



TOM SIMONS

Remembered
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ART BUILDS COMMUNITY

in Turners
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THE VOICE OF THE VILLAGES

FEBRUARY 26, 2009

Kicked to the Curb?

Montague's Recycling Program May Fall to Budget Crunch



DPW employee Robert Brownlee empties a recycling bin on Turners Falls Road on Wednesday morning.

BY DAVID DETMOLD – For many years, Montague has provided curbside recycling pickup for its residents. For three days a week, two recycling trucks travel the highways and byways of town – all 108 miles of them – picking up five tons of paper and cardboard and three tons of bottles and cans a day. On rainy days, the weight of the paper and cardboard increases. With

the highway department perpetually short staffed, on snow days, recycling routes are cancelled and drivers pulled off to handle the priority plowing and sanding, doubling the amount of recycling to be picked up the following week.

It is backbreaking work for the drivers, and, with all the stopping and starting, hard on the recycling vehicles as well.

Now, with budgets also at the breaking point, the town is looking seriously at privatizing, reducing or eliminating curbside recycling altogether.

Montague and Greenfield are the only two municipalities in Franklin County that provide their residents with a curbside recycling program in addition to a recycling center at the town transfer station. With the intro-

duction of pay-per-throw trash 17 years ago, the percentage of trash Montague residents recycle has steadily increased, to its recent level of 38%, above the 35% average for the 19 towns in the 21-town Franklin County Solid Waste Management District that provide some form of recycling for their residents, according to FCSWMD director Jan Ameen.

The dollar amount the Springfield Materials Recycling Facility (MRF) pays for recyclable seems to go through cycles of its own, and just now, with the economy in the gutter, reimbursements are at a low of \$16 a ton. Ameen said she has seen the rate go as high as \$42 a ton, and has seen the cycle climb and crash, climb and crash before. The FCSWMD receives semi-annual checks from the Springfield MRF based on tonnage and current market rates, and maintains those funds in escrow for the towns to draw on for their recycling programs: for truck repairs, lease payments on the vehicles, and recycling bins for households in Montague's case. Montague town accountant

Carolyn Olsen said the town has drawn \$20,000 annually from this program for the last three years, up from \$5,757 ten years ago.

Ameen warned that at current market rates and current tonnage, the town's reimbursement funds may drop to \$16,000 this year, down from \$30,000 when the market was at its peak just a year ago.

Even in the current downturn, FCSWMD towns' recycling reimbursements are protected by contract, and the Springfield MRF, unlike many recycling facilities nationwide, "is still moving materials."

And so is the town of Montague, at least until town meeting has a chance to weigh in on whatever the selectboard and finance committee recommends regarding the curbside recycling program.

The selectboard, with the chair of the finance committee John Hanold present in the audience, held a public hearing on Monday about recycling, where a number of options were considered. At first, Hanold and the board seemed to be open to

see RECYCLING pg10

Montague Presents Budget Estimate to G-M School Committee

BY ELLEN BLANCHETTE –

Town officials from Montague presented their budget projections for FY '10 to the school committee on Tuesday night, February 24th. Based on the town's financial situation as it stands now, Montague officials estimate they can afford to add only an \$11,000 (.1%) increase over last year's \$7,190,683 assessment for the regional schools.

Jeff Singleton of the Montague finance committee advanced the position that the school committee should use the amount the towns can afford as the basis for their '10 assessment figure.

Interim superintendent

Ken Rocke stated this is not how the schools develop a budget. "You start with the budget you need, not an assessment," he stated, adding that "It's in the policy, in the statutes." A needs-based budget should be the beginning of the negotiations with the towns, he said.

Chair Mary Kociela promised town officials there would be multiple opportunities to meet on the budget in the months to come.

Tomahawk Chop

Kociela stated the school committee's goal regarding the issue of the moratorium of the high school band's use of

see BUDGET pg 7

Palestinian-Israeli Conflict Flares Up in Turners Falls

BY DAVID DETMOLD –

Was it a documentary, or a propaganda film? And whose land is it anyway? *Gaza Strip*, a 2001 film by James Longley, was shown at the Brick House on Tuesday night, to an audience of Jews and Palestinians and unaffiliated others from around the Valley.

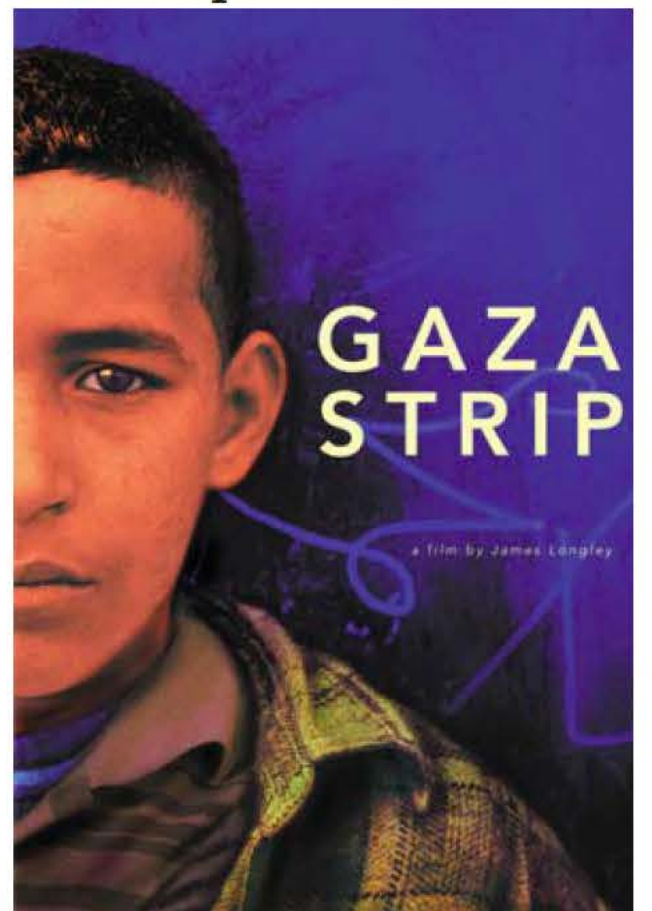
One Palestinian woman in the audience challenged a man named Yoel Caplan, who lives half the year in Jerusalem - or Al Quds - as to whether he was even accurate in describing the conflict depicted in the film as one between Jews and Palestinians.

"You mean the conflict between Israelis and Palestinians," she corrected him. "There are plenty of Jews in America and

elsewhere who are against what the Israelis are doing. The Palestinians are Christians, Muslims and Jews. It's not a question of one religion against another," she insisted.

But Caplan maintained the struggle was in large part based on religion, and pointed to the charter of Hamas, the organization now governing in Gaza, calling for the destruction of Israel to somehow prove that point. He recalled the shooting of yeshiva students at Mercaz HaRav nearly one year ago by an Arab man from East Jerusalem armed with an AK-47 to remind the audience that not all violent acts in this land have been directed by

see CONFLICT pg 11



PETS OF THE WEEK

Petite Beauty



Layla

My name is Layla, and I'm a two-year-old mini pinscher mix in need of a good home. I'm a tiny little girl at just 13 pounds. I have tons of energy. I am a dog for adults, no kids under 12. I'd be best as an only pet; I love to chase cats. I am a Dixie Dog. For more information on adopting me please contact the Dakin Pioneer Valley Humane Society at 413-548-9898 or via email: leverett@dpvhs.org.

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MONTAGUE LIBRARY NEWS

Story Hour

LINDA HICKMAN
TURNERS FALLS – Story Hour is held at the Carnegie Library on Wednesday mornings at 10:15 a.m. Young children and their parents or care givers are invited to join Ruth O'Mara for stories, crafts, music, and activities. This is a

great time to meet new people, listen to stories, chat and play. The programs are designed for children under five, but all children are welcome. Refreshments include coffee and juice.
For more information, call 863-3214.

Beading Party

LINDA HICKMAN
TURNERS FALLS – There will be a Beading Party at the Carnegie Library on Saturday, March 7th, from 10:30 - 11:30 a.m. Children of all ages are

invited to make several beaded projects with Ruth O'Mara. All of the materials will be provided.
For more information, call the Carnegie Library, 863-3214.

Music and Movement

BY LINDA HICKMAN
MILLERS FALLS – The weekly Music and Movement series with Tom Carroll and Laurie Davidson will be held at the Millers Falls Library on Thursday mornings at 10 a.m. from March to June. Young children of all ages

and their families or care-givers are invited to the free programs. Registration is not required. The series is currently funded by donations and the Friends of the Montague Public Libraries. For more information, please call 863-3214.

Montague Clean Energy Campaign Says, 'You Can Be a Green Champion'

BY TIM VAN EGMOND - The Montague Clean Energy Campaign, a project of the Montague Grange, is spreading the word about a great opportunity for our town, our state and our environment. By making a tax-deductible contribution to the New England Wind Fund, town residents can make matching funds available to the town of Montague dedicated to clean energy projects and programs.

online in this spring.

When you join the New England Wind Fund, the Massachusetts Technology Collaborative will match your donation twice: 100% to help fund a renewable energy project in our town, and 100% matched again for clean energy projects to benefit low-income residents in the Common-wealth.



People can join the New England Wind Fund in one of two ways: through a \$5 per month (or more) monthly ongoing donation, or through a one-time donation of \$100. All contributions are 100% tax deductible.

The New England Wind Fund is a product of the Mass Energy Consumers' Alliance, which promotes the development of zero-emission wind energy for our regional power supply. For example, the New England Wind Fund is supporting two 1.5 megawatt wind turbines in Princeton, MA that will go

Shutesbury and Northampton put solar panels on their schools through their versions of the Campaign. Wendell put solar panels on their library. Montague



New bar on Will's Hill? No, just an interesting collection of vintage signs from some notable Turners establishments, on the backside of a barn.

Turners Consulting Collective Awarded Bio-Diesel Grant

An Agricultural Innovation Center grant was awarded to Field to Table, a non-profit agricultural and small business consulting collective in Turners Falls, on behalf of three founding family farms. These Western Massachusetts farmers will be growing and harvesting oil seed

crops using equipment purchased with the assistance of this grant that will enable the farmer-members to produce their own on-farm biodiesel fuel at significant savings over current retail fuel prices.

Meet these farmers, their supporters and officials who work to make a stable food future possible on Friday, March 6th, 10:30 to 11:30 a.m. at the Great Falls Discovery Center, Avenue A in Turners Falls. For more information contact Christine Serrentino, Field to Table, Inc., 177 Avenue A, Turners Falls, or call 413-665-5518, or email: Christine@field-totable.net.

Here's how to sign up:

- Call CET (Center for Ecological Technology) at 413-586-7350 x 25 or
- Go online at www.GreenStart.net

When Montague residents pledge to join, they can enter their names in a raffle for goods and services donated by local businesses. For a list of raffle items and a Raffle Ticket you can fill out and send in, go to Montaguema.net and click on the Montague Clean Energy Campaign logo on the right.

The Montague Clean Energy Campaign is supported by the Montague selectboard and the Montague Energy Committee.

For more information, call Tim Van Egmond at 367-9304.

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SENIOR CENTER ACTIVITIES – March 2nd to 6th

GILL/MONTAGUE Senior Center, 62 Fifth Street, Turners Falls, is open Monday through Friday from 9:00 A.M. to 2:00 P.M. for activities and congregate meals. Council on Aging Director is Bunny Caldwell. For information or to make reservations, call 863-9357. Meal reservations need to be made a day in advance by 11:00 A.M. Messages can be left on our machine when the center is not open. Mealsite Manager is Chris Richer. The Center offers a hot noon meal weekdays to any senior. A reservation is necessary and transportation can be provided.
Monday, 2nd
10:00 a.m. Senior Aerobics
11:00 a.m. Easy Aerobics
12:30 p.m. Council On Aging Board Meeting
Tuesday, 3rd
10:00 a.m. Brown Bag

1:00 p.m. Canasta
Wednesday, 4th
10:00 a.m. Senior Aerobics
12:45 p.m. Bingo
Thursday, 5th
1:00 p.m. Pitch
Friday, 6th
10:00 a.m. Senior Aerobics
11:00 a.m. Easy Aerobics
ERVING Senior Center, 18 Pleasant St., Ervingside (Old Center School, 1st Floor), is open Monday through Friday from 9 a.m. to 2 p.m. for activities and congregate meals. For info and reservations call Polly Kiely, Senior Center director at 413-423-3308. Lunch daily at 11:30 a.m. with reservations 24 hours in advance. Transportation can be provided for meals, Thursday shopping, or medical necessity: call Polly Kiely at 413-423-3308.
Monday, 2nd
9 a.m. Exercise

12 Noon Pitch
Tuesday, 3rd
9 a.m. Aerobics
12:30 p.m. Painting
Wednesday, 4th
8:45 a.m. Line Dancing
12 noon Bingo
Thursday, 5th
9:00 a.m. Aerobics.
Friday, 6th
9 a.m. Bowling
11:30 a.m. Lunch – Pizza
WENDELL Senior Center is located at 2 Lockes Village Road. Kathy Swaim is the director: (978) 544-2020. Call for hours and upcoming programs.
Monday March 2nd at 7 p.m. Letter writing party to Vermont newspapers and Vermont state legislators calling for a shut-down of the Vermont Yankee Nuclear Power Plant. For more information contact Laurel Facey at 978-544-7178.

- Gerald Sykes -
Running for Precinct 5 Town Meeting Member (Downtown Turners Falls)
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Tom Simons, Former State Rep, Dies at 67

BY DAVID DETMOLD

MONTAGUE CENTER – Tom Simons died on Monday, February 16th, just two weeks after the sign came down from the first-floor window of the former medical office building at 77 Fourth Street in Turners Falls, where he and his brother Gerry maintained the Simons & Simons law office for the last dozen years. He practiced law in Turners, at one location or another, since 1968, with a brief stint off from 1979 to 1983 to serve as the first fulltime District Attorney for Franklin and Hampshire County. He handled estates and real estate transactions, and didn't go in much for criminal cases after his time as D.A. He'd seen what that racket was like from the other side of the courtroom.

Tom Simons was always courteous, affable to friends and strangers alike, a man who combined the finer qualities of an earlier generation with his own warmth and wit. He served the town of Montague and the Third Franklin District as our representative in the General Court of the Commonwealth from 1971 to 1979, pursuing and achieving a measure of success at legislative goals that still resonate with constituents in these parts. He was one of the first ten signers of a bill to establish a state ethics commission, a measure enacted in 1978. In 1974, he worked closely with the House leadership in passing the first major reform of campaign finance laws in Massachusetts since the 1940s. He also worked on the passage of the open meeting law.

"It was an interesting time," said Simon's wife Sharon Kennaugh, who met her husband as a newly hired research director to the committee on election laws, where freshman legislators – particularly freshman Republican legislators like Simons – were commonly assigned to toil in obscurity in an institution that has always favored the status quo. But with the Watergate scandal breathing new life into good-government groups like Common Cause, reforms like the reporting of campaign contributions and the formation of committees to inquire into the ethics of legislators suddenly found unusual majorities in statehouses across the land.

"The Republican leadership in the House was quite liberal," Kennaugh recalled, "and the party out of power was looking for change."

Did Simons look back on the legislative reforms he sponsored with pride, in an era when House Speakers still can't seem to keep

their public and private business separate? "The legislative process is one of compromise," said Kennaugh. "Tom felt they had come up with the best package they could get passed at the time. He did not think the job was done."

By 1978, Simons had worked his way up to Minority Whip, and with Frank Hatch, the Republican floor leader, tossing his hat in the ring for governor, he had to decide whether he wanted to move further up. He was tired of the commute to Boston, and as a member of the leadership he would be required to be there every day the House was in formal session. Plus, he would be expected to travel the state to recruit new candidates. Aware of recently passed legislation requiring a move from part-time to full-time district attorneys (an attempt at eliminating conflicts of interest: before 1978, D.A.s in the hinterlands generally worked part time for the state, while maintaining their private practices) Simons explored the possibility of running for that post in Franklin and Hampshire County.

"John Callahan was the D.A. at the time, from South Hadley," said Kennaugh. "He did not want to give up his law practice, and decided not to run." Callahan, a Democrat, encouraged Simons, though he was a Republican, to run for the position.

In those days, Franklin County was narrowly Republican by registration, while Hampshire County was solidly Democratic. Simons beat two Republicans in the primary, and went on to defeat the relatively unknown Jonathan Souweine, an Amherst Dem who had survived a four-way primary against three Northampton-area contenders, in the general election.

He served a four-year term, during which he strengthened the victim-witness protection program, among other accomplishments, before being bested in 1982, in the last contested race for Northwestern District Attorney, by one of the Democrats who had lost the primary battle to Souweine in 1978: Mike Ryan. (Since then, the Northwestern D.A.'s post has gone by appointment, first to Judd Carhart, and then to Elizabeth Scheibel, neither of whom faced reelection opponents.)

Almost as soon as he took office, Simons was confronted with a growing protest surrounding the unexplained death of a black UMass student, Sita Rampersad, who, according to contemporary news accounts, died at the former Motel 6 in Whately in September of 1978, following a drug-fueled party

attended by a number of prominent Northampton citizens, who failed to get medical attention for her.

Though the case originated on Callahan's watch, it became a cause célèbre among campus activists, and was featured prominently in the pages of the Valley Advocate, which took Simons to task for failing to prosecute any of those who had been in Rampersad's company at the time of her death.

"It was clear to Tom that the Advocate was the liberal alternative in the Valley, and here you had – my God – a Republican as the District Attorney, with no acknowledgment of why it would be in his interest to cover up anything for these men, who were all Democrats," said Kennaugh. "Legally, there was nothing you could do without a charge that would stand up in a court of law." Though an inquest was held, the medical examiner had wavered on the cause of death, changing his finding after the fact. He was considered to be unreliable due to age or infirmity. "The examiner would never have withstood cross examination," said Kennaugh.

Simons handled the criticism with stoicism. "He felt he did the right thing. This goes with the territory. You get criticized when you make tough decisions," Kennaugh said.

Bill St. James, who Simons hired as his first assistant D.A. in 1979, said, "He was a good leader in that office. He was fair with defendants; he was fair on recommendations on sentencing, but he wasn't a pushover."

St. James said under Simons' watch he prosecuted and won one of the lengthiest criminal cases in the history of the Commonwealth, gaining a verdict of first-degree murder against Emilian Paszko in the death of an Easthampton pharmacist, Leslie Zive, shot in the back of the head for drugs in his pharmacy.

St. James recalled his boss as, "Very patient. The Valley Advocate was after him constantly. If it weighed on him, he didn't communicate it to me. A lot of that was very unfair."

After returning to private life and private practice, Simons continued to follow politics closely. "He was a shrewd observer, always speculating on what the back story was," said Kennaugh. "He knew a lot of the players," and he followed their careers from the state house to Washington D.C., in many cases.

Simons read newspapers voraciously, along with mystery novels, in his later years. He was a frequent



Photo courtesy of Sharon Kennaugh

Tom Simons

patron of the Montague Center Library, especially in the last decade, as he successfully managed living with Waldenstrom's Macroglobulinemia, a rare "indolent" cancer that affects the blood. "He read the New York Times, the Boston Globe, the Recorder, and the Montague Reporter," said his brother, Gerry.

Tom and Gerry and their older sister, Drucille, were the children of E. Gale Simons, a pharmacist from an old New England family, who married Margaret Conway, Tom and Gerry's mother, after his first wife died in childbirth. Margaret Conway grew up with 10 siblings in the Keith Apartments. Her father, also named Thomas, an Irish immigrant, worked at the Keith Paper Mill.

Tom and his brother and sister were raised in Montague City and attended grammar school there. Tom graduated from Turners Falls High School, where he excelled at tennis, before attending college at UMass. He majored in government there, graduating in 1963, and gained his law degree at St. John's University in Brooklyn in 1967.

An early influence was his tennis coach at TFHS, Chris Garrahan, who was also his high school government teacher.

Interestingly, Simons began his political career as a Democrat, in fact a member of the 'Young Democrats,' in Franklin County, when Jack Kennedy was running for president, and his 29-year old kid brother was being groomed for his Senate seat.

"One of the best speeches he ever gave was for Ted Kennedy," his brother recalled. "In 1962, when he ran for Senate, he made two appearances in the area. One was at the high school, here in town, probably in May; we were quite impressed with Ted. Then in the fall, during the election campaign, Ted came to Greenfield. My brother was

one of the speakers, representing the Young Democrats. He got up on the back of Warren Ball's sound truck, parked in front of Court Square. There was a good-sized crowd there. He talked about, 'Ted Kennedy is not the first person to run for Senate at the age of 29.' Ted came walking down in the entourage, past the Garden Theater, onto Court Square. They were playing his campaign theme, 'Hey, Look Me Over: If you want to make sure your vote is heard beyond election day, vote for Kennedy, yeah, yeah, yeah.' Later, at the reception, Ted came up and thanked Tom by name, 'That was a great speech you made.'"

Simons switched parties after Montague's representative, Walt Kostanski, urged him to run for his seat, on his retirement in 1970. "Walter said, 'I'll support you,' and he did," Gerry Simons recalled. "Tom beat Fran Pleasant, a popular local insurance man, a Democrat. I think it came as a surprise."

Kennaugh recalled her husband talking to his former Republican House leader, Frank Hatch, at Hatch's 80th birthday party a few years ago. He told him he had become a Democrat again. "I have too," said Hatch.

Simons kept a positive attitude and an active work schedule throughout his sometimes difficult struggle with lymphoma. He was a devoted father to his and Kennaugh's two daughters, Courtney, 18, and Kara, 15, driving them to school, attending their soccer games and horse shows.

Tom Simons died of a massive stroke the Monday before last.

"He never complained. That's why the shock was so great for all of us," said Kennaugh. "He wasn't someone to see the limitations. He just saw the possibilities."

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Reform and Revenue

BY JEFF SINGLETON

MONTAGUE – Most of us in Franklin County have tried to approach the concept of school regionalization with an open mind. There are constant meetings, "stakeholder" surveys, RFPs, forums, article after article in the newspapers, etc. Of course, this section of the state being a democracy, there are those who disagree with the concept, those who support it, and those who are not sure what they think. But we are certainly engaged in the process and trying to get some proposals on the table.

Thus many of us are a bit put off by the threatening tone occasionally adopted by state officials. Despite our efforts, we are constantly warned that unless we regionalize, the state will do it for us. Greenfield is threatened with the withholding of pothole money unless the city attends a meeting with Montague. But of course Greenfield had already agreed to attend a meeting with Montague.

The conventional wisdom holds that this was an unfortunate mistake by an official who did not understand western Massachusetts. I strongly disagree. To me it is part of a pattern. The pattern is based on the assumption that consolidation is unnatural and we will not consider it unless threatened. This myth prevails despite the fact that we have been consolidating school districts in Franklin County for 150 years. (Montague once had a number of school districts in a town with a much smaller population than at present.)

One consequence of this myth is that the state appears not as a body elected and funded by the citizens but rather as a kind of bully: "If you don't do it, we will do it for you." But I thought this was a democracy. I thought "we" (the state) represented "us" (the citizens).

To me, the new mantra at the statehouse, "reform before revenue," is also part of that pattern. This may be an effort to describe a political reality we should take seriously. Yet it essentially says the state will continue to throw school districts in this region into fiscal chaos until we do something. To me, this seems very irresponsible. Our teachers and students should not be held hostage to a debate over administrative reorganization.

And exactly what is the "something" we are supposed to do? One minute we are told that there must be fewer school districts in the state, which means consolidation. The next minute we are told that it does not have to be consolidation but might be collaborations for specific programs (e.g. special education transportation). Well, there is a pretty big difference. Where are the goal posts? Which hoops are we supposed to jump through before our schools are financially stabilized?

It is also hard to understand how the state can embark on a major policy without any research to show that it will make a difference. All we hear are comparisons with Maryland and similar impressionistic evidence. Is this really how state government makes policy? Apparently state officials are dead certain that regionalization is the right thing to do, but residents of Franklin County are supposed to come up with the evidence.

We need reform and revenue. Local officials should continue to consider and implement options to produce greater efficiency. If the state goal is consolidation, let's be clear about that. Let's get specific models on the table, cost them out, and consider the educational benefits. We also need a better mechanism for implementation. I am afraid if

see REFORM pg 6



NINA ROSSI ILLUSTRATION

LETTERS TO THE EDITOR

Slate Library: the Heart of Gill

I was disheartened to read in a recent issue of *the Reporter*, (MR VII #19) that the Gill police chief suggested closing the Slate library in the town of Gill. His words were, "How many people really use it?"

I would like to reply to Chief Hastings that over 700 people are currently listed on our patron roles, and that the library has over 3,000 items of books and audiovisual materials that can be checked out. During the summer, Slate library hosts a very successful reading program for children and throughout the year we offer a variety of educational and cultural programs.

I think it is important to remember that times are hard for everyone, and it is inappropriate to pit

department against department. Moreover, as times become more difficult fiscally, a library becomes even more of a necessity. We offer free computer access for the community, books and educational research materials for families unable to afford them, and wireless internet for the unemployed who need access to technology as they search for new employment.

I would like to invite Chief Hastings to actually visit the library, and to perhaps even check out a book. He may find the Slate Library is a vibrant, thriving entity and in some town members' opinions, "the heart of Gill."

– Jocelyn Castro-Santos
Slate Library Director, Gill

Montague Begins Process of Abandoning Williams Way to Make Room for New Sk8 Park

BY DAVID DETMOLD

TURNERS FALLS – On Monday night, the selectboard voted unanimously to begin the process of abandoning Williams Way, a block long bypass that shunts traffic from the end of 2nd Street over to 1st Street at Unity Park. The took the action in order to create additional room at Unity Park to locate a new, concrete skate park there, as part of the planned renovation of Unity Park.

Building inspector David Jensen said, to the best of his

recollection, Williams Way was created sometime in the 1980s, when the end of 2nd Street was abandoned to enlarge Unity Park. At that time, Jensen said, First Street, which formerly ended at L Street, was extended to run continuously along the river to connect with Ferry Street by the old Red Bridge abutments, and Williams Way was created to allow traffic to cut over from Second Street to First Street, and continue east from there.

From the selectboard, consideration of the abandonment of Williams Way goes next to the planning board, and would require town meeting approval before it is finalized. Closing off Williams Way would make 2nd Street a dead end, although parks and recreation director

Jon Dobosz objected, humorously, when highway superintendent Tom Bergeron made that statement of fact.

"It won't be a dead end. It'll bring you to the Park!" Dobosz said.

Jensen said the town owns a strip of land approximately 250 feet long by 50 feet wide, between Williams Way and the former Williams Garage. That land is paved now, and has been used both as overflow parking for events at Unity Park and sometimes as parking for tenants of the garage, owned by Tim deChristopher. Jensen believes the town's title to the land is not in question. "It was the original border of the park."

By voting to abandon Williams Way, the selectboard is contemplating combining the land next to Williams Garage with the road itself to add nearly 20,000 square feet to the current layout of Unity Park, an area more than big enough to locate a new skate park. The current skate park is 6,000 square feet in area.

The ten-year lease on the see SK8 PARK pg 13

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EYE ON TOWN FINANCES

Difficult Choices In Town Budgeting

BY JOHN HANOLD

MONTAGUE – The process of balancing a budget for Montague in Fiscal 2010 is now in the middle stages - the selectboard and finance committee are reviewing the assumptions on expected revenue, and considering how to achieve a balanced budget in a recessionary environment.

One of the painful decisions we will deal with is a product of Montague's past accomplishments: we have provided, over the years, an array of services not offered by many other towns, services we have come to consider the foundation of our quality of life. We sponsor a senior center for Gill and Montague

residents, we offer curbside pickup of both trash and recyclables, we plow an unusually broad network of roads, we have a flourishing parks and recreation program at multiple sites, and we have a central library plus two branches. I suspect no comparable town in Franklin or Hampshire Counties provides this level of service to its residents.

At the 2008 annual town meeting and its continuations, our representatives discussed whether to scale back some of these services. Speakers asked, essentially, "If Program A is critical to the life and values of the town, what Program B should be reduced, in order to pay for A

within our means?"

Some cuts were made, some programs saved – at least for another year – and some reserves were expended to close the budget gap. But the reality of a recession presents a time to decide what services, for the next several years, are most important to preserve while we prepare for better times.

Available funds from beyond our town continue to dwindle, and reliance on possible stimulus money from state or federal sources is risky for two reasons: first, a budget based on funding that may not recur simply postpones the difficult decisions for another year (a technique with which we are familiar, to our

discomfort), and second, if the supplemental funds aren't granted in time or are less than predicted, we will arrive at May's town meeting with a budget balanced in haste rather than with forethought.

With this uncertainty in mind, the selectboard and finance committee are discussing what speculative state or federal aid to count on, and what use of savings is appropriate in a recessionary economy.

Public hearings on the trash and recycling programs, and budget hearings on the wastewater treatment plant and employee benefits have taken place this week. Some recommended spending adjustments



have been identified (e.g., utility forecasts) and more are likely in the next weeks. The town will revisit last year's difficult choices, and I urge everyone to start with the belief that none of us is insensitive to Montague's values or the importance of past services. But the questions we must answer are insistent: If not this cut, then what else? If not this year, then when? Tell the selectboard and finance committee the choices you would make, and then tell your town meeting members the same thing.

GUEST EDITORIAL

Creating New Opportunities for High School Students

Last week, an editing error resulted in the omission of part of G-M Superintendent Ken Roche's editorial promoting the benefit of a combined academic and technical education for juniors and seniors. Here, with our apologies, is the editorial in full.

BY KEN ROCHE

GILL - MONTAGUE – The discussion about increased regionalization of public education in Franklin County has focused primarily on reducing cost, rather than on improving education. Advocates contend that, through more comprehensive regionalization of school districts, we can get the same educational 'product' for fewer dollars, by collaborating on administrative functions, transportation, and low-incidence special programs. The fear among educators and community members is that forced regionalization may lead to diminished educational quality and loss of local control, with little or no savings in cost.

Our recent experience shows that increased countywide educational collaboration done intelligently will reduce some costs. The question is – what to do with the savings? Why not borrow a trick from the world of business? Why not re-invest in our system, to make it both more effective, and more cost-effective?

The needs of students are not growing less. The costs of basic educational services – health insurance, utilities, and yes,

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

I'd like to propose a simple idea: let's consider introducing career and technical educational programs into the junior and senior years of high school in Franklin County.

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

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

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

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

Our best and most traditional academic learners thrive in our academically oriented high school environments, go on to college, and develop successful careers. But for many, high school education seems increasingly disconnected from what they imagine their own future lives to be, and lacking the kind of motivating experiences that might inspire them to want to learn more.

There are proven, compelling, motivating programs available for high schools. Each requires vision, time and money to implement. Examples include Project Lead the Way, a pre-engineering curriculum; Health Careers academies, information technology programs, and performing arts programs for high school students.

No high school in Franklin County could possibly afford to implement all of these programs. But each high school might be able to implement one or two, and do so in a way that ensured the highest quality.

Students in urban areas like Boston can attend high school in career-themed academies that match their own interests and abilities. Why not do the same, out here in Franklin County? Why not allow students freedom of movement for their last two years of high school? And why not structure the system so that all schools prosper as a result, rather than gradually getting 'choiced' out of existence?

We could borrow a trick from the Five College system in the Valley: students enrolled in UMass, Amherst, Hampshire, Mt. Holyoke or Smith can take classes at the other schools.

We have a great educational resource for technical high school education, Franklin County Technical School. I'd like to suggest that key elements of their success could be successfully transplanted into the junior and senior years of academic high schools, and would result in lower dropout rates, more motivated students, and graduates prepared not only to go on to college, but with marketable skills for jobs that are out there now.

Franklin County Tech performs a very valuable role for students who need four years of technical training. For other stu-

dents, technical training coupled with rigorous academics delivered at their own 'home' high school in their junior and senior years would better prepare them for their future lives than a purely academically-focused curriculum.

If we were to develop such a countywide system, we might well be able to attract grant funds to implement it, and renewed state funding to sustain it. The whole state is watching what's happening in Western Mass. If we can present a positive educational vision together, we may find unexpected levels of resources and support coming our way.

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NOTES FROM THE WENDELL SELECTBOARD

Wendell Prepares for Special Town Meeting

BY DAWN MONTAGUE - Highway commissioner Harry Williston was the first speaker last Wednesday night at the Selectboard meeting. He reported the February 14th break-in at the WRATS (Wendell Recycling and Transfer Station), fire station, and highway garage. [A full story on the burglaries appeared in the February 19th issue of this newspaper.]

Williston also brought forward a request made by animal control officer Maggie Houghton, who asked if it would be possible to use some space in the highway garage as emergency shelter for a dog for a maximum of ten days, should the need arise. Williston agreed that Houghton could use the generator room, if she would provide a portable kennel for any dog sheltered there, and the selectboard concurred.

Clean-up from the December ice storm continues, and Williston was scheduled to meet with a representative from FEMA on February 20th to drive around Wendell and assess damage. Particular attention was to be given to remaining hanging branches, which still pose a danger to people and property.

With the help of FEMA, Wendell has applied for \$53,125 to cover costs associated with the clean up from December's ice storm. This includes both costs incurred at the time of the storm for debris clean up and emergency services and for future costs to clean up the remaining debris once the snow has melted. If approved (and Wendell has not yet received approval), FEMA will pay 75% of this amount, or \$39,843. MEMA (the Massachusetts Emergency Management Agency) may then reimburse the town for some of the remaining funds, but that amount has not been

determined. Additional funding may be requested to remove hanging branches or leaning trees, as this was not included in the original storm damage estimate.

The board discussed the special town meeting scheduled for Wednesday, February 25th. As this issue of the Reporter goes to press, residents of Wendell will vote on a number of items, including whether to authorize the use of funds to purchase emergency generators for the town. If passed, the new generators would be installed in town facilities including the highway garage, town hall, and the public water well.

The selectboard also discussed how to buy and store propane that would be needed for the new generators. Town coordinator Nancy Aldrich provided the results of her research into the issue, concluding it would be most efficient at this time to rent, rather than purchase, two 100-gallon propane tanks. If Article 1 passes, the lowest quote for propane so far is a \$65 per year rental fee for each tank, plus the cost of propane, or about \$500 per generator per year.

The proposal to purchase the generators was drafted in the wake of the December 12th ice storm, since which there have been several planning meetings to assess the town's emergency preparedness, and to make plans to improve emergency response for future power outages. Jim Slavos of the finance committee pointed out that in Wendell the roads were open, so at least people could get to a place with power and water, but that it could have been much worse. There has been a lively discussion about emergency planning and the proposed purchase of generators for town buildings on the "townfolk" email list, which made those present at the selectboard

meeting hopeful for a high turnout on the 25th.

The Wendell finance committee were scheduled attendees at the meeting, and contributed to an extensive discussion on the proposed regionalization of area schools. A number of people have mobilized to resist the state's expected push for greater school regionalization, which for Wendell could mean merging the Swift River School, now shared with New Salem, into a larger K-12 Mahar school district. Finance committee member Michael Idoine expressed his belief that people should participate in the process, so they are not at a disadvantage when decisions on the regionalization of schools are made.

Meeting participants discussed the state's proposed regional investigation of Verizon's telephone service in the small towns of Western Massachusetts, sent from the

Massachusetts Department of Telecommunications and Cable. According to the Department of Telecommunications and Cable document, "the evidence ... shows that the types of complaints from customers are similar throughout the region, and include such issues as repeated service outages, poor signal quality, delays in repairing or restoring service and generally responding to troubles, and deficiencies in network maintenance and

replacement of aged facilities." Selectboard member Dan Keller noted that the quality of the phone lines was reflected in the repeated problems the town has experienced with false fire alarms set off due to a poor phone signal in the new town office building.

The town's beautiful bicentennial quilt is insured, and is now hanging in the town office.

REFORM from pg 4

we leave it up to individual towns or school districts, we will be set up for failure.

As a quid pro quo, the state should reform too. State officials should accept responsibility for the fact that state funding of public education is broken and must be fixed. The legislature should put some specific proposals on the table, perhaps making them contingent on local administrative reorganization.

We need reform, revenue and responsibility.

Jeff Singleton is a member of the Montague finance committee. The opinions expressed here are his own, and do not necessarily reflect those of other members of the committee.



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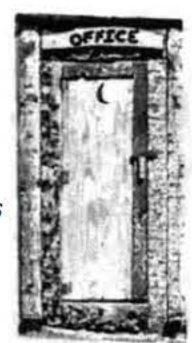
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BUDGET from pg 1

the Tomahawk Chop fight song is to make a decision by May 1st, or at least by May 12th, their last meeting before reorganizing after the May 18th town elections.

Kociela said she's talked to TFHS Principal Kenny about having discussion sessions with the students sometime in March, and perhaps a presentation in April with Marisa Vanesse of the Springfield Renaissance School, on the history surrounding the issue. The discussions could take place in afternoon assemblies.

Committee member Michael Langknecht said it was important for students to discuss the Tomahawk Chop issue among themselves. He suggested school committee representatives could be present to listen and answer any questions the students might have. Student council president Josh Gammon stated, "There

definitely needs to be an opportunity for students to be heard." Committee member Joyce Phillips said, "If we could try not to talk about who's for and who's against," suggesting other ways be found to talk about the issue. Gammon agreed, saying that would be better than having students feel there's only one position being presented, where adults are telling students what they should feel about 'the Chop.'

Transition Recommendations

In his report to the school committee, Superintendent Rocke described the situation the committee faces in the near future. There will be many changes, he said, with openings on the school committee as well as a new superintendent in the next school year. Rocke put forward a plan for the transition, building on the progress the schools have already made in the last few years.

He emphasized the importance of maintaining educational programs that are succeeding, stating, "Genuine educational improvement has been taking place."

Rocke repeated his suggestion for having career exploration beginning in middle school, involving classes in collaboration with the Tech School, GCC dual enrollment (Educational Transitions Program) and Bridges to the Future with UMass. He also stated his support for educational programs that work such as Tools of the Mind and Developmental Designs. In addition he suggested the district deepen its link with educational partners and become a lab site for educational innovators, including the Turners Falls based Northeast Foundation for Children, and others like them. He then raised another idea, of reaching out for grant funding from corporate donors like the

Gates Foundation or the Wallace Foundation, who are looking for school districts working on new concepts in education.

Rocke said it would be essential to focus on drop-out prevention programs for the district, as well.

Search Committee Volunteers

Chair Mary Kociela announced at the meeting Tuesday night that the GMRSD school committee is looking for volunteers to serve on the Superintendent Search Team. One elementary and one middle school parent and three teachers – one each from elementary, middle and high school – are needed to join the team charged with selecting a new superintendent for the district.

The next school committee budget meeting will be held on Wednesday, March 4th, at the TFHS television studio at 6:30 p.m.

**Hillcrest School News
Guest Readers Hook
Pre-K Book Worms**

BY BRIDGET SWEET

TURNERS FALLS – Hillcrest School classes have been a-buzz this winter! Here's some of the news:

Montague police detective Lee Laster recently joined the ranks of guest readers who have visited Hillcrest to read to students. Previous guest readers have included interim superintendent Ken Rocke, Sheffield principal Elizabeth Musgrave, and director of special education Nadine Ekstrom.

Important Questions

The three, four and five-year old students in Discovery Preschool teacher Chanda O'Keefe's class have been learning about President Barack Obama. O'Keefe, who shapes her curriculum around the children's interests, says she is amazed by how excited the children are about the new president. They

see READERS pg 9



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Art Springing Up in Turners Falls



Cathe Janke

BY FARRAH ALEXANDER – Many of Vincent van Gogh's greatest masterpieces weren't created when he lived in the bustling metropolis of Paris, but rather while he was sojourning in rural Saint Remy de Provence, surrounded by cornfields, vineyards, and olive and cypress trees. It was in this bucolic region he painted his best known works: *The Starry Night*, *Wheat Field with Crows*, *Cornfield with Cypresses*, and *Daubigny's Garden*.

A similar combination of rustic landscapes, intimate small-town culture, and cost-effective real estate is proving to be fertile ground for a slowly but surely emerging art scene in Turners Falls.

"A lot of my new work is more or less about choosing the country or small town over the city. It's about living in Boston or New York, and feeling very alone despite being surrounded by people," Nayana Glazier, artist and owner of the 'Round Here Café, 111 Avenue A in Turners Falls, said about her original, mono-chromatic, black and white acrylic on canvas paintings now on display in the café.

"In contrast, Montague and Turners Falls has the opposite [effect]. You can literally be alone, but not feel so at all. And the same thing happens in the café on a daily basis. People will

just come in, sit down and complete strangers will start conversations, and it's that feeling that stands out, [and is] different than what I experienced at other places – a lot of the paintings are about that."

Cathe Janke, whose paintings are on display around the corner at the Rendezvous bar and restaurant, 78 Third Street, shares the sentiment. "[Art] builds community in the larger sense. It builds connections between individuals, and you get to know your neighbors and friends, and make more friends. People are encouraged to be more creative," Janke said.

Janke describes her paintings, which are on display thru the end of April, as watercolors with natural elements – things found in nature or in everyday life, such as fabrics, cotton, salt, food coloring, milkweed, and debris from the beach.

"I want people to see and create their own story in the pieces, so I try to have it be a mystery, but open to interpretation. [They're] a timeline of things passing from one person to another – good things growing or changing from my grandmother or from some friends that have passed on, and you try to hold the good things that the person gave you and their love, and you try to pass it to the next person or the people you

know around you," Janke said.

"They're a timeline of events in my life or in the world around me, and a way of organizing my experience."

The effect that art has on a community goes far beyond just stirring the imagination. Art can stimulate the economy, even the local economy, in a remarkably well-preserved 19th century industrial mill village like Turners Falls. At least, that is the theory behind the Turners Falls RiverCulture program, which just received a third successive annual grant – this time for \$40,000 – from the Mass Cultural



Josephine Sacabo, *Lux Perpetua*

Council to coordinate the emerging art scene in Turners Falls and market it to local residents and tourists from near and far alike.

"Art has the potential to really revitalize a town that has previously been somewhat depressed and lacking in that pizzazz," Glazier said. When local businesses, "put other people's work up, it just encourages people to come in. It would increase business because people want to see what you have and who did it."

The emerging art scene is complemented and enhanced by the prestigious Hallmark Museum of Contemporary Photography, which, in addition to Colin Finlay's harrowing black and white photos of destitute and starving inhabitants of some of the most war-ravaged and

environmentally distressed corners of the globe on display at Gallery 85 (Witness to Suffering, MR VII #16), is also showing new work at exhibits in galleries 52 and 56.

In Gallery 52, Susan Bozic, of Vancouver, British Columbia, presents, "The Dating Portfolio," her humorous take on the contemporary dating scene.

In her witty exploration of relationships, Bozic portrays consumer culture, and the effect the ad industry has on our expectations of romantic forays. The photographs are large-scale, color representations of dating couples and are intended to leave viewers not just amused, but keenly aware of how commercialism permeates the perceptions and expectations of new couples.

In Gallery 56, New Orleans photographer Josephine Sacabo exhibits, *Lux Perpetua*; three distinct collections on exhibit: "A Geometry of Echoes," "The Nocturnes," and "El Mundo Inalcanzable de Susana San Juan."

Her works are dreamlike photographic representations of myth, literature, and poetry. "Geometry" is a narrative of a woman's life as experienced and perceived through the eyes of a six-year-old child. "Susana San

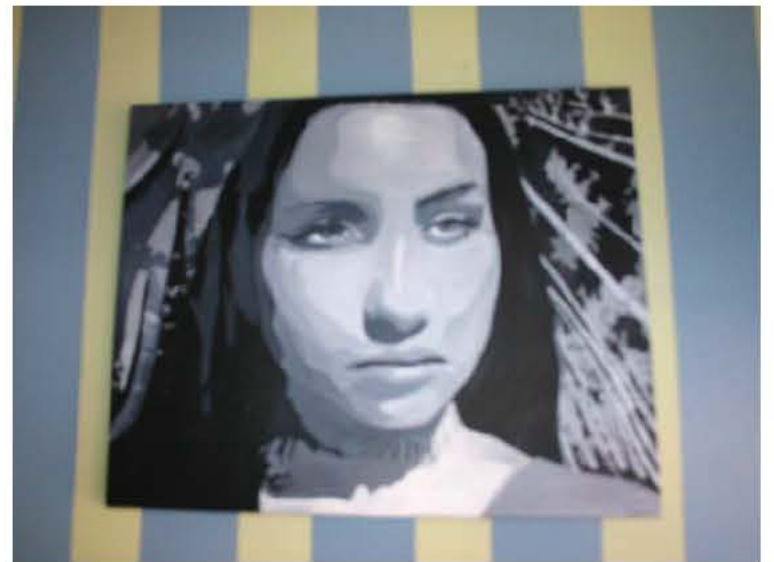
Juan," based on Juan Rulfo's novel, portrays the tragic story of a woman resorting to madness to cope with and protect herself from the surrounding world.

Both exhibits will be on display thru March 29th. For more information, please visit www.hmcp.org

For more information on artist Nayana Glazier, please visit www.picturetrail.com/nayanag

Artist Cathe Janke will be offering a free public reception for her show at the Rendezvous on March 7th, from 6 - 9 p.m., with light refreshments. At 9 p.m., musician Jeremy Latch and the Fashion People band will perform; there will be a \$3 cover charge for this performance. For more information on Cathe Janke's work, please contact her at, cateileenjanke@lycos.com

It may not be Daubigny's Garden, but sandstrewn Turners Falls, with its rough hewn February edges, is still a feast for the eyes, and you don't need to wait for an organized art walk to experience it. There is art on the walls from the bakery to the coffeeshop to the yoga studio, and world-class photography beckoning from the picture windows of the old Crocker Bank. Take a stroll. You'll be surprised at what you see.



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Don't Miss Tom Stratford's Nature Photos - Friday and Saturday



Tom Stratford's photo of Whitmore Falls, Sunderland

BY DON CLEGG

GREAT FALLS - Tom Stratford's love for photography began in junior high school in Amherst more than 35 years ago. Stratford credits his teachers for instilling in him a passion to capture what he sees in the natural world around him. He remembers the days he spent as a student,

working in the darkroom developing his own black and white nature photographs as a formative experience. Now, 35 years later, Stratford has just had the second showing of his photographs, titled "Landscapes and Nature," on display in the Great Hall of the Discovery Center in Turners Falls.

For years, Stratford would bring a photo album to family functions and friends' gatherings, along with his camera. Last year, his brother Will persuaded him to show his works in public. In the fall, Stratford held his first show at the Levertt Public Library, and followed that up with his present show, which has been on display in Turners since

December 14th, and can still be viewed this weekend, Friday and Saturday, from 10:00 a.m. to 4 p.m. at the Discovery Center.

All of Stratford's nature photographs on display there are from the local area; they include scenes from Mt. Tom, the North Leverett Sawmill, waterfalls in Sunderland, and crystal clear images of wild turkeys, deer and beavers, in their natural haunts. There is a particularly stunning image of a brushy-tailed red fox, pausing in his fluid motion to eye the cameraman, as Stratford's camera eyes him.

Stratford hopes to display his photographs next at Amherst College, where he has worked the past three decades as a custodian, and he may have prints for sale at this year's Art Fest, held in May, sponsored by the Brick House. Drop by the Discovery Center this weekend and take a look at these beautiful scenes of nature, from a local photography buff, while you have the chance.

READER from pg 7

have written to him at the White House, asking questions such as: "Do you have lights?" and "Do you like Chinese food?" O'Keefe has also collaborated with art teacher Nancy Meagher to create a White House project that extended students' learning about shapes and colors.

That's Right: 10!

Hillcrest students celebrated the 100th day of the school year in various ways. Cheryl Robertson's kindergarten class created a "100 Wishes" book and shared it at all-school meeting. Students' desires included 100 pepperoni pizzas, 100 dogs, 100 swimming pools, and 100 unicorns. After the book sharing, principal Chris Jutres asked the attentive audience how many tens

make 100. One glowing kindergarten piped up, "10!"

Parents' Choice

Karen Wartel's kindergarten class has continued their buddy program with Sheffield Elementary School's fourth graders. On their February 12th visit to Sheffield, they exchanged Valentines and read together. On February 25th, both grades reconvened at the Hillcrest auditorium to see performer Rick Goldin, whose "I Like to Read" program has received a Parents' Choice Recommended Award.

Jessica Bessette was recently hired as a kindergarten teacher, joining veterans Fay-Jean Smith (36 years) and Karen Wartel (32 years). Connie Renaud was hired as a new full-time paraprofessional.



Officer Laster reading "If You Give a Cat a Cup Cake" to Chanda O'Keefe's classroom

Advanced Weapon Systems 'Save Lives'

War Reporter Lectures at Northfield Mount Hermon School

BY DAWN MONTAGUE

GILL - Last Sunday evening, journalist Kris Osborn spoke at the Northfield Mount Hermon School, as part of the school's State of the World lecture series. Osborn reports primarily on land war issues for Defense News, and is also a military analyst for MSNBC. He gave his presentation in a packed auditorium, to a lively audience of more than 60 people. Most attendees were of high school age, but there were a few older folks as well.

NMH's director of communications Heather Sullivan said the State of the World lecture series was developed after the events of September 11, 2001, and "aims to expand our community's understanding about the complexity of world events and to promote dialogue as a way to understand the world more fully."

Much of Osborn's talk concerned the development and procurement of new military hardware. He repeatedly emphasized the ways in which more accurate weapons systems "save lives," a perspec-

tive he acknowledged as "controversial," but which he reported is widely held in the military.

By contrast, an earlier lecturer, Boston University professor emeritus Howard Zinn, a renowned historian and former WWII bombardier, told the NMH student body on February 13th, 2003, "As a bombardier, I've always been interested in bombing. The equipment is much more sophisticated now." But, he said, "Bombing is the inevitable killing of large numbers of innocent people. Smart bombs can be aimed by dumb people. When the bombing starts, and the excuses start, it is important to remember: war is terrorism. It is important we keep that in mind."

Osborn's presentation repeatedly highlighted the U.S. military's current stated doctrine that it faces an "era of persistent conflict." In short, according to Osborn, the U.S. military is in the midst of a generalized struggle, with multiple fronts, asymmetrical access to resources, and irregu-

lar battlefields, and will remain committed to that struggle for at least the next 15 or 20 years.

He discussed weapons and vehicles developed for the military at length, giving a great deal of attention to expensive prototypes. Osborn showed a clip from MSNBC of himself being interviewed about the February 2008 shoot-down of a disabled U.S. spy satellite. Osborn spoke about the promise and potential for a U.S. missile defense system, one of the military's most costly and controversial programs, for nearly 20 years.

At least two of the students questioned Osborn as to whether the U.S. actually needs elaborate new weapons at this point, whether advances in military technology are beneficial to the overall war effort. Osborn pointed to the increased precision of today's weapons as "a huge game changer," that he claimed could save lives on both sides of the conflict. He acknowledged that the new administration may cut some military spending on future combat sys-



Ted Thornton, Chair, Department of History and Social Science at NMH and journalist Kris Osborn

tems, in favor of more pressing national needs in tough economic times.

Osborn detailed a number of weapons systems that use remote sensing to acquire targets, or are completely unmanned (both aerial and land-fighting robots). One student expressed concern about placing lethal firepower in the hands of robots, and Osborn agreed, "We don't want the technology to get ahead of the tactics."

Osborn briefly touched on

some of the issues raised by being a journalist embedded with the U.S. military, as he was when he traveled to Iraq in 2004. He told the audience he felt he had freedom in what he wrote, and that no one told him what to report.

Due to time constraints, the question and answer period was cut short. Sullivan pointed out that "Kris Osborn's talk was typical of [a] level of respectful, informed, and energetic dialogue."

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Boys to Men Mentoring Project



John Berkowitz is bringing the Boys to Men New England Mentoring Network to Franklin County

BY JOE KWIECINSKI GREENFIELD – John Berkowitz is a man on a mission: to help stop the violence men do to each other, and to the people they love.

That's why Berkowitz, a retired but youthful-looking 62-year-old, is bringing the Boys to Men New England Mentoring Network to Franklin County. The network, aimed at heading off such violence before it begins, is part of a national program founded in San Diego in 1966.

Berkowitz is gentle but determined as he describes the challenge in very personal terms, noting that he has a 12-year-old granddaughter, and will soon have a grandson.

"I'm concerned with what kind of world they'll grow up in. I want to see it a much safer and

more peaceful place," he said.

"I'm appalled by men's violence towards one another and towards women and children," he continued. "We can help over the long term to raise better boys with more positive care and attention in their families and communities – boys who will grow up into men who will not act out in destructive ways. And our society will be better for it in many ways, such as the development of better employees, better fathers and husbands, and men who will care for their communities and the environment."

Berkowitz now lives in Shelburne, after spending 35 years in Vermont, where he instituted the Boys to Men curriculum in Brattleboro. He is now eager to reach out to

Franklin County by beginning a program in Greenfield.

There will be an organizational community meeting at the Greenfield Youth Center on Tuesday, March 3rd from 6 to 8 p.m. with a pizza and salad supper. The center is located at 20 Sanderson Street, south of the middle school.

Families with boys from 12 to 17 years old are invited to attend the meeting, which is also open to men who might like to join the program as mentors. School officials and representatives of community organizations that help youth are also welcome to attend.

"There are lots of indicators in Franklin County," Berkowitz continued, "that boys are at risk." He pointed to poverty,

see MENTOR page 11

RECYCLE from pg 1

considering reducing the collection of recyclables at curbside to an every-other-week schedule, so that glass and bottles pickup would alternate with cardboard and paper. In its favor, this proposal would allow the town to keep the older of its two recycling trucks in reserve as a back-up vehicle, with an investment of about \$8,000 to \$10,000 to keep the older truck inspectable and roadworthy. It would also allow for the probable elimination of one fulltime position at the DPW, if need be, according to Tom Bergeron, DPW superintendent, who also pointed out that recycling drivers are needed on off days and off hours to perform a variety of other tasks at the department.

But, weighing in against the approach, Bergeron said he does not know whether the newer of the town's recycling trucks – which does not have the ability to compact the load, like the older one – can really handle the doubled volume of recyclables an every-other-week pickup schedule would entail. It might mean more frequent trips to the Greenfield transfer station,

where large containers are available for Montague, as a member of the FCSWMD, to offload recyclables for transfer down to Springfield.

Billy Hudson, one of the DPW drivers on the recycling runs, said, "I have a lot of problems going to every other week. We pick up 3,000 to 5,000 pounds a day. If you put that on one person every day, you'd have to pick up 10,000 pounds a day." When routes are canceled during snow storms, that amount could double again on the fourth week, she said. "It isn't really feasible. It's not fair to the driver."

Hanold and some members of the selectboard then seemed more open to the idea of town residents driving their recyclables to the recycling center. Hanold said, "There is an opportunity here for people in town, in neighborhoods, to take up the burden of what the DPW has done. Recycling behavior is important to continue." But, Hanold said, given the repair and maintenance costs to the vehicles, labor costs, and the need for a new recycling vehicle, keeping the current recycling program is "the least

attractive option. We can't afford that level of service in this environment."

Both Hanold and selectboard member Pat Allen spoke favorably of the possibility of establish neighborhood networks, or recycling depots, to avoid the problem of everyone in town being asked to drive their own recyclables to the transfer station off Turnpike Road.

"Think if the whole town is going up there every week," said Allen. She said the objections people in the Turnpike Road area had to the idea of 17 or 20 trucks making daily trips through residential neighborhoods if a new landfill were developed there would pale in comparison to the amount of traffic that could be generated by every Montague resident driving their own recycling to the transfer station.

As he remarked at a similar hearing on curbside recycling last year, building inspector David Jensen said, "If everybody drives to recycling, how much fuel is that? It would be half again the cost of the recycling program. They'll put it in the trash," he said, estimating

recycling would decline by up to a half from current levels.

On Tuesday, the Montague energy committee voted to study the carbon footprint of various recycling alternatives for the town.

Jensen added, "It's one of those programs we're operating close to the cheapest way possible. It saves money."

Ameen, who was also present at the hearing, said the town should consider privatizing the collection of recyclables at curbside, just as they do trash hauling. She offered to "crunch the numbers" with town administrator Frank Abbondanzio, town planner Dan Laroche, and Bergeron at a later date, to prepare recommendations for alternatives if the town decides to change its recycling program.

Allen called for Bergeron to provide numbers for what it costs the town to run the current program, and what it would cost to run the recycling program curbside every other week, or expand hours of operation at the transfer station to accommodate more private drop-offs by residents there if the curbside program is eliminated. Ameen

suggested the town retain the ability to control the Springfield MRF reimbursement dollars, which, in better times, amounts to "real revenue."

Bergeron said the cost of running the town's recycling program on a yearly basis - without including labor costs - equaled about \$74,500.

In a later phone interview, she said expected changes to the bottle bill, which could move plastic water and juice bottles into the returnables category, would result in more uncollected nickels that the Patrick administration may once again make available for recycling programs statewide. She also said their was a possibility that 50% of tax credits for potential waste to energy incinerators may be dedicated to recycling programs in the Commonwealth, if this once-shunned program is renewed in light of improved technology. She also said the Obama stimulus package contains \$3.2 billion for recycling nationwide, some of which will flow to Boston in the months ahead.



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CONFLICT from page 1 the Israelis against the Palestinians. He could have continued with quite a list of others, had he been given time.

The guest speaker of the evening, Lana Habash, a spokesperson for the New England Committee to Defend Palestine and Qawem Coalition, failed to show up. But she called on speaker phone from Boston, where she was caring for her sick two-year old, to preface the film with a speech denouncing the Zionist state of Israel as racist, colonialist, based on the theft of land and resources of the indigenous people, and illegitimate.

It was a disputatious evening focused on a part of the world where violence and discord seem indissolubly linked to the arid soil, revered as the Holy Land by three major world religions, all of whom espouse the ideals of peace and the brotherhood of man.

Habash gave a thumbnail history of the last 60 years of Palestinian-Israeli relations, beginning with the Al Nabka – “the Catastrophe” – in 1948, when Zionists expelled – in her words, “ethnically cleansed” – Palestinians from their lands to found the state of Israel. Her parents were among those forcibly removed and unable to return to their homes and villages. She said 45 massacres against the Palestinians were documented during this campaign, and “530 villages completely destroyed,” while Palestine was still nominally a British mandate.

“Zionists are to Palestinians what Western Europeans are to the First Nations of North America,” said Habash. “It’s just another form of colonialism, where the oppressor has employed massacres, the theft of resources, brutal repression and racist ideology against the indigenous population.”

She brought her historical sketch up to date with a summation of Israel’s December 2008 incursion into Gaza, during

which, Habash said, “Over 1300 people were murdered, mostly women and children, well over 7000 wounded, not including casualties from the strangulation blockade of Gaza that started in November.” She said the Israelis used white phosphorous bombs (an incendiary weapon which ignites spontaneously in contact with oxygen), flechette shells and other fragmentation devices designed to cause maximum injury, and did not shy from bombing funerals, hospitals and civilian infrastructure.

She held the United States responsible for the ongoing destruction of Palestinian lives and livelihood at the hands of Israel, since the U.S. has poured a total of \$140 billion in aid – mostly military aid – into that country, at the rate of about \$3 billion a year, “one fifth of America’s entire foreign aid budget.”

Habash dismissed Israel’s categorical branding of Qassam rocket launches against Sderot and other towns bordering Gaza as terrorist acts. “Where there is dignity like this among the oppressed, there will be resistance,” she declared.

“This is not a religious struggle,” Habash added. “This is about land. To say settlers have a right to land that they have stolen and now occupy militarily is absurd.”

As Habash called on the audience to take a stand in solidarity with the Palestinians, Caplan spoke up and said, “As a peace activist in Israel, I’m telling you, you don’t have to choose. There is a whole ‘nother movement going on that is not so black and white.”

Then, the movie started, and even though it was filmed in color, the images that stuck in the mind were indeed black and white: scenes of rubble and destruction, frantic ambulance rides to mobbed hospital wards filled with shouting men and keening women, with blotches of red splashed across the foreheads and blown-apart abdomens of children providing

an occasional counterpoint to the grim palette.

“At the southeast corner of Israel lies a sandy strip of land bordered by Egypt on the south and the Mediterranean Sea on the west,” began the movie’s scrolling prologue. “It is 28 miles long and four miles wide...”

And, as Habash pointed out in her earlier remarks, in this 128 square miles, at the time the film was made in 2001, 5000 - 6,000 Israeli settlers controlled 42% of the land and 60% of the water, amid 1.3 million Palestinians. Israel then, and now, controls access to the Gaza Strip by land, sea, and air.

Longley, the filmmaker, displayed his bias in an interview about his film (which he made on his first visit to Gaza, without knowing a single resident there when he entered from the Erez Crossing), calling Gaza “an open air prison for Palestinian refugees, guarded on all sides by the Israeli military... over one third of them living in squalid refugee camps built in 1948 to hold the people forced out of their homes by the creation of modern-day Israel. It is one of the most densely populated places on the planet.”

Mohammed Hejazi, a 13-year-old newspaper boy, becomes the principal narrator of the story Longley unreels in a tense hour and ten minutes. Hejazi, like his chums, has little use for school. He quit after second grade and went to work in a bakery, but that didn’t appeal to him either: “I don’t like to be confined.”

After his father is released from an Israeli jail he cannot find work, so Hejazi became the main breadwinner for his family.

Hejazi tells of a close friend’s death at the hands of the Israeli defense forces, shot dead scavenging metal near the border fence. It is the first of many children’s deaths depicted or described in the film, and the desolation in Hejazi’s voice and

see **CONFLICT** pg 12

MENTOR from page 10 delinquency, drugs, lack of good jobs for teenagers and a high divorce rate in the county.

“About half the boys are growing up in a single parent household, and that figure is rising. When boys act out in such behaviors as graffiti, fighting, poor grades in school, getting into trouble with police, stealing, and vandalism – all these behaviors stem, in many cases, from the need for positive attention.”

What is Boys To Men?

“We offer consistent and effective mentoring,” said Berkowitz, “and modeling of behaviors and attitudes through biweekly group activities and discussions. We’re trying to get back to a community of support that boys truly need: listening, praise, and encouragement through their adolescent years.”

Berkowitz drew a contrast between Boys to Men and programs such as Big Brother/Big Sister. “Our program is aimed at older kids. We offer a group model as opposed to a one-to-one relationship. Also, our mentor’s commitment is bi-weekly, not each week. And, our men are mentors to all the boys in the group.”

In addition, the program emphasizes group activities. “Sometimes we just have a lot of fun,” said Berkowitz. “We bowl, hike, go sledding, make bows for soft-tipped arrows used in safe archery, and make apple cider. And some of the time is spent on discussion where we encourage boys to share the good things happening in their lives as well as difficult or challenging issues. At

the same time, the mentors model mature behavior by honestly expressing what’s going well in their lives and what problems they’re facing.”

One of the highlights of Boys to Men is a gathering of members in a two-day Rite of Passage Adventure Weekend known as a ROPAW. Last October, five boys from the Brattleboro group were joined by 18 other youths from the Northeast and Canada at a rented campground in Dummerston, VT. Thirty men organized and staffed the get-together, including Craig McClain, the founder of the national BTM organization.

“ROPAW is an intense, fun, safe, life-changing experience,” emphasized Berkowitz, “for the adolescents who are being initiated. For the first time many of the youngsters feel a sense of support, attention, and caring from a large group of men and other boys their own age who have already gone through a ROPAW.” In short, ROPAW gives the boys a sense of initiation into manhood.

Berkowitz, who also leads a poetry group in the area, stresses that men who are selected to become mentors in the Boys to Men program undergo an extensive screening process. “Mentors are chosen carefully,” he stressed, “after completing a criminal record background check, several in-depth interviews, and an optional but strongly-encouraged 30-hour mentoring training program.”

Berkowitz can be contacted at 413-625-6374 or at johnberk@crocker.com.



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NOTES FROM THE ERVING SELECTBOARD

"Little Accidents" Filming in Town

BY DAVID DETMOLD – A slightly mysterious crew is coming to Erving next week to film scenes from a movie called "Little Accidents." According to town administrator Tom Sharp, a Boston graduate student named Sharon Barnes, who will direct (or produce) the short film, has been in contact with the town, to inquire whether a police detail will be needed in order for the company to film scenes on Dorsey Road, near the French King Bridge. They also plan to shoot a scene inside the Erving Paper Mill, Sharp said.

On Monday, the selectboard gave permission for the company to film scenes in town, and Sharp extended an invitation for the crew to use the basement of town hall as a sort of Green Room. The production crew plans to hire a caterer for 20 or more, and Sharp hopes that business will be handled by a local establishment.

What's the film about? Calls to Barnes were not returned at press time. Her production assistant, Josh Youman confirmed the company planned to shoot in Erving on Tuesday and Wednesday of next week, but declined to say more. Sharp said

he thought the film might be a love story, but for now, it still remains a mystery.

The selectboard were also mystified by a quote received from engineering consultant Tighe and Bond to paint the inside and outside of the water tank across Route 2 from the former Starlight Diner. The estimate about a year ago was around \$400,000 Sharp said, but on Monday, the projected cost had risen to \$515,000. "We will mull this over," Sharp promised, before seeking town meeting approval for any expenditure on the painting job, which will require draining the water tank and taking it offline for a period of time.

The board accepted Margaret Sullivan's resignation as the treasurer and water collector. She is also resigning her seat on the board of assessors. Sullivan intends to volunteer for these positions, until the next town election, when she will run for them again.

What mysterious motive would lead a person to volunteer for a position she'd been receiving a good salary for?

"I retired from my job at the

Franklin Regional Council of Governments last June," explained Sullivan. "I can't collect my pension unless I retire from these jobs first."

The board received a bill for \$16,987 for bid ready plans to add a geothermal design component at the proposed new senior center, from John Catlin Associates of Quincy. The geothermal heating and cooling component of the \$2.3 million project will cost \$80,000, with an expected payback of seven years.

Sharp is meeting today, February 26th, with Catlin, to discuss the project, which he hopes will be ready for approval at annual town meeting in May, and ready for construction next year. The town received a \$169,000 block grant to prepare bid ready designs for the new senior center, which is planned to be built near the elementary school, and will seek an additional \$700,000 block grant for construction.

"We've also added the senior center to the Governor's list of shovel ready projects to receive stimulus funding," said Sharp. "If that comes through, it would

make it an easier sell at town meeting." Otherwise the town will be asked to chip in \$1.6 million for construction.

At their February 9th meeting, the board appointed Gilbert Crafts of High Street to the fire department, effective March 1st. Recreation commission chair Bill Bembury resigned his post, effective March 1st. The board also signed another contract through the Hampshire Regional Council of Governments to supply electricity for Erving next year. "We calculate we saved nearly \$10,000 with them last year, compared with the utility price," Sharp said.

HIGHLIGHTS FROM THE ERVING POLICE LOG

Civil Citations For Marijuana

Tuesday, 2/17

8:05 a.m. Suspicious call to a Maple Avenue residence. Under investigation.

9:00 a.m. Report of barking dog complaint on Warner Street. Citation issued to [REDACTED]

[REDACTED] for failing to register dog and disturbing the peace.

2:45 p.m. Report of larceny of a purse and its contents at French King Restaurant. Under investigation.

Wednesday, 2/18

12:24 p.m. Citation issued to [REDACTED]

[REDACTED] for operating a motor vehicle while unlicensed.

9:55 p.m. Assisted Northfield police with a motor vehicle stop on Route 63.

Subject arrested on a warrant.

Friday, 2/20

4:47 p.m. Arrested [REDACTED]

[REDACTED] for failure to stop for a police officer, reckless operation of a motor vehicle and speeding. Civil citation issued for marijuana possession.

Saturday, 2/21

10:30 a.m. Citation for marijuana possession issued to a resident from Mountain Road.

11:00 a.m. Barking dog on Ridge Road address. Checked, nothing found.

Sunday, 2/22

10:45 a.m. Report of two dogs missing from a River Road address. Checked area, nothing found.

Monday, 2/23

9:30 a.m. Report of barking dogs in the area of Ridge Road.

11:30 a.m. Report of malicious damage to a van parked at French King Entertainment Center.

2:00 p.m. Report of possible breaking and entering into a residence on Old State Road. Checked same, door found open. Under investigation.

11:15 p.m. Assisted Northfield police with a possible suicidal male.

Tuesday, 2/24

12:26 p.m. Officer observed a branch on an electrical wire on Swamp Road. National Grid notified.

3:00 p.m. Citation issued to [REDACTED]

[REDACTED] for operating without a license, no inspection sticker and no front registration plate.

CONFLICT from page 11

tears on his scarred cheeks makes it all the more vivid. Perhaps not quite as vivid as the accidental explosion of a bomb picked up by a couple of school kids as a lark, but still, vivid enough.

The filmmaker takes a side trip from Gaza City to the refugee camp of Khan Younis in the south as the election of Ariel Sharon leads to the constant encroachment and attack by the Israeli military. The children throw rocks broken from the concrete rubble of former apartment blocks at Israeli tanks and bulldozers, then scatter as the soldiers rake the area with machine gun fire. Street protests, with Palestinians chanting, "Intifadah, take your course, until we reach self-determination," end in pell-mell stampedes as

incoming fire disperses the marchers. A Palestinian youth fights back against the tanks with a slingshot. Children run up to concrete barriers and toss rocks blindly, turn and flee.

"What is death?" asks Hejazi. "Maybe it is a place where no one can see me, where I can see no one. It would be better than this life."

A woman tells of the night the Israeli soldiers interrogate her, plow down her date palm grove with bulldozers, destroy her house, then drive towards her as if to plow her down with all she owned. She and her daughter are left homeless, two more among Gaza's countless refugees.

"It is enough," says Hejazi, his old man's speech uttered from a 13-year-old's lips. "The trees, they have uprooted. The people,

they have killed. What more do they want to do to us?"

Trash blows across scenes of utter destruction. Children play amid the ruins. It is a heavy piece of filmmaking.

When the lights came up, Caplan, alone among the 25 or so in the audience, shouldered the Israeli perspective on the conflict. "It's not an easy black-and-white issue," he began. "Seeing a film like this is disturbing. In Jewish religion, we are clearly responsible for the deaths of innocent children and women. But this film is lacking context." He called for cultural bridges of understanding between the Israelis and the Palestinians, something his grassroots peace organization, Sulha, embodies, he said. "The way forward in 2009 is for peace

loving people to connect."

Someone else countered, "When the oppressor doesn't give you a way to get out of the situation, armed resistance is the only way."

A Jewish woman in the room said, "It's beyond comprehension people do that to each other. To see the hopelessness and futility of these kids, what else is there to do but be appalled?"

Caplan said, "This is a film of propaganda. There's an element of truth here, but it's not the whole truth."

He debated the history of the Middle East with a Palestinian woman in the audience. He said the Jews had arrived in Palestine 3000 years ago, and stayed and established their kingdom there until the Romans drove them into exile 1000 years later, since when

"not a day has gone by we do not pray three times a day to return."

But she said the Jews found the Palestinians there when they came, and the Palestinians remained there when they left.

Liz Kellner, of Shelburne Falls, who also identified herself as Jewish, said, "The behavior of the Israelis toward the Palestinians undoes all the good in Judaism. There is no excuse for it. It's inhuman. There is no excuse that Jews, who experienced that kind of mass punishment themselves, can turn around in any way and do that to the Palestinians."

The film and talk was sponsored by Undergrowth Farm, of Gill, as part of their "Movements for Self-Determination Film Series," at the Brick House.

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JESSICA HARMON ILLUSTRATION

BY FRED CICETTI

LEONIA, NJ - Q. Will taking testosterone bring back the virility of my youth?

The subject of testosterone is fuzzy, so it's difficult to give a simple answer to this question.

There is some controversy about whether testosterone therapy should be used in men who have naturally lower testosterone levels because of aging. It remains unclear whether restoring earlier testosterone levels benefits older men.

For example, studies found that healthy men who took testosterone medications got bigger muscles, but in most studies the men weren't stronger. And, if you suffer from erectile dysfunction, taking testosterone may not relieve your condition.

**THE HEALTHY GEEZER:
Fuzzy Testosterone**

Testosterone is a hormone produced by the testicles. It is responsible for male sexual characteristics and function. Testosterone is also important for maintaining muscle, red blood cells, bone, and a sense of well-being. In females, the ovaries produce testosterone, but at significantly lower levels than are found in men.

For most men, testosterone levels decline modestly as we age. The testosterone level in the male body peaks during adolescence and begins to decrease in between the ages of 30 and 40. The significance of this decline is controversial and poorly understood.

There have been studies that show that low testosterone levels can impair sexual function, diminish bone density, reduce muscle mass and strength, increase fat, contribute to memory loss and lead to depression.

However, some men who have adequate levels of testos-

terone have these symptoms. Others with low levels of testosterone may not experience the symptoms. Very fuzzy.

Your doctor can prescribe a synthetic version of testosterone. Testosterone replacement medications may be necessary for men with extremely low levels of testosterone. These medications are delivered with injections, patches and gels. There are currently no pills available in the United States that provide adequate levels of hormone replacement. In addition, oral medications may produce liver abnormalities and should be avoided.

Not enough study has been done to determine the risks of testosterone therapy in men with normal testosterone levels.

The potential benefits of this therapy are: more muscle and strength, increased bone mineral density, thicker body hair and skin, elevated sexual desire, more energy, less irritability and depression, and improved men-

tal capacity.

The potential risks are: growth of existing prostate cancer, benign growth of prostate that can worsen urinary problems, sleep apnea that makes you start and stop breathing as you sleep, reduced sperm production, fluid retention, baldness, skin reactions, enlarged breasts, testicle shrinkage, acne, and excess blood production that can increase your risk of heart disease.

The only accurate way to determine if you have a testos-

terone deficiency is to have a blood test. It can take several measurements because testosterone levels fluctuate throughout the day. The highest levels of testosterone are generally in the morning. This is why doctors prefer, if possible, to obtain early morning levels of testosterone.

The normal testosterone levels for males is between 300 and 1,000 nanograms per deciliter (ng/dL). For females, the range is 20 to 80 ng/dL.

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

MCTV Afternoon/Evening Schedule 2/27 - 3/5

Visit www.montaguema.net for complete listing

Friday, February 27
2:00 p.m. Physician Focus
2:30 p.m. TWB Ergonomics
3:30 p.m. GMRSD Budget Meeting 2/17/09
7:00 p.m. GMRSD 2/24/09
Saturday, February 28
2:30 p.m. Dodging The Bow
4:30 p.m. On The Ridge: Frank & Charlotte Sousa
5:30 p.m. Seneca Falls
6:00 p.m. Mighty Minds
7:00 p.m. Back in The Day Night Variety Show
9:00 p.m. Discovery Center: Northern Bats
10:00 p.m. Why or Why Not Nuclear Power?
Sunday, March 1
2:00 p.m. Tapping Maple Ridge
3:00 p.m. The Flow of Time
4:00 p.m. Transport Taxes
5:30 p.m. Basketball State Tournament
8:00 p.m. Discovery Center: Northern Bats
9:00 p.m. Why or Why Not Nuclear Power?
Monday March 2
2:30 p.m. The Looming Crisis in Oil Depletion
4:30 p.m. Red Cross Prevent Home Fires
5:00 p.m. TWB Sky Awareness
6:00 p.m. They Are Still There
7:00 p.m. Select Board (Live)

10:00 p.m. Back in The Day Night Variety Show
Tuesday, March 3
2:30 p.m. White House Chronicles 1005 thru 1006
3:30 p.m. Women Girls & HIV: African American Women
4:00 p.m. Discovery Center Poetry and Prose
6:00 p.m. Discovery Center: Northern Bats
7:00 p.m. GMRSD 2/24/09
Wednesday, March 4
2:00 p.m. They Are Still There
3:00 p.m. Tiny Tim
4:00 p.m. On The Ridge: Frank & Charlotte Sousa
5:00 p.m. Caregiver
6:00 p.m. Montague Update: Lisa Enzer
6:30 p.m. GMRSD Budget Meeting (Live)
10:00 p.m. Naturalist Laurie Sanders
11:00 p.m. On The Ridge: Coyote Hunting
12:00 a.m. Encore Body Art #4
12:31 a.m. Encore Body Art#11
Thursday, March 5
1:30 p.m. Michael Nix
3:00 p.m. Discovery Center: Northern Bats
4:00 p.m. Why or Why Not Nuclear Power?
7:00 p.m. Select Board 2/23/09
9:00 p.m. Basketball State Tournament

SK8 PARK from 4

the current skate park has expired, and the skate park steering committee has not been able to arrive at an interim agreement with deChristopher, who owns that lot. Ruth Nervig, who has been working with the skate park committee for the past year in her capacity as an Americorps worker for the Brick House, proposed that the selectboard spend \$4,000 in program income funding to blacktop a section of land owned by Jim Capen.

Nervig said that Capen has

agreed to allow the skate park to relocate there - to the rear of the former East Coast Choppers, on the corner of 11th Street and Avenue A - for up to three years, while the Unity Park plan moves forward.

Capen would seek a tax abatement on his land for the duration of the three-year lease, Nervig said, in an arrangement that parallels the ten-year pact the town reached with the previous owner of the 2nd Street skate park property, Chick's Garage.

Nervig said the DPW would be able to accomplish the blacktopping of a 60-by-50-foot area of land for a temporary skate park on 11th Street for less than \$4000. She also asked for \$8000 to \$10,000 in program income money to pay for bid ready design of a permanent concrete skate park at Unity Park.

The selectboard deferred on both requests, seeking more accurate estimates of the work involved. Nervig said volunteers would be found to remove the old ramps from the property behind Chick's, and move the usable ramps to 11th Street. Bergeron asked what the plan would be for the fence that has been recently installed at the current skate park.

On Tuesday, Nervig, and other representatives of the skate park committee, met with Dobosz and the parks and recre-

ation commissioners at the Unity Park field house to discuss a possible collaboration for managing a permanent skate park at Unity Park. According to Dobosz, "The meeting went well. The commission has not made its final decision as of yet. We are looking to tighten up some loose ends, and we have a few more questions.

"Ultimately," Dobosz said, "if it's at Unity Park it will be a parks and recreation facility, but day to day management can be shared."

HIGHLIGHTS FROM THE MONTAGUE POLICE LOG

Breaking & Entering

Tuesday, 2/17
6:28 p.m. Report of a family disturbance at a Fifth Street address. Referred to an officer.
Wednesday, 2/18
12:21 p.m. Report of missing person from a Turners Falls Road address. Subject returned to home or family.
Thursday, 2/19
12:10 a.m. Report of possible suicide attempt from a Millers Falls Road address. Subject removed to hospital.
10:58 a.m. Report of fraud from a Sunrise Terrace address.
11:18 a.m. Report of burglary / breaking and entering from a Fourth Street parking lot. Investigated.
Friday, 2/20
1:11 a.m. Officer initiated investigation of a suspicious auto on East Miineral Road. Dispersed a gather-

ing.
4:13 a.m. Officer initiated investigation of a suspicious auto on Country Club Lane.
8:17 a.m. Alarm sounding at Rendezvous restaurant on Third Street. Investigated.
10:25 a.m. Walk-in to station arrest of [redacted] on a straight warrant.
12:45 p.m. Officer initiated arrest of [redacted] on a straight warrant and a default warrant.
Saturday, 2/21
1:16 a.m. Report of an accident with property damage. Arrested [redacted] Charged with operating a motor vehicle while under the influence of

liquor, second offense.
9:50 a.m. Report of hit and run accident in the Food City parking lot, Avenue A. Services rendered.
Sunday, 2/22
12:57 a.m. Officer initiated investigation of a fight at Between the Uprights, Avenue A. Peace restored.
10:05 a.m. Report of a threat to commit suicide at an Oakman Street address. Subject removed to hospital.
12:16 p.m. Report of disorderly conduct at a Third Street address. Services rendered.
Monday, 2/23
8:42 p.m. Officer initiated arrest of [redacted] on a straight warrant.
Tuesday, 2/24
3:12 p.m. Report of pedestrian accident on Avenue A. Arrested [redacted] on a straight warrant.



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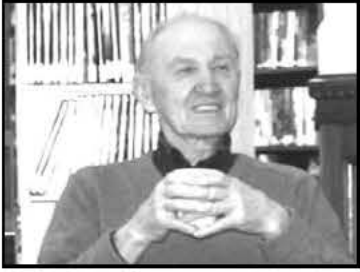
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JEP'S PLACE: Part CXII

Reform School



BY JOSEPH A. PARZYCH GILL

Not long after settling scores with my tormenters at school, Pa cornered me. He took a swing at me and I blocked it. The same calm determination I had felt on the playground came over me, but without the wild aggression. I was going to put an end to it right now, but not by

striking back. I still respected him as my father and would not hit him. I just blocked the blows. He tried a few more times but each time I'd raise my arm to block the punch.

"Raise your hand to your father, will you? Get your things and get out."

When I didn't move, he went upstairs and threw my clothes out the window. I picked them up and brought them back inside.

"Get in the car. We're going to the police station; you're going to reform school."

Our town didn't have a police station. We didn't even have a policeman. All we had was a constable and he never arrested

anyone. Pa knew he wouldn't be any help. Besides, the constable didn't even have a uniform, nor did he have a gun. He was apt to just smile and get people to work things out.

The adjoining town of Turners Falls had a police station, complete with a police chief. He had a uniform, a gun and substantial girth. Pa marched in ahead of me, jaw set and scowl on his face. The veins on his neck were bulging and his eyes were bugging out a bit.

"I want you to put him in the reform school."

At this point, I'd resigned myself to going and even began to look forward to it. Chief Walter Casey leaned back in his office chair. The chair creaked as he rocked back and forth with his

hands folded over his ample stomach. He listened to Pa rant on about me raising my hand to him.

Casey knew Pa, but he never brought up the fact that we were in the wrong town, and that as police chief, he had no jurisdiction over Gill.

"Can't do it," Casey lied. "They don't do that no more."

Pa threw up his hands, and walked out. I followed him to the car. We drove home in silence. He more or less gave up on me after that, and never tried hitting me again. And we actually got along better, to my surprise.

I got along better at school, too. I enjoyed a feeling of power after the playground battle. When I came out onto the playground, I got respect. The

cowards slunk away. There was no more ganging up on me. I even picked on Hugo, once in a while, just to let him know what it was like to be on the receiving end.

My marks were still a problem. At the end of the year my grades were so low the teacher passed me "on trial" again. I felt a failure. When she found out I wanted to go to Mount Hermon, she said with scorn, "Mount Hermon will never take you."

I hated to think she was right and felt depressed, especially knowing Hugo had a much better chance of being admitted because his marks were better and his father was on the Mount Hermon School faculty.

- Continued Next Week

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TOWN OF WENDELL PLANNING BOARD

In accordance with the provisions of M.G.L. Chapter 40A, Section 11, the Wendell Planning Board will hold a public hearing at 7:30 p.m. on March 17, 2009 at the Town Offices, 9 Morse Village Road on the application of Jonathan and Susan von Ranson for a special permit under Articles V and VI of the Wendell Zoning Bylaws to allow a secondary dwelling at 6 Lockes Village Road. The applicants seek the designation of the building in which the secondary dwelling will be located as 'existing' and to waive setback requirements for using the existing building. A copy of the application and plan may be inspected at the Town Offices during Town Coordinator hours, ordinarily Tuesdays and Thursdays 8:30a.m.-4:00p.m., phone (978) 544-3395 or at the Wendell Free Library.

Any person interested or wishing to be heard on the application should appear at the time and place designated.

- Deirdre Cabral, Wendell Planning Board Chair

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HIGHLIGHTS FROM THE GILL POLICE LOG

Loud Fishermen and Loose Cows

Wednesday, 2/18
6:47 p.m. Car vs. deer accident on Main Road, minor damage.
7:38 p.m. Car vs. deer accident on West Gill Road, minor damage.

Thursday, 2/19
11:10 a.m. Assisted with funeral procession at Gill lights.
2:22 p.m. 911 hang up, Main Road. All checked okay.
9:15 p.m. Car vs. deer accident on West Gill Road, report taken.
10:01 p.m. Complaint of loud fishermen on Barton Cove, checked area. Unable to locate.

Saturday, 2/21
4:50 p.m. Arrested _____ Charged with operating a motor vehicle with a suspended license.

11:45 p.m. Arrested _____ Charged with operating a motor vehicle with a stolen license plate, operating after license revocation for operating a motor vehicle while under the influence of liquor, attaching license plates, operation of an uninsured motor vehicle, unregistered motor vehicle and providing a false name to a police officer.

Sunday, 2/22
1:34 a.m. Report of a two vehicle motor vehicle accident on Gill-Montague Bridge.
1:41 a.m. Arrested _____ Charged with operation of a motor vehicle while under the influence of liquor, second offense, open container of alcohol in vehicle, driving to endanger, speed greater than reasonable and proper, and issued a civil citation for possession of marijuana. Incident occurred on Gill-Montague bridge.

3:45 p.m. Report of vehicle off of Main Road, into fence, minor damage.
11:34 p.m. Report of suspicious vehicle at a Main Road business. Subjects checked okay.

Monday, 2/23
9:05 a.m. 911 mis-dial on Mount Hermon campus.
12:50 p.m. Report of possible past breaking and entering on Main Road.

Tuesday, 2/24
1:50 p.m. Report of loose cows on Main Road near North Cross Road.
2:45 p.m. Report of loose cows on Center Road.

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ARTS & ENTERTAINMENT



JACK COUGHLIN ILLUSTRATION

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

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

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

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

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

Deja Brew, Wendell: *Nexus*. Dancing tends to break out when this group gets going! Harmonic Eclectic Rock / Alternative, 9 to -11 p.m.

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

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

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

Wildflower Society Annual Meeting, 9 to 4 p.m. Plant Conservation Volunteers will be meeting in the Great Hall. If you've ever thought about

becoming one, you can email us and we'll send you an application. Trainings for newcomers & ideas for how to strengthen your skills if you're already experienced. Call John Burns at (508) 877-7630 for info. Held in the Great Hall of the Discovery Center, Turners Falls. (413) 863-3221 or greatfallsma.org.

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

The RECOVER Project hosts a *Sober Open Mic Night*, 8 to 11 p.m. at 68 Federal Street, Greenfield. An evening of music and entertainment for people in recovery, their friends, and family. Musicians, Poets, and Comics welcome! Admission is \$3. Light refreshments for sale.

Deja Brew, Wendell: *The Equalites*. Reggae Extraordinaire! 9 to 11 p.m.

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

SUNDAY, MARCH 1st
Animal tracking and skull identification program, 10 to 12 p.m. Begins at the Montague Center Library, then a nature walk looking for animal signs in the Montague Center Conservation Land. In the case of unpleasant weather, the program will be held inside the library. Children and youth of all ages and their families are invited to the free program.

The Emily Dickinson Museum, Amherst: The Homestead and The Evergreens opens for the season: Wednesday through Sunday, 11 a.m. to 4 p.m. The Emily Dickinson Museum comprises two homes, the Homestead where the poet was born and lived for most of her life, and The Evergreens, where her brother Austin lived with his family. www.emilydickinsonmuseum.org.

Free Films For The Frozen, Montague Bookmill, Montague Center: *Oklahoma!* Directed by Trevor Nunn,

1999. Not the saccharine old movie version, but a filmed-for-TV version of a darker, brilliant 1999 London production starring Hugh (Wolverine, Sexiest-Man-in-the-World) Jackman. Who knew Curly could be sexy? 7 p.m.

TUESDAY, MARCH 3rd
At The Rendezvous, Turners Falls: Craft Night, 7 p.m. on. Careful mixing knitting &

Family Fun Night, Unity Park Fieldhouse, Turners Falls. Bingo theme night. Table tennis and other board games. Music, raffles, and refreshments will be provided. Families; children must be accompanied by an adult. 6:30 to 8 p.m. No registration needed.

SATURDAY, MARCH 7th
Beading Party at the Carnegie Library, Turners Falls, 10:30 - 11:30 a.m. Children and teens of all ages are invited to making an assortment of beading projects with Ruth O'Mara. Materials will be supplied. For more information, call the Carnegie Library, 963-3214.

Montague Grange Contra Dance. Gender-role-free contra dance. Admission. Open to all. 7 to 10 p.m.

Rt. 63 Roadhouse, Millers Falls: *Everspeak* CD release party come out show support \$5 or \$10 includes cd. 9:30 p.m.

Comedy at the Shea, Shea Theatre, Turners Falls. Fantastic comedy with one of Boston's best: Steve Bjork, 8 p.m. (Doors open at 7 p.m.) Info: www.sheacomedy.com.

Hooker-Dunham Theater & Gallery, Brattleboro. Twilight Music presents an evening of old-time, early country and honky-tonk music with *The Sweetback Sisters*, 7:30 p.m. \$15 general, \$13 students and seniors. Info: (802) 254-9276.

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

THURSDAY, MARCH 12th
At The Shea Theatre, Turners Falls: *Four Rivers Charter School Annual Variety Show*, 7 p.m. (413) 863-2281 www.theshea.org.

Jazz at DiPaolo's, Turners Falls: *Winterplay Jazz Band*, John Michaels-guitar, Mark Dunlap-bass, Rick Tutunlian-sax, 6:30 - 9:30 p.m.

FRIDAY, MARCH 13th
Celtic Heels School of Irish Dance Live at the Shea, 6 p.m. The unique choreography of this dance troupe beautifully blends the ancestral style of traditional Irish Dance with a toe tapping, hand clapping, vibrant modern flair! Performers, ages five to adult, are excited to share with you the true flavor of Ireland! Musical guests will include Dave of the MacCana band on fiddle along with other local musicians. This is sure to be an energetic show not to be missed!

Rt. 63 Roadhouse, Millers Falls: *Heroes*, local favorites classic and modern rock & roll \$5 cover, 9:30 p.m.

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

Get a taste of

drinking, bring a project to work on.

WEDNESDAY, MARCH 4th
Super Fun Bowling Club. Fun in a non-competitive setting, all ages welcome. Held every other Wednesday, French King Entertainment Center. *Show 'n' Tell Nite*. Bring an item to share as a "conversation piece." 7:30 p.m. www.superfunbowling.com.

THURSDAY, MARCH 5th
Great Falls Discovery Center, Turners Falls. Join Dawn Marvin Ward as she presents a nature series designed for preschoolers and their caregivers. 10:30 - 11:30 a.m. Includes stories, songs and hands-on activities, all designed for young children and the young-at-heart. This week: *Tracking Tricks for Tots*. Stop, Look, and Listen! Learn to become a "Nature Detective" with a few simple tricks and tools, then find who's hiding about! 3/12 *Lady Bug Lore*. 3/19 *Bears Awake!* 3/26 *Mobile Homes*.

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

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

Great Falls Discovery Center, Turners Falls: *Harvesting Yesterday, Cultivating Tomorrow* art exhibit on display through March. Inspired by Willa Cather's "My Antonia," and in partnership with the Great Falls Discovery Center and Frontier Regional Community Service Learning project, PVMA hosts an exhibition of words, pictures and art objects. Featuring a selection of reproductions from the Memorial Hall Museum collection, several local artists and student work that inspire reflections on the land and its stewardship.

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MONDAYS - Drop-in, 3 - 6 p.m.
TUES & WEDS - Ongoing Music Project, 3 - 6 p.m.
THURS - Drop-in, 3 - 6 p.m. & Movie Night, 6 - 8 p.m.
Free (except some trips), open to local teens. Some require permission slips.
Info: Jared at 863-9559.
Hot Spot Teen Center is in The Brick House
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3. WATCHMEN R in DTS sound THURS. MARCH 5TH at MIDNIGHT
4. SLUMDOG MILLIONAIRE R DAILY 6:30 9:00 FRI, SAT, SUN 12:00 3:00
5. HE'S JUST NOT THAT INTO YOU DAILY 6:40 9:20 PG13 FRI, SAT, SUN 12:15 2:15 4:15
6. TAKEN PG13 DAILY 6:40 9:20 FRI, SAT, SUN 12:15 3:15
7. CORALINE PG in DTS sound DAILY 7:00 9:30 FRI, SAT, SUN 12:30 3:30
8. THE WRESTLER R DAILY 7:00 9:30 in DTS sound FRI, SAT, SUN 12:30 3:30

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Mysterious Fungus Kills Northeastern Bats

BY DAVID DETMOLD

GREAT FALLS - Since a fungus of unknown origin was found on bats hibernating in four caves in the Albany area of New York in the winter of 2007, thousands of bats have died from the disease, which wildlife biologists have named White Nose Syndrome. In the two winters since, the mysterious disease has spread, and is now affecting all six hibernating species of bats in New England, with confirmed or suspected outbreaks in Vermont, Massachusetts, and Connecticut, and more recently in New Jersey, Pennsylvania, West Virginia, Ohio, Indiana, Ohio, New Hampshire, and Rhode Island. Mortality at some of the hibernacula - the caves where little brown bats, big brown bats, eastern pipistrelle, eastern long-eared bats, eastern small footed bats, and Indiana bats hibernate - has been estimated at between 60% and 90%, or higher. Northeastern bats are dying in massive numbers, and scientists don't know why.

Bats, the only flying mammals, occupy a significant ecological niche. During the months when they are active, bats eat between 50% and 75% of their body weight in insects every night. Moths and beetles are their favorite quarry. A nursing female may eat her entire body weight - up to 4500 insects - nightly. One hundred and fifty big brown bats can eat 33 million insect pests in one summer. If the bats in our region die off - and since bats have only one pup a season, the high mortality rate from White Nose Syndrome may swiftly decimate their numbers - the consequences to farmers who will have to contend with resulting hordes of insects are unknown and incalculable.

"White nose syndrome," so named because the white fungus

can affect the muzzles of hibernating bats, as well as their wings, and other areas of bare skin, "is the newest threat to the six species of bats resident in New England," said Susi von Oettingen, endangered species biologist for the New England region of U.S. Fish and Wildlife, who gave a slide presentation on White Nose Syndrome (WNS) to a dozen people at the Great Falls Discovery Center on Thursday, February 12th.

Von Oettingen called WNS, "an ailment identified by a series of symptoms," typified by "a cold-loving white fungus around the nose, wing, or tail membrane of some but clearly not all affected animals, extremely abnormal behavior in winter, including flying outside of the hibernaculum during daylight hours," or roosting close to the opening of the cave or mine, where sunlight can strike them, instead of further back in the interior where temperatures can be more stable. Affected bats are often found dead near the entrances to the hibernacula. Bats with WNS appear dehydrated, suffering from depleted body fat, the energy they depend on for their dormancy in winter used up prematurely. They rouse from torpor months ahead of normal, fly about in freezing temperatures in the middle of the day, searching for food, for water. They are starving, and this may be what kills them.

Von Oettingen estimated there may have been a half a million bats in the affected hibernacula. Her slides, some taken near the entrance to Mt Aelous Cave near Manchester, VT, showed desiccated bats shivering or dying in the snow. She said she found 300 dead or dying bats near a major hibernaculum in Chester, MA this time last year, frozen against the shingles of a neighboring

house, flying about in mid-day. Reports of WNS affected bats are widespread in Berkshire County, where rocky limestone outcroppings provide ideal bat habitat. She told of one call from a woman in Northampton who observed a bat crashing onto the sidewalk in the middle of the day. "That's not normal."

In summer, researchers are finding bats "in very bad shape, with some effects of WNS, wings dehydrated, necrotic, with tears and holes," von Oettingen said. "The fungus invades just skin cells on bare skin," she added.

Researchers are trying to pinpoint how the disease is spread, with a dozen laboratories studying the problem, particularly the laboratory at Cornell University, and the National Wildlife Health Laboratory in Madison, WI. There have been no reported health effects to humans who have entered the affected caves, and researchers are being careful to decontaminate their gear and clothing so as not to inadvertently aid in the transmission of the disease. Von Oettingen said biologists are conferring with colleagues around the world to see if they can find other examples of the disease, and she said there has been speculation as to whether cavers, who pursue their hobby internationally, may have been unwitting vectors of the fungus.

"How is it spread? We don't know yet." Experiments are being conducted, where infected



CREDIT: NANCY HEASLIP, NEW YORK DEPT. OF ENVIRONMENTAL CONSERVATION
Little brown bats with white-nose syndrome, New York

bats are placed in climate controlled settings with uninfected bats, to see if the fungus is exchanged between bats. Some of the species of bats that roost or hibernate in New England pack together tightly, then swarm and migrate widely. "It's very plausible it could spread that way," von Oettingen said.

She said the species of fungus associated with the disease "has not been seen or documented in the U.S. before. It could be an AIDS-like virus." But, "We have not observed any viruses or bacteria or pathogens," as yet in the affected species, with the equipment currently available to study the disease. It could be caused by changes to the insect population, perhaps due to the affect of newly developed neonicotinoid pesticides, or it could be a by-product of global warming, mused von Oettingen. Researchers are examining all these possibilities.

Meanwhile, at the Great Falls Discovery Center, staff member Sue Cloutier had her own theory about the possible origin of White Nose Syndrome. She felt it was possible that widespread spraying of insecticides during the years of the Equine Encephalitis scare may have led

to bats entering their period of winter torpor underfed and without adequate reserves of fat to make it through the cold months. The cold tolerant white fungus characteristic of White Nose Syndrome may have been present in the hibernacula all along, Cloutier postulated, and may have attacked weakened bat populations opportunistically. She plans to organize a bat conference in the months ahead, to bring together the researchers who are studying the problem, and compare notes.

Meanwhile, for the latest on the mysterious disease that is ravaging our Northeastern bat population, go to: www.fws.gov/northeast/white_nose.html.

If you observe bats flying in the daytime or exhibiting other characteristics of White Nose Syndrome, you may call the U.S. Fish and Wildlife office in Belchertown at 413-323-7632. But don't be surprised if they respond as von Oettingen did to one questioner who asked her about the disease plaguing Northeastern bats on the 12th.

"Their behavior is so weird," she said. "We just don't know what's causing it."

Noticing Nature at the Great Falls Discovery Center

BY DON CLEGG

TURNERS FALLS - A Hands-on Nature series for preschoolers will be held at the Great Falls Discovery Center in Turners Falls, presented by naturalist Dawn Ward each Thursday in March from 10:30 to 11:30 a.m. Each hour-long program includes stories, songs and hands-on activities, all designed for young children, and their young-at-heart caregivers.

The first offering in the series, on March 5th, is entitled 'Tracking Tricks for Tots.' Learn to become a Nature Detective by stopping to look and listen, and using a few simple tricks and tools to find who's been out and about, and who's hiding in the natural landscape.

March 12th will feature 'Lady Bug Lore'. Some of the questions to explore: Have you

ever seen a "baby" lady bug? Are they all ladies? Where do they come from, what do these ladies eat, and why is this bug such a popular insect?

Watch out, because on March 19th, Ward will be back talking about bears! Bears are beginning to wake up with the arrival of spring. Black bears, brown bears, and even Teddy bears. Tots will search for the hiding bear in the Discovery Center. (Will they use the tracking tools they learned on March 5th?) If they would like to, they can bring their own special bear to show off.

Noticing Nature winds up on March 26th with 'Mobile Homes'. Youngsters will try to imagine having to carry their homes on their backs all the time. Come listen to stories and sing silly songs as we explore

some creatures who do. Children will then create their own 'mobile home'.

Montague resident Dawn Ward, the presenter of this series, is an environmental educator who shares her appreciation of nature by bringing her knowledge to the younger generation and their families. She has a background as a preschool teacher with a degree in plant and soil sciences. Ward designs and presents children's story hour programs for the Family Network at many local libraries, and is an environmental educator at Northfield Mountain Environmental Center.

The Noticing Nature programs at the Great Falls Discovery Center are free and open to the public. For more info contact 413-863-3221 or check out greatfallsma.org.

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