



6th Annual Montague Winter Carnival

see schedule on Page 12



HARRIET TIDD FETED

Gill honors 50 years of service,
see page 6

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

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The Montague Reporter

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THE VOICE OF THE VILLAGES

FEBRUARY 2, 2006

Mass Highway "Not Inclined" to Rebuild Greenfield Road Bridge

BY DAVID DETMOLD MONTAGUE - On April 1st, 1999, Jon Carlisle, spokesman for the Massachusetts Highway Department, said of the Greenfield Road overpass, "We certainly don't want it to be closed for a year." In retrospect, that was one of Mass Highway's more humorous comments about the demolished bridge. The fact Carlisle made the statement on April Fools Day, nearly seven years ago, has not escaped attention, now that his colleagues, Albert Stegemann and Rich Masse have formally told the public Mass Highway would prefer not to rebuild the bridge at all.

On Monday, January 30th, Stegemann, Massachusetts District Two Highway Director, and State Highway Engineer Masse, addressed a crowd at the Great Hall of the Discovery Center, with the selectboard and heads of various town departments present.

They looked uncomfortable.

Stegemann started off speaking in tones that were inaudible to most of the crowd, but began again when audience members called out they couldn't hear. "At the present time," he said, "Mass Highway is not inclined to move forward with the bridge." He said the estimated \$3.5 million overpass could not actually be built for less than \$5 million, due to the difficult hydrogeology of the site. Before sixty seconds of his speech had elapsed, he began using the word liability, as in "Mass Highway is unwilling to undertake the liability associated with the project," and he kept using that word in various formulations through the evening until Franklin Regional Council of Governments transportation planner Maureen Mulvaney pinned him down.

"I've heard you say 'Mass Highway is not

see BRIDGE pg 7

Hallmark Uncorks a Gala Opening for Photography Museum



DAVOL PHOTO

BY CHRIS SAWYER-LAUCANNO TURNERS FALLS - The corner of Third Street and Avenue A hadn't looked so good, or so proud, or so vivid in a long, long time. Outside, every section of the sidewalk was cleared of snow and ice and debris; a red carpet extended from the elegant wooden and glass door; a limo was prominently parked in front of the entrance. Inside, a harpist rendered complex compositions with grace and ease. Bouquets of exotic flowers adorned the large gallery space where a packed crowd, dressed to the nines, mingled. Some sipped wine and nibbled at a host of

sumptuous *hors d'oeuvres* proffered by strolling waiters. Others chatted, making new acquaintances, or catching up with neighbors and old friends. Some simply inched along the walls, their backs to the gathering and the waiters and the food and wine. Oblivious to their surroundings, they gave themselves over to the evocative and powerful Barbara Bordnick photographs, marveling at what a flower or the human body could look like when seen by the keen, unique eye of an exceptional photographer. It was, after all, the photographs that had brought the crowd to the opening reception of

what is sure to become a hot destination in Turners Falls and Western Massachusetts: the Hallmark Museum of Contemporary Photography.

Many have caught sneak previews of the museum over the last six months: there was a show of student photographic work last spring to raise money (in fact, over \$10,000 was brought in) for tsunami victims; more recently, this past October, the museum hosted an exhibition of jazz musicians by New York photographer Paul Aresu.

see HALLMARK pg 10

Runway Extension in Dispute

BY PHILIPPE DEGUISE MONTAGUE CENTER Most residents of Montague don't give the Turners Falls Airport much heed. After all, they don't own planes and don't fly from there to warmer climates for the winter. Whether or not the airport is in need of a major structural overhaul and a runway extension doesn't seem to interest most people, unless of course their taxes are used to pay for it.

According to the Turners Falls airport commission and airport manager Mike Sweeney, the Turners Falls Airport needs a lot of work. At a

minimum, the runway needs to be moved and repaved. Optimally, they say, it needs to be extended from its current length of 3013 feet to 4200 feet, for safety reasons. Taxiways, lighting, trees and electrical lines must be rebuilt, improved, cut down and replaced. In sum, they are looking at a project with a seven million dollar price tag, stretched over two years.

Of that amount, the Federal Aviation Administration and the Massachusetts Aeronautics Administration will pay \$6,825,000, leaving the

see RUNWAY pg 9

Landfill Proposal Rejected

PHILIPPE DEGUISE TURNERS FALLS - The town of Montague's landfill committee has unanimously recommended rejecting the bid of Coventa Haverhill, the only vendor being considered for developing the town-owned landfill off Turnpike Road. At its regularly scheduled meeting Tuesday evening (1-31), the selectboard voted 2-0 to accept the committee's recommendation. The board will assess the feasibility of reopening the bidding at a later date.

According to town administrator Frank

Abbondanzio, Coventa Haverhill's bid did not meet the minimal technical requirements of the RFP (request for proposals). However, neither he nor landfill committee chair Emily Monosson would comment on the reasons underlying that decision. "I am not prepared to discuss that tonight," said Abbondanzio, who said the details would be released in due time, once the separate evaluations of each committee member had been collated.

Asked by the select- see LANDFILL pg 10

New Use for an Old Library

SENIOR CENTER, FOOD PANTRY TO MOVE



The Wendell Free Library

BY DAVID DETMOLD & JOSH HEINEMANN WENDELL - After a December public forum came up to save the town money on the cost of constructing the new town

offices. The idea is to relocate the senior center to the present town library instead of the soon-to-be-constructed town office building, after the library moves into its new quarters, on the site of the pre-see WENDELL pg 14

PET OF THE WEEK**Furry and Sweet****Shiloh**

Shiloh is a five-month-old black and white long-haired kitty in need of a good home. This playful youngster is, like her siblings, FIV+, so she must live as an indoor only cat, which will keep her nice and healthy. Ask the Dakin staff about FIV if you have questions, they'll be happy to educate you on how it affects a cat's life and how a cutie like this can still be your friend for many, many years despite it.

For more information on adopting Shiloh contact the Dakin Animal Shelter in Leverett at 548-9898 or via email at info@dakinshelter.org.

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LIBRARY NEWS**Hats off to America**

BY LINDA HICKMAN

MONTAGUE CENTER - A performance of *Hats Off To America* will be held at the Montague Grange on Thursday, February 9th at 7 p.m. Carol Pedigree of Greenfield stars in a musical performance featuring vintage clothing and hats.

There will be a hat contest for the audience with prizes for various categories, including most elegant, funniest, and most outrageous.

The program is presented by the Friends of the Montague Public Libraries. Refreshments, including wine and cheese, will be served. No admission charged; donations will be accepted.

The Montague Grange is located on the common, 34 Main Street, Montague Center. For more information, please call the Carnegie Library, 863-3214.

MCTV on the Air

MCTV began broadcasting on Channel 17 on Wednesday, February 1st from the studios formerly known as Crocker Studios in Turners Falls. A formal program schedule hasn't been created yet. MCTV staff and board members are making themselves familiar with the equipment and are busy typing up public service announcements for the community calendar.

MCCI, the parent organization of MCTV, will be holding their next board meeting at the 'Studio in the Crocker' on Wednesday, February 15th at 7:00 p.m. They expect to make some minor revisions to their bylaws. MCCI also has three open seats they are looking to fill: a Millers Falls seat, a Montague City seat and an "at large" seat. Potential applicants are encouraged to call 863-9200.

POSTCARDS FROM THE PAST**Dance Pavilion and Tea Room at Mayo's Point**

POSTCARD COURTESY OF THE MONTAGUE HISTORICAL SOCIETY

This recreational area was located on Millers Falls Road and in later years became a roller skating rink. Roller skating was quite popular before World War II. Norman and Janice Fuller's home now graces the site. *From the collection of George Dyer.*

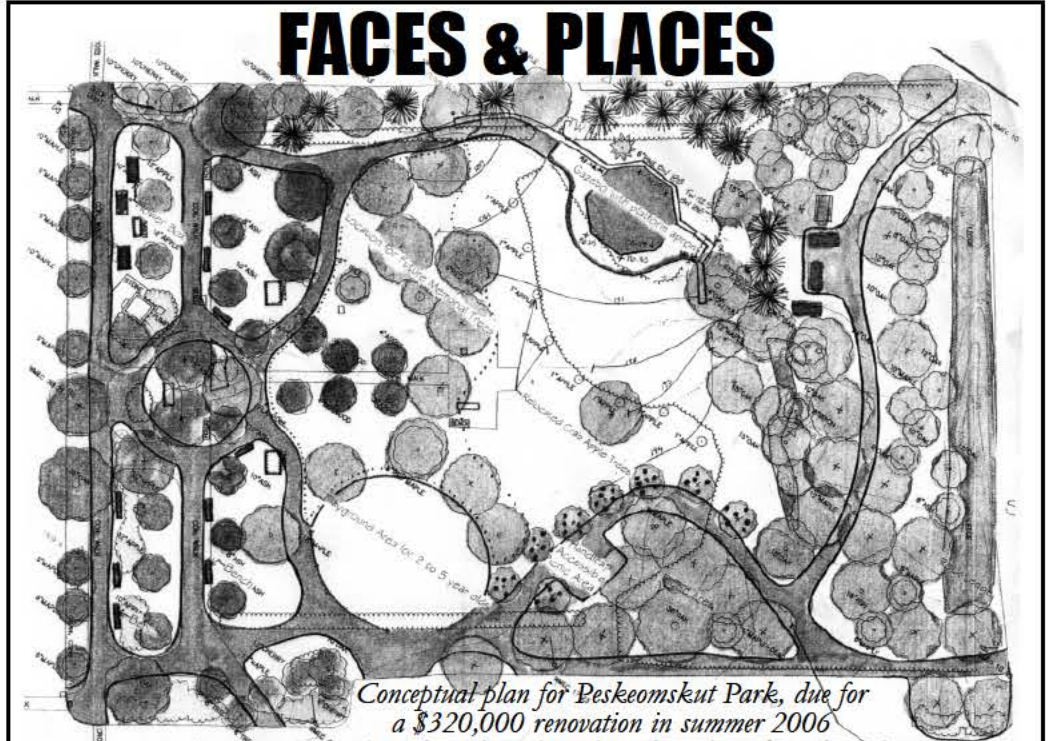
SENIOR CENTER ACTIVITIES Feb. 6th - Feb. 10th

MONTAGUE Senior Center, 62 Fifth St., Turners Falls, is open Mon. - Fri. from 9 a.m. to 2 p.m. for activities and congregate meals. Make meal reservations a day in advance by 11 a.m. Messages can be left on the machine when the center is closed (863-9357). Mealsite manager is Chris Richer. The center offers a hot noon meal weekdays to any senior. Transportation to the center can be provided. Special trip coordinator is Jean Chase. Make trip reservations by calling 772-6356. Payment and menu choice is due three weeks prior to trip.

Monday, 6th
10:15 a.m. Senior Aerobics
11 a.m. PACE Aerobics
1 p.m. Canasta
Tuesday, 7th
9:30 a.m. Tai Chi
10:00 a.m. Brown Bag
1:00 p.m. COA meeting
Wednesday, 8th

9:00 a.m. Foot screening, reservations required
10:15 a.m. Senior Aerobics
11:15 a.m. Mealsite meeting
12:45 p.m. Bingo
Thursday, 9th
10:00 a.m. Coffee and conversation
10:45 a.m. "You Don't Need A Stroke" seminar
1:00 p.m. Pitch
Friday, 10th
9:15 a.m. Tap and soft shoe dance, open to the community, reservations and fee apply
10:15 a.m. Senior Aerobics
11:00 a.m. PACE Aerobics

ERVING Senior Center, 18 Pleasant St., Ervingside (Old Center School, 1st Floor), is open Monday through Thursday from 9 a.m. to 2 p.m. for activities and congregate meals. For information and reservations call Polly Kiely, Senior Center director at (413) 423-3308. Lunch daily at 11:30 a.m. with reservations a day

FACES & PLACES

Conceptual plan for Peskeomskut Park, due for a \$320,000 renovation in summer 2006

From the Montague Town Clerk

Dog Licenses Available February 14th - John Zywna doesn't want to get 'ruff' with Montague dog owners. But nothing raises the town clerk's hackles like the thought of one of the town's 1100 dog owners failing to license their pooch. New licenses are available February 14th. If they don't show up to buy one (\$5 for fixed, \$10 for unaltered pets) before the end of March, owners may find themselves receiving a stiff fine. So stay out of the doghouse. Don't forget your best friend on Valentine's Day. And get your dog a license, too.

Census Forms in the Mail - Town census forms were mailed out to every household in Montague on January 26th. If you did not receive one, call the town clerk at 863-3200 x 203. Registered voters who do not fill out and return a census form will be dropped to the inactive voter list, requiring them to swear out an affidavit to vote at the next election. Besides unexpired dog licenses, nothing gets the town clerk's hackles up more than people failing to return their census forms.

Nomination Papers Available - Nomination Papers for the May 15th town election will be available on Monday, February 6th. At least seven town meeting seats will be up for election in each precinct in town. To run for town meeting for

the first time, registered voters are required to get the signatures of 10 registered voters from their precinct on nominating papers. Additionally, various town board members, trustees and other officials are up for re-election. Registered voters wishing to run for these seats must obtain the signatures of 30 registered voters, from any part of town. Last day to pick up nominating papers is Friday, March 24th. Papers must be turned in by March 27th.

On the selectboard, chairman Allen Ross is up for re-election this year. Moderator Ray Godin, assessor Betty Waidlich, library trustees Suzanne Kretzinger, Karen Schweitzer, Barbara Stewart, and Melissa Barton all face re-election. Nancy Green on the parks and recreation committee, Christopher Boutwell on the board of health, Barry Levine on the Montague housing authority, Mike Cenzano and Donald Girard on the soldiers memorial trust all must stand for re-election to retain their seats. There is also one open seat on the soldiers memorial trust.

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Gill Store Grand Opening a Great Success

BY JOSEPH A. PARZYCH
DOWNTOWN GILL - The Gill Store Grand Opening on Saturday, January 28th, had it all. There were coloring contests for the kids, a contest to guess the number of candies in a jar, and a drawing for a gift certificate to the Gill Store. I guessed the correct amount of candies (a jarful) but they would not award me the prize. Around noon, people came in for soups, sand-

wiches, and tempting deserts. Wine tasting was from 2 p.m. to 4 p.m. Former owner Susie Maddern still works at the store, part time. On Saturday, she zipped around as waitress and factotum. As of press time, no word on whether she will carry on her tradition of challenging customers to learn the definitions of difficult words. On her break, she read an article from the *Montague*

Reporter on last week's tea tasting to Marion Bourbeau, William Cramer, and Mary Bonnette of Greenfield, complete with the saga of the crystal radio and the tea strainer.

Edwin Booth drove up from Georgia for the grand opening. He said he was there to help - to help taste the food, apparently. Helen Trembl from Turners Falls left with her arms laden with assorted goodies. Ashley Storrow and her brother Ben stopped on their way to Vermont to stock up on supplies.

There are stores in



Susie Maddern is all aglow at the renovated Gill Store.



Ashley Storrow of Gill, with deli purchases for a trip to Vermont. They have country stores in Vermont, but none like the Gill store, Ashley says. Clerk Elizabeth Worthington, at left, looks on.

Vermont; but none like the Gill Store, Ashley says.

Store manager Vicki Van Zee took time from her busy sandwich making to offer me a cup of beef stew made with grass fed local beef. It was delicious. There is nothing like vegetarian beef stew.

Cashier Elizabeth Worthington often had a long line of customers at her regis-

ter checking out purchases. Van Zee said she was very pleased with the big turnout, and the support she has received from the surrounding area. She said she would put me on the payroll if I wrote one more article about the store. I did not stick around for the wine tasting for fear I would begin dancing on the tables.

Sheffield School Calendar Features Photos from Five Villages

BY NICOLE KAPISE
TURNERS FALLS - The 21st Century Community Learning Center after-school program at Sheffield School is proud to present the 2006 Sheffield School calendar, titled *A Town Full Of Learning*.

The after-school program, an affiliate of the Hampshire Educational Collaborative, produced the calendar with support from the Sheffield School PTO. The calendar is a fundraiser to support art programs at Sheffield during the regular school day and in the after-school program.

The calendar features the Sheffield classes at various

historical sites throughout the five villages of Montague. There are a number of samples of student art in the inside cover and school information (half-days, school vacations, etc.) and community event listings within the calendar itself.

"It's an idea we thought would be fun," said Tova Neugut, program coordinator for the after-school program. "We thought it would be a great way to raise funds and include



The calendar features photos of Sheffield classes at historically and culturally significant sites throughout Montague, including Town Hall, Bartons Cove, Montague Center and the French King Bridge. Above: The avid readers of Mrs. Laurel Robbins' 4th grade class pose in front of the Carnegie Library in Turners Falls.

everyone."

The idea was adopted enthusiastically by the students, Neugut said. "The kids are really calling for art programs [in school]."

The *Town Full Of Learning* 2006 calendar costs \$10, and is available at Sheffield School, Books and More in Turners Falls, and the Montague Book Mill in Montague Center.

Picking one up will help keep you, and our local art programs, right on track for the year ahead.


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Peskeomskut Park Redesign

The newest Peskeomskut Park redesign committee met for the first time on Thursday, January 26th. This summer, the town will undertake a complete remodeling of the park, with the help of \$320,000 in community development block grant funds. But the redesign has been years in preparation, with various committees meeting to push the concept forward for more than a decade, and a preliminary design prepared by the Conway School of Landscape Design. The suggestions from those meetings, and the concepts contained in that design have been incorporated into the working blueprints. The town will soon see them take shape, with repaved walks, a bandshell, new loam, plantings, many new trees, a tot lot, and picnic areas. Invasive species are slated to be removed (how that will be accomplished is a bit unclear), but the well-loved fountain will remain, though the shrubs around it will be pruned or replanted. When complete, the park will be entirely made over, creating an attractive green space, performance and play area in the center of downtown. It will be the closest thing Turners has to a town common.

For this, we have the Turners Falls Young Women's Club to thank, first and foremost. In 1967, the club raised funds and with the blessing of the select-board undertook to transform a vacant lot on Avenue A between 6th and 7th into a park. Excavator Gil Lamore, nurseryman Jim Stewart, and Winslow Wentworth, town surveyor, along with countless others volunteered their services to the complete the effort.

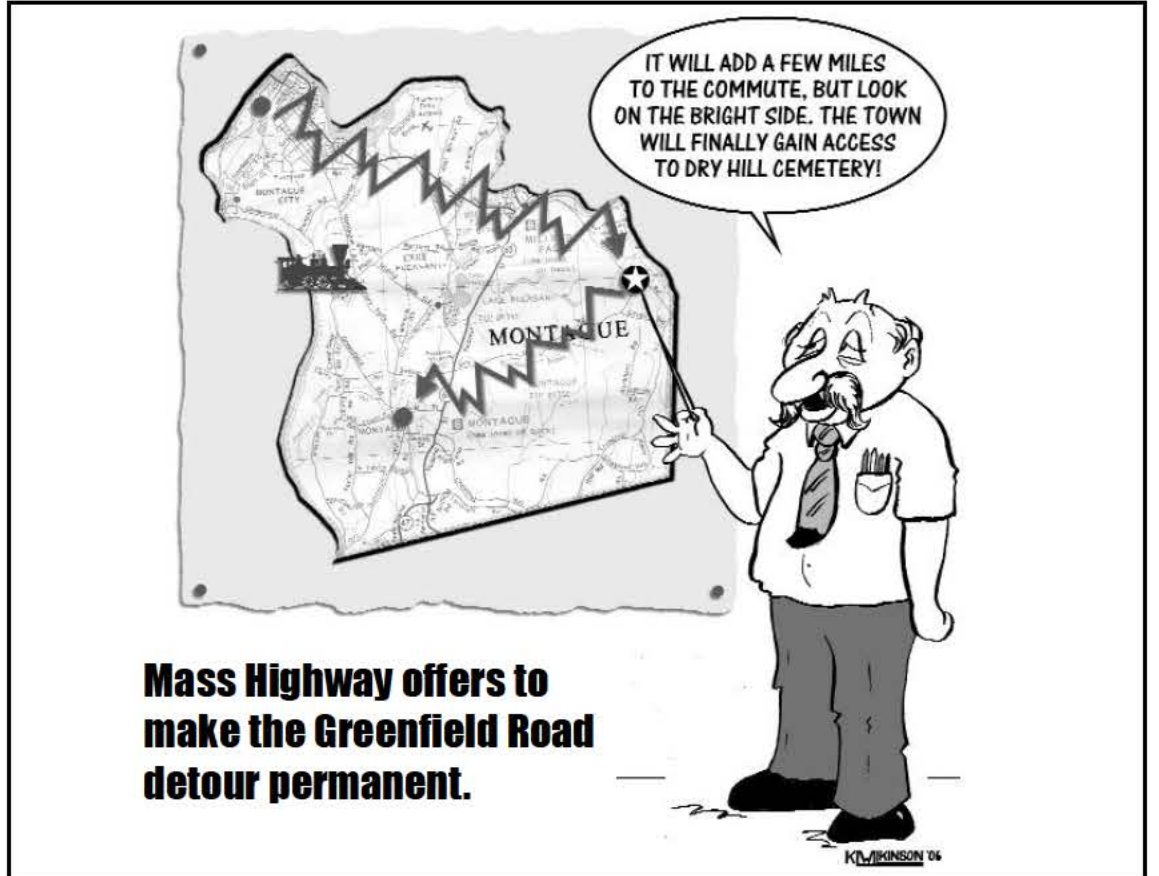
The name of the park was chosen to honor the Native origins of our village. It translates roughly as 'the place where the split rocks are,' referring to the Great Falls. On the American bicentennial, a stone fountain was dedicated at the front of the park, with a wish for the nation to be at peace. People still throw coins into that fountain every year, making wishes of their own.

The summer concerts by the Montague Community Band, one of the oldest continuous community bands in New England, are much anticipated events, enjoyed by young and old. After this summer, they will once again have a suitable place to play when the new bandshell takes the place of the old bandstand that once stood in Unity Park. (More than a hundred years ago, when it was still known as the Germania Cornet Band, performances were staged from a wooden stand on the corner of Avenue A and 2nd Street.)

The Farmers Market will have to find a new location for vendors to set up this summer, as construction work progresses. But they will be back on 6th Street, with a far more beautiful backdrop, in 2007.

The one thing that concerns us, amid all the positives in the new plan, is that suitable care be taken of the many memorial plantings that have taken root in Peskeomskut Park over the years. In addition to plantings by Students Against Drunk Driving and in memory of Korean War veterans, recent tragedies in town were remembered by trees planted in memory of Vivian Morrissey, Virginia Reyes, Cathy Gochinski, and Tracy Shepherd, four Montague women killed by their partners, fourteen years ago. When Palden Sangpo, a Tibetan refugee who washed dishes at the Shady Glen, died in the fire at the Crocker Building in 1997, trees were planted and a stone bench placed in his memory, too.

These memorials were placed along the paths and walks that existed in the park at the time. As those paths are redesigned, and the sightlines to the new bandshell created, those trees have to be moved; we understand that. But they should be moved in consultation with the communities, organizations, and families that planted them in the first place, and rededicated in a spirit of honoring the past, while making way for the future.



Mass Highway offers to make the Greenfield Road detour permanent.

LETTERS TO THE EDITOR

Gill Store Highlights Appreciated

How wonderful that your paper has recently highlighted the 'new' Gill Store. How lucky we are in Gill to have had this landmark reopened, and to see Susie Maddern there among the staff, such a familiar face. The store has had a face lift but seems like it has retained its charm and familiarity, where the staff is

friendly and wants to get to know you. This doesn't happen in most chain stores. I was never sure how Susie remembered all those birthdays and never forgot to say hello on your special day!

What a wonderful paper, the *Montague Reporter*. David Detmold and his staff do a super job of reporting what is going on

not only in Montague but the Franklin County area. You seem to have a good balance of facts and opinion and seem willing to be unbiased, which is hard to find in any print news today.

Keep up the great job!
- Cindy Hunter
Gill, Ma.

New Parking for Turners?

A new parking lot has opened up in downtown Turners Falls. Across the lane from the popular club of St. Stanislaus Society is a leveled area of dirt, surrounding a defunct building site with two impressive mounds of earth. The level area has lately become a double-lane parking spot.

A whole convoy of trucks was lined up in the double lanes last Saturday night. At around 9 p.m. it was time to "move 'em out." Happy men rolled out of the club and fired up their big machines. One on the inside lane (closest to

the impressive mounds) decided that straight forward was the best way to go: not deterred by hanging up on a boulder (excavated ledge that now serves as the cornerstone of the building site), he pressed forward through our garden, leaving two deep ruts - one through the garlic bed and the other through our compost pile.

If the contractor for this building site can't afford to do anything else with this property, certainly the neighborhood has use for extra parking, and the massive mounds could be levelled to

plant a lovely community garden this spring. The site's foundation walls would serve our community well as ramparts - to keep trucks and traffic off our flower beds and vegetable plots.

- Stephen Cobb,
Turners Falls

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WORD ON THE AVENUE

What was your reaction to the State of the Union address? If you didn't listen, how do you think the state of the union is?

COMPILED BY LISA DAVOL

I listened a little bit. I think things are going so-so. The poor fella (Bush) is doing all he can do. The economy is poor these days.

-Howard Feige
Turners Falls

I didn't watch, but we are in a sad state at this point. The elderly suffer most and get the least support. The economy is supposedly up but people get more in the red each year. If this continues, there will be more desperate people.

-Brenda Darnley
Turners Falls



I listened to a lot of it. He has ruined the economy, artificially driven up fuel prices and gotten us into the middle of a civil war in Iraq. It was a lot of political rhetoric. It seems like the people who elected him are the ones he is screwing the most.

-Steven D. Brown
Turners Falls

I did not listen but the country has been thrashed by a hurricane, there are no restaurants around, no clothing stores and nowhere to buy shoes. Everything is going down. I feel sorry for the younger generation

-Ellen Caruczek
Turners Falls

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Early Days of Turners Falls

The following excerpts are taken from a historical paper by Charles W. Hazelton of Montague City; read by him at the Annual Meeting of the Pocumtuck Valley Memorial Association, held at Deerfield on Thursday, Feb. 23rd, 1926.

"For over 200 years, the Connecticut River was the main artery of travel and transportation between the towns and cities of the coast and nearly all the territory embraced by its watershed in Vermont, New Hampshire and Western Massachusetts.

The locks and canal at Turners Falls were opened in 1798, and for the next forty or fifty years, a very prosperous business was carried on, but in 1846, when the Connecticut River Railroad was built to Greenfield, and began the transportation of travel and merchandise, the business of the canal very rapidly diminished, until soon it did not pay for its operation, the last boat going through the locks in 1856. From that time until 1865, the old canal was going to decay as to its locks and the dam, and the canal bed was growing up to brush.

On account of the loss of its business, the canal property had become practically worthless, but its organization had been maintained. Col. Alvah Crocker, of Fitchburg, through his knowledge of the development of water power already made at Lowell, Lawrence and Holyoke, realized the possibilities and value of a similar development at Turners Falls. He, therefore, through Mr. Wendell T. Davis of Greenfield, who had been for a number of years the secretary and treasurer of the old Locks and Canal Company, secured control of the stock of the old corporation, and proceeded to change the name and organize the Turners Falls Company.

In 1866, after the company had, by act of the Legislature, been relieved of the obligation to maintain the canal for navigation purposes and was empowered to build and main-

tain a dam and canal, and lease and sell the use of water for power purposes, they began the construction of the dam and headgates.

This dam was the fourth to be built in practically its present location, since 1793. Timothy M. Stoughton, born in 1818, and for 90 years a resident of Riverside, said to me that he had seen three dams either carried out or seriously injured by ice freshets before this dam of 1866 was built. The engineer for the construction of the dam of 1866 was Charles Francis, a

son of James. B. Francis, the engineer of the Locks and Canal Company at Lowell, and a noted authority on hydraulics, but after the construction of the dam, it was decided that a change should be made in the engineer.

Col. Crocker had a brother, who at that time was engaged in the practice of civil engineering at Laconia, in the State of New Hampshire, and in September of 1867, this brother, William P. Crocker, was employed as engineer to go on with the work of developing Turners Falls. It was with him, as a boy just starting in to learn surveying and engineering, that I came to Turners Falls, on the 18th day of September of that year, although he had preceded me by a day or two in his arrival.

On my arrival at Greenfield, I was met at the station by George W. Potter, who at that time, and for some years previous, had acted as agent for the Locks and Canal Company in the care of some of its property, and during the construction of the dam of 1866, acted as purchasing agent. Mr. Potter brought me to Turners Falls by the way of the old toll bridge at Montague City, and left me at

the Old Hotel, so-called, which as a matter of fact was not a hotel at all, but had previously been the residence of the Superintendent of the Locks and Canal of the old company, and later had been used as a boarding house for the men employed in the construction of the new dam.

The proprietress of the Old Hotel was Mrs. Susan Lebourveau. There was a Mr. Lebourveau, Louis, but he was not very much in evidence. Both were very much along in years. The principal experience in the early life of Louis that he liked to refer to was the time when he drove the stage from Keene to Brattleboro. He was a very methodical man. In the main living room there was a large fireplace, and at the left hand side Louis had his regular seat. The last thing that he did before going upstairs to bed was to put his hat on the mantel over the fireplace. The first thing he did after coming down was to put on his hat, then light his pipe, then put on his shoes, then start the fire in the kitchen stove.

Mrs. Lebourveau was a most excellent cook, and by reason of her skill in that line did quite a business in transient meals. She sometimes expressed considerable feeling when Geo. W. Potter put butter on the pie crust.

The next morning on looking the place over, in addition to the Old Hotel and the Lock tender's house, near the dam, with Samuel D. Emery as a guide, I found the Goss tenement house, the Goddard and Taft houses up near the ferry, a small house standing near where the Schuler block now stands and one other house on the old road to Montague City, near where the Griswold tenement block now stands, temporarily occupied by John Dunbar and family. This was the situation at the beginning of the early days of the present village of Turners Falls.

courtesy of Lillian Fiske
continued next week



This map of Turners Falls dates back to 1877.

HIGHLIGHTS FROM THE MONTAGUE POLICE LOG

Hold Your Horses

Friday 1-27

1:24 a.m. Report of a domestic disturbance at an N Street address.

was arrested and charged with domestic assault and battery.

2:55 p.m. Walk-in to station reported witnessing a motor vehicle accident on Montague Street. Neither owner reported it.

Saturday 1-28

11:42 a.m. Report of an animal complaint at a Federal Street, Montague address. Three dead birds were found. Advised to call animal control.

12:01 p.m. Report of an animal complaint at a Turners Falls Road address. A horse was loose. Owner took control of horse.

12:37 p.m. Report of an animal complaint at a Turners Falls Road address. Horse loose again. Turned over to animal control.

5:04 p.m. Report of a larceny at Cumberland Farms on Montague City Road. Male subject stole food. Officer unable to locate. Report taken.

9:58 p.m. Report of a disturbance at an L Street address. Found to be a verbal argument between neighbors. Both parties spoken to. Peace restored.

10:45 p.m. Report of a domestic disturbance at a Newton Street, Millers Falls address.

was arrested and charged with domestic assault and battery.

Sunday 1-29

7:34 a.m. Report of an animal complaint at a Turners Falls Road address. Horse loose again.

Monday 1-30

6:24 a.m. Report of an animal complaint at a Turners Falls

Road address. Horse loose again!

9:25 a.m. Walk-in to station reported an assault happened at work. Advised of court options.

12:56 p.m. Report of a larceny at Turners Falls High School. Seventeen-year-old male summonsed.

Tuesday 1-31

9:05 a.m. Report of illegal dumping at a 3rd Street address. Someone left mattresses next to a dumpster. Unable to locate the perpetrator.

7:02 p.m. Report of a domestic disturbance at a 7th Street address. Found to be verbal only.

Wednesday 2-1

3:45 a.m. Report of a disturbance at a Turners Falls Road address. Neighbors playing loud music. Officer had them turn it down.

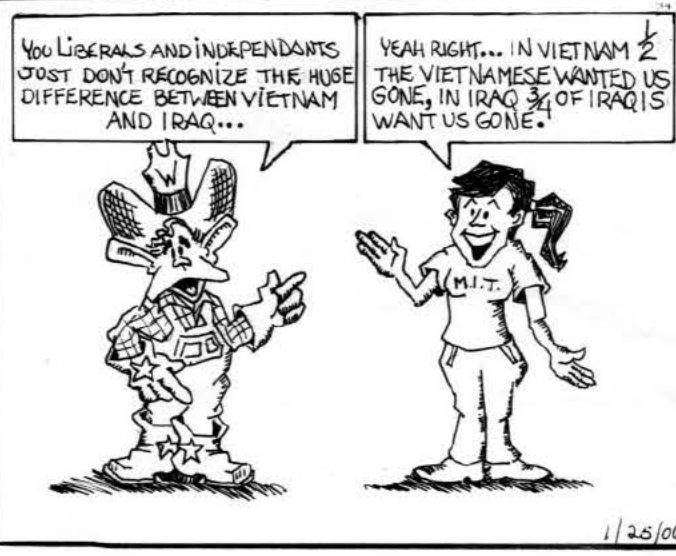
7:40 a.m. Report of a breaking and entering at a 4th Street address. A motor vehicle was entered. Report taken.

American Dead in Iraq as of 2/2/06



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BY DENIS BORDEAUX



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Congratulations, Harriet Tidd!

YOU HAVE SERVED GILL WELL

BY JOSEPH A. PARZYCH

GILL - The Friends of Gill sponsored a surprise retirement party for Harriet Tidd in the Gill Congregational Church community room on Sunday, January 29th. The potluck celebration brought a great response, especially since there was no publicity (obviously), and news of it spread only by word of mouth.

Both Representative Chris Donelan and Senator Stan Rosenberg attended the affair.

When someone requested that both of them pose together for a photo opportunity, Rosenberg complied, but said he generally avoids standing next to Donelan. "It makes us look like Mutt and Jeff," Rosenberg said. "I noticed that more and more politicians have names ending in vowels. We may change our names to Rosenbergi and Donelano."

People brought a wide variety of dishes. "Bring whatever you like," Beverly Demars said when she called. "The Friends of Gill are supplying the dessert."



Selectman Philip Maddern, left, presents Harriet Tidd, center, with a plaque listing some of her many accomplishments during her years of service as town clerk, librarian, finance committee member, assessor, member of the council on aging, historian and sage. Tidd is surrounded by friends in this photo, taken at her retirement party.

There was not a duplicate dish on the table. Ellen Hastings donated a huge cake she had baked and artfully decorated with frosting rosettes. She lettered the

cake, honoring Tidd's more than 50 years of service to the town of Gill.

Ronnie LaChance introduced Donelan and Rosenberg. Donelan spoke first, saying a few suitable words before presenting Tidd with an award. Rosenberg, next, kept the crowd in stitches with his monologue. He pointed out, with tongue in cheek, that his award was much nicer than Donelan's.

"It has a nice blue cover; Donelan's is plain white. We have four signatures," Rosenberg said, reading off the names. He also pointed out that his award says, "Over 55 years of service, thus, even beating out the cake, over there, which only has 50 years."

After the laughter subsided, Rosenberg said, "People in Boston don't know this place exists. They think Massachusetts ends at Framingham, and they ask why I chose to live 'way out there.'"

"Don't tell them!" someone cried out. "We don't want them moving here."

"I don't. I encourage them to

visit here, spend their money, then go back home."

Rosenberg went on to say, "It is communities like this where people like Harriet serve for years, and people get together to show their appreciation for those who serve, as we are doing, here, today - that's what I like about living out here in Western Massachusetts."

Rosenberg's sincerity and his ability to entertain may be a big reason he has stayed in office for so many years. He fondly recalled how he once called the Gill town hall number to ask a question and got Harriet at home. The town hall number used to ring at her house when she was not at work, as a convenience to townspeople.

"She said she was at home," Rosenberg said, "but could answer my question. And she did. Harriet and I started off at the same time. She started serving the town, and I started eating and talking. Now, here we are 55 years later."

It was not lost on the gathering that Rosenberg did not zip out the

door as soon as the award presentation and photo-op were over, and later stayed to partake in food and conversation.

Phil Maddern, selectboard chairman, presented Tidd with a plaque honoring her for her long years of service as town clerk, librarian, finance committee member, assessor, member of the council of aging, historian, and sage. "I'm responsible for adding 'sage,' Maddern said.

Harriet warmly thanked everyone for honoring her with the retirement party.

In earlier years, she was also the Gill correspondent for the *Greenfield Recorder Gazette*. Her reports were folksy. Harriet kept people informed of happenings in town, such as who was visiting whom, from far off places like Hatfield or Amherst.

She took photos of house fires and wrote the reports as well. When I was in the fourth grade she informed the world that I had reported sighting the first robin that spring. That was my 15 minutes of fame. She probably could tell me who told her, if I asked. She once wrote about our dog growing a pumpkin. He liked to bury things, including part of a pumpkin, seeds and all. The seeds sprouted, and the vine produced a pumpkin. Harriet took a photo of the dog with his paw on the pumpkin, and wrote the story. That was his 15 minutes of fame.

Harriet lives in a remodeled Methodist Church on Cross Road. When she and her husband George first came to Gill in about the early 1940s, they owned and rode horses. George also kept a milk cow. He milked the cow with a surge milking machine powered by the vacuum of his automobile engine when the cow was in the pasture. Harriet may have milked the cow too, though no one ever saw her doing it. I'm willing to bet she could.

HIGHLIGHTS FROM THE GILL POLICE LOG

A Quiet Week

Tuesday 1-24

9:20 p.m. Emergency message delivered to French King Highway resident to contact the hospital.

Wednesday 1-25

8:19 p.m. Assisted with medical emergency on Oak Street.

Thursday 1-26

11:20 a.m. Received information at station regarding suspicious activity on Main Road.

4:20 p.m. Assisted Erving Police with motor vehicle accident.

6:15 p.m. Snowmobile complaint on River Road, unable to

locate.

Friday 1-27

5:40 p.m. 911 mis-dial on Mount Hermon campus, all o.k.

Saturday 1-28

1:15 p.m. 911 mis-dial on Mount Hermon Campus, all o.k.

Monday 1-30

10:20 a.m. Assisted with medical emergency on River Road.

Tuesday 1-31

5:05 p.m. Car vs. deer accident on French King Highway. No injuries, deer gone on arrival.

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BRIDGE from pg 1
 inclined,' I've heard you say 'Mass Highway is reluctant to replace the bridge,' I haven't heard you say 'Mass Highway will *not* replace the bridge.' People are creatures of habit. The bridge connects places people are going. What else is it that is factoring into this decision?"

If the town decides it wants the bridge rebuilt, replied Stegemann, "Mass Highway is going to ask the town to assume some liability with Mass Highway in case the structure fails." Calculating the risk of rebuilding at that location, he referred to the potentially huge liability of damaging the Guilford tracks that run beneath the overpass - or used to run beneath the overpass before it was demolished following April 7th, 1999, when the abutments tipped further and the bridge's road surface sank 12 inches overnight. Before "the railroad undercut the rails and disturbed the stability of the underlying aquifer," in Stegemann's words.

According to a 2001 report evaluating soil and groundwater conditions at the site for the Montague conservation commission, by Stephen Mabbe, a hydrogeologist at UMass Amherst who is now the Massachusetts State Geologist, "in mid to late winter 1998, the railroad commenced undercutting operations at the site to accommodate excess height cars under the bridge structure. This operation apparently destabilized the existing granite foundation system, causing the abutments to lean. In addition, the removal of subgrade material combined with the dynamic loading of the trains caused the saturated underlying fine sands beneath the clay confining layer

to destabilize, leading to soil failure, loss of ground, and excessive settlement of the tracks."

Stegemann confirmed that Mass Highway had authorized Guilford Rail's request to undercut the tracks at the site, part of a move to get double stacked freight cars sufficient clearance to pass beneath roadways throughout New York and New England. But, "Nobody knew what the result of the undercutting would be," Stegemann said.

UMass soil scientist and Montague conservation commission member Deb Picking confirmed Mabbe's findings regarding the complexity of the substrate and groundwater conditions at the site.

"It is a challenging site with respect to its soils and its hydrology," said Picking, who characterized the soil in the area as "glacial lake bottom sediments" from ancient Lake Hitchcock, deposited 10,000 to 14,000 years ago. "Glacial lake bottom sediments have a very high clay content, not a very stable substrate on which to build. Compounding the problem in this location are the presence of confined aquifers, under pressure. If you put an open pipe down beneath the clay, water would come spurting out," Picking said.

The nearby Montague Plains were formed at the same time, by deposits of larger sedimentary material from glacial streams flowing into the lake. Now, the porous sand and gravel of the Plains act as an aquifer recharge area, gathering and filtering rainwater into the aquifer, which travels laterally down-grade, in this area, toward the fish hatchery and Greenfield

Road. The Bitzer Fish Hatchery, like other hatcheries along the Connecticut Valley, is characterized by the presence of springs of "cold, clean groundwater upwelling at the toe slope of these sand deposits," Picking said. Mabbe's report also notes the presence of a spring on the north embankment of the former Greenfield Road overpass, and mentions, "the pathway of the spring is unknown."

In layperson terms, the fine clay deposits, unstable footing for heavy structures like bridges, act to seal off groundwater in the confined aquifers. Dig down through the clay, or remove it, and the "interfingered" layers of permeable sand allow groundwater to flow, making the sediment more unstable, more fluid.

Picking, who formerly worked at an engineering firm as a wetlands geologist, said

even with the complexities of the underlying dynamics, "I'm sure there is a solution for building at the site. It's a matter of money. There are geotechnical engineering solutions to these scenarios."

But Mass Highways' Masse cautioned, "There are limited resources. There is limited funding available. We can't do everything people want us to do."

In lieu of rebuilding the bridge, the Mass Highway spokesmen offered to move forward with the long delayed Greenfield Road reconstruction project, in stages, and offered to include a total rebuild of Hatchery Road, the detour commuters have used for the last seven years since the bridge came down. The full depth reconstruction of the northern 2.1 miles of Greenfield Road, to a width of 29 feet, including a

redesign of the intersection of Randall Road, would cost an estimated \$5 million, Masse said. The southern section of Greenfield Road, which would be reclassified as a local road from the dead end where the bridge once stood down to Ferry Road, would perhaps simply be repaved to its present width, 26 feet, and have attendant drainage issues fixed. That part of the project would cost \$4 million, Masse said.

At which town planner Robin Sherman exclaimed, "Those figures are up by a factor of three from a few years ago!"

Masse stuck by them, and said energy costs and the price of bituminous accounted for the huge increases. He estimated the cost of rebuilding Hatchery Road, to handle detouring traffic permanently, would run

see **BRIDGE** pg 13



A freight train passes the dead end of Greenfield Road, looking south

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NOTES FROM THE WENDELL SELECTBOARD

Progress on Town Water Supply

BY JOSH HEINEMANN - At their January 25th meeting, the selectboard discussed progress in the search for a source of public water for new town buildings under construction in the Center. Selectboard member Daniel Keller said Ward Smith had flagged the town-owned Cooleyville Road property, the preferred source, delineating the wetlands there. Rather than building a road into the well site, swamp mats could be employed for temporary access. Swamp mats are essentially big bundles of railroad ties. Although the proposed solution could break a logjam in helping the town determine where potable water for the new library and office buildings would come from, Keller warned that the \$100,000 authorized at last year's annual town meeting will probably not be enough to construct the public water supply. The board considered but did not determine dates for a special town meeting in February to authorize additional funds.

Speed Limits and Office Trailers

Highway commissioner and board of health member Harry Williston met with the board, wearing both his hats. As highway commissioner, he said the state allows towns to lower speed limits by 15 m.p.h. in school zones. He thought he might be able to speak with state highway people in Northampton and get a similar allowance for Wendell to lower the speed limit in front of the new town offices and at the Wendell Country store, without the trouble and expense of having a person count cars in those locations, as was discussed at the January 11th selectboard meeting. Also as highway commissioner, he said the only reasonable place for two temporary office trailers at the highway garage was in line, on the south edge of the pavement, and backed up to the east end of the pavement. That brings the front edge of the forward trailer just short of the back corner of the highway garage and fire station, allowing truck access to the garage. He asked that stairs going to the trailer doors be given a right angle turn so their run is parallel to the trailer side,

which will make snow removal easier, and that a street light be included when electric service is brought in for the trailers. The road crew can create a level place for the storage trailer in front of the fire station, not an attractive alternative, but a workable one.

Aldrich reported that stairs cost \$35 a month apiece to rent and \$450 to buy; the town will need four: two exits for each trailer.

As a member of the board of health, Williston said the board had already submitted a letter with concerns about the Lake Grove School site plan for constructing a barn, playing fields, a skate park, and other facilities. (The plan was submitted to the selectboard at its November 30th, 2005 meeting.) The site plan review hearing before the planning board is scheduled to continue February 7th, which is the night of the next board of health meeting. If the board of health has further concerns about the Lake Grove expansion, they will only have an hour between the start of their next meeting at 7:00 p.m. and the start of the planning board hearing at 8:00 p.m. to discuss them.

Lake Grove Hearing

Deirdre Cabral, planning board chair, met the selectboard next, first with a request for time with town counsel to clarify section 40 Chapter 3, to determine whether the town is limited to statutory requirements if the applicant has expressed willingness to comply with other reasonable requests. She was referring specifically to the Lake Grove school site plan. Aldrich told her the selectboard had an executive meeting scheduled at 3:00 p.m. on February 7th, and that at 4:00 p.m. the planning board could have a joint meeting with the selectboard and counsel.

Cabral said the planning board is looking at town bylaws to see if the site review application process can be avoided when only minor changes are made to site plans. She wanted to set up a meeting with the zoning board of appeals, the selectboard, and the planning board. Keller suggested she contact Steve Gross of the ZBA.

Cabral reported that Robert Shulman had resigned his position on the planning board. Aldrich said she would post that vacancy for a week, but Cabral said the remaining planning board members were more interested now in their work load than in trying to bring a new person in before the May election.

However, she said if someone began to attend meetings, the first and third Tuesdays of the month, that person might catch on to the board's work.

Aldrich reported that Bruce Hunter of Franklin Community Action Corporation said there appeared to be enough money allocated for housing rehabilitation for Wendell for the next twelve to eighteen months. That money has also been used for demolition, Cabral said. Keller asked if the town could apply for some of that money for cleaning up town owned properties, and Cabral thought it could.

Keller said that treasurer Carolyn Manley had figured out the cost of different loans, and discovered that borrowing from the state revolving fund for the town public water supply could save the town \$45,000 over the life of the loan. That might justify spending \$4,000 to \$5,000 to hire an engineer to fill out the involved application form, and the delay that applying for that loan would put on the projects. The board agreed to continue pursuing that possibility.

Stone Road Auto Salvage

Keith Washburn came to the meeting anticipating that there would be a continuation of the hearing about the new license being considered for John Germaine of Boylston, who wants to buy Robin Pierce's house, garage and land on Stone Road. Heard told him the selectboard learned since the last meeting it did not have the authority to withhold a license because of a lien or unpaid back taxes, and that the hearing would be continued again if the property is not sold by the next meeting.

Regarding the potential well for a public water supply for the new town buildings under construction in the Center, Keller said Ward Smith had flagged the town-owned Cooleyville Road property, showing wet-

land delineation. Swamp mats, which are essentially big bundles of railroad ties, could be used for temporary access to the well site. Keller also said the \$100,000 authorized at the annual town meeting was not likely to be enough for the public water supply, and a special town meeting was needed soon to authorize additional funds.

Aldrich announced that the Franklin County Technical School board of trustees will hold their annual budget hearing March 25th from 10:00 a.m. to noon. Rick Droen is the Wendell representative.

PILOT Payments Drop Sharply

Aldrich relayed that Dennis Rindone, town administrator of Princeton, and member of STAR (originally Small Towns Against Repression, now Stand Together, Act Responsibly) said Governor Romney had increased PILOT (Payment In Lieu Of Taxes) money, but had redistributed the payments to favor richer towns in the east. Wendell's share was reduced from \$216,000 to \$64,000, and Rindone gave an example of a town in the east whose share went from \$5,000 to \$500,000. Keller said he thought it was due to the big increase in prices in the east, but thought it was still a big rip off, and said he would write to Senator Rosenberg and Representative Kulik. Lewis added "the votes are there, not here."

Town librarian Rosie Heidkamp was incensed when she heard the news. "Here the state is holding us to strict standards for how we construct our new library and office buildings, they are holding us to strict standards on how we construct our town water supply. The town is spending a great deal of money to meet the state's requirements. But when it comes time for the state to make good on their commitments to us, we get a drop of more than \$150,000. That will have a huge impact on us." Heidkamp vowed to get her Friends of the Wendell Library group involved in lobbying for full PILOT payments to the town.

The board signed an appointment slip for Allison Wight to the finance committee, replacing Sarah Schley, who sent her

resignation to the town clerk by email.

No one from the Wendell Women's club could come to this meeting, but Aldrich said the club was hoping to reserve the town hall for a fundraising spaghetti supper on Saturday, February 25th.

Electronic Voting Machines Protested

The three board members signed a letter that Aldrich had written to Secretary of State Bill Galvin protesting the proposed installation of electronic voting machines in towns that still use paper ballots.

The letter stated that paper ballots are time tested, have earned the trust of citizens, and allow for rechecking of results, while electronic voting machines are not fully tested, are subject to manipulation, leave no paper trail to allow rechecking, and were the source of doubt in national elections. The letter ends, "We hope you will give our objections your full consideration before mandating the use of a voting method we find unwelcome at best."

Under the terms of the federal Help America Vote Act, cities and towns that use paper ballots will be required to install one electronic machine per precinct, ostensibly to make voting easier for disabled voters.

Phyllis Brooks also came before the board with a request to rent the town hall for training sessions from Friday through Sunday, April 21st, 22nd, and 23rd. The board granted her request. She is familiar with clean up policy, and is paying full rent for private use of the hall.

VY Safety Review Sought

Dorthee was also in the room when the meeting opened; she asked the board to send a letter to the Vermont Public Service Board telling them to require an independent safety assessment of the Vermont Yankee Nuclear power plant before the owner, Entergy, is allowed a 20% power upgrade. Selectboard members agreed with that request, and chair Ted Lewis asked town coordinator Nancy Aldrich to draft a letter to that effect for the board members to sign.

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RUNWAY

continued from pg 1

\$6,825,000, leaving the town of Montague to foot the bill for just \$175,000, two and a half percent of the project's total cost. According to Sweeney, an effort is underway to identify a funding source to cover the town's share. However no details have been made public at this point on the status of that effort.

In 2002, Gale Associates Incorporated, an engineering firm based in Bedford, NH issued the "Runway and Terminal Area Study, and Airport Layout Plan Update: Draft Report for Final Review" [hereafter: draft report]. An update of the 1999 master plan for the airport, the report lays out the need for improvements to the current facilities. These include "moving the current runway fifteen feet to the north to achieve a compliant runway to taxiway separation, reconstruction of the runway safety area, a runway layout compliant with the Object Free Area design standards, a runway extension and a new electrical vault to support runway and taxiway lighting."

The runway extension from 3013 feet to 4200 feet is being proposed as an issue of safety based on FAA guidelines. To determine the correct length of the runway, airport elevation, ambient temperature and the aircraft's take-off weight must be determined. It is important to know the temperature of the average warmest day at the airport as well, since an aircraft taking off on a hot day will require a longer runway.

In his presentation before the selectboard on January 17th, 2006, Sweeney stated he and the commission had become aware of an FAA requirement for the runway extension only two months ago, after reviewing the airport's master plan. Contained in that document was a recommendation strongly suggesting, if not mandating, the extension by the FAA. Sweeney appeared as surprised as anyone at that meeting to have uncovered the stipulation, and could not explain the oversight on his or the airport commissioners' part in not discovering it sooner.

Yet the idea of extending the Turners Falls Airport runway is nothing new. It was first proposed in the 1999 master plan by the airport commission, and not by the FAA, according to

John Silva, Manager of Environmental Programs for the FAA New England Region. "The FAA concludes there is a need, but the driving force is the airport," he said. Asked whether or not the runway could safely serve aircraft in its current configuration, Silva replied, "The FAA is not forcing anyone to implement the master plan. The runway is safe for the planes that use it today."

"The FAA will not issue any grants [for runway improvement] if the minimum standards are not met," said Sweeney during a recent presentation in Montague Center. According to Silva, the FAA would likely pay its share of upgrades, in particular to repave the runway, whether or not it is extended. Said Silva, "Airports add economic value to the community."

There are other issues surrounding the airport project as well, such as the location of rare and endangered species of flora and fauna and significant Native American archaeological sites. While the report does not list which rare plant, insect or animal species are endemic to the area, due to state law prohibiting such information in printed form, Mark Fairbrother, one of the airport commissioners and chair of the Montague conservation commission insists the plan will cause no harm to these species. He explained he was personally opposed to the runway extension until the issues of endangered species protection and archaeological site integrity could be addressed to his own satisfaction.

According to the draft report, "Relocation of the runway fifteen feet to the north and the runway extension will likely disturb cultural grasslands that may act as rare species habitat." This is not a problem, said Fairbrother, because new grassland areas will be created by the realignment.

For his part, Sweeney said the presence of the airport actually serves to protect the surrounding grasslands from further development.

Another issue addressed by the draft report is the movement of 185,000 cubic yards of earth on the north side of the end of the runway, which "may disturb unconfirmed species habitat." Fairbrother said part of that hillside must be moved for safety reasons.

Regarding the presence of important paleo-Indian sites,

the draft report states, "A pre-historic archaeological site will be disturbed. It is an obstruction. The taxiway extension will need to be constructed over a portion of the archaeological site." While moving the runway further to the north was examined as an alternative, according to the report, it was determined impact of such a move would be greater. And yet, at the Montague Center meeting, Sweeney said, "The runway is being moved thirty-five feet north-northeast from where it is now to avoid the archeological site."

Before any plan can be approved, it must be submitted to the Massachusetts Historical Commission for review. Mass Historic did not return phone calls seeking comment in time for this article.

Besides safety, another impetus for improving the facilities at Turners Falls Airport is revenue. According to Sweeney, the airport is presently able to raise revenue only through leases on the hangars where aircraft are stored. In 2005, the airport's operational budget was \$39,000, but it ended the year with a \$9,500 deficit. That was an improvement over the \$22,000 operational deficit the airport faced in 2004.

Under Sweeney's supervision, the airport commission has been working to renegotiate the long-term leases on the existing hangars, which has accounted for the airport's improved financial picture. The cost of those leases has increased significantly, according to pilots such as Josh Simpson and Kip Miskinis. According to a number of leaseholders, Sweeney has used slim pretexts - such as the presence of a bicycle in one hangar - to justify a lease violation leading to a renegotiated lease.

Be that as it may, there are currently 23 hangar spaces at the airport, and Sweeney wants to increase that number. "There is one six-unit box hangar which would be planned and constructed in the short term, and an adequate area for t-hangar construction should be reserved for unforeseen demand," he said. "We should secure an area to be reserved for construction of one or two corporate hangars, should the demand develop," he added. However, "The demand for more is not evident," he said.

Under the commission's plan, private developers, not the town, would build new

hangars. Sweeney projects the construction of one hanger each year over the course of the next three years. The increased lease revenue of between \$9,500 and \$13,000, per hangar, depending on the structure, would provide an estimated profit of \$35,000 by the year 2010, he estimated. "This would remove a significant capital improvements need for many years," Sweeney said. "The town's input would otherwise have to increase regularly by 2008," he concluded.

According to the draft report, there were 14,900 flight operations at the Turners Falls Airport in 2004. It is projected, based on a three percent yearly increase in operations, the number of flights will rise to 18,000 at Turners Falls by 2009, and 23,625 by 2019.

While this does not translate directly into a need for more hangar space, it may portend a greater need for services. In order to provide these, taxiways must be redesigned and improved, lighting upgraded and the runway repaved. The last runway repaving at the Turners Falls Airport was completed in 1978.

At the first of a number of public presentations the commission plans to hold in each of the five villages, at the Montague Center Fire Station on Tuesday, January 24th, Sweeney warned the small audience that any move to close the airport at this juncture would cost the town a whopping \$9.5 million. That's because the FAA would require the town to refund the money it has invested in the facility over the years. Sweeney said the figure was based on each of the 212 acres owned by the airport multiplied by a value of \$40,000, totaling \$8.4 million. The balance presumably would come from the value of structures and other improvements.

Some of the 10 residents in attendance at the informational meeting took this to mean that if the town opted not to fund its share of the costs of runway improvement, the airport would close. But according to the FAA's Silva, the \$9.5 million is an unfamiliar figure to him. "The FAA would expect a prorated share of it, but I don't know how realistic that is," he said. "If we pay for the replacement of lights, like five million dollars based on twenty years of operation, and the airport closes after ten years, we would expect ten years' of our money back," he added. Silva said that

in any case the value of the airport had not been assessed.

But for now, closing the airport is not an option anyone in town government has suggested, according to town planner Robin Sherman. She said she would like to get a less muddled picture of what the town's options at the airport really are.

"We believe there are regional benefits to an improved facility with an extended runway, but we can't prove it to you," the airport commission's Fairbrother told the gathering in Montague Center.

Yet, speaking of regional demand for an expanded runway and more hangar space, Sweeney told the same crowd, "There is no latent demand from the business community." Sweeney assured the audience at Montague Center on the 24th that his main concern, apart from the budget, is airport safety. "I don't care how long the length of the runway is, as long as it meets the standards," he added.

Sweeney and the airport commissioners told the selectboard that grant applications had to be submitted by May 1st in order to ensure a place in the current funding cycle, or the town would end up at the bottom of the pile. But Silva said he does not see funding for this project being applied for until that time next year. "It should be thought of as a '07 project," Silva said.

Whether or not a delay on a decision on this particular project could put Turners Falls Airport at the bottom of a funding list, Silva would not commit. He said a delay would affect the chain of FAA funded projects in general, but was not certain what effect if any that would have on the Turners Falls Airport. For now, the project cannot move forward until funding is in place, including any local funds subject to town meeting approval, and until all the required environmental and archaeological permits have been acquired. In the meantime Sweeney and the airport commission will continue to make their presentations throughout the five villages. The next one scheduled is for Tuesday, February 7th at 7 p.m. in the downstairs conference room in town hall, in Turners Falls. Another will follow two weeks later in Millers Falls. All presentations are open to the public regardless of precinct affiliation.



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HALLMARK continued from pg 1

But this was the big night, the real night, the launch. It was a smooth, stylish, splash of an opening; it couldn't have gone more smoothly.

The idea for a museum started last year when George Rosa III, president of the Hallmark Institute, saw the renovated Colle Building was for lease. An avid photography collector himself, Rosa decided to act, feeling that an in-town museum would compliment both the Institute and the town. He contacted the selectboard; a lease was signed. It was only then, according to Rosa, that he fully realized what he had done. But not one to balk at an opportunity, he plunged ahead, determined to create a first-class museum in Turners Falls.

The Institute initiated a search for a museum director. Coincidentally, at about this time a photographer named Paul Turnbull turned up at a Hallmark open house. Turnbull was no stranger to Rosa or to Hallmark; in fact, he had been Hallmark's first teacher, hired by George Rosa's father in 1975. Prior to coming to Hallmark, Turnbull had run a

commercial studio in Chelmsford, MA for 18 years. As Turnbull recalled it, a vendor with whom he did business told him about the new photography school opening in a little mill town in Western Massachusetts. Turnbull, who felt himself ready for a change, sent an inquiry to George Rosa II, the owner. By the summer of 1975 Turnbull found himself ensconced in a house on top of a hill in Heath, trying to figure what this new job was all about. But he quickly took to the Institute and was named Academic Director not long after his hire. Among his students was the owner's son, George Rosa III, who completed his studies at Hallmark in 1980.

Then, in the late 1980s everything changed. Turnbull remembered that Rosa's father called him into the office and informed him that the Board of Directors had decided to close the school, and that he needed to inform his faculty they would be out of jobs in June. Turnbull had two reactions: "My head said, 'What a shame.' My heart said, 'Sell the school to me.'" The heart won, and Turnbull became the owner of Hallmark.

Turnbull successfully ran the school but found he had less and less time to pursue his own photography. "I was working 12 to 16 hours a day, seven days a week," he recalled. "I had a passion for working with the students, but was less interested in the business side. I'm not totally inept at business administration, but that's work!"

In 1992, Turnbull's former student George Rosa III appeared. According to Turnbull, "George had gone off to pursue his fortune, then returned with an offer to buy back the school. I was more than ready to let it go." Turnbull worked closely with Rosa on the transition, but gradually drifted away. "Then, last April I saw that Hallmark was having an open house. My wife and I drove down for the event and reconnected with George. He gave us a private tour and I was dumbfounded and overwhelmed by the transformation." A month or so later, Turnbull got a call from Rosa. "I knew he was up to something, but didn't know what," said Turnbull.

It didn't take long for Turnbull to find out what Rosa wanted. According to

Turnbull, he was a bit flummoxed when Rosa offered him the job as museum director. "I can't possibly do that," he told Rosa. But moments later he agreed, "Sure, let's do it." Or as Turnbull reflected, "I realized this opportunity wouldn't come again, and if I didn't leap, I'd always regret it."

Throughout the summer and fall Turnbull and Rosa plotted how to put the museum on the map. Out of a long list of possible candidates to feature for the first exhibition, they chose Barbara Bordnick. Rosa and Turnbull agreed that for the opening, they should invite someone with whom they were familiar, who had a reputation, and with whom they knew they could work. Bordnick met all three criteria. Not only was she recognized internationally, she had given a well-received talk at the Institute. "Her work is beautiful, sensuous and serious," noted Turnbull. "But you don't have to have a doctorate in art history to deal with it."

Once the decision was made, the preparations proceeded smoothly. But just prior to the opening, Turnbull found himself in a whirl. He had his own exhibition at the Vermont Center for Photography and

was torn between getting his own work up at the gallery and taking care of the myriad details associated with launching the museum. In the end, Turnbull managed to do both, with aplomb.

Now the opening has come and gone, both Turnbull and Rosa are delighted with their choice. Over the weekend the museum had scores of visitors, and Bordnick's Saturday-evening talk showcasing her career in photography was illuminating, fascinating and well-attended. Her show will run until April 2nd. The museum will be open every Thursday through Sunday from 1-5 p.m. Admission is free.

Both Turnbull and Rosa have high hopes for the museum. They see it as a resource for Hallmark and for the community. For Rosa, the museum adds prestige to the school while helping to transform the downtown as a welcoming destination for locals and out-of-towners. Turnbull agrees: "I see the museum as the catalyst for pulling the cork on the bottled-up energy in this town."



LANDFILL

continued from pg 1

board what the next steps for the landfill project would be, Monosson replied the committee's charge had been to review the current proposal, and not to say what would happen next for the project. Abbondanzio told the board he wanted to find ways to encourage more bids in the future. He suggested bringing together both the vendors who did bid as well as those who did not to determine how to improve the process. He explained that in this round, Massachusetts General Law Chapter 44-28c, defined as the "management of solid waste; project costs; debt obligations" had been used as the town's legal guideline in accepting bids. Under this state law, both the technical and financial parts of the bid must be made public. While this may have put off some vendors, this law does allow a town to negotiate with them, which can be beneficial.

"Did Chapter 44 discourage bids?" asked selectboard member Patricia Pruitt.

"Possibly," Abbondanzio

replied.

The alternative is to invite bids under Massachusetts General Law Chapter 30-B, the Uniform Procurement Act. That guideline is more straightforward, said Abbondanzio, but does not allow the town to negotiate with vendors. In addition, the bids are exempt from the public records law. Abbondanzio intends to weigh the pros and cons of the various bidding procedures after meeting with potential vendors.

In the meantime the selectboard considered giving Coventa Haverhill a full refund of its \$10,000 bidding fee. Selectboard chair Al Ross wanted to know what expenses had been incurred by the town during the process. "Is there a rough estimate of legal expenses to the town?"

"No," replied Abbondanzio. While there have been legal and other associated expenses, there has not been a need for expensive engineering reports because Coventa Haverhill's bid did not get beyond the committee's consideration. The town will pay any incurred expenses. The selectboard

voted 2-0 in favor of the refund.

Electric Rates

Penny Geis from the Hampshire Council of Governments spoke to the selectboard about the Energy Aggregation Program. The program seeks towns interested in buying electricity from the HCOG at less expensive rates than they are currently paying to the utility company. The HCOG is a licensed provider that can buy electricity right off the market. Geis explained how electricity is purchased, and outlined the payment options the town would have, depending on usage. Towns like Deerfield and Gill have already signed on, while Amherst and Northampton are weighing their options. The selectboard will review the packet of information and revisit the options at a later date. According to Ross, Montague's energy bill accounts for 5 - 10% of its budget.

Community Development Strategy

A hearing was held regard-

ing the Community Development Block Grant, to discuss and solicit response for the update of the Community Development Strategy and to prioritize projects. Town planner Robin Sherman presented the board with a seven-page chart of 39 projects the town is interested in pursuing. These include the Canalside Rail Trail, the construction of a new community center, reconstruction of the Prospect Street Bridge and housing rehabilitation.

"The list of projects is a planning guide and is not intended to be a static document," said Sherman. Ross suggested it would be a good idea to make a connection between the selectboard's agenda and the list. A hearing will be held on the final grant application for 2006 at the selectboard's meeting on February 13th. In the meantime, the document can be found on the town's website under planning and conservation documents.

Sherman asked the selectboard to sign a letter in support of the Connecticut River Scenic Farm Byway Land

Preservation Project. The project would help to protect open space and farmland along Routes 47 and 63 in Montague Center. Sherman also informed the selectboard of an application currently underway regarding an Agricultural Preservation Restriction near South Ferry and Wills Ferry Road in Montague Center.


The Franklin Land Trust seeks to acquire fourteen acres currently owned by Western Massachusetts Electric Company, land the utility was once intending to use to build a substation for planned nuclear plants on the Montague Plains, since canceled. The land would be agriculturally zoned and returned to the tax rolls.

Special Town Meeting

A special town meeting has tentatively been scheduled for Thursday, March 2nd at 7 p.m. at the high school. Town meeting members will be asked to consider a new union contract. There may be other items on the warrant, said Abbondanzio.



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At the Hallmark Museum of Contemporary Photography Grand Opening, Friday evening, January 27th

BY LISA DAVOL



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14



3

Over 200 people gathered for a gala reception to celebrate the Hallmark Museum's much anticipated grand opening. Festivities continued Saturday and Sunday

- 1. Featured photographer, **Barbara Bordnick**
- 2. **Barbara Bordnick** and Hallmark president and museum founder, **George Rosa, III**
- 3. Archivist & Exhibitions Manager, **Laurie Wheeler**(left) & **Joanne Potee**
- 4. **Norma Johnson** & **Eric Poggenpohl**
- 5. **Christopher Sawyer-Lauccano** & Montague selectboard member **Patricia Pruitt**
- 6. **Clay Turnbull** & Montague selectboard member **Pat Allen**. Montague selectboard member **Allen Ross** (in background)
- 7. **Senator Stan Rosenberg**
- 8. Town Moderator **Frank Abbandanzio**
- 9. **Jim Wallace** & **Robin Logan**
- 10. Harpist **Rosemary Caine**
- 11. **Myron Becker** & **Jan McClish**
- 12. Montague town planner, **Robin Sherman** & photographer and Hallmark instructor, **Alan M. Thornton**
- 13. Programs director, **Vern McClish**
- 14. Museum director, **Paul Turnbull**



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selectboard, airport manager Michael Sweeney outlined the work required to modernize the facility, including a new runway and taxiway, removal of aviation obstructions and the updating of runway lighting and navigation aids. In addition, Sweeney called for the runway to be extended from the current 3000 feet to 4200 feet to meet Federal Aviation Administration standards for an airport in this class.

The cost of the new, expanded runway is estimated at seven million dollars, which would be spent over two years. Of that, the FAA, through the Massachusetts Aeronautics Commission would provide \$6,825,000 and \$175,000 would be paid for by the town of Montague.

The subject of expanding the runway has not met with widespread approval at public hearings in the past. And for years the airport commission has requested funding from town meeting for studies to examine the presence of endangered species and Native American archaeological sites on airport land. At those meetings, town meeting members say, assurances have been given that the purpose of such studies was not to pave the way for extending the runway.

But two months ago, while preparing a study outlining improvements to the facility, the airport commission discovered that the length of the present runway did not meet federal standards. Now, the sudden imperative to extend the runway has angered some community members who feel deceived and has led others to question whether they can trust the commission members' word.

"We just stumbled on the regulation. Words like 'deceived' and 'lied' are prominent. We didn't know, and we're not lying or deceiving," said commission member Mark Fairbrother.

According to Sweeney, the federal standard was in at least two previous airport master plan documents. But, "we didn't appreciate the significance of it. Our understanding of it is new," Sweeney said.

"We need an independent assessment," said Mike Naughton, of the capital improvements committee. "This expansion just dumped in our lap at the last minute leads us to question the assumptions tonight's presentation is based on. We just can't accept what we're hearing anymore," he added.

Although the airport commission has not received an official letter from the FAA on the matter, Sweeney and the commissioners are concerned that funding for the project could be delayed or lost if not applied for within the next few months. The deadline for the current cycle of funding is October 1st.

According to Sweeney, Turners Falls airport traffic is estimated to increase by 17% by the year 2010. Although the new runway could attract small jets, he anticipates these would account for no more than 1% of local air traffic. The facility, limited to planes 12,500 lbs. or less at present, would not see a visi-

ble change in the types of aircraft using the runway. In addition, said Sweeney, the extension would result in a slight decrease in noise over Turners Falls and would have no impact on noise levels over Millers Falls. "It would remove a significant capital improvements need for many years," he added.

It is estimated that 175,000 cubic yards of soil will have to be moved if the runway extension is built. Scrub oak and pine will have to be cut down and replaced with grasses. This will provide grassland habitat for endangered species such as moths, butterflies and birds. There are also three or four Native American archaeological sites in the area, which Sweeney said the commission has been working with the Narragansett Indian tribe on. "We will do all we can to not impact the sites," he said.

Another goal of airport modernization and expansion is to construct new hangars in which to store aircraft. There are currently eight hangars at the site, which provide the bulk of the airport's annual revenue. Although these hangars are privately owned, they are located on municipal land and the owners must sign a lease for their use. These are usually long-term leases, lasting anywhere from ten to twenty years with a built-in clause for automatic renewal. Sweeney hopes to attract developers who would be willing to build a number of new hangars, each of which would provide the airport up to \$12,500 per year in additional annual revenue. While the airport operated at a \$22,000 loss in 2004, Sweeney forecasts a profit of \$35,000 by 2010 through such leases.

According to Bob Bacon, owner of Northampton Airport, where the runway was resurfaced in 2000, a hangar has an expected life span of forty years. Northampton currently has fifty such units, all of which are rented. However, he warns that few developers would want to spend money building a structure without a long-term lease, particularly on public land. As a result, he said, attracting such developers may not be an easy task.

On the other hand, Sweeney alluded to a developer who recently contacted him about building a hanger at the Turners Falls Airport. Whatever the case, Bacon explained the reason for Northampton's success is that the runway was resurfaced. At the Tuesday night meeting, Sweeney's profit projections were criticized because they did not seem to account for the added expenses of plowing and mowing a larger area, nor of maintaining a greater infrastructure. However, Brain Carroll, chair of the airport commission, said he did not see anything that would justify an increase in operating costs. "We would have to have the revenues to justify these, but I don't see it," he said. Sweeney added he saw no reason to add hours to his own position or to hire anyone else, because of the amount of work that is subcontracted.

Divisiveness was evident between the Airport Commission

and a number of those who use the facility, particularly over hangar leases. According to Fairbrother, leases dating back to the 1980s and 1990s had been recently updated after being undervalued. The increased rates did not please many of the long-time owners. This resulted in lawsuits by some of them against the commissioners.

One of the dissatisfied pilots who spoke at the meeting was Josh Simpson, who with his wife has owned two hangers at the airport for many years. Simpson, who said he is committed to aviation, explained that at one time the pilots, the commissioners and the airport manager were "on the same team." "But in the last two years things have been different. There is a sudden cry for the airport to make money, but it is not being addressed in a friendly or cooperative way," he said.

According to Simpson, the Airport Commission has tried to squeeze the owners of the hangars by claiming minute violations such as having a bicycle stored inside. When his own lease was not renewed, he asked why but did not receive an answer. He attended meetings, but received the silent treatment, he said. As a consequence he sued the commission and has spent thousands of dollars on litigation. "A phone call could have fixed it, instead of \$5,000," he added.

In the meantime he does support the runway expansion as being a good thing for the town. "The town would be shortsighted not to take advantage of the reimbursement for the project," he said, adding that the airport supports the region's economy. And he added, the balance paid by the town is a good investment in existing infrastructure.

Simpson, however, is dubious of Sweeney's financial projection for revenues from the hangars. He says that under the current approach to management and client relations, it is difficult to imagine a developer willing to risk his or her own investment. In addition, leases are now expensive at the Turners Falls Airport and limit the ability of an owner to pay all the associated costs such as a mortgage and insurance.

"There are options, we've been told," said Fairbrother. One is to not lengthen the runway. In that case, he said, the FAA would abandon the facility and the town would be left paying the price. Another option is to close the airport. But that, he said, is not realistic for monetary reasons due at least in part to the FAA's investment over thirty years. The town might have to compensate the FAA before it could close the airport, Fairbrother said.

The proposal before the town, its various committees and the selectboard is to improve the airport by upgrading safety standards in addition to extending the runway by 1200 feet. In the meantime, selectboard chairman Allen Ross said, "We need more hard information. A lot of questions need to be explored."

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Montague's 6th Annual Winter Carnival

SATURDAY, FEBRUARY 4, 2006

Brought to you by The Montague Parks & Recreation Department, in partnership with Greenfield Savings Bank, Montague Center Volunteer Firemen's Association, Sirum Equipment Company & The Brick House

SCHEDULE OF EVENTS

All programs are **FREE OF CHARGE** unless otherwise noted. Most activities are weather/condition dependent. Contact the MPRD Office for activity status.

2nd ANNUAL WINTER JAM @ Unity Park

Cardboard Sledding, Snowball Slingshot, Snow Sculpture Contest & Music... 10 a.m. - 1:30 p.m.

CARDBOARD SLED JAMBOREE

Construction 10-11 a.m.
Sled Races 11-11:30 a.m.

Who can make the best custom-made, cardboard sled? Families & friends are encouraged to show their spirit of the season. Feel free to build your sled at home. There will be prizes for 1st, 2nd and 3rd place. Refreshments will be served. Competitors must supply their own cardboard for their sled.

THE BRICKHOUSE SNOWBALL

SLINGSHOT CHALLENGE..... 11:30 a.m.

Pack your tightest snowball and see if you can shoot it at the targets (no, not other people) across the field. Prizes for accuracy and distance. Join The Brick House Staff and take your best shot!

SNOW SCULPTURE CONTESTNOON

Who can make the best snowman, or hut, or sculpture? Whatever you wish to create. Artistic ability doesn't matter here, just use your imagination! Awards for 1st, 2nd & 3rd place.

BROOMBALL GAMES

The Pond (Montague Center School).....2:30 p.m.
Broomball is played like hockey without sticks, skates, a puck, or checking! Equipment will be provided. This is a classic winter sport that has grown in popularity over the past few years in the U.S. If there is no snow, we'll play in Montague Center Park!

SATURDAY EVENING 4-7 P.M.

HORSE DRAWN HAYRIDES

At the NEW Montague Center Firehouse. One of the truly wonderful experiences of the season. Our friends from Muddy Brook Farm will be providing scenic hayrides through the village. Hayrides depart from Old Sunderland Road every 25 minutes. Coffee, cocoa, mulled cider and hot dogs will be provided courtesy of the Montague Center Fireman's Association. Witness a beautiful winter sunset! Hayride Fee: \$2/adult, \$1/Youth (17 & Under).

CARNIVAL BONFIRE

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

ICE SKATING at The Pond at Montague Center School. Enjoy ice skating on the pond located next to the Montague Center School. B.Y.O.S. (Bring Your Own Skates). *Activity status dependent upon ice conditions.

Additional Co-Sponsors & Friends

The success of the Annual Winter Carnival is also dependent upon generous, community-minded businesses, organizations and groups. The Montague Parks & Recreation Department and Parks & Recreation Commission would like to thank these folks for their donations and assistance in pulling off this year's carnival: Connecticut River Internists, Renaissance Builders, Inc., and St. Kaziemerz Society. We appreciate your support.

THE HEALTHY GEEZER

Your Habit is Killing Me!

BY FRED CICETTI

LEONIA, NJ - Q. I live with my 40-year-old son and he smokes like the proverbial chimney around the house. I'm afraid of what it's doing to his health. What can I do to get him to quit?

Tell him he may be killing you with his secondhand smoke.

Secondhand smoke - also called environmental tobacco smoke (ETS) - is made up of the "sidestream" smoke from the end of a cigarette, pipe, or cigar, and the "mainstream" smoke that is exhaled. Nonsmokers exposed to secondhand smoke absorb the same 4,000 chemical compounds that smokers do. More than 60 of these compounds are known or suspected to cause cancer.

Each year, in the United States alone, secondhand smoke is responsible for about 40,000 deaths from heart disease, and about 3,000 lung-cancer deaths. Secondhand smoke causes increased cardiovascular risks by damaging blood vessels, decreasing your ability to exercise and altering blood cholesterol levels.

Some research indicates that people exposed to a spouse's cigarette smoke for several decades are about 20 percent more likely to have lung cancer.



ILLUSTRATION JESSICA HARMON

Those who are exposed long-term to secondhand smoke in the workplace or social settings may increase their risk of lung cancer by about 25 percent.

Some of the components found in tobacco smoke that are known to cause cancer or are suspected to be carcinogenic include: formaldehyde, arsenic, cadmium, benzene and ethylene oxide.

Here are a few other chemicals in tobacco smoke along with their effects: ammonia (irritates lungs), carbon monoxide (hampers breathing), methanol (toxic when inhaled) and hydrogen cyanide (interferes with respiration).

On the national level, several laws restricting smoking in public places have been passed. Smoking is also banned on all domestic airline flights and nearly all flights between the

United States and foreign destinations. All interstate bus travel is smoke free. Smoking is also prohibited or restricted to specially designated areas on trains traveling within the United States.

Many states and local governments have passed laws prohibiting smoking in public facilities such as schools, hospitals, airports, and bus terminals. Some states also require private employers to create policies that protect employees who do not smoke. Several local communities have enacted nonsmokers' rights laws, most of which are stricter than state laws.

Although air-conditioning may remove the visible smoke in your home, it can't remove the particles that continue to circulate and are hazardous to your health, so don't delude yourself that running the AC is the answer to secondhand smoke dangers.

To solve your problem, you should try to get your son to seek help in fighting his addiction to nicotine. There are many programs available. Call your doctor for some recommendations. Meanwhile, for your own health, you should insist that he not smoke in your house.

If you have a question, please write to fredcicetti@gmail.com

Boxed chocolates? Store bought cards? Limp bouquets? No way! Valentine's 'Sweet Art' Sale at the Montague Grange on Saturday, February 11th. Free Admission. Treat yourself and your sweetheart to fine art and delectable edibles at the 'Sweet Art' Sale. Local artists and specialty food creators are offering unique, quality gift items for you and your beloved. An affordable alternative to the been there, done that world of store-bought sentiment. Our locally produced gifts are unique and high quality. We put a lot of heart into our work and it shows!

The Valentines 'Sweet Art' Sale is artist-run, created by local artists. The sale runs from 10-4, snow or shine. For more information call Mark Lattanzi at (413) 367-0042. Directions to the Montague Grange are available at www.TheAlchemyStudio.com.

NOTES FROM THE ERVING POLICE LOG

Final Warning on Loose Dogs

Wednesday 1-25

11:30 a.m. Report of a parking problem at a Prospect Street address. Subjects working on garage. Moved vehicle from private area.

11:45 a.m. Report of loose dogs on Gunn Street. Located owner. Advised this is the final warning for having loose dogs.

5:40 p.m. Report of loud noise at a French King Highway address. Advised subjects to quiet down.

Thursday 1-26

1:20 p.m. Report of loose dog on Gunn Street defecating on neighbors lawn. No response at owner's. Passed on to next shift.

3:30 p.m. Mutual aid to Northfield for a car vs. tree motor vehicle accident. Subject transported by BHS. Information turned over to Northfield Police.

Friday 1-27

7:05 a.m. Report of a medical emergency at a North Street

address. Fire Department on scene. No need for medical assistance.

Saturday 1-28

9:50 p.m. Walk in to station reported suspicious person on French King Bridge looking over the side. Officer checked area and observed the suspicious person get back into vehicle and drive off upon approach of officer. No action required.

11:30 p.m. Assisted Montague Police with domestic disturbance. Stood by while Montague officers interviewed and arrested subject. Officer also took photos for Montague Police.

Monday 1-30

11:30 a.m. Assisted EMTs at a High Street address.

Tuesday 1-31

6:50 p.m. Alarm sounding at a State Road address. Secured doors. Owner notified.

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BRIDGE

continued from pg 7

between \$800,000 to \$900,000. Stegemann said this relatively minor expense could be absorbed by the state, and Mass Highway could move forward on this aspect of the plan without much delay, if the town agreed to it. The spokesmen also offered to build a \$150,000 pedestrian and bicycle bridge to connect the dead ends of Greenfield Road over the railroad, in place of the former vehicular overpass.

The larger sections of Greenfield Road reconstruction would be dependent on the availability of federal transportation funds, distributed in amounts ranging from \$3 - \$4 million per annum to the county as a whole, Masse said.

Few in attendance seemed satisfied with Mass Highway's permanent detour, bike path solution to Greenfield Road's problems. One resident scoffed at the \$2 million a mile figure. "You'll be hiring Haliburton, naturally."

Mike Nelson said, "You're not going to find a single person in this room who supports the

idea of not rebuilding the bridge. The people on the dead end are really (unhappy)."

John Rastallis demanded, "How did someone allow the railroad to dig it out and get away scot free?" Stegeman said Mass Highway had decided a lawsuit against Guilford Railroad for destroying the bridge would fail. He admitted that Mass Highway had given Guilford the go ahead to undercut the rails in 1998.

"In all candor, it's really hard to take not rebuilding the bridge, when we live down there. We can get around it, yes. Why don't we just fill it in and level the road off?" Rastallis asked.

Leslie Cromack said, "I see no reason, with the engineering available in this day and age, that we can't rebuild that bridge. I really think the bridge needs to be put back and that road restored. Frankly, I think you are trying to avoid some of your responsibility when you say you are not going to replace that bridge."

Andy Rewa echoed his call. "Put the bridge back in. Eight or nine years ago, at the meeting

you guys held at the Grange, you were all gung ho to rebuild it. You can span the Keys in Florida, you can span the bay in San Francisco. Put the abutments back far enough: span it!"

Selectboard chair Al Ross said "the aquifer is very active in that area."

Finance committee chair Jeff Singleton said, "I've become increasingly skeptical about fixing the bridge. I don't particularly find the current situation inconvenient. I don't think the town needs two high speed roads heading to Montague Center."

Town administrator Frank Abbondanzio said he wanted Mass Highway to put in writing the offer to reconstruct the southern portion of Greenfield Road, if it was indeed going to be reclassified as a local road. He got Stegemann to promise to do so, and Stegemann told him, "I would consider the request to pay for the design of the footbridge a reasonable request."

Stegemann made these statements on January 30th, but the crowd seemed worried. After all, another April Fool's Day is just around the corner.

G-M School Committee Vacancy

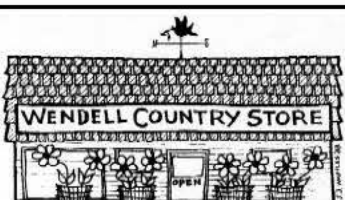
The Gill-Montague Regional School Committee has a Montague representative vacancy to fill out the term of Tony Guglielmi, who resigned recently. The term will end May of 2006, at which time the new appointee would have the option to run for re-election for two remaining years in the three-year term.

Serving on the school committee is a rewarding and challenging experience. Members deal with many issues ranging from developing policies, budget review and approval, health and safety, curriculum approval and collective bargaining. As a school committee member you will be required to spend at least two to three nights out a month for meetings. You will also have the satisfaction of knowing that you are serving children and your community in building a strong future.

Letters of interest should be sent to Superintendent Sue M. Gee, GMRSD, 35 Crocker Avenue, Turners Falls, 01376 or e-mailed to sgee@gmrso.org. Deadline is February 6, 2006.

BEGINNER TAP DANCE:

This is a new dance class teaching the basics of Tap and light soft shoe dancing. It will be taught by Kathy Dunn at the Montague Senior Center, 62 Fifth Street in Turners Falls. This is a six week course on Friday mornings at 9:15 a.m. starting Friday, February 10th. The cost is \$30.00 for six lessons. This is an open program for all ages interested in dance. To register or for more information call Kathy (413) 773-5261 or the Senior Center(413) 863-9357



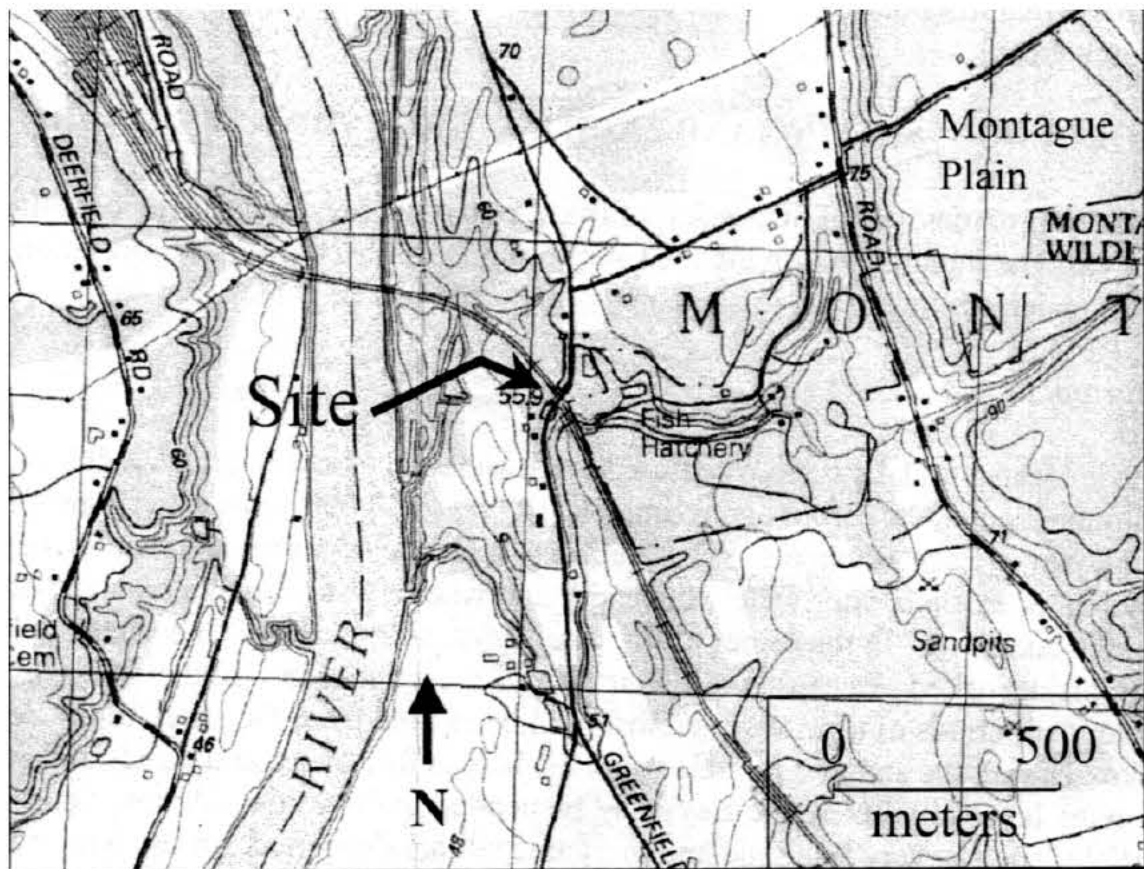
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The site of the Greenfield Road overpass, showing proximity to the Montague Plains, the Fish Hatchery, and the Connecticut River. (courtesy of Mabbe's Evaluation)

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ARTS & ENTERTAINMENT



JACK COUGHLIN ILLUSTRATION

FRIDAY, FEBRUARY 3RD
Contra Dance with *Moving Violations* at the Guiding Star Grange Hall, 401 Chapman St., Greenfield. 8:00 to 11:30 p.m. 413-549-1913.

New Members Show at Vermont Center for Photography, 49 Flat St., Brattleboro, VT. adjacent to the lower level of the new municipal parking garage. (802) 251-6051. Opening reception during Brattleboro Gallery Walk, Friday February 3rd, from 5:30 to 7:30 p.m. Exhibit runs through February 26th. Gallery Hours: Friday 1:00 to 7:00 p.m., Saturday and Sunday 12:00 to 6:00 p.m. Show director is Phil Stake. This is an eclectic show of what VCP's newest members are currently exploring in their personal projects. The members include, Matthew Baily, Nancy Belluscio, Christopher Curtis, Iphi Hatt, Erik Hoffner, Lodiza Lepore, Michael Miller, Daniela Nachazelova, Victor Salvo, Jim Schlessinger, Tony Schwartz, and Phil Stake. This diverse group of photographers have one thing in common, their passion for photography as art. www.vcpphoto.org.



Ottomatic Slim

Ottomatic Slim (great harp) plays rocking blues at Rt. 63 Roadhouse, Federal St., Millers Falls. For more info call (413) 659-3384.

SATURDAY, FEBRUARY 4TH
The Lady Killigrew Cafe presents Kelli Shay Hicks playing guitar, autoharp and singing at 8 p.m. (no cover charge) at the Montague Bookmill, 442 Greenfield Rd., Montague Center. For more info call (413) 367-9666 or visit www.theladykilligrew.com.

Annual Winter Carnival sponsored by the Montague Parks &

Recreation Department. Schedule includes: cardboard sled jamboree (10:00 to 11:30 a.m.); Brickhouse Snowball Slingshot Challenge (11:30 a.m.); Multicultural Crafts (2:00 p.m.); Broomball Games (2:00 p.m.); horse-drawn hayrides; carnival bonfire, ice skating and more. 413- 863-3216. See ad and schedule on page 12.

Strange Brew plays classic rock at Rt. 63 Roadhouse, Federal St., Millers Falls. For more info call (413) 659-3384.

Contra Dance with *Wild Asparagus* at the Guiding Star Grange Hall, 401 Chapman St., Greenfield. 8:00 to 11:30 p.m. 413-772-6840.

Make-Your-Own Tie Dye Morning at Leverett Crafts & Arts, from 10 a.m. to noon. Bring your own clothing items and we supply the dye and instruction. This is a chance to get the tie dye portion of your outfit together for Leverett Crafts & Arts A Black Tie Dye Affair on the 11th, or just be a fun morning for the family. LCA Resident Artist Susan Mulholland, screen printer and tie-dye specialist, has donated white bowties ready to be dyed and Jodi Levine of Wild Child Tie Dyes will be on hand for tie-dye instruction. For inspiration Jodi will bring samples of tie-dye artwork from Japan, Africa, India and Thailand. \$3 per item at the Barnes Gallery, 13 Montague Rd, Leverett, open to tie-dyers of all ages.

SUNDAY, FEBRUARY 5TH
Cross Country Skiing for Women - Start skiing the right way in a full-day instructional program - tips on equipment, clothing as well as outdoor sessions on skis for both beginning and intermediate skiers. Northfield Mountain Recreation Area, Route 63,

Northfield. 9:30 a.m. to 4:00 p.m. Pre-registration required. (800) 859-2960.

Acoustic Jam at Rt. 63 Roadhouse, Federal St., Millers Falls, followed by Superbowl party with food and promo giveaways. For more info call (413) 659-3384.

THURSDAY, FEBRUARY 9TH
Open Mic at Rt. 63 Roadhouse with Peter Kim, Jimmy Arnold and MaryKate, no cover. Federal St., Millers Falls. For more info call (413) 659-3384.



Blame it on Tina

SATURDAY, FEBRUARY 11TH
Wendell Full Moon Coffee House presents *Blame it on Tina*, an act that covers the spectrum of music; rock, pop, country, folk, with even a taste of world music and jazz. These four talented local musicians have come together to put on an awesome evening of original music to thaw the chill in our February bones and release their first CD "A Good Story". Jen Spingla, Bob Rosser, Adam Bergeron, and Tina Horn welcome their talented guests; Kellianna, Alyssa Kelly, and Ethan Stone to join them on stage for this incredible evening of musical entertainment. Partial proceeds to benefit Good Neighbors, an organization dedicated to providing free, wholesome foods for local community members. Full Moon Coffee House is inside Town Hall on the common in downtown Wendell. 7:30 p.m. sharp. \$6 - \$12, kids 6-12 \$2; under 6 free. (978) 544-5557, www.wendellfullmoon.org

Leverett Crafts & Arts takes a trip back to the 60s with A Black Tie Dye Affair, a gala evening to benefit the arts center. A concert by Marsia Shuron Harris of Mother Turtle, wine tasting by Amherst Wines & Spirits and psychedelic hors 'd'oeuvres are among

the evening's attractions. Fine and fancy dress with a touch of tie dye is appreciated. Tickets are a donation of \$20 or more and can be reserved by calling Leverett Crafts & Arts, (413) 548-9070. 8pm at the Barnes Gallery, 13 Montague Rd., Leverett.

SUNDAY, FEBRUARY 12TH
Scandinavian Dancing Second Sundays at the Montague Grange #141, 34 Main St., Montague Center. Great live music played by Andrea Larson, David Kaynor and friends. David Kaynor will also teach basic Swedish dances. Dancers with all levels of experience are welcome. No partner necessary. \$10 suggested donation. Musicians wishing to play or for more info call Andrea at (603) 878-4332, or email ALLarson56@aol.com or call Alice at (413) 774-7771 or email klng63@yahoo.com.

Double bill Hilltown Folk show at Memorial Hall in Shelburne Falls. CD release performance by subversive traditionalists The M a m m a l s (www.themammals.net) and modern country duo Sarah Lee Guthrie and Johnny Irion (sarahleeandjohnny.com). Tickets are \$18 advanced, \$20 at the door and \$10 for under 18-y-olds. Tickets available online at hilltownfolk.com or at THE HEMPEST in Northampton (413) 585-9707, BOSWELL'S BOOK in Shelburne Falls (413) 625-9362 or WORLD EYE BOOKSHOP in Greenfield (413) 772-2186.

TUESDAY, FEBRUARY 14TH
Smith College presents acclaimed poets Charles Bernstein and Jerome

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Rothenberg at 7:30 p.m. in Stoddard Hall Auditorium. The reading is free, open to the public and wheelchair accessible. The event coincides with the exhibition "Too Much Bliss: Twenty Years of Granary Books" at the Smith College Museum of Art, which features the work of both poets through Feb. 19th. The readings will be followed by a book sale and signing in Stoddard Hall. Afterward, the Smith College Museum of Art will host a reception in the museum atrium. For more information, contact Cindy Furtek in the Poetry Center office at (413) 585-4891 or Ellen Doré Watson, director, at (413) 585-3368.

COMING SOON to the Shea Theater: February 10th, 11th & 12th Stoneleigh-Burnham School presents *Alice in Wonderland* and Ja'Duke Productions presents *Annie* on Friday, February 17th at 8 p.m.; Saturday, February 18th at 8 p.m.; Friday, February 24th at 8 p.m., Saturday, February 25th at 8 p.m. and Sunday, February 26th at 2 p.m.

NOW THROUGH FEBRUARY
Nature Remembered by Chuck Braun, illustrator, designer and painter. Works on display at Great Falls Discovery Center through this month.

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- SYRIANA** R
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- THE CHRONICLES OF NARNIA**
DAILY 6:40 PG13 in DTS sound
MAT SAT, SUN, WED 12:15 3:15
- UNDERWORLD: EVOLUTION**
DAILY 9:15 R in DTS sound
- BIG MAMA'S HOUSE 2**
DAILY 7:00 9:10 PG13 in DTS sound
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- WHEN A STRANGER CALLS**
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Teaching Us to Treasure our Natural Heritage

BY FRAN HEMOND

GREAT FALLS - A beautifully landscaped park on the banks of the Connecticut River introduces the visitor to the Great Falls Discovery Center. And an exciting introduction it is. Not only is the museum a center of knowledge and understanding of our valley and us creatures who live here, it is also a place set up so that children and others may push buttons on dioramas, try "hands-on" some fascinating natural materials near the gift shop, see and hear the birds and animals around this area in an effective setting.



**Great Falls Discovery Center
Turners Falls, MA**

Its prime four acres of land is located on Avenue A in Turners Falls, by the bridge to Gill and Route 2. This group

effort of several state, federal and local organizations offers programs featuring experts in the field. The museum diorama of the 400 miles of Connecticut River and its surrounding countryside, the fish, animal and bird exhibits, complete with songs and calls, the TV view of the eagle nest at Barton Cove, the habitat exhibit tours every Saturday at 11 a.m. led by Chuck Braun, Nature and Wildlife Artist, are only part of the February offerings.

The Discovery Center's regular hours are on Friday and Saturdays from 10 a.m. to 4 p.m. and at other times for special events. The Center is open at no charge to the public. Its facilities are accessible. Some of the special programs do require registration and a fee, and if so, this is noted.

February programs at the Discovery Center include: "On the Trail of the Fisher Cat" on Thursday, February 2nd, 7 - 8 p.m. featuring a slide presentation by David Brown. This program will be followed on Saturday the 4th by snowshoeing at Northfield Mountain and "Tracking Fishers and other Woodland Predators." Both require pre-registrations and fees. The

slide program is \$5.00; the snowshoe trip is \$15 per person, or \$27 with snowshoe rental. For the Saturday program, call Northfield Mountain at 413-659-4461.

On Saturday, February 4th, at 1-2 p.m., Gini Traub, regional coordinator for the Mass Department of Conservation and Recreation, will present a program, "Making Massachusetts," featuring demonstrations of valley and hillside formations. School age children, their families, amateur geologists and all others are welcome.

On Wednesday, February 22nd, special family programming with open hours 10 a.m. to 4 p.m. offers an eagle program at 11 a.m. and Winter Habitats at 1 p.m.

On Thursday the 23rd, Caribbean Day, the Discovery Center invites you to consider where migratory birds are wintering and how to prepare for their return.

The Center joins in sponsoring programs at Arcadia Wildlife Sanctuary and the Hitchcock Center in Amherst.

Because of Discovery Centers, our children may grow up with an appreciation of the fact that rivers and streams are not 'garbage dis-

posals.' It has been a long struggle to change the thinking of society. In the 1900s, towns along the banks used the river to dump untreated wastewater of any kind. Industrial areas got rid of their chemical leftovers; residential areas gave little thought to pollution. By the time the Connecticut River reached Holyoke, swimming was a 'no-no'.

When the Valley towns finally did something about the problem, it cost federal, state and local governments millions to clean the river up. It is a long four hundred miles from the mountains of New Hampshire above the Fourth Connecticut Lake to Long Island Sound in Connecticut. This generation knows the value of clean water. It takes the hard work of many citizens to preserve our beautiful valley.

The site of the Discovery Center has always been a busy one. In the heyday of Turners Falls, Bernard Farren built a handsome hotel on the spot to accommodate the growing industrial village. Later, it furnished lodging and entertainment for the men who drove logs down the river from the north, a dangerous business. It was successively the Hotel Farren, the Hotel Riley, and the Grand Trunk Hotel, and at one time held the town offices and other businesses. The Montague Paper Company was located nearer the river. Its renovated machine shop now houses the Great Hall of the Discovery Center. Cumberland Farms, too, had a turn in the area. But this growing center of natural history and environmental education reminds Western Massachusetts it has a treasure to protect, with significance for generations.

Happy Valentine's Day!



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