhouses here? Just a thought."

Baldassarre presented copies of the filings by attorneys representing Constellation New Energy and Northeast Energy. Paul Gervais of Orange said the filings made a strong case against Mahar's position to challenge the significant electricity rate increase when Mahar's contract was automatically renewed in December 2008. Baldassarre said Mahar was not properly notified in writing in advance of the rate increase. Questioned about the reasonableness of pursuing the suit, Baldassarre told the committee, "Our attorneys think it's worth the fight."

The school committee voted unanimously to accept the low bid of \$647,740 for school transportation from Swift River Bus Company of Orange. Other bidders were F. M. Kuzmeskus of Gill and McCarthy & Son of Brookfield. 

**CHATEAU from pg 8**

asking why he had not come when summoned. The farmer sent a message back, "Since you ordered me off your property, you can go to the devil for your stones."

One person Schell did not shun was his coachman. Because Schell was very superstitious, he would never sit down at a table of 13 people. Despite the Schells' disdain for the working class, he would send someone to summon the coachman to avert the peril of 13 people at dinner. The carriage house was about an eighth of a mile away. If the coachman were tending the horses, he would have to make himself presentable to the gathering of the upper crust, thus making the elegant dinner party wait until he came to the table.

The Schells' guests evidently ate well. To accommodate stout ladies, the Chateau had an electric elevator to spare the overweight from climbing stairs. The elevator once stalled midway between floors and the staff had to toboggan a large lady down to the floor below on an ironing board. Another pleasingly plump lady, or perhaps the same one, got stuck in a bathtub. The staff covered her with a sheet to guard her modesty and dignity. Workmen shut off the water, disconnected the plumbing, and moved the tub away from the wall so they could get on both sides of the tub to hoist her out. The Italians could have built her a tub to accommodate her

dimensions, if only Schell had known.

Mrs. Schell was not to be outdone by her husband in snobbery. To maintain her perceived station in life, Mrs. Schell employed a full-time dressmaker to turn out a stream of new clothes. And though she worked full time making Mrs. Schell's clothes, she never met her once in eight years of employ. The dressmaker worked with a dress form made to Mrs. Schell's measurements.

Another employee lived and worked in the Chateau for 25 years before she ever saw the lady of the castle.

After her husband died, Mrs. Schell signed the Chateau, and 125 acres, over to the Northfield Hotel, owned by Northfield Mount Hermon. The price was \$34,000. Mrs. Schell moved into the hotel, insisting on a room facing away from the Chateau she had come to abhor. She is quoted as saying, "I never liked it, and I shall never like it."

At the hotel, as at the Chateau, Mrs. Schell was reclusive and took her meals in her room, or ate with just one other female companion, according to former hotel manager Edwin Finch. When employees cleaned her room, they were instructed not to touch any of her toiletries or personal items.

The Northfield Hotel used the Chateau to accommodate an overflow of guests. And in 1934, Monroe and Isabelle Smith founded the American Youth Hostel, after seeing


youth hostels when visiting Europe. They used cots set up in the Chateau basement to house the first of their youthful travelers.

The Smiths later moved the Youth Hostel to a house and barn on Northfield's Main Street.

Within a year, the Smiths had 30 privately owned youth hostels up and running. Both Franklin and Eleanor Roosevelt were honorary presidents of American Youth Hostel.

The trustees of Northfield Mount Hermon, tired of maintaining the Chateau, hired engineers to evaluate the building. The engineers found the building more than structurally sound, needing little more than cosmetic work from a minor roof leak caused by torn flashing. The chapel ceiling also needed replastering. The trustees decided to demolish the Chateau.

In 1963, R.W. Payne of Keene, NH was contracted to destroy the building. Payne, too, found the Chateau very sound and in no way ready to fall down. Legend has it that their wrecking ball broke when Payne's crew was attempting to bash the Chateau down. Payne brought in a big bulldozer to aid in the demolition.

A grassy knoll stands as a monument to a spoiled millionaire's whim and the grave to a pair of fine horses not deemed worthy of the bother of extracting them from the ditch they fell into. 

**Small Grants for Connecticut River Improvements**

Non-profits, municipalities, and schools within the watershed of the Connecticut River region are invited to submit project proposals that will result in improved river water quality, ecosystem health, public awareness or recreational access to the Connecticut River. This effort is a

joint project of the Franklin Regional Council of Governments, Pioneer Valley Planning Commission, Capitol Region Council of Governments, and the Connecticut River Estuary Regional Planning Agency.

Proposals are due Friday, March 18th, 2011. A full announcement and application form can be downloaded at [www.frcog.org](http://www.frcog.org). For more info, contact: Kimberly Noake MacPhee, at 413-774-1194 x103.

**MONTAGUE from pg 9**

trator Frank Abbondanzio noted that while a regional health district might "not bring lots of savings to the town's budget," a regional district could possibly assist the town in meeting the challenges of health-related mandates. The grant funded study will run from March through September this year, administered by the Franklin Regional Council of Governments.

More adjustments are underway to the town's inclement weather policy, and a version of the policy will be up for approval at the next selectboard meeting, to define which town employees

will work on snow days.

The board of health has proposed a no smoking policy for the playground in Peskeompskut Park. Public hearings will be scheduled on the issue.

There is now a Montague natural hazards mitigation committee, as the selectboard has approved membership in it for Abbondanzio, Tom Bergeron, Ray Zukowski, Michael Brown, Gary Dion, Ray Godin, John Greene, Walter Ramsey, a representative from Northeast Utilities, and a representative from the health department.


The selectboard approved continuing to work with the

Franklin County Regional Housing and Redevelopment Authority as part of the town's Community Development Block Grant applications for 2012.


Pat Allen described the FCHRA as having done "a great job" over the past 30 years in contributing to the success of grants associated with housing improvements in Montague. Abbondanzio noted at the federal level regional housing authority funding has been cut 7.5 percent, "which is not good," but future funding for Franklin County housing will depend on how the state allocates those cuts. The results of the 2011 CDBG appli-

cation, including Phase I of the Unity Park improvement plan, will be announced this summer.

The town of Montague has been turned down for two of the last three cycles of CDBG funding, depriving the town of one of the few outside sources of funding available to small towns in lean economic times. The Obama administration is now seeking cuts to overall CDBG funding.

Abbondanzio also commented on the budget of another regional agency, reporting that the Franklin Regional Council of Governments fiscal year 2012 budget will be level funded. 

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JESSICA LARKIN ILLUSTRATION

**THE HEALTHY GEEZER:**

**Seniors and Suicide Pt.1**

**BY FRED CICETTI**

**LEONIA, NJ - Q. Who is most likely to commit suicide?**

The following figures are from the National Center for Health Statistics for the year 2007. The rates are per 100,000 members of the population.

White men are at the highest risk of suicide, especially those over the age of 85; they had a rate of 49.8 suicide deaths per 100,000 persons. Women and teens report more suicide attempts. Suicide is the eleventh most common cause of death in the United States.

Depression is a condition usually associated with suicide in older adults. There are a lot of problems to face as you get older. There are losses of all kinds that

can get you down. And feeling blue for a while is a normal part of living at any age.

But, unrelenting depression is not normal. If you feel this way, you should seek medical attention. Most people get better if they treat their depression.

If you or someone close to you is having suicidal thoughts, you can call this toll-free number, available 24 hours a day, every day: 1-800-273-TALK (8255). You will reach the National Suicide Prevention Lifeline, a service available to anyone. All calls are confidential.

Causes of depression include the natural consequences of being older: a health crisis or death, the loss of physical or mental capacities, or being a stressed-out caregiver.

Seniors usually rebound from a period of sadness. However, if you are suffering from "clinical depression" and don't get help, your symptoms might last months, or even years.

The following are common signs of depression. If you have several of these, and they last for more than two weeks, get treatment: anxiety, fatigue, loss of interest or pleasure, sleep problems, eating too much or too little, abnormal crying, aches that can't be treated successfully, diminished concentration or memory, irritability, thoughts of death or suicide, and feelings of despair, guilt and being worthless.

Depression is a serious illness. It can lead to suicide. Don't waste time; find help.

Start with your family doctor. The doctor should check to see if your depression could be caused by a health problem (such as hypothyroidism or vitamin B12 deficiency) or a medicine you are taking.

After a complete exam, your doctor may suggest you talk to a social worker, mental health counselor, psychologist, or psychiatrist. Doctors specially

trained to treat depression in older people are called "geriatric psychiatrists."

Support groups can provide new coping skills or social support if you are dealing with a major life change. A doctor might suggest that you go to a local senior center, volunteer service, or nutrition program. Several kinds of talk therapies work well.

Antidepressant drugs can

help. These medications can improve your mood, sleep, appetite, and concentration.

Electroconvulsive therapy (ECT) is an option. It may be recommended when medicines can't be tolerated or when a quick response is needed.

(More about suicide in our next column.) If you have a question, please write to [fred@healthygeezers.com](mailto:fred@healthygeezers.com)

AGE	SUICIDES	POPULATION	RATE
5-14	184	40,128,842	0.5
15-24	4,140	42,407,421	9.7
25-34	5,278	40,401,199	13.0
35-44	6,722	43,082,460	15.6
45-54	7,778	43,871,845	17.7
55-64	5,069	32,725,938	15.5
65-74	2,444	19,369,726	12.6
75-84	2,119	13,057,435	16.3
85+	858	5,515,250	15.6
Unknown	6		
<b>Total</b>	<b>34,598</b>	<b>280,560,116</b>	<b>11.5</b>

**ERVING from pg 6**

Sharp told Hubbard he understood she had put "heart and soul" into establishing the Friends, and thanked her on behalf of the town.

Emergency management director Luke Hartnett told selectboard members that Erving had received an emergency management performance matching grant of up to \$2,500 he proposed using for a reverse 911 system.

A reverse 911 system would allow emergency management, fire, and police departments to contact residents by telephone or email in the event of emergencies.

Hartnett said residents who wished to could opt out of the system. He told the board the one-year matching grant would require the town to pay for half of the cost of the system in the first year, and then to be responsible for annual costs of the program after that.

Town treasurer Margaret Sullivan reviewed the effect of changing the percentage paid by the town for employee and retiree health and dental insurance. She noted that lowering the town's contribution by 1% would

result in \$10,000 in savings for the town. She suggested the savings could be put aside toward benefits for future retirees.

Hackett said, "Even if we dropped 2%, it's still the best package around." The board decided to table the discussion until the next selectboard meeting.

In response to several break-ins at the library and thefts of petty cash, police chief Christopher Blair recommended installing three or four security cameras covering the building exits. The selectboard agreed to spend \$400 to purchase the cameras.

Informed of a \$150,000 estimate from Tighe and Bond for repairing a manmade fire pond on High Street, the selectboard decided to ask for comments from fire chief Bud Meatty before taking further action.

The board accepted the annual report for the closed Maple Avenue landfill, required by the Department of Environmental Protection after a landfill is closed. Apropos of the landfill, Klepadlo commented, "Why not put a solar farm there? If you did that, you could power town buildings."

**LEVERETT from pg 7**

of two newly adopted Ukrainian children at the elementary school in grades 2 and 3 have prompted LES to hire Jennifer Martin as an English Language Learner teacher, at a cost to the district of \$8,300. Martin, who does not speak Ukrainian, is nevertheless "very qualified" to work with the youngsters, who seem to be transitioning well, said Ross. Martin has worked with Moldovan students in Greenfield in the past.

Ross said she should be able to make up the cost of Martin's salary from within her FY'11 budget.

Superintendent Joan Wickman brought the committee up to date on the hiring of a new business manager for the district. At the end of February, Mike Kociela, who has worked as the account-

ant for the city of Greenfield, will take over the post formerly held by Charlie Paulin, who retired recently.

On February 8th, the Leverett selectboard took issue with the fact that Union 28 hired Kociela at the same rate of pay Paulin retired at, plus 2½%. But Wickman defended that choice by saying the committee had conducted three rounds of interviews, and other qualified candidates had declined to take the position once they learned how many night meetings they would be asked to attend in addition to their daily work.

The issue of Paulin's retirement benefits continues to take time on the agenda of numerous selectboards in the U-28 member towns, and it took time on the school committee agenda last

Monday as well. Since Erving, with a slightly higher percentage of students enrolled than any other member town in U-28, is considered by law the 'lead town,' it sets the rate of benefits for U-28 employees and retirees. Paulin is the first person to retire from U-28 since Erving became the lead town, and as such he has been entitled to receive a much higher percent of his health benefits than Leverett, Shutesbury, Wendell or New Salem pay to their own retirees. The selectboards and accountants of the member towns met earlier this month in Shutesbury, and agreed to back special legislation to allow U-28 retirees' benefits to be paid at a rate commensurate with the rate paid by each member town.

**HIGHLIGHTS FROM THE ERVING POLICE LOG**

**Vandalism, Missing Dogs, Assistance to Gill**

**Tuesday, 2/8**

6:00 p.m. Call of possible vandalism at Hansen Court. Report taken, under investigation.

**Wednesday, 2/9**

9:25 p.m. Report of sewer back up at French King Highway. Fire Department to handle.

**Thursday, 2/10**

8:00 a.m. Report of two missing labs from a River Road residence. Checked area, unable to locate.

7:12 p.m. Report of a distraught male subject at the French King Bridge. Located same at Gill Mobil, subject transported by state police to

**Friday, 2/11**

2:00 a.m. Call of cat on porch with tags and collar from Reyold Street. Gone on arrival.

8:39 a.m. Report of possible animal cruelty on Maple Avenue. Checked same, owner spoken to. No animal

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cruelty found.  
**Sunday, 2/13**  
6:02 p.m. Assisted Gill police with motor vehicle crash with injury on Route 2.  
11:14 p.m. Suspicious males on River Road. Checked same, are heading to a friend's house.  
**Monday, 2/14**  
Welfare check requested at a Lillian's Way residence. Checked same, is fine.

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# GO GREEN FAMILY

## Episode 45: Rendezvous at the Killigrew

BY JEANNE WEINTRAUB-MASON

**MONTAGUE CENTER** – When Jane first spotted her inside the pub, Ruby Tinker was listening closely to an animated debate taking place around a long table between several young people. One of them Jane recognized as Ruby's brother, Alex. Sitting next to him was

Jayden Bartlett, of all people, and a dark-haired girl with an Australian accent who was arguing:

"I think we should do an action that will get the attention of the media. We need to act now, while the tritium leak is in the news." she asserted.

"Hi, Ms. Robbins-Levine," Ruby said, noticing Jane.

"Can I buy you some hot chocolate, Ruby?" offered Jane.

"Yeah — I'd love hot choco-

late! replied Ruby, following Jane to a small table overlooking the Sawmill River.

"Looks like an important discussion," Jane observed, nodding towards Alex and his friends.

"They're arguing over what kind of protest they should do to try to shut down the Vermont Yardley nuclear power plant."

"Who's 'they?'" asked Jane.

"The Greenwashing Guerillas," Ruby replied.

"Maggie — she's Jayden's cousin — thinks they should go up to Montpelier to picket the government offices there, but almost everyone else wants to do an action at Synturgy headquarters."

Jane changed the subject to what she really wanted to know. "Tell me what you've done so far to organize the Green Pioneers."

"Well, all these people started emailing me and calling me since they heard 'Feets too Big' on YouTube. Alex called up Jayden's dad and he put up a web site for people who want to

know more about the song and to tell them about Green Pioneers. So now we're getting kids to join up. Jayden and Alex are helping me and other kids write letters to our teachers and school principals. Plus they say we should talk to the school committee about teaching us what we want to learn. The first thing we want to do is a solar or a wind project. But we don't know where to find people to teach us yet."

"That's something I can help with," promised Jane.

*Continued next issue...*



KAREN WILKINSON ILLUSTRATION

## MONTAGUE ENERGY CORNER

### Avoiding Ice Dams

BY CHRIS MASON

**MONTAGUE CENTER** – It seems everyone I talk to has experienced water leaking into windows, walls, and ceilings due to an ice dam this winter. I too had an ice dam that channeled water into the soffits of our house, down two walls, and out three windows – on the second and first floors! That is, at least some of the water came out the windows. Much of the rest of it is still sitting in the wall, soaking and degrading some brand new insulation and setting us up for potential mold problems to come.

If it hadn't been for an energy performance contractor who was adding energy saving measures to my home, I may not have noticed the wet walls, as the dampness didn't show up clearly on the inside – the dripping windows drew most of my attention! The contractor who had just put in the insulation was still working on our house, and looked at the insulation in the walls where the ice dam occurred, using an infrared (IR) camera.

There, where a few days before the inside walls had glowed with new warmth (seen as a nice yellow-orange color through the IR camera), ran streaks and blobs of cold blue and purple. These cold blotches

showed where the water had destroyed my brand new insulation and where the damaged insulation was allowing the heat out and the cold in to my home.

What bad timing! This would not have happened if the insulation crew had finished work a week earlier. The last part of the house scheduled to be air-sealed and insulated was the roof where the ice dam subsequently formed. The crew left on a Friday with only that half of the roof left to insulate and air-seal and came back on Tuesday (they took Monday off because of one of those knock-out storms) to find water seeping in through windows and down through newly insulated walls. The ice dam had formed over the weekend because the under-insulated and un-air-sealed roof allowed heat onto the roof, melting the snow above and forming ice dams along the eaves, where the water froze.

Over the next few days, the crew finished their work on the roof while water kept dripping inside windows and walls. The night they finished, the temperature dropped well below freezing and turned the water sitting behind the dam back into ice. The dripping stopped and hasn't again reappeared. The newly air-sealed and insulated roof is allowing the snow and ice on

the roof to stay frozen instead of turning into a stream that flows into our house or over the eaves to add to the ice dam.

Since then, with the help of some warmer daytime temperatures, I have watched the ice dam and icicles on my house shrink and begin to melt away. Unfortunately for many of my neighbors, their dams and icicles are still there. Many of my neighbors have shoveled snow off the roof – the source of water behind the dam—or have engineered channels through the ice dams to let water run by.

But, as warmer weather comes about, all of the ice dams will disappear, and the problems they cause may seem to disappear as well. More likely though, many of the homes affected by ice dams will now be prone to mold problems and more liable to experience ice dams in the future because existing insulation has been degraded and has settled in ceiling and wall cavities. Of course, degraded insulation means homes also won't stay warm as easily.

#### So what to do about ice dams after they are gone?

- Repair damaged insulation, ceilings, and walls.
- Make the roof insulation air tight (often by sealing off air leaks in the ceiling of the attic, around where the rafters and wall meet, and in the ceiling below the attic), so no warm, moist air can flow from the house up to the roof.
- After sealing air seepage paths from the house to the roof, consider increasing the ceiling or roof insulation to cut down on heat loss by conduction.

see ICE pg 16

## Farmers Market and Health Fair in Bernardston

BY STEVE DAMON - The first annual Dennis Roth Memorial Farmers Market and Health Fair will run from 9 a.m. - 2 p.m. on Saturday, February 19th at the United Church of Bernardston.

Rev. Dr. Dennis J. Roth was the church's pastor in the '80s, before serving in churches in Princeton, Brattleboro, and Turners Falls. Before his career as a minister, he taught at Northfield School for Girls and (after the merger) Northfield Mount Hermon School. Roth died on July 25th, 2010, two weeks after his last service at the 1st Congregational Church of Turners Falls.

The farmers market will consist of over a dozen local farmers

selling meat, mohair products, vegetables, apples, honey, and other produce. The health fair will consist of yoga, Zumba!, a nutrition class, a Red Cross-run blood drive, Reiki, emotional health class, and hearing tests by Dr. Barb Morris of the church. Once the farmers market is cleared, organizers Steve and Joyana Damon will call a good old-fashioned folk dance to get the heart pumping again.

There will be live music in the sanctuary, by various groups, including Eventide and Light Amber Trumpet Duet. Free admission. All donations to the health fair will go to the oncology unit of the Brattleboro Memorial Hospital.

## Fox Fun for Families

What makes a fox a fox? Find out at Northfield Mountain on Saturday, February 26, from 1:00 to 4:00 p.m. as we look at mounts, skulls and books indoors and follow tracks outdoors to observe behavior of the fox. Families will learn through activities and the use of tracking journals, and will come up with their own important questions about these "ghosts of the woods." Via books, field research and group wisdom, we will do our best to find answers – or maybe discover even more fascinating questions.

Please bring water; wear wind pants or gaiters if you have them; and dress in warm layers that can



RFP PHOTO

be shed as we get moving. A light snack will be shared on the trail and the group will return to the building to warm up with hot chocolate at the end of the program. For ages 7 and older. Pre-registration is required. Program cost is \$6 per person and \$11 with snowshoe rentals.

Northfield Mountain Visitor Center is located at 99 Millers Falls Road in Northfield.

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# ARTS & ENTERTAINMENT



JACK COUGHLIN ILLUSTRATION

Hermon, Gill: *Northfield Mount Hermon Symphony Orchestra, Concert Band, and Jazz Ensemble* will present a benefit concert for Senior Citizens in Franklin County to benefit *Meals on Wheels*, 3 p.m.

Burrito Rojo, Turners Falls: *OFC*, 8 p.m.

**WEDNESDAY, FEBRUARY 23rd**  
Rendezvous, Turners Falls: *How do you do?* Art opening party, 7 p.m. Free.

Thrive Project, Turners Falls: *Four-Season, Small-Plot Food Production*, an introduction to permaculture-influenced backyard farming with *Daniel Botkin*, 7-9 p.m. Free.

Burrito Rojo, Turners Falls: *Reggae Night*, 8 p.m.

**THURSDAY, FEBRUARY 24th**  
Burrito Rojo, Turners Falls: Debut concert of *Lovely Red Vega*, folk rock quintet, including *Katie Sachs, Karen Werner, Tim Murphy, Liam McFarland, and Carolyn Walker*, 8 p.m.



St Mix plays at Mocha Maya's in Shelburne Falls on Friday, February 25th at 8 p.m.

Deja Brew, Wendell: *Larry Kopp, Country & City Blues Guitar and Vocals*, 8 to 10 p.m.

Rendezvous, Turners Falls: *Bow Thayer & Perfect Trainwreck*, roots/rock, Free.

Arts Block Café, Greenfield: *Alan Evans from Soulive*, 9 p.m.

Athol Orange Community TV: VDay North Quabbin will present a two night benefit screening of VDay's documentary *Until The Violence Stops*. Raise funds and awareness to end violence against women and girls to Benefit NELCWIT, 7 p.m. Additional screening on Sunday, February 27th at 2 p.m.

**THURSDAY, FEBRUARY 24th Through SATURDAY, FEBRUARY 26th**  
Northfield Mount Hermon, Rhodes Arts Center: *Little Women*, a musical, 7:30 p.m. on each night. Additional Saturday matinee performance at 2 p.m.

**FRIDAY, FEBRUARY 25th Through SUNDAY, FEBRUARY 27th**  
The Shea Theater, Turners Falls: *New*

Renaissance Players present, *The Jungle Book*, Feb. 25 at 7 p.m., Feb 26 at 2 p.m. and 7 p.m., and Feb 27th at 2 p.m.

**FRIDAY, FEBRUARY 25th**  
Great Falls Discovery Center, Turners Falls: *Ice Fishing Clinic, Join Jim Lagacy*, for a free ice fishing clinic. The program will start in the Great Hall and then move to Barton Cove (1 mile away) for hands-on experience. Call 413-863-3221 for reservations, 10 a.m. - 1 p.m.

Wendell Public Library: Narragansett Tribal Preservation Officer *Doug Harris* and filmmaker *Ted Rimreck* *Hidden Landscapes: New Investigations into Ancient Stone Ruins of New England*, 7 p.m.

Deja Brew, Wendell: *Blame It On Tina, Folk Rock with Jen Spingla, Bob Rosser, Klondike Koehler, and of course... Tina Horn*, 9 to 11 p.m.

Arts Block Café, Greenfield: *Becca and the Big Wig*, 8 p.m. and then *Rocky Roberts & Friends* at 9 p.m.

Mocha Maya's, Shelburne Falls: *St Mix*, 8 p.m.

**SATURDAY, FEBRUARY 26th**  
Montague Grange: *Gender role-free Contra, caller David Kaynor, music by Cam Am Hotshots*. All level contra dance, 7 to 10 p.m.

Arts Block Café, Greenfield: *Grooveshoes with Left Ear Trio*, 9 p.m.

Deja Brew, Wendell: *Nexus*, Harmonic Eclectic rock, 9 to 11 p.m.

**Sunday, February 27th**  
Rendezvous, Turners Falls: *The Oscars on the Big Screen*.

**Monday, February 28th**  
Rendezvous, Turners Falls: *Dada Dino* hosts *Open Mic*, 8 p.m. Free.

Deja Brew, Wendell: *All Small Caps, A Night of Spoken Word*, special poetry night menu available, bring a friend and your appetite, doors open at 6:30 p.m., 7 to 10 p.m.

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**EVERY THURSDAY IN FEBRUARY**  
The Arts Block, Greenfield: February residency with *Alan Evans*, the drummer of the seminal funk, soul band *Soulive*. Every Thursday night at 9 p.m. Soul funk syndicate *Play on Brother*.

**EVERY FRIDAY IN FEBRUARY**  
Montague Inn: *TNT Karaoke*, 8:30 p.m.

**Now Through FEBRUARY 26th**  
Great Falls Discovery Center, Turners Falls: *Fine Fishing Artwork* by *James Roszel* in the Great Hall. Open Fridays & Saturdays 10 a.m. to 4 p.m. Artists reception on Saturday, February 5th 1 to 3 p.m.

**Now Through FEBRUARY 26th**  
Gallery A-3, Cinema Building, Amherst: *Gloria Kegeles, Mirages*, with *Lourdes Morales*, photos and mixed media. Wednesdays through Sundays, 1 to 7 p.m.

**THURSDAY, FEBRUARY 17th**  
Discovery Center, Turners Falls: *Climate change and water resources: expectations and uncertainties in natural systems*. *Timothy Randhir*, Associate Professor of Watershed Management and Water Quality at the University of Massachusetts, to learn about the relationships between climate change and the hydrologic cycle. 7 to 9 p.m.

Northfield Coffee and Books: *A new monthly open mic*. Featured reader *Trish Crapo*, followed by 5-minute open mic readings. Third Thursday of every month, 7:30 to 8:30 p.m.

Deja Brew, Wendell: *Dave Robinson & Tommy Filault*, Blues based Roots Music, 8 to 10 p.m.

Burrito Rojo, Turners Falls: *Shag*, 7:30 p.m.

**FRIDAY, FEBRUARY 18th**  
The Brick House, Turners Falls: *Goth V-Day Open Mic*, 6:30 p.m.

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

Arts Block, Greenfield: *Chicago Afrobeat project, with Shokazoba*, 2010 Chicago Music Award Winners, Best African Act, 10 p.m.

Rendezvous, Turners Falls: *Hi-Country Lo-Fi*, 9:30 p.m.

Burrito Rojo, Turners Falls: *Rhythm Inc.*, 8 p.m.

**SATURDAY, FEBRUARY 19th**  
Mocha Maya, Shelburne Falls: *Heather Maloney*, folk rocker, 8 p.m.

Wendell Full Moon Coffee House, Old Wendell Town Hall: *Viva Quetzall* with *Harp beat and Fatbeard*, Show at 8 p.m. Open mic at 7:30 p.m.

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

Rendezvous, Turners Falls: *Rock-it Queer*, dance party, 9:30 p.m.

Deja Brew, Wendell: *Eric Love*, singing all the tunes you loved in the 60's & 70's just the way you remember them! 8 to 10 p.m.

Arts Block Café, Greenfield: *Girls, Guns, and Glory*, 9 p.m.

**SUNDAY, FEBRUARY 20th**  
Deja Brew, Wendell: *Steve Crow, Peter Kim & Joe Fitzpatrick*, Acoustic Trio - Warped Americana, 8 to 10 p.m.

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DAILY 12:30 3:30 7:00 9:30
- JUST GO WITH IT** PG13  
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**Sunday, 2/20** 8 to 10 p.m.  
*Steve Crow, Peter Kim & Joe Fitzpatrick, Americana*

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# Iraqi Children's Art Exhibit

**LEVERETT** - Iraqi children's art will be on display at the Leverett Artists and Craftsmen. The reception is Sunday, March 6th from 4:00 - 6:00 p.m. The exhibit will run until March 27th. Gallery hours are Friday and Sunday, 2:00 p.m. - 5:00 p.m.

Claudia Lefko, a Northampton artist and educator who, for the last ten years, has been visiting children first in Baghdad, and then when that became impossible, in the refugee camps of Jordan and Syria. She travels with paint, paper, and canvas, and over the years her young friends, refugees from war-torn Iraq, have been expressing their feelings, hopes,

and dreams through art. Claudia has brought back large murals and many individual pieces of art. Some of these will be included in the exhibit, together with photographs of the artists in their home environment.

Lefko speaks of her sense of wonder at these children's creative expressive capacity. She is called to empower what she feels is their basic human right to have their voices heard. One of the things Claudia finds remarkable is how little there is in the children's work of death and destruction. Most

of the work, she says, is a sharing of their best wishes, and their best work.

Communication is central to the show's vision. The voices of Iraqi children will sound from the walls of the Barnes Gallery, and local children will have the oppor-

tunity to listen and respond. There will be a large blank canvas upon which they will be able to create their own conversation. They will be able to take home the work of an Iraqi child, and leave a work of their own for Claudia to deliver to Iraq.



Claudia Lefko, with a mural by Iraqi children.

# Plowshares Activist to Speak

**LEVERETT** - On Friday, March 4th, the Committee for a Leverett Peace Commission will sponsor a talk by psychologist and Plowshares peace activist Dean Hammer, speaking on "Overcoming the Pathology of War; Building a Culture of Peace." Hammer participated in the first (1980) and sixth (1983) in a series of over 90 Plowshares Actions in the U.S., Europe, and Australia where activists hammered on nose cones or the hardened silos of nuclear weapons in an attempt to manifest the biblical injunction to beat swords into plow-

shares (see website: [www.craftech.com/~dcpl/edge/brandywine/plow/Chronology.html](http://www.craftech.com/~dcpl/edge/brandywine/plow/Chronology.html)).

Hammer lives with his wife in Vermont, practices as a licensed psychologist at a community mental health center, and teaches doctoral students in clinical psychology at Antioch New England University.

The program begins at 7 p.m., and will consist of a talk and informal conversation with Dr. Hammer. Refreshments will be served. Admission is free, but donations will be cheerfully accepted. All are welcome.

## ICE from pg 14

Most home owner's insurance policies will pay to repair the water damage to insulation, ceilings, and walls. But a home prone to icicles and water dams needs more than that - bringing the home back to pre-ice dam

conditions won't stop the next dam. It didn't stop this one. Advice from a professional conservation consultant or insulation contractor is highly advised.

Find a contractor with Building Performance Institute (BPI) certification. They are trained and

experienced in identifying and fixing home performance problems such as being uncomfortably cold or hot, excessive energy consumption, and indoor air quality issues. In Massachusetts, these contractors are also well versed in securing money from utilities to help pay

for home energy improvements such as improved air-sealing and insulation.

For instance, the MassSAVE program offers eight hours of free air-sealing and subsidies of up to \$2,000 for insulation. Utilities also offer a 0% HEAT Loan, recom-

mended because the free air-sealing and insulation covered under MassSAVE may not be enough to avoid future ice dams.

I know of two homes that have recently gone through the basic MassSAVE program and still developed ice dams. The MassSAVE incentives certainly provide a generous start, and we took advantage of those subsidies for the work on our house. But we also took advantage of the 0% HEAT loan to do more, which, in our case, is what ended our problems with the ice dam.

Call MassSAVE at 866-527-7283. If you qualify for free weatherization through the fuel assistance program, MassSAVE will connect

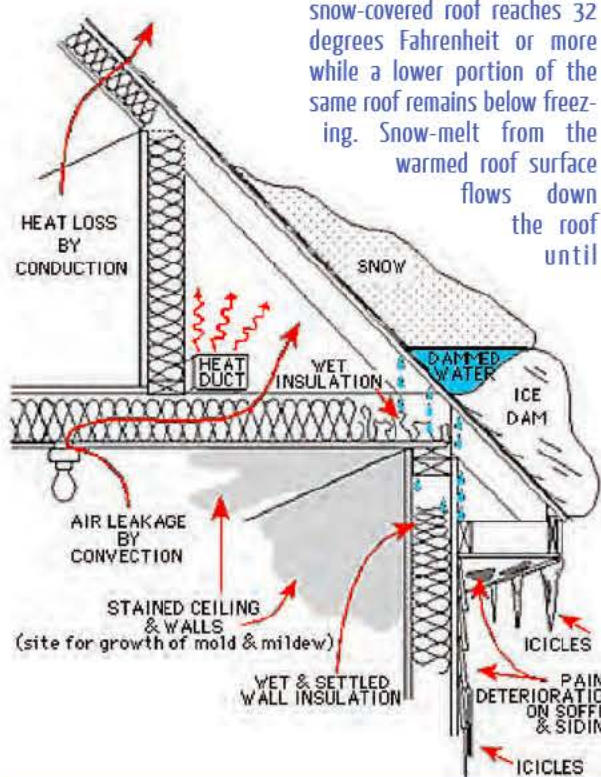
you with those resources.

My insurance company has already been out to inspect the water damage in our house and is now working on their estimate to gut and dry out portions of walls in four rooms, replace the insulation, and repair the interior. I intend to make sure these walls are well air-sealed as well. Next winter, even if the weather is as snowy and icy as this one has been, I fully expect my home to remain ice-dam free. It's only too bad the insulation project on my house started a little too late to avoid this year's mess.

*Chris Mason is the chair of the Montague energy committee.*



## What Causes Ice Dams



Ice dams are caused when a portion of the surface of a snow-covered roof reaches 32 degrees Fahrenheit or more while a lower portion of the same roof remains below freezing. Snow-melt from the warmed roof surface flows down the roof until

it reaches the portion of the roof with sub-freezing temperatures where it then re-freezes.

This re-freezing typically happens at the edge of the roof because the roof extends beyond the warm house. As more and more snow-melt flows to the eaves, ice builds up there to form a dam. Additional water backs up behind the dam and remains liquid because of warmth from the roof. This water seeps through cracks and openings in the roof surface and runs down into the ceilings and walls of the home.

The primary source of heat warming the upper roof's surface in many houses comes from warm air leaking through ceilings and walls and flowing through ceiling and wall cavities (even if filled with fiberglass insulation) to the roof's surface. See the snaking "air-leakage" arrow in the accompanying

diagram for one example.

In addition, heat travels directly to the roof through roof, ceiling, and wall materials, (much as heat flows through a cast iron pan from a hot burner to the handle). Insulation can, however, slow down the movement of this source of heat.

Ice dams form most readily where warm air can leak into the roof cavity and/or insulation is missing or is degraded. Un-insulated exhaust fan ducts or duct work that ends just above the roof can also contribute to ice dams. So too can heat from a chimney, particularly if warmed by a wood stove or fireplace. Another typical source of heat comes from un-insulated or leaky heating duct work in the attic space. These defects often reveal themselves as areas of no or reduced snow on the roof above the dam.

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