



## NEW OWNER

For Neighborhood Store  
Page 8



## LOCAL WOMAN

A Hint of Charlotte in Film  
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LAKE PLEASANT MILLERS FALLS MONTAGUE CENTER MONTAGUE CITY TURNERS FALLS

# The Montague Reporter

YEAR 7 - NO. 20

also serving Gill, Erving and Wendell

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THE VOICE OF THE VILLAGES

FEBRUARY 19, 2009

## Wendell Depot Post Office Broken Into

### Safe Stolen; Fire Station, Recycling Center Also Hit



Anny Hartjens

perpetrator found in the drawer once he forced it open.

The Postal Inspection Service is seeking information on the break-in, from "anyone who may have information on that crime or have observed anything out of the ordinary at that location during the time frame specified." Call 413-731-0552 if you do; anonymous calls are accepted. Burglary of a U.S. post office is punishable by up to five years in jail.

The time frame of the crime may be narrowed considerably, if investigators determine there is a connection between the break-in at the Depot post office and the Wendell fire station, highway garage, and recycling center, all of which were the scene of forced entries over the weekend.

Fire chief Everett Ricketts said he received a call Tuesday morning that the fire station had been broken into over the weekend. "They kicked in the highway office door, jimmied my office door, and broke into my safe." He said his safe is just a locked filing cabinet, which normally contains coins from the soda machine, but that he had just taken all the money from the Full Moon Coffeehouse benefit for the fire department to the bank, so the safe was empty of cash. The only damage was to the two doors,

which will have to be replaced.

On Sunday morning, Alex Lankowski, who runs the Wendell Recycling and Transfer Station, got a visit from a town resident who asked him jokingly if he was in the habit of leaving the gate of the WRATS open overnight. He knew he had locked it up with a heavy chain, as always, so he went down to see both the gate and the door to the office trailer open. He called highway commissioner Harry Williston and police chief Ed Chase, "and they got over there right quick. They had ransacked the whole place, completely went through everything. They stole my bolt cutters, and a pair of gloves..." Lankowski said the thieves probably used those to cut the chain on the gate, which he has since replaced with a chain so thick, "they'd need an acetylene torch to cut through it."

This is the fourth time in two years the WRATS has been broken into, Lankowski said. In previous break-ins, the thieves were after copper and aluminum. This time, despite turning over all his files and pulling out all the office drawers, the only other thing the perpetrators took was 17 to 20 70-gallon clear plastic garbage bags filled with returnable bottles and cans.

On Saturday evening, about 6:30 p.m., Williston told Lankowski, the highway commissioner had been driving down the road to the Depot, and he had spotted a plastic garbage bag filled with recyclable containers on the side of the road.

Lankowski said a dozen 70-gallon bags of recyclables filled the bed of a 1-ton pick-up truck, and it would not surprise him if the thieves had struck in daylight on Saturday afternoon, filled a vehicle with the bags, and had one blow out of the bed of their truck on the way down the hill toward Route 2.

"I kind of felt violated," by the break-in, Lankowski said. "I love working here; I love serving the public."

Chase said anyone with information on any of the break-ins can call the Wendell police at 1-978-544-7448.

On Wednesday afternoon, as her assistant vacuumed up the remnants of fingerprint powder from the floor of the Depot Store, Hartjens was philosophical about the damage and theft to her store and post office.

"It's a sign of the times," she said. "For what they got, they are looking at a pretty stiff penalty."

**BY DAVID DETMOLD** - Sometime between the afternoon of Saturday, February 14th, and Tuesday morning, February 17th, the Wendell Depot Store and post office was broken into and burglarized. Postmistress Anny Hartjens knew as soon as she came to work on Tuesday morning, after the President's Day holiday that her store had been the scene of a crime.

"Everything was out of place. I called the Postal Inspection Service; I called the police. The Postal Inspection Service told me to wait outside until they got there, so as not to disturb fingerprints that might be found at the

scene. They took an hour and a half to get here, from Springfield."

Hartjens, who has run the cozy coffee counter and store since 1982, said this is the first time her establishment had ever been burglarized. The thief, or thieves, made off with a three-foot by three-foot safe, property of the U.S. post office. And, what particularly upset Hartjens, "They busted my beautiful cash register," a brass, manually operated vintage model manufactured a century ago in Dayton, Ohio by the National Cash Register Company, probably worth a great deal more than the few coins the

## Montague Seeks Voluntary Unpaid Furloughs

**BY DAVID DETMOLD** - Town administrator Frank Abbondanzio presented a budget forecast for Fiscal Year 2010 to the Montague selectboard on Wednesday afternoon, with a roomful of anxious department heads looking on.

Abbondanzio described a situation where the town expects to receive between \$167,577 and \$346,359 less in state aid than last year, and where the selectboard and finance committee hope to reduce the amount of excess overlay reserves allocated to the operating budget by half of last year's amount, or \$269,647. This would preserve a dwindling nest egg and avoid over-committing one-time funds to reg-

ularly occurring expenses.

Abbondanzio recommended, and the selectboard approved, a target of \$17,466,868 for the FY'10 budget, a number which represents a .7% increase over last year's omnibus (school and town budget).

This target number, which will be the subject of discussion with the finance committee in the weeks ahead, reflects an \$11,000 increase for the Gill Montague Regional Schools, a .1% increase over last year's \$7,190,683 GMRSD assessment for Montague.

The school committee has issued a preliminary budget calling for a total operating budget increase see **BUDGET** page 13

## Winter Farmers Market at TFHS

**BY DAVID DETMOLD** - This time of year, as winter just begins to think about giving way to spring, Steve Damon would normally be spending his spare time (in between giving music lessons to elementary school children in the Gill-Montague schools) helping his uncle, Jim Graves, tap the maple trees up in Shelburne at Graves Glen Farm. But a combination of events have led to the family's decision not to sugar this year, and instead, Damon has been busy organizing wintertime farmers markets to help maple producers like his family, and a variety of other farmers with products ranging from canned

green beans to veal, honey, apples, and everything in between, sell their wares to a willing horde of localvores starved for anything that might have a Local Hero stamp on it.

"Last fall, I was told we were not maple sugaring this year, because we had too much maple sugar left to sell before next season," said Damon. "That did not sit well with me. My grandmother had been the chief salesperson, but she died in June. Also, the Asian Longhorn Beetle has been attacking some of the maples, the December ice storm brought down more, and then a cow kicked my cousin. So, I thought see **MARKET** page 8

## Town Officials Express Frustration with G-M Budget

**BY ELLEN** **BLANCHETTE**

As part of the coordination with the state on the District budget, DESE consultant George Gearhart attended the Gill-Montague Regional School Committee's budget meeting Tuesday evening. He will work as a liaison between the school district and the state department of education, reporting directly to assistant Commissioner of Education Jeffrey Wulfson. Gearhart said, "I'm here to listen," and by the end of the meeting, he'd gotten an earful.

Gearhart will be attending the school committee meeting on March 4th. Wulfson plans to attend the March 17th meeting.



Mary Kociela to resign from the school committee  
See Page 6

**Towns and Schools Work on Budget Process** Town officials from both Gill and Montague in attendance at Tuesday night's school committee meeting expressed frustration and asked for clarification of their role in the budget process for the dis- see **SCHOOL** page 6

## PETS OF THE WEEK

### Enough Adventure



#### Sweaterman

My name is Sweaterman, and I'm a ten-year-old male longhair cat in need of a good home. I don't remember much how it happened, but I was found outside in the snow and cold with a dirty, old sweater on me. I love affection. And I have had enough adventure in my life. I want nothing more than a loving home where I can doze away happy hours in the sun. For more info on adopting me please contact the Dakin Pioneer Valley Humane Society at 413-548-9898 or via email: leverett@dpvhs.org.

—Gerald Sykes—

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## MONTAGUE LIBRARY NEWS

### Valentines Party



PHOTO BY LINDA HICKMAN

Chloe Hayden worked intently making Valentines, with her father Michael looking on, at the annual Valentines Party at the Carnegie Library on Saturday, February 7th. Over 60 people attended. Dipping fresh strawberries in a chocolate fountain was also very popular.

#### Montague State Quarters?

Montague library director Sue SanSoucie reports the Montague Center Historic District is in the running to be put on the next Massachusetts State quarter. People have to vote for the District if they want to make this happen. Log onto [www.mass.gov](http://www.mass.gov) and type in "state quarters" in the search space. Up will come the entire list of eligible candidates. Folks can vote more than once. The deadline is February 26th. "Wouldn't it be great if we won?!"

Students are responsible to participate in the program at the level that is safe for their physical condition. Teachers include Apollo, Shay Cooper, Arieh Kurinsky, Patty Smythe, and Susan Von Ranson.

Please bring yoga mat, blanket and towel. No scents or perfumes. The classes begin at 10 a.m. promptly. The program runs through the last Sunday of May.

A donation of \$2.00 or more per class is requested. Mostly Yoga is also sponsored by the Friends of the Wendell Free Library.

## WENDELL LIBRARY NEWS

### Mostly Yoga

BY ROSE HEIDEKAMP - We've added a second day to this popular body works series. Wendell body movement teachers lead these sessions on a rotating basis; classes are now held every Thursday and Sunday at the library, from 10:00 a.m. - 11:15 a.m. While students are encouraged to attend as often as they can to build up skills and experience, all are welcome to participate in individual classes as their schedule allows.

On Sundays, a number of different yoga styles are offered, as well as chi-gong.

Currently, Thursday classes focus somewhat more on Psycho-calisthenics, which includes 23 movement and breath works designed for activating, stimulating and rejuvenating the five cavities of the body.

#### Tyler Bourdeau Speaks on Iraq War

BY ROSIE HEIDEKAMP - Tyler Bourdeau, Iraq War veteran and author of *Packing Inferno, the Unmaking of a Marine*, will give a talk at the Wendell Free Library on Wednesday, February 25th, at 7 p.m. *Packing Inferno* is the spectacularly written story of the ordeal of a marine officer in battle and then coming home. It is the struggle with a society resistant to understand the true nature of war. It is the fight with

combat stress and an exploration into the process of recovery. It is the search for conscience, family, and ultimately for one's essential self. Here are the reflections of a man built by the Marine Corps, disassembled by war, and left with no guidance to rebuild himself.

This is Tyler E. Boudreau's first book. He currently lives in western Massachusetts, where he works with other veterans on many projects related to war.

## SENIOR CENTER ACTIVITIES – Feb. 23rd to 27th

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

#### Monday, 23rd

10:00 A.M.; Senior Aerobics  
10:50 A.M.; Easy Aerobics

#### Tuesday, 24th

1:00 P.M. Canasta

#### Wednesday, 25th

10:00 a.m. Senior Aerobics  
10:30 a.m.; Blood pressure and  
Blood sugar screening  
12:45 p.m. Bingo

#### Thursday, 26th

1:00 p.m. Pitch

#### Friday, 27th

10:00 a.m. Senior Aerobics  
11:00 a.m. Easy Aerobics

**ERVING Senior Center**, 18 Pleasant St., Erving (Old Center School, 1st Floor), is open Monday through Friday from 9 a.m. to 2 p.m. for activities and congregate meals. For info and reservations call Polly Kiely, Senior Center director at 413-423-3308. Lunch daily at 11:30 a.m. with reservations 24 hours in advance. Transportation can be provided for meals, Thursday shopping, or medical necessity; call Polly Kiely at 413-423-3308.

## FACES & PLACES



### Timber-r-r-r!

MICHAEL MULLER PHOTO

Tree removal in progress at the Wastewater Treatment Plant on Greenfield Road. Seventeen of the 22 pines were removed earlier this week. The trees had outgrown their original purpose, to provide a visual screen for motorists. Instead, they had grown to the point where they were shading the road too much, and causing ice buildup in winter in traveling lanes.

## Help Needed for 2010 U.S. Census

The U.S. Census Bureau is currently recruiting staffers for the upcoming 2010 census.

Census information is used in part to determine your community's representation in government, and to help direct federal funds to local programs and projects, such as roads and other community needs. It's important to make sure you and your community are accurately accounted for.

The bureau is hiring for a wide range of positions, including supervisors and

door-to-door census takers. A number of testing sites have been set up throughout the county, including one at the Great Falls Discovery Center in Turners Falls, with testing and applications being taken each week.

Those interested will have to fill out an application and sit for an exam.

To contact the Census Bureau to set up an appointment, call 1-866-861-2010. For additional information go to: [www.2010censusjobs.gov](http://www.2010censusjobs.gov).

### ERVING SENIOR CENTER "Love Letters"

The Erving Senior Center presents the play "Love Letters" by A.R. Gurney on February 20th at 1:00 p.m. The play will be performed by actors Richard Clark and Lynne Lydick. This Broadway hit is told through the reading of letters between a man and a woman during the WWII era. This event is made possible in part by a grant from the Erving Cultural Council, supported by the Mass Cultural Council. A Valentine Luncheon will be offered at 11:00 a.m., followed by the play. For more info: or for reservations, call Polly at 413-423-3308.

### Great Falls Middle School Students of the Week

#### Grade 6

Brittany Miller

#### Grade 7

Austin Hurley

#### Grade 8

Cody Brunelle  
Courtney Eugin

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## MONTAGUE?

[www.MontagueMA.net](http://www.MontagueMA.net)

local gossip, news & business listings

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Cabbage • Fri: Fried Scallops  
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**WENDELL Senior Center** is located at 2 Lockes Village Road. Kathy Swaim is the director: (978) 544-2020. Call for hours and upcoming programs. **Ongoing writing workshop** Mondays, 7 - 9 p.m. Register for the workshop with Nina Keller at 978-544-2857.

#### Monday, 23rd

9 a.m. Exercise  
12 Noon Pitch

#### Tuesday, 24th

9 a.m. Aerobics  
12:30 p.m. Painting

#### Wednesday, 25th

8:45 a.m. Line Dancing  
12 noon Bingo

#### Thursday, 26th

9:00 a.m. Aerobics.

#### Friday, 27th

9 a.m. Bowling  
11:30 a.m. Lunch – Pizza

# Thank You! from Holiday Fair Committee



Back row: Holiday Fair Chair Barbara Caruso hands an envelope with \$1500 from the proceeds of the holiday fair to Swift River Music Teacher Edward Hines. Front Row: Swift River Music Students Elijah Ablstrom, Graham Skorupa, Lilliana Fellows, Sierra Harris.

We raised \$1500 for the school in spite of two horrible weekend storms.

On behalf of the Wendell Holiday Fair committee and the students and teachers of Swift River School, we would like to thank the following patrons for their generous support of our holiday fundraiser for the school's music department. We encourage people to support the following businesses. We could not have been as successful or effective without their support.

Gold Patrons: Brown Motors, Greenfield Farmers Coop, Greenfield; Ristorante

DiPaolo, Turners Falls; Diemand Family Farm, Klondike Sound Richardson Excavating, Kevin Skorupa Family, Ed Hines, Wendell; Orange Oil, Whittier Plumbing, New Salem; Kelly Bado, Carol Hetrick, Leverett

Silver Patrons: 1880 House, Aubuchon Hardware, Dean's Beans, Hamshaw Lumber, House of Wax, Pete's Tire Barn, Radio Shack, WalMart, Orange; Adam's Donuts, BJ's, China Gourmet, Foster's Market, Green Fields Market, Lorenz Honda, Stop & Shop, Greenfield; Companions of

Health, Kaleidoscope of Gems, Myron's Fine Foods, Wendell Country Store, Wendell; Leverett Village Coop, Leverett; Miller's Pub, Millers Falls; New Salem Country Store, New Salem; The Rendezvous, Seth & Eva's Music Store, Turners Falls; Walter's Propane, Sunderland; Whole Foods Market, Hadley.

Our communities are stronger and our children are better supported for these businesses.

- Barbara Caruso  
Wendell Holiday Fair Committee

# Join the Hilltown Business Club

BY JOHN DEWITT

**NEW SALEM** - Has business slowed down for you? If not, do you want to make sure it doesn't?

Networking within your local community is often the best way to survive tough times, and thrive afterwards. You are invited to the first meeting of the Hilltown Business Club, sponsored by the New Salem General Store and JW DeWitt Business Communications.

Join us on February 25th from 6:30 - 8:00 p.m., at the home of

John and Lisa DeWitt, 16 West Main Street in New Salem. We'll network, plan future programs, and introduce our first club-affiliated project, [www.hilltownconnect.com](http://www.hilltownconnect.com), an online community bulletin board and business directory for New Salem, Wendell, and Shutesbury. All are encouraged to attend. Please RSVP to John DeWitt at (978) 544-1918 or [john@jwde-witt.com](mailto:john@jwde-witt.com).

# Montague Energy Committee Corner

BY SALLY PICK - In the upcoming weeks, residents in Montague Center and the Chestnut Hill neighborhood may hear a knock on their door from a volunteer for the Montague Energy Committee. Don't worry; they won't be checking to see if you turned off lights in an unoccupied room or if you forgot to turn down the heat at night.

They'll be inviting you and all Montague residents to attend one of two upcoming workshops on home energy efficiency, designed to show you how to put more money in your pocket by spending a bit on conservation.

They'll explain that through the MassSave program, WMECO will pay 75% (up to \$2,000) of the total cost of weatherizing your home. The workshops will tell you about

the energy audit process, connect you with other neighbors having energy audits, and, following the workshop, the Montague Energy Committee will be available to help explain your weatherization options.

The workshops will take place on Saturday, March 14th, at 12:45 p.m. to 3 p.m. at the Maezumi Institute, 177 Ripley Road, just off North Leverett Road, and Saturday, March 21st, from 9:45 a.m. until noon, at the Montague Center Library. Residents are welcome to come to either workshop.

Look for more information in upcoming issues, and keep an eye out for your neighbors from the energy committee. If you're not home when they stop by, they'll leave you an informational flyer!

# Unity Park Rehabilitation Planning Committee

The Montague parks and recreation commission is looking for one more Montague resident to fill a vacant position on the Unity Park project planning committee. The successful candidate will be working with the committee and the parks and recreation commission in formulating a final design plan for Unity Park. Committee members will discuss and provide input on the master plan (which requires attending two meetings and one public presentation - beginning in February of 2009 and ending in June of 2010), and, when the grant is

awarded, attend a total of three meetings from September of 2009 to December of 2009, with a public hearing in January 2010.

Meetings will be primarily held in the evening, and will typically last one to one and a half hours, and will be held at the Unity Park Fieldhouse, 56 First Street in Turners Falls. All meetings are open to the general public. The first meeting will be held on Thursday, February 26th at 6:00 p.m. at the Unity Park Fieldhouse. Interested candidates should contact the Montague parks and recreation office at (413) 863-3216.

# HIGHLIGHTS FROM THE WENDELL POLICE LOG

## Break Ins

- 1/26 - One car accident on Farley Road with minor injuries
- 2/11 - Assisted Maple Valley School staff and Orange ambulance to remove two students to hospitals.
- 2/15 - WRATS broken into - 16 bags of returnable plastic bottles taken.
- 2/15 - Assisted women in regaining possession of her motor vehicle.
- 2/17 - Highway Garage/Fire Station broken into. Nothing appears to be missing.
- 2/17 - Depot Post Office broken into over the weekend. Safe stolen.

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~ J.R.R. Tolkien

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# The Montague Reporter

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## We Need a Truth Commission

SEN. PATRICK LEAHY

(D - VERMONT) - Two years ago we were a nation at a crossroads, and we are still repairing the damage from those dark days. We fought for access to the secret legal opinions of the Bush-Cheney-Gonzales Justice Department by which they bent the law to excuse illegality, from warrantless wiretapping to torture. It was in connection with a Senate Judiciary Committee hearing that the infamous 2002 torture memo was withdrawn.

This year is different. I was at the White House two weeks ago when President Obama signed into law the Lilly Ledbetter Fair Pay Act. That bill corrects the overreaching by activist members of the United States Supreme Court who misinterpreted the law and granted license to companies to discriminate against women employees, so long as those employers concealed their illegal actions for a mere six months. The checks and balances in our system of government finally worked last month to correct that harmful error. Instead of the presidential veto promised by former President Bush, our new Senate was able to do the right thing, and our new President proudly signed this restoration of civil rights as the first legislative bill of his presidency.

Attorney General [Eric] Holder certainly is a welcome change. He is committed to restoring the rule of law and, as President Obama said in his inaugural address, "to reject as false the choice between our safety and our ideals." Attorney General Holder understands the moral and legal obligations to protect the fundamental rights of all Americans, and to respect the human rights of all. The nation was reassured when, in answer to my first question to him at his confirmation hearing, he declared that "waterboarding is torture" and that no one is above the law.

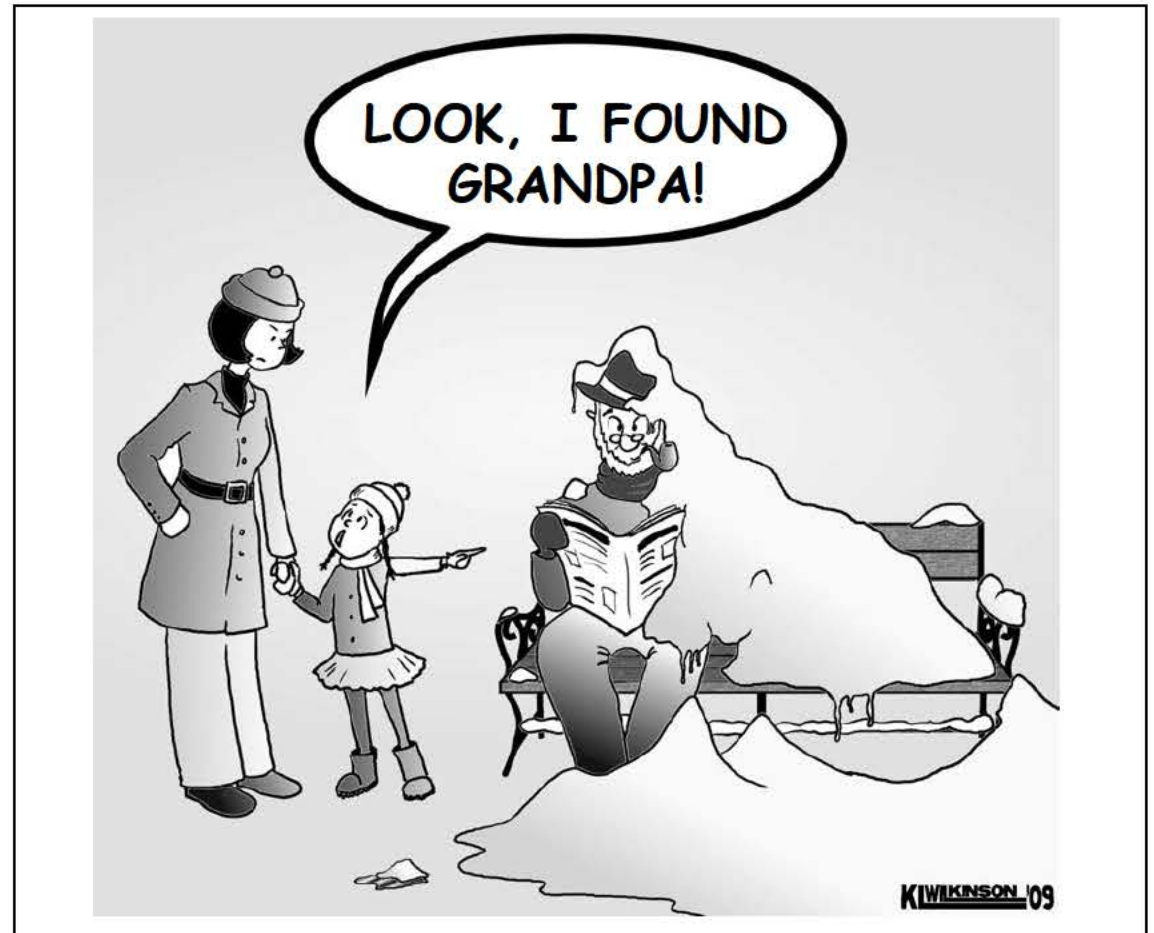
The confirmation of Eric Holder is a marker of how far we

have come as a nation. We have come from a time many years ago when a United States Attorney General believed that the Constitution did not allow African Americans to be considered citizens, to the day when an African American now serves as our Attorney General. It was, after all, a former Attorney General who authored the Supreme Court's Dred Scott decision denying the humanity of slaves, former slaves and free men. That is not what the United States Constitution said. That is not consistent with the promise of America.

The Judiciary Committee has a full docket with matters ranging from review of expiring provisions of the PATRIOT Act, and reforming our patent laws in order to help revitalize our economic engine, to passing personal data protection legislation and strengthening our anti-corruption and anti-fraud laws. I hope that this year we can also strengthen penalties for violent crimes motivated by prejudice and hate. The President has already moved to increase transparency in government, but we can make even greater improvements to the Freedom of Information Act, and we may finally be able to enact a media shield law. These are all issues that you will be hearing about in the months ahead.

The President is right that we need to focus on fixing the problems that exist and improving the future for hardworking Americans. I wholeheartedly agree and expect the Judiciary Committee and the Senate to act accordingly. But that does not mean that we should abandon seeking ways to provide accountability for what has been a dangerous and disastrous diversion from American law and values. Many Americans feel we need to get to the bottom of what went wrong. We need to be able to read the page before we turn it.

As to the best course of action for bringing a reckoning for the actions of the past eight years,



KAREN WILKINSON ILLUSTRATION

there has been heated disagreement. There are some who resist any effort to investigate the misdeeds of the recent past. There are others who say that, even if it takes all of the next eight years, divides this country, and distracts from the necessary priority of fixing the economy, we must prosecute Bush administration officials to lay down a marker. Of course, the courts are already considering congressional subpoenas that have been issued and claims of privilege and legal immunities - and they will be for some time.

There is another option that we might also consider, a middle ground. We need to get to the bottom of what happened -- and why -- so we make sure it never happens again.

One path to that goal would be a reconciliation process and truth commission. We could develop and authorize a person or group of people universally recognized as fair minded, and without axes to grind. Their straightforward mission would be to find the truth. People would be invited to come forward and share their knowledge and experiences, not for purposes of constructing criminal indictments, but to assemble the facts. If needed, such a process could involve subpoena powers, and even the authority to obtain immunity from prosecutions in order to get to the whole truth. Congress has already granted

immunity, over my objection, to those who facilitated warrantless wiretaps and those who conducted cruel interrogations. It would be far better to use that authority to learn the truth.

In this week when we begin commemorating the Lincoln bicentennial, there is need, again, "to bind up the nation's wounds." President Lincoln urged that course in his second inaugural address some seven score and four years ago.

Rather than vengeance, we need a fair-minded pursuit of what actually happened. Sometimes the best way to move forward is getting to the truth, finding out what happened, so we can make sure it does not happen again. When I came to the Senate, the Church Committee was working to expose the excesses of an earlier era. Its work helped ensure that in years to come, we did not repeat the mistakes of the past.

Edmund Burke said that law and arbitrary power are eternal enemies. Arbitrary power is a powerful, corrosive force in a democracy. Two years ago I described the scandals at the Bush-Cheney-Gonzales Justice

Department as the worst since Watergate. They were. We are still digging out from the debris they left behind. Now we face the worst economic crisis since the Great Depression while still contending with national security threats around the world. This extraordinary time cries out for the American people to come together, as we did after 9/11, and as we have done before when we faced difficult challenges.

That is no more improbable than the truth that came to light and laid the foundation for reconciliation in South Africa, or in Greensboro, North Carolina; no more improbable than the founding of this nation; and certainly no more improbable than the journey the people of this nation took over the last year with a young man whose mother was from Kansas and whose father was from an African village half a world away.

*Senator Patrick Leahy is the chairman of the Senate Judiciary Committee. These remarks are excerpted from a speech he gave at Georgetown University on February 8th.*

## LETTER TO THE EDITOR

### In Support of a Tax on Alcohol

The Communities that Care Coalition supports Governor Deval Patrick's plan to remove the five percent tax exemption on alcohol.

In addition to helping to generate much-needed tax revenue for the state, taxing alcohol could help deter excessive drinking. A recent study by the University of Florida found that taxes are among the best deterrents to drinking - better than law enforcement, media campaigns, or school programs - all of which cost money instead of raising money.

Our research shows that many Franklin County youth

are under the misconception that adults don't care whether they drink alcohol. The tax would communicate that adults see alcohol as categorically different from necessities - like clothing and healthy food - that should remain untaxed.

- Glenn Johnson  
Greenfield

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EYE ON TOWN FINANCES

# Town Meeting to Seek Funds for Generators, Pensions, and Unemployment Compensation

**BY DAVID DETMOLD WENDELL** - Among the items to be considered at the Wendell special town meeting on Wednesday, February 25th, at 7 p.m. in the town hall, are articles to establish and fund reserve accounts to pay for the town's pension obligations for retirees, increased unemployment assessments, and \$20,500 to pay for emergency generators for town buildings and the well that supplies the center with potable water. The latter article was proposed following a severe December ice storm that knocked out electric power to most of the town for three days or more.

Also on the warrant is an article to transfer funds from free cash to the town's stabilization account.

The money to purchase back-up generators for the town hall, the DPW and fire station, and the town's public water supply system will come from Wendell's foundation reserve fund, also known as the state 'Pothole' grant.

In a recent post on Wendell's 'townfolk' listserv, finance committee member Jim Slavas explained the thinking behind a number of the articles on the special town meeting warrant. On Article 1, to purchase generators for the town hall, DPW, fire station, and well, Slavas noted, "Generators are also being considered for the library and the town offices, but these are to be purchased with remaining funds from the original building accounts. Following this winter's ice storm, the selectboard held a series of emergency planning meetings to evaluate the town's response, and to develop planning to improve its response for the next emergency. One of the primary critiques was the lack of back-up generator capabilities at most of the town's build-

ings and the Swift River School. Without generator back-up, these buildings could not be used terribly effectively as either emergency shelters or to provide living support to the community [toilets, showers, potable water, and so forth]."

Slavas also commented on the warrant articles that "deal with establishing and funding a pension reserve fund and an unemployment compensation fund, as well as the transfer of our certified free cash to the stabilization account."

"The pension reserve fund is an attempt to start setting aside money to pay for the town's pension liabilities, currently estimated at \$124,000. The finance committee is asking that \$40,000 from free cash be used for the initial funding. Our expectation is that we will be incorporating ongoing requests for this account in our main annual budget article in order to get closer to meeting the town's obligations to our retired employees."

"The unemployment compensation fund is meant to provide some cushion for future unexpected 'hits' on our state unemployment insurance account. Over the last two years our assessment has gone up ten-fold, from \$300 to over \$3,000, owing primarily to the recent high turnover at the DPW. Although the highway commission and the finance committee have been working together to tighten up personnel and paperwork procedures, these will not have an immediate effect on our current high 'experience rate'."

"The finance committee is suggesting that \$10,000 be allocated from free cash to provide the initial funding for this account. As with the pension reserve, this will most probably become an annual appropri-



tion request, although not at such a high amount.

"The state certified Wendell's free cash in January at \$234,537. The last article on the warrant asks that the certified free cash, as adjusted if the pension and unemployment articles pass, be transferred to the stabilization account."

Before signing off, Slavas added this warning note. "As you have probably heard, Wendell has had its current year's state funding reduced by some \$20,000 and Governor Patrick has proposed an additional \$35,000 reduction next year. The finance committee will probably be recommending that approximately half of the state funding reductions be covered by cutbacks in the town's budget, and the other half be covered from the stabilization account. Wendell is extremely fortunate to have had years of enlightened support from its residents for building up the stabilization account. This has allowed our town's capabilities to grow in a well thought out manner, allowed for the preservation of important landscapes, and now this cushion should allow us to weather these economic storms without decimating the core services the town provides."

*Jim Slavas is a member of the Wendell finance committee. The opinions he expresses here are reprinted with his permission, and do not necessarily reflect those of other members of the finance committee.*

# Difficult Budget Season Underway

**BY JOHN HANOLD MONTAGUE** - Along with the snow and ice of a difficult winter comes the weighing and trimming of a difficult budget season. The sense of our financial challenges being an eternal guest is particularly strong in 2009, because the budget for the current fiscal year was not balanced until mid-December. By the end of January, Governor Patrick's mid-year cuts in municipal state aid lowered Montague's expected revenue by over \$153,000 - and the aid forecast for FY'10, which starts in July 2009, will be lower by another \$140,000 beyond that. Given this, it would be understandable if Montague's department heads felt under siege for both current and proposed spending.

The two initial steps in the budgeting have been completed: we have a forecast of revenue from the various sources, and an array of spending requests from town departments. The first impression is what residents could have predicted before we started: sources of income are not keeping up with requested uses.

State and federal legislation or "stimulus" measures may provide some relief, but they depend on action we can't confidently forecast, in likelihood or time.

Montague relies on the property tax levy for about three-quarters of its budget (excluding the Wastewater Treatment Plant, which depends on user fees for much of its budget). Because year-to-year increases in the total levy on existing property are limited to 2.5%, only new growth - new businesses, new houses, or improvements to existing properties - can raise more revenue than that rate. At present we expect about \$393,000 more revenue from the tax levy.

The other principal sources of town revenue are state aid and local fees and receipts, both of which are sensitive to economic conditions. Our forecast for these two sources combined is a decrease of about 3% (\$93,000).

Other than Proposition 2½

overrides, which have not fared well in Montague, the last means of balancing a budget is the use of our municipal savings, a resource that shrinks from year to year. If we do not reduce our reliance on this safety net, the result will be catastrophic in the year after it is exhausted.


The selectboard and finance committee meet jointly during the budgeting season, so department heads can present their requests just once and all board members can benefit from each others' perspectives. So far, we have heard from two of the largest service providers, police and public works, and another half-dozen department hearings are scheduled over the next four weeks. We meet Wednesdays at 5:00 p.m. in the town hall's upstairs meeting room; the public is welcome to attend. A public hearing on the budget is planned for March 18th.

My first impression of spending requests is that most department heads are aware of the town's limited resources and expect to provide the same services for as little increased cost as possible. A number have asked for budget increases of 2% or less, even after reflecting last year's labor negotiations, but their efforts are more than offset by rising costs for public works supplies, police services formerly covered by grants, and projected utility costs. The increase in the employee share of health insurance premiums, part of last year's contract negotiations, has kept total benefit costs essentially unchanged from FY'09, a significant positive result. This is offset by a rise in debt service cost, as temporary borrowing for the new police station begins.

Soon the oversight boards will discuss cuts in spending - possibly by contraction of town services - and reassess revenue forecasts as better information comes out of Boston and Washington.

*John Hanold is chair of the Montague finance committee. His opinions do not necessarily reflect others' on the committee.*

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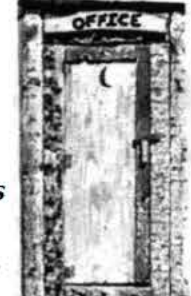
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## NOTES FROM THE GILL SELECTBOARD

# Cheap Oil and Frozen Drapes

**BY RHYS HATCH** - Leland Stevens promised this cub reporter a quiet evening at the town hall, and with the help of his colleagues on the Gill selectboard, delivered exactly that. The highlights were a jar of Chex Mix and a bold but ill-fated effort to close the town hall drapes, which turned out to be frozen in place.

In short order, the selectboard heard from Jeff Suprenant, a water commissioner from Riverside. Suprenant talked about the sewer abatement process for people who fill their pools or spas (in such cases, where the water does not flow back into the sewer, a resident may ask for a rebate on their sewer bills). They reviewed the Department of Revenue's approval of \$10,000 in deficit spending by the town necessitated by December's ice storm (the town may actually need to spend only \$8,000, to cover the extra sanding and

salting from that storm, which the town hopes FEMA and MEMA will reimburse). They then voted to sign the Tighe and Bond contract, for a conceptual design and marketing study in connection with the expedited permitting grant for the 10-acre former Mariamante parcel the town owns on the corner of West Gill and Main Roads.

Last week, the board announced there was a dispute with the Narragansett Indian Tribe about the findings of the archaeological survey of the Mariamante land, conducted by UMass Archaeological Services for the town. The survey found one 70-foot by 200-foot section, roughly in the center of the 10-acre field, which contained "projectile points, chipping debris, stone flakes, pottery shards, and subsurface features such as pits and hearths," all of which is evidence consistent with anecdotal accounts from artifact collectors who have said that

field has been a fertile source of Indian artifacts for many years, according to Timothy Binzen, project archaeologist for the Phase I and Phase II studies UMass conducted for the town, in 2005 and 2008.

Binzen said his team had recommended in a memo to the town of Gill and the Massachusetts Historic Preservation office that the section in question be avoided in any future development of the land, and left in a grassy state in perpetuity, to preserve the archaeological finds there. The Narragansett Indian Tribe would like to see a more extensive survey of the land, according to Tracy Rogers, town administrative assistant, and have offered to help find sources of grant funding to pay for that. Doug Harris, a spokesman for the Narragansetts, came before the selectboard a year ago to speak about the significance of the area to his tribe, and made reference

to an unusual ancient burial in the vicinity of that land, recorded in local histories, where the bodies were laid out like spokes in a wheel, head to the center.

This burial was discovered during the course of a road crew working on Main Road in the vicinity of the Riverside cemetery, Binzen said. He said it was not necessarily located on the Mariamante property itself, and his surveys of the land had not turned up any evidence of human remains.

Nevertheless, Binzen said, the 70-by-200-foot area noted in his report to the town contained evidence of Native American occupation 2000 years old, and surrounding areas of the Mariamante parcel contained evidence of Native American occupation 7000 years old. The area, which Binzen said may be eligible for listing in the National Registry of Historic Places, would need to be protected with a 25-foot buffer zone from future

construction on the larger parcel if the state historic preservation office agrees with his findings.

Meanwhile, at Monday's meeting, the selectboard reviewed the highway department's 2009 budget, seeking to finalize up to \$10,000 in mid-year cuts to help close a \$26,000 budget gap, following Governor Deval Patrick's recent cut in local aid to the town. For now, the selectboard opted to cut just \$3,000 - for cleaning storm drains - and urged highway superintendent Mick LaClaire to go easy on use of gravel for grading dirt roads, rather than specifically cut the remaining \$7,000 for that work at this point.

Following this discussion, everyone present approved the return to a four-day work week for the highway department, beginning March 5th.

Selectboard member Nancy Griswold's announced the next item tentatively. "For fiscal year

see GILL page 8

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## SCHOOL from pg 1

tract. Tupper Brown, chair of the Gill finance committee, said, "Hearing your whole budget process is not helpful to me," and other town officials in attendance nodded in agreement.

Trying to understand how the budget process will work, he asked, "What is the role for a selectboard member to take?" After some discussion about the frustration town officials feel in sitting through lengthy school committee meetings to get to budget discussion items in which they have only limited input, committee chair Mary Kociela agreed to put aside a half-hour at the beginning of each budget meeting for matters directly related to town officials, so they don't have to sit through the entire meeting.

### Teacher Development Approved

Superintendent Kenneth Rocke requested \$71,696.13 be taken from supplemental '09 'Pothole' funds to be put towards teacher training and the purchase of new textbooks for the 2010 school year. The school committee voted down his request for the full amount, instead approving \$14,850 to go towards continued teacher development in the "Developmental Design"

educational program. This will go for continued training in a program already being used successfully in the middle school for the last six years. The training is necessary because there has been considerable turnover in staff, and many new teachers need training in order to work within the curriculum.

Committee members decided to put off the decision about textbook purchases until they have more information on the regular budget, before using Pothole money for this expenditure.

### Technology Budget

Director of technology Marty Espinola gave a detailed report to the school committee on the technology budget. He quoted the Massachusetts Education Reform Act, saying, "Computers, electronic networks, expanded telephone services and other technological tools are essential in the workplace. These tools must become standard within every classroom to ensure that all students and teachers have the opportunity to apply and extend their skills and knowledge." (And he wasn't talking about students texting each other test answers on their cell phones when the teacher's back was turned.)

The technology goals for the schools are for proficiency in

keyboard and basic computer operations, learning to navigate the internet, addressing the issue of safety on the internet for children, and use of software such as Microsoft Word, Excel and PowerPoint as well as specialized software for technical based applications. The GMRS D hopes to advance the use of instructional software to supplement and support classroom lessons. Children should learn to use the software programs to communicate what they've learned, and to express new ideas.

The technology line item presented to the committee totaled \$430,769. That includes \$240,454 for technology staff, \$28,430 for technology and audio-video media services and supplies including things such as printer ink and toner, projector bulbs, high speed internet lines for all schools, estimated computer and telephone repair costs for all schools, \$76,320 for software licensing which includes the cost of administrative software as well as student programs such as Renzulli Learning and Scholastic Skill Builder. The projected cost for computer hardware is \$22,500 which includes some replacement of laptops for the middle school and for

see SCHOOL page 9

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# GUEST EDITORIAL: Creating New Educational Opportunities for High School Students

BY KEN ROCKE

**GILL - MONTAGUE** - The discussion about increased regionalization of public education in Franklin County has focused primarily on reducing cost, rather than on improving education. Advocates contend that, through more comprehensive regionalization of school districts, we can get the same educational 'product' for fewer dollars, by collaborating on administrative functions,

transportation, and low-incidence special programs. The fear among educators and community members is that forced regionalization may lead to diminished educational quality and loss of local control, with little or no savings.

Our recent experience shows that increased countywide educational collaboration, done intelligently, will reduce some costs. The question is: what to do with the savings? Why not borrow a trick from the world of

business? Why not re-invest in our system, to make it both more effective, and more cost-effective?

The needs of students are not diminishing. The costs of basic educational services - health insurance, utilities, and yes, salaries - are not going to grow significantly less. Collaborating to save tax dollars is a survival strategy. Collaborating to deliver better education - to graduate higher numbers of students, to better prepare students for college and for entry into the job market - is a growth strategy, something people might get excited about, that could unify pro-school and pro-town advocates, and that could play a key role in determining the economic future of our region.

I'd like to propose a simple idea: let's consider introducing

career and technical educational programs into the junior and senior years of high school in Franklin County.

No single high school in Franklin County can afford to offer all of the educational opportunities their students actually need and deserve. But all of our high schools, working together, might be able to provide the kinds of innovative, creative and motivating programs that would give all of our kids the education and training they will need to be successful in the global economy of the 21st century.

In each of our high schools there are students whose future careers will span the whole range of society's occupations: we have future doctors and lawyers and college professors, to be sure. But we also have engineers and artists, carpenters

and nurses, accountants and performers and writers and plumbers and farmers. If we imagine the ideal high school, students could begin to follow their professional and career interests while still in high school, without forsaking rigorous academics.

There is considerable evidence that the narrowing of the curriculum resulting from the imposition of federal standards has driven two kinds of arts education out of our curriculum: both fine arts and practical arts are much diminished in many of our schools. And it's not just a question of money - educational time, too, is in high demand, as we focus excessively on preparation for four-year college education.

## Ackermans Make the Dean's List

**MONTAGUE** - Amber Ackerman was named to the Dean's List at the Carlton School of Business, UMass Dartmouth, for the 2008 fall semester. Ackerman is a senior majoring in marketing, and will graduate in May, 2009.

Alix Ackerman was named to the Dean's List at St. Anselm's College in Manchester, NH, for the 2008 fall semester. Ackerman is a freshman in the nursing program at the college.

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MARKET from pg 1



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Salsa Sampling

we'd just hold a farmers market," to clear out some of the inventory from last year's maple season.

Damon put together a market at the United Church of Bernardston on January 21st, with 21 vendors. He announced it in church the week before, and put up some posters. "Hundreds of people came. It was a huge success. All the vendors said, 'When are we doing it again?'"

He gave it some thought and decided a winter farmers market would provide a good fundraising opportunity for the Gill-Montague Education Fund, which provides mini-grants for curriculum enrichment programs at the Gill-Montague schools. The GMEF was delighted with that offer, and consequently, Damon is now organizing yet another winter farmers market for Saturday, February 28th, from 9:00 a.m. to noon, in the

Turners Falls High School cafeteria. Nine vendors have signed on to participate so far, and Damon is just getting started.

Among the vendors that showed up to the Bernardston winter market in January were: Sticky Business Apiary from Montague, with Tony Reiber bringing honey; Tim Smith, from Apex Orchards in Shelburne brought apples and honey, the Shelburne Falls Back Door Bakery brought (what else?) baked goods; Bingo Granola from Brattleboro brought Vermont-grown dried cranberries, nuts and - you guessed it - granola; Kyle Bostrom of Greenfield brought beef and pork, Chase Hill Farm, in Warwick, provided veal and cheese; Clarkdale Fruit Farms in West Deerfield brought cider and apples; Coopershop Farm from Buckland brought eggs,

Crabapple Farm from Chesterfield brought beets, carrots, lamb and eggs (everybody brought eggs); Diemand Farm (more eggs) from Wendell, who also brought soup (Damon said he was having some of their soup for supper on Tuesday); Red Fire Farm, of Granby, (all kinds of vegetables); Dwight Miller Orchards, from Dummerston, offering apples, maple products, preserved green beans, and other canned goods (you can't imagine how many green beans there are in a pound); and the Gill Greenery sent sprout samples. In addition, Littlebrook Farm brought lamb and wool rugs from Sunderland, River Maple Farm in Bernardston brought beef, SongLine Emu Farm from Gill brought emu oil and emu products, Still Willin' Organic Farm from Warwick brought herbal tinctures, Stockbridge Farm from South Deerfield brought dried herbs, lavender, and potpourri, Wells Tavern Farm from Shelburne offered ham, pork, beef and eggs.

A lot of those vendors are returning for the February 28th market in Turners, along with Hedgie's Hot Stuff, from Belchertown, bringing salsa and marinades, and there's room for many more.

If you have locally-grown or local-value-added food products to sell, call Damon at: 863-2850.



GILL from pg 6



JOE A. PARZYCH PHOTO

Tim Binzen, project archaeologist for UMass Archaeological Services, led a Phase II survey of the Mariamante land on the corner of West Gill and Main Roads last summer. His team determined a 70-foot by 200-foot parcel, with a 25-foot buffer zone in the center of the land, should be avoided in any future development of the land, due to the Native American artifacts found there. The Narragansett Indian tribe, concerned about historical reports about an unusual burial near that site, have called for a thorough survey of the area. 2010, heating oil...um...locked in?"

"Yeah!" answered administrative assistant Tracy Rogers cheerfully. "Locked in, if you'd like to, at a dollar eighty-one," per gallon. This information was met by a chorus of unanimous glee.

"You didn't figure that price into the budget, right?" probed selectboard member Ann Banash.

"I figured two dollars, so, even better."

The next order of business, the appointment of junior firefighters, was forestalled by an accidental blank space on a certain form.

"We are taking under advisement three junior firefighters," began Nancy Griswold.

Tracy Rogers chimed in. "I noticed on the last one, he did not fill in the question of whether he'd ever been convicted of a felony..."

"Oh, really?"

"I'm sure it was an oversight, but I'm thinking maybe I should check and make sure."

Everyone agreed to that, and moved briskly along to address a complaint filed against the Gill Store & Tavern, located just across the street. A neighboring family had expressed their discontent regarding the level of noise coming from the fairly new establishment. They asked that the Tavern not host live entertainment without an entertainment license, and they requested that some measures be taken to reduce the level of noise, particularly during the later hours of the evening.

Tracy Rogers and Ann Banash confirmed that the owner of the Tavern was in the process of obtaining an amended license from the Zoning Board of Appeals to reflect the Tavern's actual hours of operation, and may also seek an entertainment license. All agreed that the Tavern should be advised to keep the noise down.

Lastly, the selectboard addressed a problem that was not on the agenda: town employees were being contacted at their homes on their days off. Ann Banash had a suggestion. "Maybe we should do a reminder memo to everyone in town, that the town hall is closed on Friday, there is no business that's conducted on a Friday, employees should not be contacted at home."

Once again, all agreed.



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## New Owner for Scotty's on the Hill



Rae "Bobbi" Wells

**BY DAVID DETMOLD**  
**TURNERS FALLS** - Rae "Bobbi" Wells is the new owner of Scotty's Convenience Store. The popular corner store has served as the neighborhood grapevine for many years for all the local news, whether exchanged across the counter with the friendly help or purchased with a cup of coffee and the price of the morning paper. Former owners Steve and Sharon Lamonakis ran Scotty's for 25 years. Wells said the store is named after someone

who owned the store before them, whose last name, apparently, was Scott. Wells said she planned to keep the store's name the same, and planned no major changes to the inventory or offerings. Store hours will remain more or less the same (although opening at 7 a.m. on Saturdays and Sundays, as of March 1st), but the sandwich counter will feature extended hours: open until 6 p.m. Monday to Friday, and 2 p.m. on Saturday and Sunday. The

extended hours for the sandwich counter will also start as of March 1st. Wells, who has lived in Turners Falls for the past 15 years, had been waiting for the transfer of the lottery license before completing her purchase of the store. That license came through on Friday, and the closing took place on Tuesday morning. Of the Lamonakis, Wells said, "They're great people. They will be missed."

## Opening Seats on GMRSD School Committee

**BY ELLEN BLANCHETTE GILL - MONTAGUE** - Mary Kociela, school committee chair, announced unexpectedly at Tuesday evening's meeting she will be resigning her position as of May 18th, 2009. Telling the committee that she made this decision with mixed feelings, she stated, "I am honored to have served on school committee for eight years, the last four as your chair. It has been an experience like no other, extremely challenging and personally fulfilling. However, the time required is simply more than I can give at this time. I remain dedicated to the Gill Montague Regional School District and its extraordinary students, families, teachers, staff and administrative team. I wish to thank my fellow school committee members for your unwavering commitment and steadfast support of our public school system. I look forward to continuing to support this outstanding school community and I am confident that I leave you in very good hands."

Montague Regional Superintendent's office for school committee positions. School committee completed nomination papers are due back in the superintendent's office no later than 4:00 p.m. on March 27, 2009. Those with questions or in need of more information can contact Robin Hamlett at the superintendent's office at: 413-863-9324. Valeria Smith in Gill, Linda Kuklewicz, and Kristin Boyle in Montague all have terms expiring in 2009. Boyle, now in her fourth year on the school committee and working on contract negotiations with GMRSD employees, is running again, and Linda Kuklewicz, when asked, stated she has not decided whether she will run for re-election, although she expects to make her decision within the next two weeks. Valeria 'Timmie' Smith has decided to run for re-election this year. She said these are challenging times for the schools and she feels she has the experience to make a positive contribution to the process of balancing the needs of the children, the taxpayers and the towns. "I thoroughly believe to have thriving towns it is essential to have excellent schools," she said, adding her immediate goal is to produce a sustainable district budget for the next fiscal year by June 30th. "This budget needs to adequately support our schools and allow our towns to maintain their necessary services."

Kociela's resignation adds one more seat to be filled on the school committee in the annual town elections on May 18th. Three seats were already open this year: one 3-year seat from Gill and two 3-year seats from Montague. Kociela's announcement throws a third Montague seat into play, and there may yet be another before the nomination season ends. Nomination papers are now available for pick-up in the Gill-

## Hospice of Franklin County Honors Founder the Week Before He Dies



Bruce Van Boeckel, MD

On Friday, January 30th, Hospice of Franklin County presented Dr. Bruce Van Boeckel with the First Annual Bruce Van Boeckel Founder's Award. Established in his name, the award seeks to honor an individual or group who made a significant contribution to extending the mission and quality of hospice services in Franklin County. Hospice director Terry Gaberson said, "This award provides an opportunity for us to recognize the tremendous effort given by Bruce over the past five years to ensure that local quality hospice services would continue to be available in our community. His contribution was instrumental to the establishment and growth of the Hospice of Franklin County."

Dr. Van Boeckel, a well-known physician, who died on February 6th, after a four-month bout with cancer, was known for his respect and compassion toward the patients in his care. In 2004, he helped to found Hospice of Franklin County, and served as its medical director since that time. He strongly believed in the importance of the hospice movement and sought to advance the quality of palliative care in our community. Future awards will recognize

those who serve as models of commitment to compassionate and quality end of life care. Any community members, caregivers, or teams of caregivers, who further the mission and philosophy of hospice, will be eligible for consideration. Hospice of Franklin County is a non-profit organization that works to support and care for those living with a terminal illness so they may live as fully and comfortably as possible. Hospice of Franklin County cares for patients and caregivers in their homes, nursing homes, or in the hospital. For more info please contact Terry Gaberson, Hospice of Franklin County, 329 Conway Street, Suite 2, Greenfield, 01301; 413-774-2400.

## SCHOOL from 6

computers, but nothing for replacing laptops in elementary schools or for purchase of graphics capable computers for graphic arts and video editing for the high school classes, something Espinola stated as a future goal. He emphasized the importance of replacing computers on a regular schedule as

they go forward. Joyce Phillips commended Espinola and the tech department for functioning so efficiently with a limited staff. Phillips stated, "This is the language of this generation." She added students have grown up with technology and so is their natural form of communication.



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# the poetry page

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

- William Carlos Williams

The editors would like to thank the following for their generous financial underwriting of The Poetry Page:

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

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

Readers are invited to send poems to the Montague Reporter at 24 3rd Street, Turners Falls, MA 01376; or email us your poetry at reporter-poems@montaguema.net

design by Anja Schütz

### Here

Here comes  
The rain  
That drums  
Sea of madness  
Here, the highway,  
9/10s of a mile north,  
competes with the  
morning birdsong.  
try to imagine  
That this incessant roar  
Is the sound of the ocean,  
4 miles west, but such  
illusion is futile,  
cannot be attained,  
for this ocean would be  
a sea of madness.  
So the traffic sounds  
Have come to inspire  
Nightmares in us all.  
Soon the song of birds  
Is replaced by the whine  
Of rubber on the roadway  
As morning inclines to noon.

--Doug Turner  
New Salem

### Torture Sonnets

I.  
Gathered in an oval office  
projecting a new american century  
with an awful callus calmness  
deceit, betrayal at every entry;  
filthy rich and unelected  
commanding views, manufactured consent,  
all dissent firmly rejected  
all reality to reinvent.  
Outside the roses in the garden  
drop their flowers, shed their leaves  
as the land begins to harden  
resisting footprints of traitors, of thieves;  
when will their plans be laid bare open  
and justice brought to such as these?

II.  
Towers burning, we all fall down,  
crimes go unpunished, plots are drawn,  
flags unfurled, doubtful come around  
and all sense of reason seemingly gone.  
The young line up and take an oath,  
fed, housed and clothed, then reconfigured,  
taught to kill, taught to loath  
then cast into the fire undeterred  
and held in the fire, time after time  
as the family shops in the distance  
and they are cut down in their prime  
or come home to a kind of resistance  
or worse, and the greatest crime,  
a long and enduring silence.

III.  
They will invest with others' blood  
amass more wealth than ever seen  
their base will toast the coming flood  
tell us exactly what does this mean?  
Oil and empire, desert sand,  
a knock on the door, a false alert.  
It's pain and fear that sweeps the land,  
hooded figures rise from the dirt.  
There's something secured there to his hand,  
there are dogs and blood, a world of hurt.  
Your honor, may we take the stand?  
You may speak but do not say a word  
You may look but you must not observe,  
pay no attention to what you've heard.

--Don Ogden  
Leverett

### My Biggest Adventure.....

On the bus one day I was feeling a bit astray  
At last we were on our way  
Mum said that it would be alright  
I closed my eyes tight as the plane took flight  
I went to Paris to see all the sights  
And the bright city lights  
On the first day I went to the top of the Eiffel tower  
It nearly took an hour  
I was so high  
I could nearly touch the sky  
I went to Paris to see all the sights  
And the bright city lights  
On the second day I went to Disneyland  
I saw Mickey Mouse and the Disneyland Band  
'Hey that's not fair!' I said to the Guide  
'I'm not too small, let me on the ride!'  
I went to Paris to see all the sights  
And the bright city lights  
On the third day Mum lost the tickets on the RER  
Oh help-ity help Mum found the tickets on the RER  
On the Bateau Mouche to the centre of town  
I ate the best ice-cream in my princess gown  
I went to Paris and I saw all the sights  
And the bright city lights

--Alice Spencer  
Skeoghvosteen, Ireland  
photo by Alice Spencer



### Death Psalm

My mind is not quiet.  
I do not think of you dead.  
Many who read  
this do not know  
you. They know  
someone else,  
don't want either  
to think of someone  
else dead.  
Of all the rain storms,  
we are alive for this one.  
as if you are a paint truck  
spilled in summer.  
Or a painting  
where once there was  
a window.

(originally published in  
American Poetry Review)

--Christopher Janke  
Greenfield

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the poetry page

Muse

There's a muse in the air.  
 She stretches, relaxes, collapses like a flag,  
 then stands like a T, stubble under her arms.  
 Her breasts are vertically ribbed, her cheeks pale.  
 Elbow on the bar, she leans toward the bartender, confiding—  
 a pose with a classical precedent.  
 Now spiky, she squats, knees and elbows meeting,  
 then evaporates.

--Joel Sloman  
 Medford, MA

History's Mysteries

History's mysteries,  
 Legends and lies;  
 Abra Cadabras, and pies in the skies  
 Harlequin charlatan,  
 Claimer to truth,  
 Fully exposed by the amateur sleuth  
 Silly, gaunt dilettante,  
 Dabbler and geek;  
 Shallow, pretentious; a circus show freak  
 Prophecies, sophistries,  
 Sycophant tales;  
 Words worth the price of some poop in a pail  
 Recorded, distorted,  
 Aborted - a dream;  
 History's mysteries, God's latent scheme

--Kevin Smith  
 Turners Falls

Cobalt-Blue Chuchoteur

My cobalt blue.  
 This is how.  
 Or how I see you  
 from the inside out.

Two discussions.

One, rained asphalt waking—  
 that between my dreams and your reason.  
 And the staggering rain which stammers.

Cerulean hands bold at the neck.  
 Braver still at the back.

Fingers the blue jean small.

The architecture of air is invisible fragments  
 silicon or binary circuits untangling  
 their way through the broken.

You could be a blue room.  
 You could spread out, place your things.  
 I could place things ringing inside you.

Linger is an ease through whispers.  
 Wooden floors. Indigo floorboards.  
 Cobalt blue cream.

My blue chuchoteur.

This is how I loved you  
 from the let go inside out.

--Deborah Poe  
 Pleasantville, NY

CONTRIBUTORS NOTES

Alice Spencer is nine years old and in her words, "lives up a lane in the countryside in a pink house in Skaoghvsteen which is in the South East of Ireland. My favourite animals are kittens and chicks. My favourite colour is also pink but not the same shade as the house. My favourite hobbies are; looking after the kittens, going on my trampoline, swimming in the river nearby in Graiguenamagh, creating and making new stuff, painting, cooking, electronics, making things work, going to discos and fancy dress parties, making new friends, skiing and going holiday. My best friend is called Orlaith...."

Don Ogden is a writer/worker/activist/broadcaster whose work has appeared in a wide variety of publications over the years. He is presently co-host on Valley Free Radio's Enviro Show (see: <http://envirosho.blogspot.com>). He lives in Leverett. These offerings are a poetic protest covering the past eight years in U.S. political history.

Christopher Janke is the Senior Editor of Slope Editions, a small poetry publisher. He is one of the owners of the Rendezvous in Turners Falls, and his book Structure of the Embryonic Rat Brain won the 2007 Fence Modern Poets Series Award. He's reading and very much enjoying Wim Wenders book The Logic of Images right now.

Deborah Poe is the author of the poetry collection Our Parenthetical Ontology (CustomWords 2006) as well as chapbooks from Furniture\_Press and Stockport Flats Press. Poe has received several literary awards including the Thayer Fellowship of the Arts (2003) and three Pushcart Prize nominations. Assistant Professor of English at Pace University, Pleasantville, Poe teaches creative writing, contemporary fiction and theory.

Joel Sloman was born in Brooklyn in 1943. In 1966, he became the first assistant director of The Poetry Project at St. Mark's Church In-the-Bowery, under its first director, Joel Oppenheimer, and was the first editor of its journal, The World. His books are Virgil's Machines, (Norton, 1966), Bus Poems, (self-published, 1992), Stops (Zoland Books, 1997) and Cuban Journal (Zoland, 2000). Since 1969, he has lived near Boston.

Gini Brown is a Berkeley mom watching life go by and kids grow up. Some moments feel like poetry.

Doug Turner, married to Sue, father of two, granddad, housepainter, reporter, writer, poet, Navy veteran, has been a resident of New Salem since 1987.

Kevin Smith is 51 years old, a Turners falls resident, tubist and therapist as well as poet.

The Winter Plow

Yellow lights and broad shield troll by  
 shouldering a plume of snow off to the side.  
 The helmsman navigates the storm from up high,  
 reclaiming the way for tomorrow's ride.  
 A freshly cleared swath  
 appears with early light,  
 strewn with fine crystals  
 scraped clean in the night.  
 It's a dazzling course  
 that follows the plow  
 but a reluctant me  
 that must get up to go.  
 With sleepy care I roll down the trail  
 hunkered to the sound  
 of tread crunching nuggets of ice  
 on frozen ground.  
 I give a yawn to the passing meadow  
 curled up and pregnant beneath a duvet of white  
 and a grateful nod to our snowplow fairy  
 for harnessing his shield to a sleepless night.

--Gini Brown  
 Berkeley, CA

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# Local Woman Inspired Academy Award Performance

BY MATT ROBINSON

**TURNERS FALLS** - As Oscar time rolls around again, readers may find it interesting to note that Ernest Thompson, writer and creator of the 1982 Academy Award winning "On Golden Pond" referred to my mother, Charlotte Robinson, when he wrote, "I frequently channel her spirit in my characters, two of whom were played by Katherine Hepburn. (Besides her Best Actress role in On Golden Pond, Hepburn also appeared in Thompspon's play, the West Side Waltz.) Charlotte's strength was the stuff of legend, being mother and father to five young children, working right through most people's retirement age."

"I like the no-nonsensibility of a woman like that. Even in a little boy's estimation," she was a "tough broad. She was the first woman I saw smoke and drink. She was raucously outspoken and uncensored; she had opinions about everything and was never shy about expressing them. She had stories to tell - some I assume apocryphal, most, I have no doubt, embellished upon with pleasure - all told with the take-no-prisoners, cigarette-on-the-lip raspy growl that

would continue to echo in my racing mind long after the hell had been scared out of me."

Ernest Thompson is that kid from New Hampshire who hitch-hiked penniless (see the movie 1969) to the "Left Coast" to seek fame and fortune, and achieved the highest entertainment recognition in the world, winning an Oscar for best adapted screenplay for On Golden Pond when he was only 32.

You may remember him as Richard Thompson. That was his name before he became famous. And he certainly remembers Turners Falls. He used to come here as a kid. He hiked in our woods and swam in our rivers.

Recalling the first time he went off the high dive at the Greenfield swimming pool, Thompson wrote, "Before I was allowed to clamber up the diving tower, already exhilarated with excitement and fear, I was made to stand beside the mother's towels and listen to the tale of the boy who fell the wrong way and cracked his head open and died. Right over there, on the pavement! That got me really enthusiastic about climbing the ladder, let me tell you; I thought my hands

would fall off as I made the long, slow ascent. When I reached the top, I glanced down to find Charlotte watching, ready to leap into Super Hero mode, also known as Lifeguard for Life. That made me feel better, as did her terse nod, no dialogue needed, the sub-text suggesting that I'd be okay, lesson learned, carry on, as you were."

So the next time you see "On Golden Pond", watch Katherine Hepburn carefully. You may see just a hint of Charlotte Robinson, the dear departed aunt of Ernest Thompson.

And to all teachers, coaches and parents, even if the children you inspire don't write about you in books or movies, you're the one standing at the bottom of that very tall, very scary, ladder, looking up at a scared little boy or girl. You're the one they glance down at. They will remember that you were there, giving them permission to try something new, to take a chance, to jump into the unknown. That they'd be okay, lesson learned, carry on, as you were.



Charlotte Robinson in her 20s

## HIGHLIGHTS FROM THE GILL POLICE LOG

### Unattended Deaths

Wednesday, 2/11

10:20 p.m. 911 hang up call on Main Road, problem with telephone line.

Thursday, 2/12

10:15 p.m. 911 hang up call on Mount Hermon campus, unable to find location.

Friday, 2/13

11:00 p.m. Assisted Bernardston police with recreational vehicle accident.

causes.

5:33 p.m.

summoned for unlicensed operation of motor vehicle.

Sunday, 2/15

12:52 p.m. 911 hang up call on Main Road, all o.k.

9:55 p.m. Assisted Northfield police with unwanted subject.

Saturday, 2/14

9:01 a.m. Unattended death on Mountain Road. Appeared to be of natural

Monday, 2/16

11:45 a.m. Unattended death on French King Highway. No further information at press time. Not regarded as suspicious.

4:07 p.m. Alarm at French King Highway business, all secure.

4:35 p.m. Assisted with disabled vehicle on Main Road.

6:33 PM Larceny report from Mount Hermon Campus Road

Tuesday, 2/17

6:20 a.m. Possible breaking and entering reported at a Center Road residence.

## TFHS Alumni Food Drive a Big Success

The Turners Falls Alumni Food Drive to benefit the food pantry of the Franklin Area Survival Center was a great success, according to organizer Nancy Holmes. "I brought down 262 pounds of food and \$155 at noon, to the pantry," Holmes wrote via email on Tuesday.

But that's not all. When she returned to her office at the Turners Falls Water Department from her trip to the Survival Center, a customer dropped off another ten cans of tuna. When she went home for lunch, she had a call waiting on her answering machine to pick up more groceries at a friend's home. So the final totals are not in yet, and you can still call Nancy at 863-2213 or drop off contributions for the food pantry at the Water Department office at 226 Millers Falls Road.

As of Tuesday, the TFHS Alumni Food Drive had already rounded up enough food donations to feed a family of

four for two and a half weeks. And since the food pantry can extend the shopping power of donated funds by spending them at the Western Mass Food Bank, the cash donations will enable the pantry to stock food for many more.

Needless to say, TFHS Alumni were the big contributors to this drive, although others in town gave food items and cash as well. Holmes reports, "I had two elderly people call and ask me to pick up groceries at their homes; both were TFHS grads. But the sweetest thing, I think, was the elderly man who came into Scotty's on Valentines Day when I was there. He bought many canned goods at the store, paid for them and then brought them over to our collection box. I thanked him, of course, and I asked if he was a TFHS alumnus, and he said, "Yes." He graduated TFHS Class of 1933!

## HIGHLIGHTS FROM THE ERVING POLICE LOG

### RR Crossing Detects Train

Tuesday, 2/10

10:30 a.m. Medical emergency on Old State Road. Assisted same. Subject transported by ambulance.

11:30 a.m. Report of jackknifed tractor trailer at Erving Paper Mill, East Main Street. No injuries.

Wednesday, 2/11

6:10 p.m. Report of flashing light at International Paper Mill. Found to be fire alarm. Erving fire called to handle same.

Thursday, 2/12

3:20 p.m. Car vs. school bus crash on Forest Street. Investigated same. Minor injury. Erving fire and ambulance

responded.

7:50 p.m. Medical emergency on Old State Road. Assisted Erving fire and ambulance.

Friday, 2/13

7:10 p.m. Report of two large barking dogs loose on Northfield Road. Transported same to kennel. Attempted to contact owners.

Saturday, 2/14

5:50 p.m. Request of welfare check on High Street resident. Checked same, all okay.

10:29 p.m. Assisted Northfield police with erratic operator on Route 63.

Sunday, 2/15

2:03 p.m. Citation issued to

for operating a motor vehicle

with revoked insurance and registration. 4:20 p.m. Report of a loose labrador retriever with an orange collar on West High Street. Spoke with owner, advised of town bylaw.

4:41 p.m. Report of railroad crossing near Bridge Street activating for the past hour. Railroad company advised, there was a train in the area.

Monday, 2/16

10:48 a.m. Assisted Gill police with a medical emergency on French King Highway. Assisted Gill fire, emergency medical technicians and ambulance.

4:40 p.m. Report of possible identity theft. Under investigation.

7:45 p.m. Assisted Northfield police with a domestic situation on Main Street.

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JESSICA HARMON ILLUSTRATION

THE HEALTHY GEEZER:

When Is It Time To Give Up Driving?

BY FRED CICETTI

LEONIA, NJ - Q. My father is 78 and his driving is getting scary. I've been asking him to give up the keys, but he won't do it. Any suggestions about how to handle this?

Here are some questions driving experts recommend older motorists ask to determine if they are still road-worthy:

- Do other drivers often honk at me?
• Have I had some accidents?
• Do I get lost, even on roads I know?
• Do cars or pedestrians seem to appear out of nowhere?
• Have passengers in my car told me they are worried about

my driving?

- Am I driving less because I am unsure about my driving skills?

Give these questions to your father. It's extremely difficult to give up driving, but he might be persuaded.

I'll share a personal anecdote that could help.

When I was a boy, my grandfather refused to listen to my father who was telling him it was time to quit driving. One afternoon, I was riding with my grandfather. He drifted across the white dividing line in the road several times. He hadn't noticed he was driving erratically. I told him I wouldn't ride with him anymore because I was afraid. He gave the car keys to my father the next day.

Giving up your car has major psychological barriers. It represents a loss of youth, vigor, inde-

pendence. But it also raises fears about the obvious: How will I get around?

If your father asks this question, tell him that the American Automobile Association estimates the average cost of owning and running a car is about \$6,420 a year, or \$123 a week. You can get around pretty well by taxi, bus and train for \$123 a week.

Older adults are the fastest growing segment of the U.S. population. There were 18.9 million older licensed drivers in 2000 - a 36 percent increase from a decade earlier. By 2020, it is estimated that more than 40 million older Americans will be licensed drivers.

Here are some interesting statistics. Older drivers:

- Tend to drive when conditions are safest. They limit their driving during bad weather and at night, and they drive fewer

miles than younger drivers

- Are the least likely to kill other drivers.
• Are more likely than younger drivers to die from injuries in car accidents.
• Wear safety belts more often than any other age groups except preschool children.
• Are less likely to drink and drive than other drivers.

Many seniors continue to be capable drivers. However, there are changes that affect our skills.

Joints stiffen. Muscles weaken. Eyesight and hearing diminish. Reflexes slow down. Attention spans may shrink. And these are just the normal changes that don't include the effects of disease and the medications we take.

To deal with the effects of aging on our driving, here are some tips:

- Plan to drive on streets you

know.

- Take routes that avoid tricky ramps and left turns.
• Add extra time for travel so you don't feel pressed.
• Don't drive when you are tired.
• Avoid listening to the radio or talking with passengers.
• Leave more space than you think you need between you and the car in front of you.
• Use your rear window defogger to keep the window clear at all times.
• Always turn your headlights on when driving.
• If you don't have them, get large mirrors for your car.
• Replace your windshield wiper blades often.
• Take a driving refresher class. Some car insurance companies lower your bill when you pass this type of class.

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

BUDGET from pg 1

of 2.7% for '10, with the expectation that state Chapter 70 aid for education will probably not decline in the coming budget year.

Even with the optimistic school assessment figure, Abbondanzio said his budget number anticipates a best case shortfall of \$278,070, and a worst-case shortfall of \$457,489, depending, he said, on whether the state legislature passes a 1% local option hotel and meals tax, and approves legislation allowing for local taxation of certain utility poles.

In order to make up the anticipated gap, Abbondanzio called on all town departmental employees to take a voluntary

unpaid two-week furlough to avoid layoffs, or for the departments to propose other ways of reducing personnel costs by a similar amount, for about \$90,000 in total savings.

Another proposed cost cutting measure would be the reduction of curbside recycling from once a week for all items, to every other week for paper, with cans and bottles picked up on alternate weeks. This change would eliminate one position from the DPW, saving \$30,000, and reduce the wear and tear and maintenance costs on vehicles. DPW superintendent Tom Bergeron said the town has paid off the leases on both recycling trucks; one of which is nearing the end of its useful working life.

These best- and worst-case scenarios already anticipate numerous cost-saving measures being put in place, such as: reducing the senior center director's position from 20 hours a week to 17 hours a week; moving the parks and recreation department to the soon-to-be-former home of the police department, in the basement of town hall, during the winter heating season, to save \$6,000 on propane heat at the Unity Park fieldhouse; cutting the police department's request for new cruisers from two to one; and moving the cost of a police officer at the high school to the GMRSD's budget, now that the grant that supported that officer's position has run out.

MCTV Afternoon/Evening Schedule 2/20 - 2/26

Visit www.montaguema.net for complete listing

Friday, February 20
3:00 p.m. Women Girls & HIV: Teen Girls
3:30 p.m. Montague Update: Ted Graveline
4:00 p.m. GMRSD 2/10/09
6:40 p.m. Mik TV: Gentling The Bull
7:00 p.m. GMRSD Budget Meeting 2/17/09
10:30 p.m. School Regionalization Forum Meeting

Saturday, February 21
2:30 p.m. Naturalist Laurie Sanders
3:30 p.m. On the Ridge Christmas Show
4:01 p.m. Mik TV: Gentling The Bull
4:30 p.m. On The Ridge Deer Huntin
5:30 p.m. Physician Focus Domestic Violence
6:00 p.m. Poetry Music Jam for Montague Reporter from the Vou
6:39 p.m. Mik TV: Gentling The Bull
7:00 p.m. Carlos Anderson Gospel Choir Celebration
8:01 p.m. Mik TV: Gentling The Bull
8:30 p.m. White House Chronicles: 1003 and 1004
9:30 p.m. Valley Idol Finals 2008

Sunday, February 22
2:30 p.m. The Western Mass Dem: Chris Forgey
3:30 p.m. Carlos W. Anderson "Get a Clue"
4:30 p.m. School Regionalization Forum Meeting
6:00 p.m. Seneka Falls
6:30 p.m. Safe and Green Campaign
8:00 p.m. Preachin the Blues
9:00 p.m. Coffee House, Jeff Martell
10:30 p.m. Chronicles Volume 33

Monday, February 23
2:30 p.m. On The Ridge New

England Brush Wolf Hunting
3:00 p.m. TWB The Aging Eye
4:00 p.m. Underground Railway Concert 07
5:30 p.m. White House Chronicles: 1003 and 1004
6:30 p.m. Cities and Towns Build our Economic Future
7:00 p.m. Select Board (Live)
10:00 p.m. Pat & Tex LaMountain & Russ Thomas & Joe Graveline

Tuesday, February 24
3:30 p.m. RTR Extending Treatment to Everyone
5:00 p.m. Over the Falls
6:00 p.m. On With The Show
6:30 p.m. Over The Falls: Dove Tails to Dories
7:00 p.m. GMRSD Meeting (Live)

Wednesday, February 25
4:00 p.m. The Western MASS Democrat
4:30 p.m. They Are Still There
5:30 p.m. Senior Center Falling Down Prevention
7:30 p.m. White House Chronicles: 1003 and 1004
8:30 p.m. Wisdom Way Solar Village
9:30 p.m. Town Forum-Unity Park Hearing
12:00 a.m. Encore Body Art#11

Thursday, February 26
2:30 p.m. Senses of Place
4:00 p.m. Senior Center Falling Down Prevention
6:00 p.m. Seneka Falls
6:30 p.m. Red Cross Prevent Home Fires
7:00 p.m. Select Board 2/23/09
10:00 p.m. The Katie Clarke Band

HIGHLIGHTS FROM THE MONTAGUE POLICE LOG

Vandalism and Trespassing Reports

Wednesday, 2/11

4:45 p.m. Report of restraining order violation at a Second Street address. Caller advised of options.

Thursday, 2/12

7:38 a.m. Report of vandalism at a Broadway Street address. Investigated.

3:13 p.m. Report of an unwanted person at a Fourth Street address. Services rendered.

7:37 p.m. Report of vandalism at Montague Senior Center, Fifth Street. Investigated.

Friday, 2/13

7:39 a.m. Report of identity fraud at an Avenue A address.

9:00 p.m. Officer initiated warrant arrest of [redacted]

[redacted] Charged with a straight warrant, two counts of possession of a class A drug and possession of a class B drug, subsequent offense.

Saturday, 2/14

12:23 a.m. Officer wanted at Between the Uprights on Avenue A. Arrested [redacted]

[redacted] Charged with disorderly conduct, resisting arrest and disturbing the peace.

12:27 a.m. Report of a fight at a Fifth Street address. Services rendered.

Monday, 2/16

2:19 p.m. Report of a domestic disturbance at an Avenue A address. Investigated.

4:38 p.m. Report of a possible suicide attempt at an East Main Street address. Subject removed to hospital.

11:18 p.m. Report of an unwanted person at an Avenue A address. Arrested [redacted]

[redacted] Charged with disorderly conduct.

Tuesday, 2/17

1:30 a.m. Report of trespassing at Lightlife Foods, Industrial Boulevard. Investigated.

4:14 a.m. Follow up investigation of trespassing report from Lightlife Foods, Industrial Boulevard.

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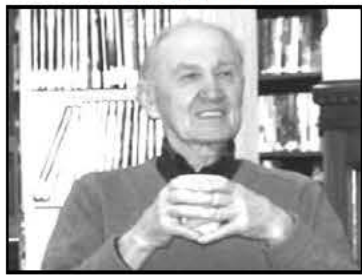
Advertisement for DENAISSANCE PAINTING, featuring a stylized logo and contact information for Brian McCue, President, at 240 Greenfield Road, Montague, MA. Phone & Fax: 413-367-9896.

Advertisement for 'round here Cafe, featuring a list of items like Pierce Brothers Coffee, Fresh Baked Goods, and Diemand Farm Eggs. Located at 111 Avenue A, Turners Falls, MA. Phone: 413-863-2800. Hours: Mon-Fri 6:30am-2pm.

Advertisement for Rau's Auto COMPLETE AUTO REPAIR, featuring a photo of a mechanic working on a car. Contact number: (413) 367-2475. Address: 531 Turners Falls Rd. Montague. Services include 24 hour emergency towing and best service licensed mechanics.

# JEP'S PLACE: Part CXI

## Turning Point



**BY JOSEPH A. PARZYCH GILL** - Hugo stood at the top of the embankment at the edge of the schoolyard. Sharp stubble covered the slope where the farmer had recently cut off the brush. Hugo spotted me. "There he is, guys. Let's get 'em!"

When Hugo approached to throw me down, I stood my ground. As soon as he reached to grab me, I punched him as hard as I could. He lost his balance, toppled over and rolled down the bank like a barrel. When he reached the bottom of the stubbled slope, he looked like a tiger had attacked him.

Seeing Hugo out of the brawl gave me a tremendous shot of adrenaline. Two more of my tormentors came at me. The bigger of the two was the one who liked to spit in my mouth. He was eager to teach me another lesson, and came at me

with arms outstretched. I kicked him in the crotch, hard. He fell to the ground clutching his groin, groaning in agony. The ringleader was next. I lusted for revenge over his punching me in the mouth when I had the abscessed tooth.

I grabbed him around the neck in a head lock, and began strangling him. The rest of the gang ran away. He began turning blue. I didn't care. He gasped that he would never touch me again. I made him say it again, choking him harder. The other cowards, who liked to join in when I was safely on the ground, had run away and were watching from afar.

The teacher came running

out. She ordered me to release my hold. I let him go. My tormentor slunk away, disgraced. Hugo had climbed back up the bank, bloodied and torn. The teacher ordered me inside and began tending to his wounds.

She cleaned Hugo up the best she could and sent a note home to his mother. The teacher kept me after school. The bus left without me, meaning I would have to walk home the four miles, or more.

"Hugo's mother is coming to deal with you," the teacher warned.

Hugo's mother arrived dressed in hat, gloves and pocketbook. The teacher apologized, repeatedly. Hugo's mother mostly listened. She took me into the coat room, sat me down, and took a seat opposite me. She reached into her pocketbook. I wasn't sure what she was reaching for. The pocketbook wasn't big enough to hold a strap. Still it made me nervous.

She brought out a donut wrapped in a napkin. She smiled and held it out to me as if she were trying to tame a savage beast. I thanked her and ate the donut as slowly as I could. As starved as I was I didn't want to gobble it down like the wild animal she probably assumed I was.

While I was eating the donut, I could see she was looking at my clothes. They were shabby and nowhere near as nice as what her son wore. At least, before he

rolled through the stubble. "So, you're the one who beat up my Hugo," she said, trying not to smile.

"Yes, ma'am."  
"Can you tell me why?"

I told her the whole story. How I finally did what the teacher told me to do - fight my own battles. She did not like the part about the boys spitting in my mouth, but she smiled when I told her how her son had rolled down the hill.

"Perhaps he won't be so ready to bully others, now."

She didn't seem at all angry. Then she quietly asked me where I lived. I hoped she wasn't going to go tell Pa, or I'd wind up in worse shape than Hugo. On my way home, I left the road and cut across through the woods where I had to cross a swamp I didn't know existed. It didn't save me any time but I didn't want anyone to see me walking home and know that I had been kept after school.

When I got home, I wasn't very popular with Pa for being kept after school. I didn't tell him why, and he didn't question me. I didn't mind getting bawled out by Pa.

It felt good to get back at the cowards who were making my life miserable. On my long walk home, I had made up my mind that I wasn't going to let them get away with ganging up on me again - ever. And I decided I wasn't going to let Pa hit me any more, either. But that decision nearly got me into reform school.

— Continued Next Week

## Gill - Montague Regional School District

### DISTRICT PUBLICIST

- \$15-20 per hour as funds are available
- See job posting on district website: [www.gmrds.org](http://www.gmrds.org)
- Resume review to begin: February 23rd, 2009

If interested, please send a letter of intent, resume, and references to Kenneth M. Roche, Superintendent of Schools, Gill-Montague Regional School District, 35 Crocker Ave., Turners Falls, MA 01376

#### TOWN OF MONTAGUE Waste Water Treatment Plant Operator

- Minimum Grade 3 Massachusetts Waste Water Treatment Plant Operator License required.
  - Full time position, 40 hours / week, involves overtime, rotating weekends and holiday coverage.
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### NOTICE OF HEARING

The Erving Conservation Commission in accordance with the Massachusetts Wetlands Protection Act M.G.L. Ch. 131 will hold a public hearing at the Erving Town Hall on Monday March 2nd, 2009 at 7:30. The Notice of Intent filed by Margaret Sullivan for construction of a single family house at 84 Old State Road will be discussed.

David Brule, Chairman

### FAMILY SUPPORT WORKER

Needed at Montague Catholic Social Ministries in Turners Falls: 21 hours/week. Provide support and stabilization to families who are referred to MCSM. Bachelor's degree preferred or a combination of associate's degree and extensive strength-based home visiting with diverse families and experience dealing with mental health, substance abuse, domestic violence, trauma and economic instability issues required. Rate of pay commensurate with experience.

Interested candidates should submit resume to: MCSM, P.O. Box 792, Turners Falls, MA 01376, "Attn: Susan Mareneck, director." Spanish speakers and bilingual candidates encouraged to apply. Montague Catholic Social Ministries is an equal opportunity employer.

### Sk8 Park on Agenda

**BY RUTH NERVIG**  
**TURNERS FALLS** - On February 23rd, the Turners Falls Sk8 Park will be on the agenda of the Montague selectboard, at 7:15 p.m. The Sk8 Park Steering Committee is seeking the board's help for a temporary move to 11th Street, while plans move forward for the redesign of Unity Park, where the Sk8 Park Committee hopes to find a permanent home. All supporters of the Sk8 Park are invited to attend the meeting. Help (and a truck) may soon be needed to move the ramps. For more info: call 863-9559.

### REPORTER CLASSIFIEDS CALL 863-8666, FAX 863-3050

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**HOBBY SHOP** - Inventory for sale: Bird Houses, Whirly Birds, Jelly Cabinets, Towel Holders, Quartz Clocks, Napkin Holders. 7 Meadow Drive, Riverside, Gill. Call: Charles Shebell, 413-863-2465

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# ARTS & ENTERTAINMENT



JACK COUGHLIN ILLUSTRATION

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

**FRIDAY, FEBRUARY 20th**  
Movie Day at The Brick House, Turners Falls. 1 to 7 p.m. Chill out on The Brick House couches and watch movies with us! Bring a dvd you want to see.

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

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

Deja Brew, Wendell: *Josh LeVangie*, country folk guitar featuring Johnny Cash favorites, 9 to 11p.m.

**FRIDAY TO SUNDAY, FEBRUARY 20th to 22nd**  
Shea Theatre, Turners Falls: Ja'Duke Productions Presents *Willy Wonka* at 7 p.m. 2/22 at 2 p.m. Tix (413) 863-2281.

**SATURDAY, FEBRUARY 21st**  
4th Annual Mardi Gras celebration at All Souls UU Church, Greenfield. Doors open at 5:30, jazz pianist Bob Cummings, a full Cajun meal of Jambalaya or Vegetarian Gumbo, wine & beer, children's activities, costume contest, crowning of the King (WRSI's Monte Belmonte), auctions. Rocking Cajun Dance party with the *Magnolia Cajun Band*. Instruction 9 - 9:30, dance till 11 p.m. (Snow date 2/22, 3 - 5 p.m.) (413) 773-5018 or [www.uugreenfield.org](http://www.uugreenfield.org). \$15 Adults (\$17 at door); \$5 children 12 and under. \$10

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for just the dance. RSVP for dinner: (413) 773-5018 or [administrator@uugreenfield.org](mailto:administrator@uugreenfield.org).

At The Rendezvous, Turners Falls: *Rockitqueer* dance night, 10 p.m., \$3.

Rt. 63 Roadhouse, Millers Falls: *Turn It Loose*. Rock & roll covers, \$5, 9:30 p.m.

Deja Brew, Wendell: *Chaotic Soul*, soulful rhythms and funk jams, originals and choice covers, 9 to 11p.m.

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

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

Annual Northfield Mount Hermon School Concert to benefit Meals on Wheels at 3 p.m. at in the new Rhodes Arts Center on campus. The school's Symphony Orchestra, Concert Band and Jazz Ensemble will be playing music by Beethoven, Tchaikovsky, de Falla, Ellington, Dizzy Gillespie, and Ray Charles. The concert is free and open to the public. Refreshments will be served. Donations will be accepted for Meals on Wheels.

Deja Brew, Wendell: *Moonstruck*, acoustic duo, 8 to 10 p.m.

At The Rendezvous, Turners Falls: Oscar Night on the Big Screen, no cover.

**MONDAY, FEBRUARY 23rd**  
At The Rendezvous, Turners Falls: Bingo Night! Prizes, fun! 8 p.m.

Deja Brew, Wendell: *A Night of Spoken*

Word, open mike at 7:30 p.m., featured readers at 8:30 p.m.: Deborah Poe, Joel Sloman & Chris Janke. Sliding scale admission, \$1 - \$5.

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

**SATURDAY, FEBRUARY 28th**  
Potato print workshop at the Wendell Free Library with Helen Haddad, 10 a.m. to noon. Register: (978) 544-3559.

The National Spiritual Alliance Psychic Fair, 11 a.m. to 4 p.m. at Thompson Temple, Lake Pleasant. Astrology, I-Ching, hand reading, vibration connection, and tarot cards. Consultation is with a medium of choice. Reiki and spiritual healing services available. [www.thenationalspiritualallianceinc.org](http://www.thenationalspiritualallianceinc.org).

Wildflower Society Annual Meeting, 9 to 4 p.m. Plant Conservation Volunteers will be meeting in the Great Hall. If you've ever thought about becoming one, you can email us and we'll send you an application. Trainings for new comers & ideas how to strengthen your skills if you're already experienced. Call John Burns at (508) 877-7630 for info. Held in the Great Hall of the Discovery Center, Turners Falls. (413) 863-3221 or [greatfallsma.org](http://greatfallsma.org).

At The Rendezvous, Turners Falls: *Fat Tuesday Mardi Gras Party with Zydeco Connection*, 7:30 to 9:30 p.m. No cover.



Kristen Ford at the Rendezvous, February 27th.

**WEDNESDAY, FEBRUARY 25th**  
Deja Brew, Wendell: Knitting & Crafts Night, every Wednesday until summer from 7-10 p.m. Any skill level welcome!

At The Rendezvous, Turners Falls: *Montague Phantom Brain Exchange*, 9 p.m., \$5 cover.

**THURSDAY, FEBRUARY 26th**  
At The Rendezvous, Turners Falls: Jim Olsen's Rendezvous Ramble, free.

Jazz at DiPaolo's, Turners Falls: *Mark Applegate/Charlie Apicella Duo*, 6:30 - 9:30 p.m.

**FRIDAY, FEBRUARY 27th**  
The Book Mill, Montague Center: special concert with Thurston Moore and Ralph White, \$8 at 8 p.m.

At The Rendezvous, Turners Falls: Kristen Ford & Naia Kete, \$3, 9:30 p.m.

Rt. 63 Roadhouse, Millers Falls: *Mike Stetson Band*, former members of Tracy & Co. rock & roll, 9:30 p.m., \$5 cover.

Story Telling for Peace and Justice at Traprock Peace Center, Miles Street, Greenfield. Local story tellers Warren Lett, Jay Goldspinner, Cindy Pomeroy, and Richie Gray share stories working for and finding peace and justice in their lives, 7 p.m. Refreshments, free.

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

At The Rendezvous, Turners Falls: *Wildwood*, sultry indie-folk, 9:30 p.m., \$3 cover.

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

**THURSDAY, MARCH 5th**  
Jazz at DiPaolo's, Turners Falls: *Miro Sprague*, solo-piano, 6:30 - 9:30 p.m.

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

**SUNDAY, MARCH 8th**  
Letter writing to Vermont editors in support of shutting down the Vermont Yankee nuclear power plant. At the Rendezvous, 78 Third Street, Turners Falls, 4 p.m.

**THROUGH MARCH 29th**  
Hallmark Museum of Contemporary Photography: New Orleans photographer Josephine Sacabo, featured in Gallery 56, displays work from three distinct projects on exhibit, "A Geometry of Echoes," "The Nocturnes," and "El Mundo Inalcanzable De Susana San Juan." Also on display work by Susan Bozic: *The Dating Portfolio* in Gallery 56. Regular museum hours: Thurs-Sun, 1 to 5 p.m.

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

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Showtimes for Friday, February 20th - Thurs., February 26th

1. CLOSED FOR RENOVATIONS
2. FRIDAY THE 13TH R  
DAILY 6:30 9:00 in DTS sound
3. HOTEL FOR DOGS PG  
FRI, SAT, SUN 12:00 2:00 4:00
3. MILK R  
DAILY 6:30 9:20
4. PINK PANTHER 2 PG  
DAILY 6:40 9:20
- MATINEE 12:15 2:15 4:15
5. TAKEN PG13  
DAILY 6:40 9:20
- FRI, SAT, SUN 12:15 2:15 4:15
6. HE'S JUST NOT THAT INTO YOU PG13 in DTS sound  
DAILY 7:00 9:30
- FRI, SAT, SUN 12:30 3:30
7. SLUMDOG MILLIONAIRE R  
DAILY 7:00 9:30 in DTS sound  
FRI, SAT, SUN 12:30 3:30

**Dora Ned Cafe & Pub**

**Draft Beer Fine Wine Great Food**

Friday, 2/20, 9 - 11 p.m.  
*Josh LeVangie*  
Saturday, 2/21, 9 - 11 p.m.  
Soulful rhythms & funk jams, originals and covers: *Chaotic Soul*  
Sunday, 2/22, 8 - 10 p.m.  
Acoustic Duo: *Moonstruck*  
Monday, 2/23, 7 - 10 p.m.  
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SAT: 2/21 | 9:30PM | \$3  
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Sun: 2/22 | FREE  
Oscars on the big screen! (Open Mic will return next month)  
Mon: 2/23 | 8PM | FREE  
Bingo!!! Prizes, big fun!

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