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A life with felines  
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Year 3  
No. 19

50¢

# The Montague Reporter

REPORTER@MONTAGUEMA.NET

THE VOICE OF THE VILLAGES

FEBRUARY 24, 2005

## Toni Wilson Makes Erving Feel Special

BY KATHLEEN LITCHFIELD

ERVING - Every morning, Toni Wilson steps outside the back door of the Box Car Restaurant, stretches her arms and exclaims to the snow-topped trees towering over the railroad tracks, "Good Morning Erving!"

With a broad smile, she then welcomes customers by name as they walk in the front door of the 150-year-old former train depot. If she doesn't know their names, she might

know them by the three-egg omelets they order weekly or the homemade chocolate chip cookie they crave after lunch.



Toni Wilson

"There's never a stranger who comes in that door. They're friends I haven't made yet," said the 44-year-old Wilson, who has run the Box Car Restaurant with her partner Terry Haertl

for the past three years. A Northborough native, Wilson dreamed about operating the small see WILSON pg. 10

## Schools Seek 6.8% Budget Increase

BY DAVID DETMOLD

MONTAGUE - Gill-Montague Regional School Superintendent Sue Gee brought a preliminary budget request to the Montague finance committee of \$14,411,405 for the coming fiscal year, up by \$917,023 - or nearly 6.8% - over what it took to run the schools last year. Based on the percentage of Montague students (888) and Gill students (159) projected to be enrolled in the system, Montague may face a \$777,727 increase in its school assessment, and Gill a \$139,295 increase, if no new revenues are found and no additional cuts are made. But Gee stressed the complications of creating a firm budget forecast, until the state budget is finalized.

"The governor has called for level funding Chapter 70 (state aid for education) to our district," said Gee. Although the state Department of Education had projected an infla-

tion increase of 3% for state aid earlier in the budget year, still Gee called the prospect of level funded state aid "a bonus for us. Districts which have lost enrollment are being held harmless." Gee said the Gill-Montague Regional Schools have seen a decline in student

expanding the enrollment of the Great Falls Middle School to include 6th graders, "to fully utilize the amazing facility we have," and to conduct tours and open houses of the district schools. "We really need to focus on building the district," she said. "It's going to be a three to five year process." But in the end, Gee said, the district schools "will be a good benefit to the town, to bring in new residents. We're poised in a positive place."

Unexpected state revenue increases in regional transportation aid, charter school reimbursement, and special education Circuit Breaker

funds at the end of Fiscal '04 left the GMRSD in the position of returning substantial funds to the district towns this year - \$824,429 to Montague and \$135,332 to Gill - after adding back 7.34 teaching

see FINANCE pg. 9



GMRSD business manager Lynn Bassett (left) and superintendent Sue Gee talk with selectwoman Pat Allen as finance committee chair Jeff Singleton goes over the numbers at Wednesday night's budget meeting.

enrollment of roughly 37 students this year. She called Gill-Montague "a shrinking school district," comparable to the Greenfield and Mohawk Regional schools, and vowed to work to correct that trend by advertising the advantages of the new Turners Falls High School,

## Coyotes in the Night

BY ALAN EMOND

COLRAIN - The air is cool; no, it's frigid, the moon is near full and the souls of the trees are imprinted in darkened outlines breaking the purity of glistening snow cover. Ten p.m., February 5th, out on the deck breathing in the dry nose-

gluing air, gazing out at hills and forest not visible on most evenings. Clouds roll by and darkness is again complete.

There in the not so distant mowing a cry clings to the wind until it reaches your ear. Then silence, followed by another cry, joined by multiple voices. A choir of primitive origin, passing over polished teeth, this song can cause a rush of adrenalin manifested by the tingling of your skin. The hairs on the back of your neck rise involuntarily, with a resurrection of forgotten instincts. Few experiences here in Massachusetts can bring us back to a place so ancient. We no longer answer to a call of the wild except on rare occasions, when the last of the large beasts or predators cross our paths. Meeting a bear in the woods, a moose crossing the road, a hawk striking its prey, or the song of the wild coyotes.

Canis Latrans, the eastern coyote, did not inhabit our landscape until the later half of the 20th century. This canine is a cross between a western coyote and a northern timber wolf. It has, on average, longer legs than its western relatives and a wide variation

see COYOTE pg. 10



**THEATER REVIEW**

## Don't Take My Coat of Kodachrome Away

Joseph and the Amazing Technicolor Dreamcoat at the Turners Falls High School

BY DAVID DETMOLD

TURNERS FALLS - Under the able direction of Nick Waynelovich, the cast and crew of the Turners Falls High School / Great Falls Middle School's production of Andrew Lloyd Webber's *Joseph and the Amazing Technicolor Dream Coat* turned in a handsome performance this weekend, in the school's beautiful new auditorium. The fine set production by Randy and Vanessa Ames, featuring a pyramid backdrop, the looming Eye of Horus, and a larger than life bust of Tutankhamen stage right, and the lumi-



PHOTO COURTESY OF NICK WAYNELOVICH

Egyptian Go-Go Girls surround Pharaoh Andy Stewart in *Joseph and the Amazing Technicolor Dreamcoat*

nous lighting design of Tyler DeRuiter set off the proceedings splendidly. The pit orchestra: Laura Savl on piano; Mimi York, flute; Steve Ciechomski, Trumpet; Scott Bryant, drums; Tom Ulrich, Bass; and the maestro himself, Nick Waynelovich on keyboards kept the score lively and upbeat see JOSEPH pg. 12



**PET OF THE WEEK**

**Crossdressing Hound**



**Rodney**

Rodney is a two-year-old neutered male pit bull terrier in need of a good home. Rodney loves everybody! He is a funny guy who likes to get dressed up in dog coats or costumes. He loves hanging out with all his pals (everybody he meets is his pal). He would love to have a person of his very own who will give him the all-over body massages that he craves! He is good with both dogs and cats, and kids over 12. Look past the breed, you will find a fun, easy dog! To learn more about adopting Rodney, please contact the Dakin Animal Shelter in Leverett at 548-9898 (ask for Lori) or via email at [info@dakinshelter.org](mailto:info@dakinshelter.org)

**Millers Falls Library News**

**Music & Movement**

BY LIINDA HICKMAN  
MILLERS FALLS - The weekly Music and Movement series with Judy and "Hound Dog" is happening at the Millers Falls Library on Friday mornings at 10 a.m. during March - June. Young children of all ages and their families or caregivers are invited to the free programs. Registration is not required. The program is cosponsored by the Gill-Montague Council of the Family Network. For more information, please call 863-3214.

**Writers Wanted**  
Montague Reporter  
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**FACES & PLACES**



PHOTO COURTESY OF BOB MOLTA

Former TFHS swim team co-captains Kelly Yankowski and Kaitlyn Kociela swam at the Division II & III New England Championships this past weekend at Bentley College. Yankowski, who now attends Keene State College, came in 1st and 3rd place in her individual events including the 50-yard freestyle. Kociela, pictured above, now attends Eastern Connecticut and was 17th in the 500-yard freestyle on Saturday, ninth in the 1,000-yard freestyle on Friday and tenth in the 400-yard individual medley. She established personal bests in the trials and finals of all three events: 11:51.83 in the 1,000, 5:50.35 in the 500 and 5:21.72 in the 400 IM.

**Smith Spring Bulb Show**

NORTHAMPTON - A spectacular array of blossoming crocuses, hyacinths, narcissi, irises, lilies and tulips will provide an early glimpse of spring at Smith College's Lyman Conservatory from Saturday, March 5th to Sunday, March 20th. The annual spring bulb show is open daily to the public, for a suggested donation of \$1, from 10 a.m. to 4 p.m. and on Friday nights March 11th and 18th from 6 to 8 p.m. Parking is available on College Lane for the two weeks of the show. On Friday, March 4th, horti-



cultural consultant John Bryan will open the show with a lecture, titled "A World of Wonderful Bulbs."

Bryan's lecture, which is free and open to the public, will take place at 7:30 p.m. in the Carroll Room of the Campus Center and will be followed by a reception and preview of the bulb show in the illuminated Lyman Conservatory.

The Lyman Conservatory is wheelchair accessible. For more information: (413) 585-2740 or visit the website at <http://www.smith.edu/garden>.

**SENIOR CENTER ACTIVITIES Feb. 28th - March 4th**

MONTAGUE Senior Center, 62 Fifth St., Turners Falls, is open Monday through Friday from 9:00 a.m. to 2:00 p.m. for activities and congregate meals. Advanced registration at many of our activities is necessary. We need to know how many people will be joining so we can be prepared. A suggested donation of \$1 per exercise class is appreciated. Lunch reservations need to be called in by 11:30 a.m. the day before. Call Bunny Caldwell at 863-9357 weekdays between 9:00 a.m. and 2:00 p.m. (Leave message on machine at other times.) Transportation to the center can be provided. Trip coordinator is Jean Chase. Make trip reservations by calling 772-6356. Payment and menu choice is due three weeks prior to trip. All Hawthorne trips leave from the parking lot on First Street across from the Police Station.  
**Monday, 28th**  
9:45 a.m. Aerobics  
11:00 a.m. PACE Aerobics  
**Tuesday, 1st**  
9:30 a.m. Tai Chi  
**Wednesday, 2nd**  
10:15 a.m. Aerobics

11:00 p.m. HEATH PLAN options for seniors  
12:45 p.m. Bingo  
**Thursday, 3rd**  
1:00 p.m. Pitch  
10:00 a.m. Triad fishing derby at Barton Cove, preregister by 2/18  
**Friday, 4th**  
9:45 a.m. Aerobics  
10:00 a.m. Coffee & Conversation  
11:00 a.m. PACE Aerobics  
12:30 p.m. SAFE STEPS prevent falling.  
**Painting for Seniors** will start Tuesday, March 1st from 1 to 3:30 p.m. and continue every Tuesday through April 5th. Preregistration is necessary. Gill and Montague residents \$10, others \$15. Call center mornings to register.  
  
The Elder Fire Safety Project has been rescheduled to March 10th at 11 a.m. Kitchen safety and escape planning are among the topics covered, free smoke alarms and emergency lights will be distributed. Installation can be arranged as needed. Advance sign-up recommended.  
  
**ERVING Senior Center**, 18 Pleasant St., Ervingside (Old Center School, 1st Floor), is

open Monday through Thursday from 9 a.m. to 3 p.m. for activities and congregate meals. For information and reservations call Polly Kiely, Senior Center director at (413) 423-3308. Lunch daily at 11:30 a.m. with reservations a day in advance by 11:00 a.m. Transportation can be provided for meals, Thursday shopping, or medical necessity by calling Dana Moore at (978) 544-3898.  
  
**Monday, 28th**  
9:30 a.m. Exercise  
9:45 a.m. Library  
**Tuesday, 1st**  
9:00 a.m. Aerobics  
10:00 a.m. Brown Bag  
12:30 p.m. Oil Painting  
**Wednesday, 2nd**  
10:00 Line Dancing  
10-11 a.m. Blood Pressure  
12:15 p.m. Bingo  
**Thursday, 3rd**  
8:30-10 a.m. Foot Clinic  
9:00 a.m. Aerobics  
  
**WENDELL Senior Center**, located in the town offices on Wendell Depot Rd. Call Kathy Swaim at (978) 544-2020 for info, schedule of events or to coordinate transportation.

**CORRECTION**

The headline for last week's front page article discussing the Erving School Committee's '06 budget request should have read "School Committee Stands Firm on \$1.704 million '06 Budget." The incorrect figure in the headline, \$1.562 million, was actually Erving's '05 school budget figure.



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# Local Authors Have the Last Word

BY PHILIPPE DEGUISE

**MILLERS FALLS** - On a rainy night, Wednesday, February 16th the Friends of the Montague Public Library held their second annual *Meet Local Authors* evening at the Millers Falls Library. The compact space provided an intimate setting for the crowd of two dozen attendees to mingle with six area writers, peruse their works, and listen as each spoke of his or her unique approach to the literary craft.

Sprinkled with a good measure of wit and wisdom, they talked about the process of writing and told how they had chosen their subject matter. David James, who sometimes writes for the religion pages at *the Recorder*, is co-author with Louise Shattuck of *Spirit and Spa: A Portrait of the Mind and Soul of a 133-Year Old Spiritualist Community in Lake Pleasant, Massachusetts*.

Their collaboration took root after James became involved in the National Spiritual Alliance. Shattuck, a third generation resident of Lake Pleasant, suggested they undertake writing a book about the history of the village. They researched, wrote and published it at their own expense. James, who refers to Shattuck as "the Oracle of Lake Pleasant" defers to her as the mover and shaker of the project. However, Shattuck returns the favor by calling him "the guiding force" behind the book. Whatever the case may be, their collaboration is responsible for putting together an informative and important compilation of local lore, and period photos of an unusual Spiritualist center in the middle of Montague.

On a different subject, Ann Feitelson, an accomplished painter, knitter, quilter and author, talked about her passion for crafts. Her book, entitled *The Art of Fair Island Knitting*, published in 1997, focuses on the work of women of the Shetland Isles from the perspective of an art historian. Having earned an MFA in painting and an MA in Art History, Feitelson is well versed to delve into the topic. On display at the library that evening were beautiful examples of her work in traditional patterns. A number of her colorful sweaters were joined by a stunning quilt that appeared on the cover of

*Quilter's Newsletter Magazine* in April, 2004.

Feitelson spoke of her long-

Although she started by penning wonderful Christmas cards cherished by family and friends,

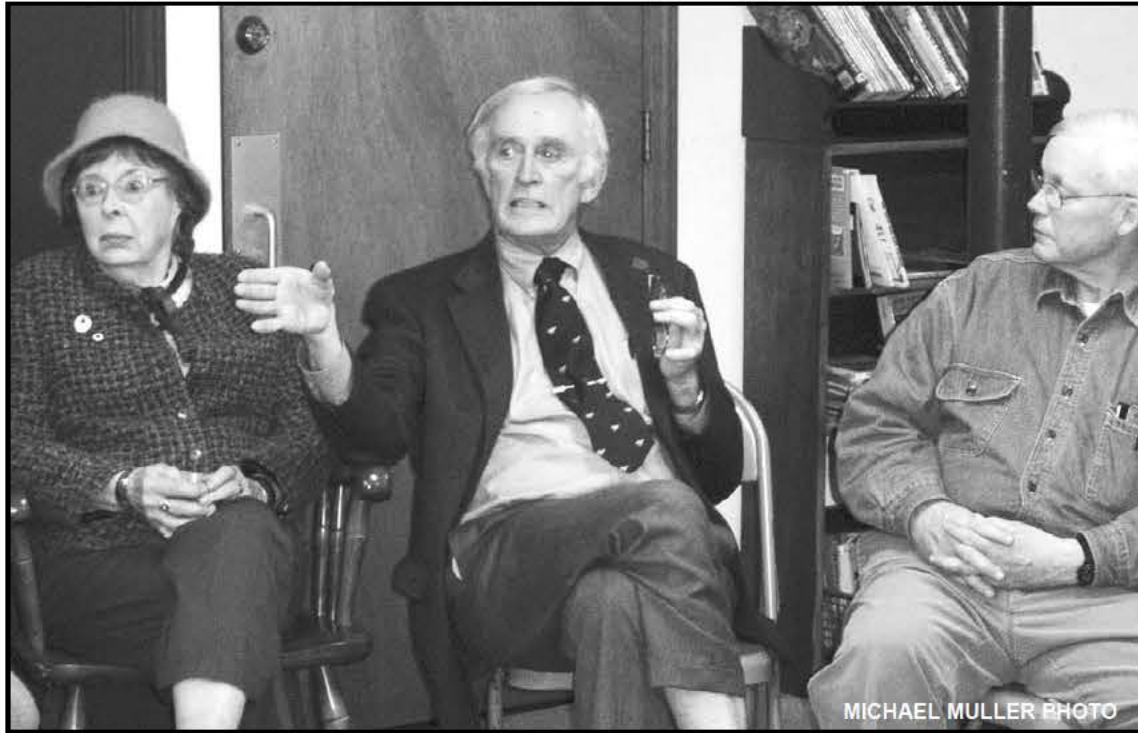
recalls racing dogs from Chestnut Hill Road into Wendell State Forest as he

are the authors of *Dogs: A New Understanding of Canine Origin, Behavior, and Evolution*, published in 2001.

The book discusses the evolution of dogs, wolves, working dogs and yes, the domestic dog. But the author's keen understanding of sled dogs becomes apparent when asked about these amazing animals. He takes out his book and points to a photo showing two dogs whose posture is a warning sign of impending trouble. "As a racer I would have my eye on those two, and would likely remove them from the team. To keep them in could damage their ability to race again," he explained.

As for being an author, he says, "Writing a book is not an easy task. I would write and my wife would cry - what do you want me to do with that?" Adds Coppinger, "My wife is the brains, and I'm the mouth."

Much credit is due to the Friends of the Library for putting on such a rewarding evening. Accompanied by a copious table of food and drink, the authors shone in this setting, and the Millers Falls Library brought the writer and the written word together with the public once again. We look forward to next year's gathering.



Local authors Louise Shattuck, left, and Ray Coppinger, center, speak at the Millers Falls Library while John Reynolds, right, listens.

time interest in "women's crafts" and explained that these were not defined as art when she was a student in the 1970s. But all that has changed. A passionate craftsperson, when asked to write a book about Fair Island knitting, she said, "I knew of no other answer than, 'Yes.'"

Chris Sawyer-Laucanno began his authorial career in the 1970s, but, as he points out, he has been writing since he was little. He has taught writing at MIT for 23 years and has written a number of books. These include biographies of e.e.cummings and Paul Bowles, translations of Spanish, French, and Mayan works, and poetry. One of his passions is to make literature more accessible to everyone. "Literature is increasingly something academics have ruined. They've made it their cloistered province," he says. Sawyer-Laucanno, who began his career as a writer for hire, clearly enjoys his work. While stating that his biography of cummings probably earned him no more than fifty cents an hour, he turned down other projects while writing it over the last few years. As for his translations, he says, "I translate only what I love," striving to introduce lesser-known international authors to Americans. At present he is planning on returning to Mexico to complete a travel book on the Yucatan.

and did not intend to become a published author, that changed for Agnes Fitch Williams when she reached her mid-70s and undertook a project that became *A Legacy of Love: the Story of Walter and Ruth Williams and the Williams Farm*. This book is the story of her husband Jim's parents and their lives on a Sunderland dairy farm. "My first instinct was to write about what I remembered," she said, but her editor kept asking specific questions which drove her to provide much more descriptive detail than she had originally planned. The book has received a lot of local interest. More importantly, she says, "The nicest thing is that our children enjoy it so much. We now feel we know our grandparents, they say." According to the author, the book took two and a half years to write. In the process she learned how to use a computer and to deal with the demands of an editor. Asked if writing was something she would continue doing, she smiled and said "The other day I saw an eagle flying outside my window and out of it came a poem."

Dogs are his passion, yet Ray Coppinger will tell you, "I am not a sentimentalist on dogs. I wouldn't want one in the house." Coppinger was a champion dogsled racer for twelve years until retiring in 1977. He

raised them and became an expert on their lives and behavior. "I was always an experimentalist," he said, referring to his animal handling techniques. His success resulted in his being called on to "design" hybridized dogs for sheep herding and to work with service dogs. Coppinger and his wife Lorna

## WRITERS WANTED

We welcome submissions on topics of general interest. Correspondents also needed to cover meetings.

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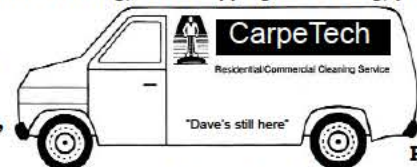
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24 3rd Street, Turners Falls, Mass. 01376

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David Detmold

## Assistant Editor

Kathleen Litchfield

## Circulation

Jean Hebdon  
Julia Bowden-Smith

## Layout & Design

James Damon  
Boysen Hodgson  
Katren Hoyden  
Karen Wilkinson

## Photographers

Sarah Swanson  
Joseph A. Parzych  
Anne Vadeboncoeur  
et al.

## Technical Administrator

Michael Muller

"The Voice of the Villages"

## Founded by

Arthur Evans Harry Brandt David Detmold  
August, 2002

## Friends of the Montague Reporter

**BY PHILIPPE DEGUISE** - The *Montague Reporter* is two and a half years old, and continues to grow. Since its inception in October of 2002, the *Reporter* has evolved into the 'paper of record' for our community. Offering extensive, in-depth coverage of local news and events, reports on the schools, thoughtful commentary, cartoons, police log, an advice column and so much more, it has truly become the Voice of the Villages.

During this period of growth, the community-owned nonprofit paper has relied on the hard work of its editor, David Detmold, a number of part-time staff for layout, local correspondents and illustrators and a dedicated core of volunteers who help get the paper out each week.

Paper routes have become established in Millers Falls, Montague Center, and Turners

Falls, and more are planned, to reduce the cost of home delivery below the newsstand price.

Subscriptions have continued to build toward the 500 mark, more are sold at the stores and restaurants, and advertising revenues have remained steady. Not bad for a little weekly.

But the time has come to consider the long-term stability of the paper and to build a stronger base of support in order to insure its continued success.

The Friends of the *Montague Reporter* is being formed to work towards that goal. It will be committed to supporting the paper and its staff through outreach, special projects, feedback or other suggestions put forth by those who attend. All that is needed to take part is an interest in the well-being of the paper. It is not necessary to be a writer to join. This will not be a board of directors or a committee that requires frequent attendance. How does once a month sound, and summers off with no meetings?

Interested?

The first meeting of the Friends of the *Montague Reporter* will take place at the newspaper office on Tuesday evening, March 22nd at 7 p.m. But don't wait until then. Pick up the phone and call Phil at 367-9267 or David at 863-8666 and get involved.

We welcome your letters.

**The Montague Reporter**

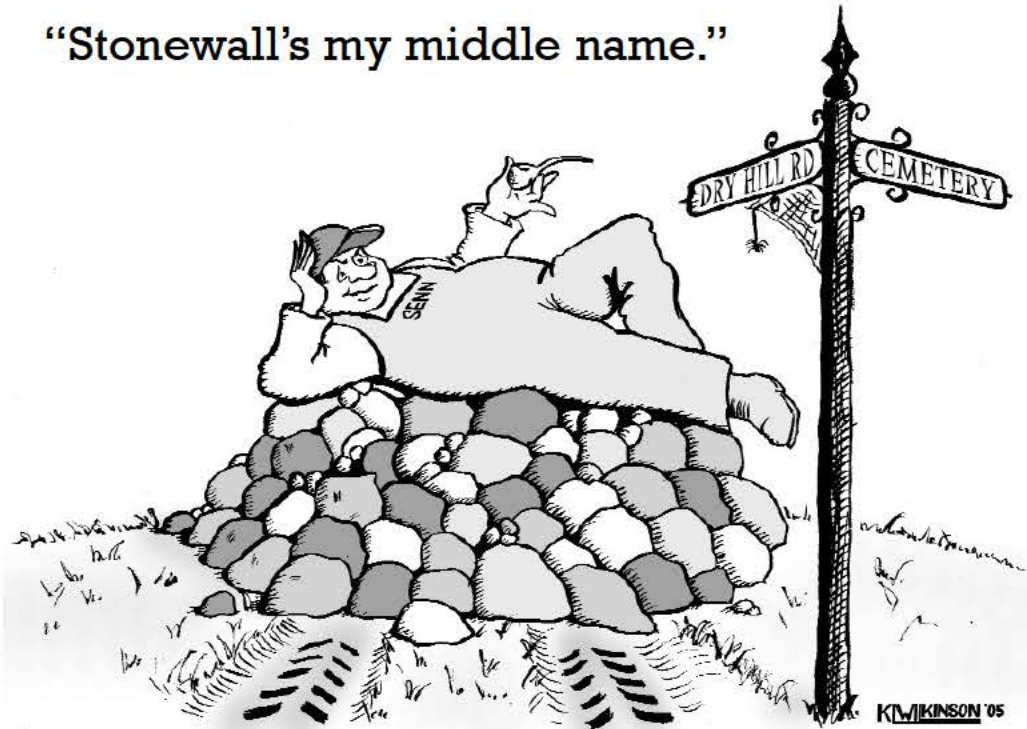
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PHONE (413) 863-8666

FAX (413) 863-3050

reporter@montaguema.net

"Stonewall's my middle name."



Jim Senn will come before the Montague selectboard on March 7th to discuss his plan for opening up access to the public cemetery on town-owned Dry Hill Road.

## LETTER TO THE EDITOR

### Fair and Open Process a Must

I strongly support the *Montague Reporter's* call for a fair and open process for determining our local cable access provider. There is a right way and a wrong way to determine who will provide a \$70,000 service to our town. The passage of three years does not make something fundamentally wrong, right. What happened in 2001 set a bad precedent that should be rejected, whatever the final decision on local access may be.

There is not only a core principle at stake here but also a

practical consideration. Is Montague really getting the most for its \$70,000? Are there really "economies of scale" in the current arrangement with GCTV that benefit Montague or are we simply pouring money into GCTV's central office? Is Montague actually represented on the GCTV board? Could another entity provide more local programming, outreach and oversight? There is one basic way to answer these questions and it seems to me that we have a right to pursue it.

I continue to be perplexed by the unwillingness of a few GCTV supporters to endorse a fair RFP-style process (in 2001 or now)! They clearly think GCTV is the best organization to run local access in Montague. Why not make their case in the light of day in accordance with the letter and spirit of the state's open bidding laws?

- Jeff Singleton  
Montague Center

## Celebrating International Women's Day

### Wednesday, March 2nd

Open House at the New England Learning Center for Women in Transition (NEL-CWIT), 10 Park Street, Greenfield, 4:30 - 6 p.m., in honor of International Women's Day. International finger foods and music in a celebratory atmosphere, and conversations with members of the board of directors and staff about their work. Free. Information: 772-0871.

### Thursday, March 3rd

Film Showing: "Afghanistan Unveiled" documents the

effects on Afghani women of both the Taliban's repressive rule and the recent US military campaign. 6:30 p.m., Greenfield Community College TV studio, Main Campus, part of an area-wide celebration of International Women's Day; group discussion to follow film showing; light refreshments and literature tables. Free. Information: 775-1152

### Tuesday, March 8th

Rally in honor of International Women's Day, Greenfield Town Common, 4 p.m., featuring singing, speak-

ing circle, dancing, the Raging Grammys, and a pots-and-pans symphony led by Ellen Clegg. Free. Information: 367-9356

### Wednesday, March 9th

Lecture and Slide Show by fabric artist Deborah Kruger, from noon to 1 p.m. at GCC, Stinchfield Lecture Hall, Greenfield Community College, Main Campus, in conjunction with the Fiber and Feminism art exhibit in the GCC library and in celebration of International Women's Day and Women's History Month. Free. Information, 775-1152.

## American Dead in Iraq as of 2/23/05



We welcome your letters.

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## PICTURE PRIZE PUZZLE

Can you guess what Turners building was located here?

Who was to have the first use of the new building?

What three street corners was the building located on?

The prize is one Flying Eagle Gold Dollar. Mail a postcard c/o Pete 01354.



## GUEST EDITORIALS

# Can Organic Food Really Save Us?

BY DAN BOTKIN

GILL - Many say the world is ruled by money, some say oil; now others are talking about the coming "Water Wars" as global aquifers become stretched, depleted, and polluted. I tend to see food as the common denominator, the great mega-issue that links us all in the global community. Think about it, when all talk of economics, war, politics, terrorism and ethnic difference is said and done, food is the last, most hopeful thing between us.

Ultimately the passion for quality food inspired me to develop two plus acres of raised beds by my home in Gill and then to share some of its harvest through a neighborhood community supported agriculture farm (CSA). Who'd a thunk it? A kid from Long Island who grew up eating pizza, spaghetti and hot dogs now grows (and eats!) nine varieties of heirloom beets - red, white, candy-striped, even golden - and an ancient, Italian broccoli that looks like it invented fractal geometry!

Whereas gardening and micro-farming has been, in the past, a pleasant, tasty and philosophically satisfying hobby, today I can't *not* produce food for my family and friends. It isn't that I expect or believe the worst. But 9/11 did again focus light on the precarious supply chain required to bring most people's food to supermarkets and stores. Understanding these risks, I cannot, in good conscience, fail to grow a ton of seasonal, storable and nutritious foods for our annual needs. While some feel safer with a retirement account, a bit of gold in a vault, or a firearm in the cellar, myself, I want a cellar full of spuds and a larder full of

seeds.

Today, the big picture food equation is changed by the ability of backyard gardeners and urban-dwellers, using biodynamics, raised beds, composting and other intensive methods, to grow substantive - in fact amazing - quantities of high-value and nutritious food crops on limited or minimal acreage. This fact stands in interesting juxtaposition to the so-called "Green Revolution", which laid claim to the bold idea that petroleum-based fertilizers, agricultural mechanization and super-yielding hybrids would "eradicate hunger in our time." But the geniuses that brought us the Green Revolution didn't accurately calculate the cost of poisoned, depleted soil, chemical dependency and endlessly imported fossil fuel. And really, what good has it done for the world's hungry that Monsanto can record astonishing yields of (Roundup Ready™) soybeans in the American heartland?

In light of this failure, backyard or urban food farming emerges not as a fad but as a hopeful piece of an integrated, sustainable, global food provision system for the future. The real potential of "square inch" gardening techniques teaches us that, come what may, families, small neighborhoods as well as whole villages and towns, in all kinds of climates, can once again produce their own food. In other words, it's time to stop waiting for those on the top to safeguard our collective food security. Local, organic, micro-agriculture is a concrete, affordable and simple way each of us can start to fix the food security problem from the grass roots up.

The principles of intensive,

organic food gardening aren't rocket science. When a society, Cuba for example, makes backyard agriculture a national policy, you see food producing micro-gardens sprouting in every barrio. Today, there are at least 400 neighborhood gardens in Havana alone, all organic, all with lines at the gates every morning and night. In progressive-minded North American cities like Seattle and Portland,



Oregon, community gardening initiatives and urban food production have become part of the status quo. All around America we see hopeful new "farm - to - school" cafeteria initiatives as local educators and public health officials attempt to improve poor eating habits and address obesity.

For anyone under the illusion that government, in league with corporate food giants, has our best food safety and security interests in mind, just take a look at the issue of genetic modification of basic grains. Genetic modification is most definitely not about taking care of the earth or feeding the hungry hordes.

In America, production, distribution, research and development of (GMO) staple foods has been controlled by ever fewer and bigger corporate interests, (Nestle, Dole, Monsanto, etc.) whose fundamental objective is

simple: increased profit. We've seen these corporations exert pressure on regulatory agencies to accommodate their products and marketing needs. We've seen an agricultural seed giant (Monsanto) bullying small farmers over bogus trademark infringements and consequently destroying biodiversity and the age-old practice of native seed saving. We are each responsible, in a small way, for allowing this to happen.

Part of the solution is for us to take back control of the production and consumption of food, whether by rejecting GMO foods, saving heirloom seeds, supporting local agriculture or joining a CSA. For those who don't know, CSAs are an alternative, local way to organize our collective food system. In the words of longtime Valley resident and farmer Liz Henderson, in her pioneering book *Sharing the Harvest*, CSAs,

*"...create a partnership between local farmers and nearby consumers, who become members or subscribers in support of the farm. In exchange for paying in advance, CSA members receive the freshest, healthiest produce throughout the season and keep money, jobs and farms in their own community."*

CSAs personally link the grower and consumer without unnecessary intermediaries, pollution and cost. All over America, Europe and elsewhere CSA "subscription farms" also serve a community-building function as locals share the bounty and help each other become less dependent on imported food. In Japan, where the movement may have started, the word for "CSA" literally means "food with the farmer's face on it".

Today, across North America, thousands of CSA farms, along with community and urban gardening projects, are providing substantive, alternative sources of fresh, naturally grown produce to local people, people who presumably love good food and who are glad to skip paying for the advertising, haulage, wasteful packaging, and GMO ingredients of corporate food. CSAs give recipient families superior, safe food at a fair price, along with a personal connection with the grower at its source.

Here in the Happy Valley, we are blessed with 14 active, local CSA farms, ranging in size from over 600 shareholders, to a mere dozen. This richness reflects not only a progressive economic and social consciousness but also the soaring demand for truly fresh, organic food throughout the marketplace. But, we shouldn't stop at joining (or starting) a CSA. We must also spread the awareness, knowledge and tools of sustainable farming practices far and wide, neighborhood to neighborhood, the whole world over.

Food can save us, if we let it. Think how you feel when you eat fresh native food. Transcendent, peaceful, grateful, alive! Healthy, organic, locally-raised food, embodies in each cell an entire map of a sustainable, healthy and just economic system, which, if embraced and applied on a grand scale, could go a long way toward feeding hungry people everywhere, and making us all happier to boot!

*The author runs a local, delivery-based CSA from his home in Gill. For info: [www.laughingdogfarm.com](http://www.laughingdogfarm.com) or call - 863-8696.*

## Iraqi Order 81

BY ROSEMARIE JACKOWSKI BENNINGTON, VT - And they said we were there to bring freedom and liberty. It is time to tell the troops the truth. While few of us were paying attention, the Coalition Provisional Authority, representing the government of the United States, imposed a set of 100 orders on Iraq. A careful examination of these orders could lead to the conclusion that the war is being waged to enrich corporations at the expense of ordinary citizens. Many of these orders take freedom and liberty away from the people of Iraq. The orders also have a profound effect on us.

Iraqi Order 81 is of special interest. It prohibits Iraqi farmers from using the methods of agriculture they have used for

centuries. The common worldwide practice of saving heirloom seeds from one year to the next is now illegal in Iraq. Order 81 wages war on Iraqi farmers. They have lost the freedom and liberty to choose their own methods of agriculture.

The food chain has been under worldwide assault by U.S. corporations for some time now. Corporations have seized control of the very essence of life itself. We are now in the age of Genetically Modified Doomsday Seeds.

This is not exactly a new phenomenon. It has been a gradual takeover. Remember Percy Schmeiser, the Canadian farmer, who was sued by Monsanto? Not enough people stood up for Percy, so then they

came for other farmers. In fact, Monsanto has sued so many farmers that a national hotline (1-888-FARMHLP) has now been set up to assist them.

Those who have been pushing for Tort Reform never mention the frivolous, mean-spirited lawsuits brought by Monsanto against U.S. farmers. This is a David and Goliath battle and, as usual, our government is on the side of Goliath. Order 81 now spreads the assault on farmers to Iraq. The domino effect is underway. The victim farmers in the U.S., Iraq, Canada, and all of the other countries who have been under attack by Monsanto need our help. The Tort Reform that is really needed would be reform aimed at compensating victims of corporate intimidat-

tion.

The corporations, backed up by the Pentagon, have been jackbooting their way across the planet. Whether you like it or not, you probably will have some franken food on your dinner plate tonight... franken foods, grown from franken seeds. Our own USDA was complicit in the development of Terminator seeds. Picture Dr. Strangelove on the John Deere.

The existence of Order 81, and the other 99 orders, which limit Iraqi liberty and freedom, creates some interesting questions. How can Washington even pretend that the election in Iraq is legitimate if U.S. imposed rules are enforced after the election, or are we to believe that the 100 Orders are canceled

by the election? I don't think so.

Is it possible that Iraqi farmers think back fondly to the good old days before the occupation, before Order 81? Even Saddam Hussein allowed them to save seeds for the next year's crop. Imagine what would happen if there was a successful worldwide movement of resistance, an international Save the Seed Campaign. Farmers and consumers in the U.S. need to stand in solidarity with the farmers and consumers in Iraq. If you have a stamp or coin collection, forget it. Instead, it might be better to start collecting seeds. Maybe soon, one good old-fashioned seed that was made by Mother Nature

see IRAQI pg 6



# 'Real Pickles' Prove Profitable for Local, Organic Entrepreneur

**MONTAGUE** - Dan Rosenberg started out making just one product, dill pickles, and has since added sauerkraut, kimchi, and red cabbage to his line. He makes all of his pickled foods at the Western Mass. Food Processing Center, a shared-use commercial kitchen in Greenfield.

One of the particularly unique aspects of his products is that they are raw and naturally fermented which, as he will explain, is why he calls them "real." Rosenberg's products are also 100% certified organic and made entirely with locally-grown vegetables.

Naturally fermented refers to a process in which Rosenberg relies on naturally-occurring, beneficial bacteria to transform his cucumbers into dill pickles and his cabbage into sauerkraut. The process is called lactic acid fermentation, or lacto-fermentation, because the main action in the process is a conversion of natural sugars (found in the vegetables) to lactic acid. Lactic acid has truly outstanding preservative qualities, and, in fact, lacto-fermentation has been used by people throughout



Dan Rosenberg offers Real Pickles

the world for thousands of years for just this reason.

However, in recent times -- and particularly in industrialized countries -- use of fermentation has been almost entirely replaced by methods which better suit the requirements of mass food production. Use of vinegar and pasteurization are key aspects of these new, industrial pickle-making practices.

Unfortunately, industrial pickles (as Rosenberg likes to call them), in addition to not tasting nearly as good, lack all

aid in nutrient absorption, and inhibit growth of harmful bacteria in the intestinal system. The lactic acid supports growth of healthy intestinal flora. And the fermentation process itself can significantly reduce the amounts of certain anti-nutritional components of vegetables, such as nitrates in cabbage and oxalic acid in beets.

Another noteworthy aspect of Rosenberg's products is that they consist of vegetables grown only here in the Valley. While any other value-added

of the important health benefits offered by raw lacto-fermented pickles, or real pickles. Among the many known benefits, the rich supply of live active cultures found in real pickles (similar to those found in yogurt) are known to support digestion,

food businesses choose to buy in produce from distant places, he purchases only from local farms like Red Fire Farm (whose Old Depot Gardens stand is here in Montague) and Upinngil Farm (on Main Road in Gill). Rosenberg believes a regionally-based food system would promote a far more ecologically sound and socially just world.

Some local retailers that carry his products include Green Fields Market, Foster's, McCusker's, and Pekarski's.

Dan Rosenberg lives on Turners Falls Road in Montague. His work involves making and selling naturally fermented pickled foods through his business, Real Pickles, which he started in 2001. You can call him at (413) 863-9063, or email dan@realpickles.com.

This piece originally ran in the Montague Grange News. The next Grange meeting will be March 2nd at 7 p.m. at the Montague Bookmill where a video of "The Mill at Montague: an Oral History" will be shown.

## G-M School Committee Nominating Papers Available

Nomination papers are available for pick-up in the Gill-Montague Regional superintendent's office for school committee positions. The Gill and Montague town elections will be held on May 16th. School committee completed nomination papers are due back in the superintendent's office no later than 5:00 p.m. on March 28th.

There is one 3-year Gill school committee seat open.

There are two 3-year Montague school committee seats open and one 1-year Montague school committee seat open.

For more information or questions, please contact Taffy Bassett-Fox at 863-9324.

## IRAQI

continued from pg 5  
will be more precious than your most prized gold coin. Just one more thing... if you save seeds, keep it a secret. The Seed Police have been on patrol. They are looking for you.

On Town Meeting Day, 2004, in Vermont, the citizens in seventy-nine towns passed resolutions against Genetically Engineered Crops. Then Vermont made history when it became the first state to require the labeling of Genetically

Modified seeds. "The Farmer Protection Act is a pre-emptive strike to stop predatory lawsuits against Vermont's family farmers by biotech companies like Monsanto," said Ben Davis with the Vermont Public Interest Research Group. Maybe this

small but hard-fought victory gives reason to hope for a better world.

Rosemarie Jackowski (disent@sover.net) is a 67-year-old US Air Force veteran and antiwar activist.



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**NOTES FROM THE MONTAGUE SELECTBOARD**

# Class II Licenses Granted

**BY DAVID DETMOLD**  
**MONTAGUE** - The town handed out two Class II used car and equipment licenses on Tuesday, February 22nd, one to Robert Koch, to relocate Koch's Auto Sales to 98 Turners Falls Road, and one to Robert Semaski, to operate a used heavy equipment yard next to his contracting business on 7 Rod Shop Road.

Koch, who formerly owned and operated his business on Millers Falls Road near the intersection of West Mineral Road, said he sold that property "to the town, so the town could expand the airport." He has purchased the former Hartley Well Drilling and storage building at 98 Turners Falls Road, and received ZBA approval for his request to transfer his business to that location as a nonconforming use in a largely residential area. The ZBA set requirements for his towing, used auto sale, and repair business, limiting Koch's hours of operation to 9 a.m. to 6 p.m., with towing confined to those hours, no more than 20 used cars in the secure lot at any time, and a

limit of three used cars on display at the front of the lot. A screen of arbor vitae will be planted around the perimeter of the fenced lot. The selectboard agreed to these restrictions, and granted the Class II license under these conditions.

The location has seen used car sales before. The Hartley Well Drilling building was formerly owned by Edwin Hartely, who also refurbished and sold Lincoln Continentals and Zephyrs on the lot.

Over in Montague City, Semaski is planning to expand his business to include sales of used heavy machinery in the lot behind his contracting business and warehouse. This building is located next to the former Rod Shop factory, taken by the town in a tax title proceeding and now falling into serious disrepair. Semaski said he has a fenced lot, on which he would hope to house up to 24 pieces of used heavy equipment, such as dump trucks and excavators, for resale. He said he had spoken with the residential abutter to the north of his lot, Em Robinson, and agreed to put up

a stockade fence on his property line to shield the view from her house.

Semaski said he had gotten into the used equipment end of the construction business gradually, buying machinery as construction jobs demanded and then reselling them to customers who had a use for them. "One thing led to another, and it's become close to a full-time ordeal," Semaski said.

The board approved operating hours for Semaski's used equipment business at 8 a.m. to 6 p.m., and approved his request for a Class II license.

In other business, the board agreed to waive the 120-day notice for right of first refusal and signed a municipal grant application for a 17 acres of farmland in the state's Agricultural Preservation Restriction program. Formerly owned by the Klepacki family, the prime farmland sits at the intersection of Meadow and South Ferry Road, and was recently purchased by Mark and Wendy Beaubien, who are seeking to keep the land under APR protection. Town planner Robin

Sherman said the land was appraised at \$360,000; the state would provide \$323,000 towards the APR, and the town will seek to come up with matching funds from the fund administered by the Montague conservation commission for the purpose of aiding in the preservation of open space, recreation land and farmland. Up to \$37,000 may be required for the town match. Sherman said the conservation fund presently has a balance of about \$80,000. Sherman said town meeting used to make an annual \$10,000 contribution to the fund, but had not done so in several years.

Sherman said, "I would like to extend thanks to the Beaubiens for being willing to help preserve this land. When it went on the market, a number of developers were interested in it. We certainly do have a need for more housing in town," (but) "we have identified blocks of prime farmland that we would like to see preserved," including the former Klepacki farm, which sits amid blocks of contiguous farmland. "It's great we

had a local person willing to step in and make this happen."

Town administrator Frank Abbondanzio reported he has been hard at work updating a pay and classification study, comparing the job descriptions and compensation of town employees with those of area towns. The study was prepared for the town by a hired consultant in 2001; the board and town meeting endorsed its findings, but the town was not able to afford the approximately \$70,000 annual increase in personnel costs to bring Montague employees up to par with the pay of employees in neighboring communities due to state aid cutbacks during the recent recession. Abbondanzio said this has left employees of certain departments, like Montague's civilian police dispatchers, working at nearly 25% less than their counterparts in nearby towns, putting Montague in the position of providing training for dispatchers who routinely leave for better paying jobs elsewhere.



# Draft Counseling Delayed by Winter Weather

**BY JOSH HEINEMANN**  
**WENDELL** - The draft counseling session scheduled at the Wendell town hall for 2 p.m. on Monday, February 21st was postponed due to snow, sleet, and freezing rain.

Molly Kaynor, an organizer of the event, canceled the session when scheduled speaker Frances Crowe, who pioneered draft counseling in the Valley for the American Friends Service Committee during the Vietnam War, agreed the driving conditions were too bad.

Kaynor called everyone she had expected to come from a distance, but in spite of the weather almost 20 people showed up, including three draft age men, and a couple from Greenfield who came because they have a draft age daughter.

Without the speakers, the group was left to hold informal discussion among themselves.

People sat in a circle and introduced themselves, including one Korean War veteran, a Vietnam veteran, a Vietnam-era veteran, and a man who said, "I

came because I heard there was food."

Several people were concerned about the possibility of the draft being reinstated, despite assurances to the contrary from the Bush administration. Attendees seemed to feel women would be at risk of conscription along with men, if there is to be a draft.

The circle discussion brought out information that there are at least 6,000 soldiers AWOL in Iraq, and the latest request for funding for the Iraq war

includes a line item to greatly enlarge the budget for pursuing them. Literature outlining the steps a potential draftee could take before being called up was available, both from the Center on Conscience and War, (CCW) and the Central Committee for Conscientious Objectors (CCCO).

Addresses are below:

CCCO: 1515 Cherry St, Philadelphia PA 19102  
 630 20th St # 302 Oakland, CA 94612

800 665 7682 www.objector.org  
 CCW: 1830 Connecticut Avenue, NW  
 Washington DC 20009  
 202 483 2220  
 www.nisbco.org

Kaynor said she did not mind paying the town hall rental for the canceled gathering, and said she planned to reschedule the event as soon as she could get the speakers together again.

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**HIGHLIGHTS FROM THE MONTAGUE POLICE LOG**

**Lock Your Car**

**Thursday 2-17**

8:30 a.m. Male juvenile summoned on charge of possession of a controlled substance at TFHS.

3:32 p.m. Report of a domestic dispute at a Main Street address. Found to be verbal only. One party removed to hospital.

**Friday 2-18**

8:08 p.m. Male juvenile arrested on a straight warrant at a High Street address.

11:45 p.m. [redacted] arrested on a straight warrant.

**Saturday 2-19**

2:55 a.m. [redacted] was arrested on a fugitive from justice warrant and also charged with failure to register as a sex offender.

reported at an L Street address. Medication was missing. Found to be a misunderstanding.

**Sunday 2-20**

7:27 p.m. Person on Gill/Montague Bridge taken into protective custody.

11:44 p.m. After a motor vehicle stop, [redacted] was arrested and charged with negligent operation of a motor vehicle, stop sign violation, failing to stop for a police officer, and speeding.

**Monday 2-21**

1:23 a.m. Report of a domestic disturbance at a Montague Street residence. [redacted]

[redacted] was arrested and charged with assault and battery with a dangerous weapon, domestic assault and battery, and destruction of property.

2:47 p.m. Report of a larceny from a 12th Street address. A

black, gas scooter was taken. Report taken.

8:48 p.m. Report of someone being beaten up on Avenue A. Subjects gone on arrival.

**Tuesday 2-22**

7:28 p.m. Report of a traffic hazard: a piece of metal lying on the Gill/Montague Bridge. DPW notified and state DPW notified.

**Wednesday 2-23**

Overnight there were at least seven reported motor vehicle break-ins in the Hill Section of Turners Falls. CD's and CD players, radios, and cash were reported stolen. According to Montague Police Chief Ray Zukowski, tracks were followed in the snow, but led to places where the thieves got into a motor vehicle. Zukowski said his best advice was for citizens to keep their vehicles locked. Only unlocked vehicles were entered.

**Montague Receives \$18,000 Grant for Fieldhouse Repair**

**TURNERS FALLS** - The Montague Parks and Recreation Commission is pleased to announce the receipt of an \$18,000 grant from the federal Land and Water Conservation Fund for improvements to the Fieldhouse at Unity Park in Turners Falls. The grant will pay for repairs to the roof and interior renovations to improve energy efficiency and space utilization. Town meeting previously appropriated \$18,165 for the roof repairs; the grant will match these funds and allow the town to make the additional improvements. "This is a good deal for the taxpayers," said Parks and Recreation Director Jon Dobosz. "It will improve the operation of our facility, while reducing costs for utilities and maintenance."

Dobosz added the grant was made possible by completion of a new Open Space and Recreation Plan, prepared by the Montague Planning and Conservation Department with assistance from the Franklin Regional Council of Governments in 2003. Communities are required to have a current plan to apply for funding through the Land and Water Conservation Fund. "This is another example of how planning pays off for our communities," commented FRCOG Executive Director Linda Dunlavy.

**Kulik Office Hours**


A member of the staff of State Rep. Stephen Kulik (D-Worthington) will hold office hours in New Salem and Wendell on Monday Feb. 28th at 4:15 p.m. at the Swift River Elementary School. Residents are invited to drop in and meet with staff to discuss any constituent issues or concerns. Call 772-2727 if you have a concern but cannot attend.

**Girls' Softball Registration**

**Monday, February 28th to April 9th**  
For girls in grades 3 thru 6  
The Montague Parks and Recreation office is open Saturday, March 5th from 9 a.m. to noon for early registrations. Games are held in May and June.  
Fees: Montague Residents, \$35; non-residents, \$40. (Fees include the cost of hat, shirt and pants). Parents are encouraged to help coach and umpire - no experience necessary, training provided. For more information, call MPRD at 863-3216.

**Psychic Fair in Lake Pleasant**  
The National Spiritual Alliance will sponsor a Psychic Fair from 11 a.m. to 4 p.m. Saturday, February 26th at Thompson Temple across from the Post Office in Lake Pleasant. Divination methods include astrology, I-Ching, hand reading, spiritual counseling, and tarot cards. Consultation is with a medium of choice.

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**MONTAGUE PARKS & RECREATION DEPARTMENT OPEN SWIM SCHEDULE**  
56 First Street/Unity Parks Fieldhouse Turners Falls, MA 01376  
Phone: (413) 863-3216/Fax: (413) 863-3229  
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<b>Wednesdays</b>	<b>6:00pm - 7:00pm</b>	<b>Wednesdays</b>	<b>7:00pm - 8:00pm</b>
<b>Thursdays</b>	<b>5:00pm - 6:00pm</b>	<b>Thursdays</b>	<b>6:00pm - 7:00pm</b>

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**FINANCE**

continued from pg 1

positions from the two dozen cut in '04. Next year's budget calls for maintaining these positions, which include reading and language arts teachers at Sheffield and the high school, a high school Latin teacher, a choral music teacher in the elementary schools (one day in each), a 1/3rd time art position to cover the entire high school, a kindergarten teacher for Montague Center (based on enrollment), a Grade 6 elementary teacher in Gill, and a pre-K teacher at Hillcrest. Additionally, Gee said the budget called for adding one custodial position for the High School - Middle School complex, to help maintain the "30,000 additional square feet of classroom space" in the newly renovated building. "Otherwise, this is a level service budget," Gee said.

Gee tied the 6.8% increase largely to these personnel costs, and to fixed costs including health care (up 15% to 17%), general insurance (up 10%), heat (up 24%), utilities (up 28%), among others. She pointed to the decreasing availability of state and federal grants to supplement the operating bud-

et in areas such as the arts, technology, and academic support services. Supporting documents showed the district had received \$114,776 less in total grant funding in 2005 than it did in 2004. "I am very worried about the outlook for support services for our children who struggle the most."

Finance committee chair Jeff Singleton asked if Gee had thought about how Montague would go about paying for more than \$700,000 increase in its assessment, given that the town's total revenues increase by around \$400,000 a year. GMRSD business manager Lynn Bassett suggested the \$824,000 reimbursement of excess funds from the schools to the town could be applied to offset that increase, but that suggestion met with scant support. Town administrator Frank Abbondanzio and Singleton proposed using a large portion of that reimbursement to set up a stabilization fund targeted toward improving art and music in GMRSD schools, as a means of attracting new enrollment. Gee seemed open to this suggestion, saying, "If we don't continue to build, we will continue to lose. If we lose enrollment, we lose revenue."



**Bush Proposes to Eliminate Upward Bound Program**

**NORTHFIELD**-President George W. Bush's 2006 budget, which was unveiled on February 8th, proposes to eliminate the Upward Bound Program. The funds would be redirected towards an extension of the No Child Left Behind program, according to a report in the Chronicle of Higher Education.

Upward Bound, established during the Johnson Administration's "War on Poverty," is one of five federally funded TRIO programs aimed at helping low-income students or those who would be the first in their families to go to college.

Northfield Mount Hermon School has hosted the program on its campus since 1968. According to Head of School Tom Sturtevant, "NMH Upward Bound was one of the first programs to start up during the 1960s, and it is one of only two hosted by secondary schools across the country. The program exemplifies our founder Dwight L. Moody's commitment to opportunity in education. The services ensure that some of the most disadvantaged students in our local communities will be prepared for and

gain admission to college, regardless of their circumstances. This program is at the heart of our school's mission. We hope there will be a way to continue providing these critical services to our local communities."

NMH's program has an annual budget of \$332,437 from the Department of Education and additional grants from the Edwin S. Webster Foundation, the Community Foundation of Western Massachusetts, and the Xeric Foundation. The money provides funding for 66 students from Greenfield, Turners Falls, Springfield and Holyoke public high schools. According to program director Gisele Litalien, "The loss of funding from the Department of Education would be devastating for our students and their families, and a significant loss of an opportunity for hundreds of thousands of disadvantaged American high school students." Students who meet the eligibility criteria attend classes on the NMH campus each summer. They also receive academic and financial aid counseling, tutoring, and after-school classes during the school year that help them succeed in high school and prepare for col-

lege. The program recently accepted 30 ninth-graders who have begun to receive services in their schools and who will join returning students for the Summer Academy beginning June 18th. Program cuts would take effect at the end of the next school year.

According to Litalien, Upward Bound has survived similar challenges on several occasions, including the early 1980s under the Reagan administration and after Republicans won control of Congress in 1994. "There was a huge outpouring of support for the program from both Democrats and Republicans during that time," Litalien said. "I hope that Congress will again recognize the importance of continuing these programs."

**THE PERSISTENT GARDENER**

**Soil Development**

**BY WOODY BROWN - MONTAGUE CITY** - Yes, snow is on the ground, but spring is coming. To while away the last few weeks of frost and chill, start planning for the growing season ahead. While you're combing seed catalogues and preparing starter plants, give some thought to the condition of the soil you will plant these babies in once the weather warms.

Nothing is more important to successful gardening than the quality of the soil. This is not to say anything against the importance of sunshine; that's important too. However, without good soil, you'll have plants of diminished quality. (For some reason it does seem that flowers can do well in relatively poor soil.)

Developing good garden soil is not a difficult chore. It does take a little patience because the proper medium cannot be arrived at instantaneously. You add the ingredients and wait just

a little while and you can have an environment your plants - primarily vegetables - will love. Flowering plants will love the mix too.

What do you add to your garden soil? In a

100-square-foot plot you'll want to add at least two wheelbarrow loads of manure. The barrow loads don't have to be heaping full. Just put in enough to make a light, easy to handle load. If you can get rotted manure, good! If not, the manure should be applied in the fall before you plan to use the bed. After you get the two barrow-fulls lightly worked into the soil, add another two loads and spread it



around with a rake. I am personally of the opinion that it is difficult to put too much organic matter in a garden bed.

Compost and liquid fertilizers can be added at the time of sowing seeds and planting plants. Compost is good to work into the soil generally, if you have enough. It always surprises me how many people don't make compost when the ingredients are so handy.

All leftover vegetable matter is suitable for compost. Do not add meats, cheese or oils. Fruit peelings, dry or moldy breads and vegetable bits are great, as are coffee grounds and

eggshells. You can also compost leaves, grass clippings and other plant materials. It's best not to introduce weed seeds or sick plants into your compost if you can avoid it.

In our garden, we compost leftover matter in two black plastic containers we got from the DPW. We rarely add soil or water or turn the pile. We just add compostable materials in one bin for a year and then let it rest. This passive composting results in enough compost to add to plant trenches and holes for the next season without the added labor of turning or feeding the pile.

Additional fertilizing with liquid foods is done by side dressing during the growing season. Over the years, following this plan, we have developed plots of exceptional quality. You can too. Happy Gardening!

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## WILSON

continued from pg 1

Erving eatery for two years, flipping the pages of real estate magazines where she saw it pictured. One weekend while visiting a girlfriend in Orange, she drove past the restaurant by accident.

"For two years we had seen this restaurant and then . . . there it was. We saw it and we fell in love," said Wilson, sipping from the coffee cup she refills throughout the day, while cooking up a storm.

"It's beautiful here. I can't tell you how much I love this place. The people are wonderful here. I love them," exclaimed Wilson spontaneously.

She respects honesty and Erving's "hard-working, genuine, sincere people" who "really help each other out and have been wonderful to me."

When her freezer was hit by lightning a couple of years ago, Annie Diemand came by and helped her move her frozen goods to the Diemand Farm freezer in Wendell. A BMW motorcyclist who frequents the Box Car Restaurant each summer on his way down Route 2 brought her a box of cannolis on her September 28th birthday. Regular customers have given her rosary beads from Brazil, Mexico and France to add to her collection and people regularly

donate train memorabilia to grace the restaurant's walls and shelves.

"Cooking and feeding people are my passions. I love caring for people. I want to make them happy and the best way to do that is to make them something yummy," Wilson laughed.

A specialty is her thick, multi-layered "Oh My God" brownie. She turned an aluminum napkin holder on its side to show the brownie's breadth, and gestured the sinfully rich layers that comprise this chocolate-laced heaven, made from "whatever I have in my kitchen": coconut macaroon, butterscotch, cream cheese, peanut butter, covered with hot fudge, whipped cream and sprinkles - "so that it looks like a celebration," she said.

Of Italian descent, Wilson said her favorite thing to cook is homemade pasta, especially ravioli and tomato sauce from scratch.

"Food is to be celebrated. Life is to be celebrated," she said, pointing out a photograph of her family that hangs above a corner table. Her parents once ran a diner in Westborough, and



Toni Wilson and Terry Haertl operate the Box Car Restaurant in Erving.

her father was also a cook in the Navy. One of her three brothers went to culinary school, and one of her 17-year-old sons is following in his uncle's footsteps at Franklin County Technical School.

"I love my family, and it feels like an extended family here. You have people in this community that have been here 50 years. We celebrate birthdays, anniversaries, here. We get cakes and cards and we push the tables together and celebrate as one big unit. It's one big family and that is what's important in life," she said, pointing to the table to her left, where every morning three local customers have met for coffee, for about a year.

Erving resident Frank Savage is one of them. "Toni's a

nice lady. Every morning I go in there for coffee with the boys. She says good morning with a big smile and then she gives me my coffee. She knows just what I like," said Savage - decaf with one sugar and a little cream.

John Zilinski meets Savage each morning around 7 a.m. and usually orders a bagel with his coffee. He said he appreciates Wilson's kindness as well as the convenience of having a local gathering spot to "talk local stuff" and "be creatures of habit."

"They sit right there and they have a little coffee klatch, and share the talk of the town," said Wilson. "Then Brian McAndrews comes in. We call him the mayor of the town, but he's not of course."

McAndrews, who sipped a cup of coffee on a recent Wednesday morning, called Wilson full of fun and said, "you never know what she is going to say next."

Erving administrative coordinator Tom Sharp, who dines at the Box Car some Monday nights before the selectboard

meetings, appreciates Wilson's culinary talent.

"She makes this shepherd's pie that is just outrageous. It's one of my favorite things there. I'm also fond of her pasta sauce," said Sharp. "I think what I like about Toni is that when you enter her restaurant, she makes you feel special. I admire the way she looks at life and her gregarious attitude. She's full of life and she's a fun person to be around."

Wilson worked as a waitress and catered on the side while her three children were small, back in the Northborough area. Owing a restaurant that is open between 11 and 14 hours every single day comes with challenges, including working 120 hours a week "whether you're sick or not."

But that comes with the territory, said Wilson, whose smile is a giveaway of her joy in her work.

"Do you know what Confucius said? He said, 'when you love what you do, you'll never work another day in your life.'" She credited Haertl with helping to make her dream come true.

"I just love what I do," she said, stepping back inside her home-away-from-home. "I think the people are the gift in life."



## COYOTES

continued from pg 1

of weight, from 30 to 75 pounds. A large male could easily be mistaken for a wolf.

This predator has been tagged with many misconceptions, probably due to the fact no one had ever seen one in the East before. The misnomer coydog is one example. There is no domestic dog in these animals. The difference in heat cycles between domestic dogs, not concerned with changing seasons, and coyotes who need a set time to assure birthing during favorable conditions in food supply and ample days to maturity before winter's onset nullify this possibility. Coyotes are extremely adaptable, intelligent, and efficient predators. They're omnivores, but they prefer meat when they can get it.

In the check and balance system nature provided all living beings, coyotes had wolves to control their numbers. Wolves are the top predator on our continent. They control their own

populations instinctually. The alpha male and female of each pack are the only breeding pair; the extended family help in rearing the pups and the pack rules a large territory so as not to deplete the balance of animals on their range.

Coyotes, because they had a predator, did not develop this system. Every female breeds to insure survival by numbers. Now, in the East, their numbers are spiraling. The problem is similar to rabbits in Australia. In the absence of wolves, coyotes are the top predator and every female breeds. This creates a predator imbalance devastating to prey animals and competing predators. Some habitats lose certain species altogether. In the past 15 years I have found areas once teeming in wildlife diversity void of rabbits, grouse, and depleted in deer population.

Some insist coyotes have no effect on deer herds, however my observations have produced evidence to the contrary. In the less hilly terrain of eastern Massachusetts, where the winters aren't so severe, biologists

may be right about this. However in our western half of the state, with its steep slopes and harder winters, during years of high coyote numbers the scenario for deer is bleak.

Coyote take deer in several ways: as fawns, as older members, as dominant bucks exhausted post breeding season, and indiscriminately during periods of severe icing, or deep snow with a crust. The natural instinct of deer during icy conditions is to simply sit tight and rely on stored fat reserves until a thaw or new snowfall makes conditions favorable to them to move. Coyotes with their lighter weight and wider feet to body size are able to move well during icy or crusted conditions, staying on top of the snow. They move deer from their bedding areas, forcing them to try to flee over the treacherous surface where they are easy prey.

On a single morning, I videotaped three deer kill sites and two deer with their hamstrings shredded who would not live to see the next sunrise, all on a single Colrain hill.

As a tracker and a naturalist I understand and enjoy the presence of coyotes. I also understand the importance of balance. Nature in balance, with a normal number of coyotes in a given area, would not adversely affect deer populations. In the absence of wolves, coyote populations balloon, leading to loss of wildlife diversity. In my opinion, we have the responsibility to maintain nature's balance, since it was our hand that destroyed it.

The state uses hunting as an economical means to control surplus prey animals. It may be time to create a more comprehensive management program than those now in existence for predators.

In the meantime, there is one other natural control similar to the one affecting raccoons and other members of the weasel family, and that is disease. The mange is a non-viral disease caused by either of two minute parasites (*dimadex* or *sarcoptes*). *Sarcoptes* is contagious. When coyotes are overpopulated, with their social

habits and overlapping territories, you have a recipe for epidemic.

Mange insects irritate the skin of their victims, resulting in severe itching. The hair of infected animals is rubbed off, scratched off, the remainder destroyed by the parasites. One can only imagine the torture infected animals endure during the summer months. If the disease peaks just prior to winter, a slow death by freezing is likely. In December of 2003, I witnessed several coyotes moving across the snow with a few hairs at the tips of their tails and the rest of their bodies void of this insulator. The skin on their bodies appeared blotched pink and purple, with clear evidence of frostbite.

Coyote numbers were down considerably in our area during 2004. The result was a noticeable rebound of grouse and rabbits in a few areas. Deer, however, will take longer to recover.

The cycle will resume if *canis latrans* is not kept in balance.



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**NOTES FROM THE GILL SELECTBOARD MEETING**

# A Pistachio for Your Thoughts

**BY HYRUM H. HUSKEY JR.** Delayed by the Presidents Day holiday, the Gill selectboard munched pistachios, and discussed the physics of acid rain laden snow between agenda items at their rescheduled meeting on Wednesday, February 23rd.

Selectboard member Ann Banash demonstrated the physics of the lever as she instructed Phil Maddern and Leland Stevens how to pry open a pistachio nut by using the shell from a previously eaten nut. Later, when Debra Rousell, Gill's administrative assistant, raised the issue of snow falling off the town hall onto parked cars, Maddern suggested the snow in Gill seems to stick to

even well-pitched roofs. When Banash offered that tin roofs should cause the snow to slide off, Maddern introduced his own scientific theory: that the snow might contain acid rain that helps it stick to the roofs here.

"I never know whether to take you seriously or not," Rousell chided.

In a more formal vein, the board reviewed a draft cable television contract proposal with Stephen Fitzgibbons, manager of government and community relations New England-West, for Comcast Cable Communications, Inc. Fitzgibbons, who had met previously with the Cable Advisory Committee, noted the proposal

contained provisions for extending service on four town roads. Fitzgibbons also said it would be necessary to hold a public hearing prior to the current contract's expiration in August of this year.

In less technical matters, the board:

- ♦ were informed that Representative Christopher J. Donelan had requested to use town hall on Friday, February 25th, at 11:00 a.m.

- ♦ were informed the town of Gill had received a FY05 Bond Premium rebate in the amount of \$31,943.78 which would go to free cash for next year.

- ♦ voted to accept 3.1 per cent as the budget figure for depart-

ment heads to include in personnel budgets. The amount would include COLA raises.

- ♦ took under consideration the possibility of separating the Riverside community building and town hall for maintenance budgeting purposes, and

- ♦ and reviewed a portion of the preliminary FY06 budget.

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## HOME COOKING

*Sandy Miner, from Ervingside, suggested we offer a column for people to share favorite family recipes. Last week, she shared one her hearty soup recipes. Here's another of her favorites, for oven apple pancakes. We welcome any of our readers to send in recipes they might like to share.*

SANDY MINER'S

# OVEN APPLE PANCAKES

This oven apple pancake recipe is so old, I've forgotten where I got it.

I sent the recipe to the Erving Elementary kindergarten class when my oldest daughter was attending (she's now 36), so you can see the recipe is an "oldie." The kindergarten class continued to make these for several years during "apple picking time."

This is good as a dessert after a hearty soup. It is also great as an evening snack while watching TV or reading. The recipe makes two 9-inch pancakes, and it can be served as a breakfast food or a brunch dish with ham, sausage or bacon.

- 6 Eggs
- 1 ½ cups flour
- 1 ½ cups milk
- ¾ cup sugar
- ¼ teaspoon salt
- 2 tablespoon cinnamon
- 5 tart apples, peeled, cored and cut into ¼ inch wedges

With a wire whisk or rotary beater, beat eggs, milk, salt and flour till smooth

Let batter rest about 10 minutes

Combine sugar and cinnamon and sprinkle over apples and toss to mix

Generously spread margarine on the bottom and sides of two 9-inch pie plates, using about 2 tablespoons for each pan

Divide apples between each pan

Stir batter and pour over apples

Bake in preheated 375 degree oven for 30 to 40 minutes or until pancakes are golden brown, puffed and set.

Serve hot in wedges topped with whipped cream, maple syrup or ice cream.



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## JOSEPH

continued from pg 1

throughout. But the stars outshone them, not only the principals: John Waynelovich, in the role of Joseph and Marissa Sicley, playing the part of the narrator, but the entire cast. John Austin deserves particular mention. As Joseph's lachrymose dad, Jacob, Austin showed a tremendous flair for finding the audience's funny bone at the most unexpected moments, as when Joseph's 10 brothers showed up with their younger brother's blood-stained cloak to claim he had been eaten by wild animals, giving Jacob the cue to dissolve into a truly operatic outpouring of grief. He's a natural ham.

Costume director Gail Villeneuve, teamed with choreographer Kim Waynelovich, deserve a special round of applause for what they did with the Pharaoh's Go-Go Girls (Nicole Siano, Abbey Daniel-Green, Kandra Cocco, Krista Leveille, Lauren Tela, Aimee Shattuck, Chelsea Isles, Jessica Jackson, Julianna Felton, Katie Bailey, Lara Ames, Lauryn Zellmann, and Alayna Zellman). These ladies looked fantastic, whether they were

walking like an Egyptian, dancing, or striking a stunning tableau around the mighty limbs of Andy Stewart, who proved that Elvis has not really left the house, he's merely been reincarnated as Pharaoh, in kind of a glam George Jetson outfit. And the King can still belt it out with best of them!

The musical had many stellar moments. The Ishmaelites produced a fantastic camel (uncredited) to carry Joseph off to captivity. Nicole Siano showed how to put the va-va-voom in vixen, as the voracious "Mrs. Potiphar." A dance with her might be worth a year or two in jail. The brothers (Josh Matusz, Henry Gaida, Andy Stewart, Jason Stewart, Ethan Kociela, Kris York, D.J. Bennett, Chris Humphrey, Ryan Herzig, Nick Imbimbo, and Aaron Cappucci) had perhaps the best set piece of the night, during the lean years "Back in Canaan" with Gaida turning in a fine solo, ably backed up by his famished fraternity. "No one comes to dinner now; We'd only eat them anyhow." And the entire troupe brought a little bit of the Caribbean down the Nile with the Benjamin Calypso: Mr. C outdoing himself on trumpet (with a hat Jimmy Buffet would



PHOTO COURTESY OF NICK WAYNELOVICH

*Joseph's brothers try to console Jacob on the loss of his youngest son.*

be proud of) and Bryant keeping the whole thing together on drums.

With all these excellent backing ingredients, John Waynelovich and Sicley had their work cut out for them to shine in their starring roles. Joseph was hampered in that task by his character's innate dreaminess. But he found his voice as the show progressed, particularly on the aforemen-

tioned calypso number, which let him out of character long enough to sing out loud and clear.

For Sicley, projecting vocal talent and stagecraft is an embarrassment of riches. This young lady has proved time and again she is a natural star. Here, she betrayed a tendency to climb a little higher into the upper register than seemed entirely safe at times, but this

small complaint only served to contrast the warmth and accomplishment of her portrayal overall.

The cast and crew deserved the longstanding ovations they received. *Joseph* provided the first class musical theater we've come to expect from these talented students under the Wayneloviches' direction.



## Vacation on the Cape Winner

BY DEB AUSTIN

**MONTAGUE CITY** - Kerry Wyman of Montague City was the winner of the Cape Week vacation raffle to benefit the Turners Falls High School Marching Band.

Kerry and her husband, Tom, have two children, Justin and Jordan. The drawing was held Sunday afternoon, February 20th, at the final performance of the play *Joseph and the Amazing Technicolor Dreamcoat*, in the beautiful new theater at the Turners Falls High School.

The raffle of a timeshare week on Cape Cod came from the idea of a cousin of Deb and Phil Austin's who lives in Washington, DC. Down there, such raffles have become popular as a wonderful way to raise much needed money for the schools in these hard financial times. Here in Montague we were able to sell almost 50 tickets, raising about \$500 for the school band. We are trying to raise money to buy new uniforms, as ours are very old and in dire need of replacement.

The band boosters are constantly trying to come up with new and creative ideas to raise money, but it is a challenge. We need new people and new ideas. Please feel free to attend our meetings, which are held at the Turners Falls High School Band room every first Tuesday of the month at 7:00 p.m. We also help pay for buses for the band trip in the in the spring for band competitions, give out a scholarship at graduation, donate money for float making, help pay for a bus for the cast of the plays to go out to eat after their last performance, help cut the cost per student for trips which include chorus, concert band and jazz band. There are so many extracurricular needs, and we love to be able to help. We are so fortunate to have such great students. They are wonderful, and the bandleader, Mr. C., provides them terrific inspiration. Thanks to all of you who helped by purchasing a ticket, and a big congratulations to Kerry and her family. Have a great vacation!




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# Adopted by Cats

BY LESLIE BROWN

**MONTAGUE CITY** - After eleven years we have lost our most favored pet, Susie. Of all of our three cats she was the brightest, the most curious, the most demanding. She had a large repertoire of behaviors and a range of vocalizations that amounted to cat conversation. She had an interrogative chirp which translated as "What's up? What's going on?" a feline bleat

residence shunned him and chased him off at feeding time. At that point I was living in three small rooms over a garage and had not given any thought to having a pet. Nonetheless this kitten with a sad story adopted me. I named him Trouble, and he was troublesome.

Trouble was the most amazingly clumsy cat I've ever known. He took over the apartment, exploring happily, leaving a trail of broken items in his wake. He once fractured his right foot by landing the wrong way after an attempted long jump. He was also a wimpy fellow. He moaned all night after I brought him home with his foot in a cast. I gave him a full-strength aspirin to get us both through that uncomfortable night.

One Christmas, Trouble ate an entire poisonous Poinsettia plant with no ill effects. Probably because of his early privations, he was a terrific eater, eventually achieving the girth of a twenty-pound turkey and earning the nickname Teewaddle. Maybe his prodigious size helped him handle toxins with aplomb. I do know that on one early dusky evening my landlord called me excitedly to report a large owl sitting in the road. It was Trouble. This cat bumbled happily through life. He was a slow learner, a lousy fighter who continued to return to the ring. Just the same he survived the move to a new home where he continued to try unsuccessfully to duke it out with the neighborhood boys and achieved the ripe old age of thirteen before succumbing to kidney failure.

At the time of Teewaddle's death we had already been adopted by his successor, a small black cat prosaically named Blackie. She showed up at my husband's sawmill and moved right in. She sat comfortably in the shop, impervious to the whine of the table saw, the screech of the planer and the rumble of the belt system that clacked and clattered as it energized the operations of the plant. This petite but ferocious critter once backed a dog into the Sawmill River, refusing to allow him to encroach on her turf. In the winter she survived the cold by rolling up in a piece of discarded insulation.

Blackie was both independent and an inveterate lap-sitter. If you sat down, there she was, curling up in the nap position, pinning you down. While she was a girl of few words, when she assumed the lap position, her body vibrated with an enthusiastic song.

After the demise of Trouble, we brought Blackie home. That was when we learned of her single fear. The five-mile trip home was punctuated by such anguished groaning that we didn't take her in the car again until the day we drove her to the vet's office to release her from the final illness from which she was slowly dwindling. She was a rugged little stray who must have had some Siamese in her veins. She had piercing, slightly slanted hazel eyes and the characteristic loud mewl. For eighteen years she successfully defended home and turf, cowering much larger cats with her attitude. After all that time as a family member, we felt we owed it to Blackie to be present at her end. That experience is one we've vowed never to repeat. We both left the doctor's office with tears in our eyes.

Months later when we missed the feline presence in our house, we went to the animal shelter. The cats were housed in several tiers of cages, and I felt compelled to interview each one first before choosing a new pet. Each one of those furry persons needed and deserved a home. However, my liberal instincts were ignored. A small paw reached out through



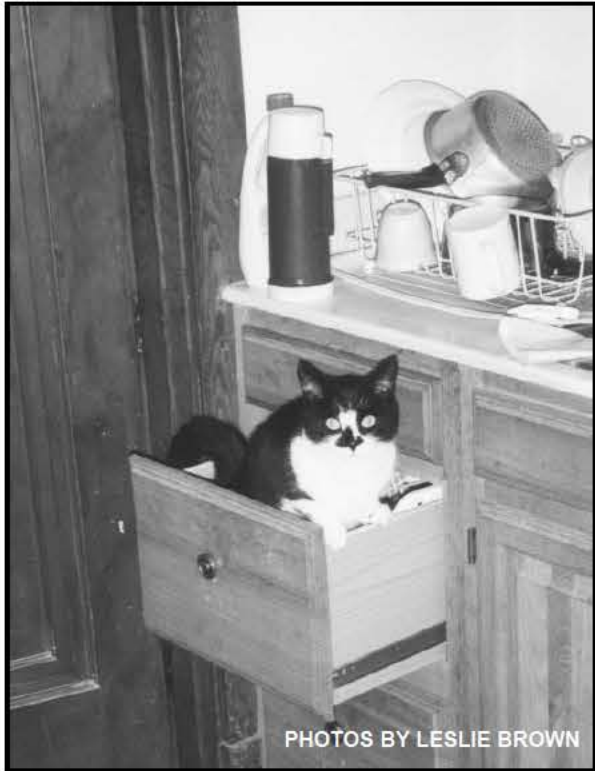
Trouble bumbled happily through life, clumsy though he was.

the grid of a cage hooking us in. The shelter staff told us Susie had been picked up in Springfield and that when she had playtime, she would climb to the top of the curtains. That didn't deter us. She had already won our hearts.

Susie never climbed the curtains in our home, but she was an investigator. She loved drawers, high places, small nooks and crannies. We took to calling her after Inspector Moto. For the first few weeks we kept her inside for fear of losing her. Once allowed outside, she ran and ran and jumped and climbed. She flew around the yard for the sheer joy of speed and movement. Susie Moto also sat quietly for lengthy periods without moving, studying a mole hole or the tiniest movement in the stone wall. As much as she loved her independence, she was always checking in, connecting, making sure you

were still there. She never sat in a lap; she disliked being picked up, but she could never get enough petting. Her favorite cold weather spot was on top of the water heater. Warmed from below by the heated metal and above by the waves from the wood stove, she was in seventh heaven. In the early morning hours, when the stove cooled down, she jumped onto the bed in search of body heat.

Susie preferred a limited audience. She disliked all cats and loved only three humans. Perhaps she was discriminating. Perhaps she was just cautious. We wondered what her life on the urban streets had been like. Her sense of adventure and investigation were very strong. For eleven years she ruled our lives, demanding, bossing, living on her own terms. And we loved it. I know she moved on to her next life with a chirp. "What's up? What's next?"



PHOTOS BY LESLIE BROWN

The late Susie was an investigator who loved drawers, high places, small nooks and crannies and had a wide array of vocalizations.

which signified "Notice me; I'm here," and a sharp meow of command which demanded immediate human response regarding feeding, opening of doors and most of all petting. Susie also had a pathetic wail we dubbed her jungle yell. This sad cry came on the occasions when she thought she was alone.

My first cat adopted me when I lived in Deerfield and still went right to the farm to buy my milk. One day when I entered the 'store' area of the barn, which was immaculate, yet infused with the neighboring real smells of hay and cows, a small striped kitten leapt to the counter and began rubbing itself against my arms and hands, purring loudly. The farmer asked me if I would consider taking it. He told me the kitten had been dropped off at the farm. The barn cats already in



Blackie showed up at the author's husband's sawmill and moved right in.

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# ARTS & ENTERTAINMENT



# CALENDAR

JACK COUGHUN ILLUSTRATION

**FRIDAY, FEB. 25TH**  
A Bouquet of Music Concert Series - Stoneleigh Burnham Octet with Cindy Meese, director. Concerts take place in Franklin Medical Center's main lobby. 164 High Street, Greenfield. Noon to 1:00 p.m. (413) 773-2573.

Fourth Friday Contra Dance with David Kaynor & Greenfield Dance Band at the Guiding Star Grange Hall, 401 Chapman St., Greenfield. 8:00 p.m. - midnight. (413) 367-9380

**FRIDAY AND SATURDAY FEB. 25TH & 26TH**  
The Shea Young Stage Company presents an adaptation of J.M. Barrie's

**PETER PAN**

Directed by Trevor Davis. The Friday show is at 8 p.m.; the Saturday show is a 2 p.m. matinee. Admission is \$5. For reservations or more info call (413) 863-2281. The Shea Theater, 71 Avenue A, Turners Falls.

**SATURDAY, FEB. 26TH**  
Wendell Full Moon Coffeehouse presents the **Reggae Allstars**. Local reggae musicians perform, to benefit Friends of Wissatinnewag. For more info visit [www.wendellfullmoon.org](http://www.wendellfullmoon.org). *FYI, Mark Erelli's performance, which was cancelled due to a good old New England Nor'easter has been rescheduled for June 25th, again to benefit the Wendell Open Space Committee*

Visitors are invited to join Sue Cloutier of the U.S. Fish & Wildlife Service, on either of two guided tours of birds in our habitat displays, videos and the Eagle Cam, at 11 a.m. and at 2 p.m. At the Great Falls Discovery Center, 2 Avenue A, Turners Falls. Both programs listed below are free and open to the public. Facilities are accessible.

Television and film star Frank Runyeon will bring his acclaimed performance of the Gospel of Mark to St. Mary's Church, 90 Seventh St., Turners Falls. One night only, 7 p.m. His performance of the Gospel of Mark is set in the catacombs of Rome by candlelight and is entitled *AFRAID!* It's text is the Gospel of Mark, translated into contemporary American speech. It is a play that is appropriate for the whole family. Tickets, \$10 adults; \$5 students. For more info call (413) 863-2585.

The Gathering Place at First Parish of Northfield, Unitarian offers card and board games, mah-jong lessons, open mike for musicians and writers, coffee & light fare on the last Saturday of every month from 7 to 10 p.m. 72

Main Street, for more info call 498-5957.

Hilltown Folk presents Ferron, 7:30 p.m. at Memorial Hall, Shelburne Falls. With 12 albums under her belt, including a 4-star rating from Rolling Stone Magazine, Ferron releases her new CD, *Songs From A Goatpath*, recorded with the same musicians as on her infamous *Testimony*. Ferron fans will be out in droves for this show; but there's still room for the uninitiated. Ferron is a remarkable singing poet, truth-teller and humorist. Your heart and spirit will not go untouched. Tickets \$17 advance/\$20 door.

**SUNDAY, FEB. 27TH**  
Got Kids? Family Dance at the Montague Grange: child-friendly contradancing at 4 p.m. The Montague Grange continues this wonderful family series, now in its fourth year. The series goes through April and features family-style contra dancing, paced for little feet (no age restriction) or adult beginners, in a beautiful, restored historic building, across from the Town Commons in picturesque Montague Center. Each dance is on the last Sunday of the month, from 4:00 to 5:30 p.m., priced a sliding \$5-\$10.

Northfield Mount Hermon School presents an afternoon of choral music. Continuing this year's jazz theme at NMH, the Concert Choir will perform selections from the Broadway musicals *Porgy & Bess* and *Ragtime*. The Select Women's Ensemble will perform Pergolesi's *Stabat Mater*, a dramatic poem based on the mother Mary's observance of her son Jesus being crucified. Featured will be a guest string quartet from the NMH Chamber Orchestra. The NMH Singers will also perform. The concert will take place at the Mount Hermon Chapel, and begins at 3 p.m. Admission is free. For more information, please call (413) 498-3281.

All That Jazz (and a dash of Blues) The second in First Parish of Northfield's free concert series, features Jerry Noble on piano with Bob Sparkman, clarinet, doing what they do and love best ~ making music, and the very best kind of music it is; perfect for brightening the February gloom. They will warm your hearts, move your soul, and agitate your hands and feet, they can't be anything but on the up beat. Performance Sunday, February 27th at 3 p.m. in the sanctuary of First Parish, Unitarian, 72 Main Street. Meet the musicians at post-concert reception. Donations welcome.

For directions call 498-5957.

**WEDNESDAY, MARCH 2nd**  
There will be a meeting of the Montague Grange at 7 p.m. at the Montague Bookmill, where a video of "The Mill at Montague: an Oral History" will be shown.

In Celebration of International Women's Day: Open house at NELCWIT. 4:30-6 p.m. at 10 Park Street, Greenfield. Learn about NELCWIT's programs and services from staff and board members. The open house will feature an exhibit of color photographs of indigenous women from Asia and Latin America by David Kestenbaum of Montague, and international hors d'oeuvres will be served. Call Diana Bella at (413) 772-0871 ext. 11 for more information.

**FRIDAY, MARCH 4TH**  
Cabin Fever Tour sponsored by CISA. This self-guided tour will give you a glimpse behind the scenes at local farms during late winter and a chance to taste, see and smell spring long before the snow melts away. See what's growing now, what's being harvested, and how your local farmers are preparing for spring. There will be dairy farms making fresh milk, sugarhouses boiling down sweet syrup, emu chicks hatching, greenhouses full of blooming flowers and more. Be sure to visit the marketplace featuring goods from Local Hero farms, restaurants and retailers. 9:00 a.m. to 4:00 p.m. Snow date: March 5. 413-665-7100.

**SATURDAY, MARCH 5TH**  
Cybertracking in the Montague Plains: Hands on Science Presented by Northfield Mountain Recreation Area. Cybertracking is a computer program that allows outdoors person to use a GPS receiver and a handheld computer to map data for local conservation efforts. Presenter is Walker Korby who is interesting in tracking the public use of land, whether for berry picking or illegal dumping, so as to better inform future conserva-

tion efforts. 1:00 to 4:00 p.m. For ages 10 and older. Pre-registration required 800-859-2960.

**SUNDAY, MARCH 6TH**  
Sarah Pirtle & Lui Collins  
**OUTBREAK OF PEACE**  
7 p.m. at Shelburne Falls Yoga  
Inspired by Sarah Pirtle's award-winning book, *Outbreak of Peace*, Lui Collins and Sarah Pirtle will share an evening of inspiring songs, poems and stories about peace-making... encouraging us all to explore how we each contribute in our own unique way to promoting peace in our community and on our planet. \$12 advance / \$15 door / under 18 half price. This intimate venue is mostly a sit-on-the-floor place with pillow and bolsters. There are about 25 chairs available for those who need them. Feel free to bring a back-jack or your own favorite pillow!

**ONGOING EVENTS**  
**Now through April 1st**  
Robert Farber Photography exhibit at PureLight Gallery in Turners Falls. Robert has published nine coffee table books, the first, "By The Sea", was brought into Doubleday publishing by Jacqueline Kennedy Onassis. His latest books are "American Mood" and the revised soft cover publication "Natural Beauty Farber Nudes". For more information on Robert, please visit his web site, [www.robertfarber.com](http://www.robertfarber.com). PureLight Gallery, 37 Third St., Turners Falls. For more info or directions call (508) 885-6048, visit [www.purelightgallery.com](http://www.purelightgallery.com), or email [jan@purelightgallery.com](mailto:jan@purelightgallery.com). Gallery Hours: Fri. 4 - 6 p.m., Saturday 10 a.m. - 12 p.m. or by appointment.

**UPCOMING EVENTS**  
Jerry's Girls: eight Broadway shows in one, celebrating the songs of veteran composer Jerry Herman, will be presented Saturday, March 12th, 8 p.m. at the First Congregational Church of Ashfield. Take a trip down a melodic memory lane with three dozen showstoppers, ballads and

Mabel Zobel  
By  
Sandra Facto

Heaven is a broken scale.

good-time tunes from *Hello Dolly*, *Mame*, *La Cage Aux Folles* and five more shows. This fun filled evening is presented by the (former) St. Martha Players, directed by Paula Cortis with musical direction by our own church organist, Amy Crawford. This almost all female cast (well, you'll see) will show off the heritage of Jerry Herman's hit shows and music. It's a perfect show to celebrate the strong women of Herman's legacy, Jerry's Girls. Suggested donation: \$10; Refreshments available. All proceeds to benefit the church and its mission.

Mohawk Trail Regional High School presents its 28th annual All-School Musical, *Seussical the Musical*. March 11th and 12th, 8 p.m. March 13th, at 2 p.m. For reservations call (413) 625-8371. *Seussical the Musical* will also be performed at the Shea Theater, 71 Ave. March 19th, 8 p.m. March 20th, at 2 p.m. Adults - \$10.00, Under 18 & Over 62 - \$9.00, reservations 413-863-2281.

Sunday at 7 All films free donations accepted

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3. BOOGEYMAN	PG13
DAILY 600 900	
3. POOH'S HEFFALUMP MOVIE	G
MATINEE SAT,SUN,&WED 1200 200 400	
4. ARE WE THERE YET	PG
DAILY 615 915	
MATINEE SAT,SUN,&WED 1215 315	
5. HITCH	PG13
DAILY 615 915	
MATINEE SAT,SUN,&WED 1215 315	
6. CONSTANTINE	R in DTS sound
DAILY 630 930	
MATINEE SAT,SUN,&WED 1230 330	
7. CURSED	PG13 in DTS sound
DAILY 630 930	
MATINEE SAT,SUN,&WED 1230 330	

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Directed by Trevor Davis

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# Visiting "Hoodies"

BY FRAN HEMOND

**MONTAGUE CENTER** - Late February brought seven 'hoodies' to the Connecticut River off Unity Park. They are a real favorite, elegant, a little more compact than their cousin mergansers; they were bouncing in the waves of a cold breezy afternoon. Even the gulls had sought sheltered retreats out of the wind. The triangular white hood on the black head, the white breast and rusty tummy give them real distinction. The girls sport a somber gray coat, but the tufty reddish feathers on their heads and their handsome company give them away as 'hoodies'. The fairly long sharp merganser bills are fine fish catchers.

Fairly frequently on the river is the Common Goldeneye, the little diving duck that's a flash of white. Their green heads look black and the white spot on their face that gives them their name is not readily apparent from a distance. Spot them on the canal near the Patch where they come in close to the shore. Here, the iridescent green head and white 'eye' can be easily seen as you spot them popping up from their last dive. The girls are gray with a brown head, not as spectacular, but equally agile.

The background flocks of mallards give voice to the waterways. Sometimes they

squawk and slip into the water in an annoyed manner when a person stops to view the canal. In the water they dip for their food, although one sunny noon a couple of big drakes were shallow diving and very successfully fishing. A big gull

l o o k e d  
l i k e

g o o d

eating and tried to play robber. So the mallard just dove under again and the gull could not follow.

That lunchtime, most of the Canada Geese were sleeping in the sun. Not so a couple of days later when winter had returned. They were active and noisy, the reason not apparent other than the wintry blast. Much of the canal had been freed of ice, but the few ice floes sailing downstream in the wind were occupied by big black-backed gulls.

The common gulls are ring-billed or herring gulls; the former a little smaller, supposedly a more accomplished flier. If he has a black ring around his bill, he is living up to his name. The great black-backed gull is also

easily identified, but the young brownish gulls have to wait for the white, gray and black pattern that gives their parents distinction. It's worthwhile to check a group of gulls for a stranger, a new species not generally in the area.

Gulls seem at their best soaring in a bright blue sky, with the sun shining through their white wings, their abandon in escaping the practicalities of food and shelter to be envied.

The swans on the river seem imperial at a distance. In their quest for lunch they may tip up and paddle forcefully to get at tasty grass growing low, trading the dignity that gives them charm for food. And again the young birds are without the beauty of their

e l d e r s .

a sunny, calm, day. Everybody was out, the breakfast club in force: juncos, cardinals, titmouse, chickadee and all, the black ducks and mallards at their favorite spots among the beaver-cut branches that make good perches near the shore.

The Common Mergansers are cousins of Cupcake, the hooded merganser who last year about this time made her first appearance at North Pond.

Subsequently she brought a handsome drake, and their repeated appearances were a delight.

Cupcake nested elsewhere, but one day late in the spring, she came for a brief afternoon visit, time out from babysitting. Perhaps she was with the 'hoodies' on the river and will stop in later. This day the two merganser drakes, slim and well-tailored, floating low in the water, sported their iridescent green heads and efficient-looking long red merganser bills while the little gray duck with her tufty rust-colored head surveyed the situation.

Woods and water and open fields are the great offering of our area, and the little creatures' presence can be a happy extension of our life.



T h e y  
a r e  
u g l y  
d u c k l i n g s .

Despite the good late winter viewing on the river and canal, my prize was an hour visit of three Common Mergansers to the North Pond. The open water was bordered by snowy ice. The mergansers walked around in the snow, tested the water, found shelter on the bank. It was

## OFF THE BEATEN TRACK

### Suppose They Lit a Bonfire and Nobody Came?

BY FLORE

**MONTAGUE CENTER** - Saturday evening, at the bonfire, I was a little dismayed and disappointed not to meet the crowd that poured into the streets of Montague Center last Halloween.

Where had the feeling of village merrymaking gone?

Lo, the princesses of Wales and the princes of Scotland had vanished! The feeling of entering fairy land, where had it gone?

Gone perhaps, underneath the shivering laps of frozen landscapes?

Who knows?

But, all bundled up, we were

the stoic ones participating: six adults, four children and one dog!

What fun we had, seeing the live fire twirling and licking with its high flames the vault of skies!

The ground was totally hard frozen.

The children bodysliding on the ice - a grand sight!

So were the broad Percheron horses, taking us for a night hayride. Their cheerful harnessed bells could be heard chanting, miles away, as they passed through the silent village streets.

Granted, due to the last storm, explained one of the fire-

men, we had to postpone the event. That could be the reason for such poor attendance. Only the *Montague Reporter* mentioned the festivities, twice. But the others, like the radio, television, local newspapers, simply forgot about us.

To reassure him, we told him the tradition in Italy was to bury winter with a bonfire, just like the one they had built so beautifully here.

Had it not been for those present, who came to rejoice, we might have had the misfortunate to witness the longest winter ever known!

Close escape! But, where were you?

## Bird Watching at Great Falls Discovery Center

BY MARCY MARCHELLO

**GREAT FALLS** - On March 5, 2005, from 1-3pm an introductory bird watching program will be offered at the Great Falls Discovery Center on Avenue A in Turners Falls. The program will meet in the parking lot and caravan to local spots to view waterfowl, gulls, and other local birds in nearby locations along the Connecticut River. The pace will be gentle to accommodate people of all ages and abilities, including families, seniors, and people with disabilities. Binoculars and scopes will be available for people to use.

The program is offered through a federal grant called

Project INSPIRE, in which the Massachusetts Department of Conservation and Recreation has teamed up with regional partners including All Out Adventures of Easthampton, the Hampshire Bird Club, and the U.S. Fish & Wildlife Service to promote and provide inclusive recreation programs. People with disabilities are especially invited to attend. For further information and to pre-register, please call 413-545-5758 or 413-527-8980. The program is limited to the first 12 people who sign up and will be offered monthly through May.

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