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# The Montague Reporter

YEAR 5 - NO. 18

also serving Gill, Erving and Wendell

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THE VOICE OF THE VILLAGES

FEBRUARY 8, 2007

## Pilots Seek Airport Manager's Ouster

**BY DAVID DETMOLD**  
**TURNERS FALLS** - More than 150 Turners Falls Airport pilots, flight instructors, mechanics and others will ask the Montague selectboard to remove Michael Sweeney as airport manager. The group, calling itself the Committee to Save the Turners Falls Airport, will present a petition to the board on February 20th, alleging a wide range of management shortcomings at the airport, according to pilot Bill Gibson.

The petition includes the signatures of six flight instructors, ten commercial pilots, 64 private pilots, seven student pilots, five aircraft mechanics, an avionics specialist, and others who lease or own space at the airport, according to a letter the group sent to the selectboard earlier this week. The petition comes as the latest chapter in a simmering dispute that centers on recently renegotiated leases at the airport, according to those closest to the negotiations.

Pilots and others allege ongoing problems, including:

- Highly inflated lease fees, far exceeding those charged at other small regional airports;
- The loss of support staff such as a mechanics and avionics staff;
- A refusal to negotiate or address complaints on the part of airport manager Michael Sweeney. An ambitious expansion strategy has sacrificed basic services and a long-standing congeniality, if not airport safety.

Gibson, an economics professor who now teaches part time at UMass Amherst, summed it up this way. "We've taken a vote of no confidence in the manager. He does not have the consent of the governed." Gibson said

he formerly piloted a plane from the Turners Falls Airport to his job at the University of Vermont two times a week.

"He's been totally unreasonable with people. He has caused such disaffection in the ranks, we're giving that a second look."

Airport manager Mike Sweeney said he had no comment on the specific complaints the group may have against him, because he had not seen the letter to the selectboard. But he noted airport revenues were up, under his three-year tenure at the airport.

Sweeney said despite the improvement in revenues, which he related to updated lease fees, the airport is "still substantially funded by the town."

Airport commissioner Mark Fairbrother acknowledged there was dissatisfaction among pilots at the airport over Sweeney's management style. "They're not happy with him," he said. But Fairbrother said he found it ironic that airport users and leasees were dissatisfied with Sweeney since the manager has moved the airport forward on an ambitious runway expansion project, regularized procedures and replaced broken or outmoded equipment. "You'd think they'd be talking up the airport," he said.

The town has been increasing pressure on the airport commission in recent years to try to turn a profit at the airport. Sweeney cast his effort to modernize lease fees in that context. He also said, "We're pleased to be bringing in a \$5 million [runway expansion] project to the community at no cost to the town. We're enhancing the wildlife habitat there. We're pretty proud of the job we're

see PILOTS pg 10

## Non-Binding Question to Close Montague Center School to be on Townwide Ballot

**BY DAVID DETMOLD**

Anger at the recent school closing decision by the Gill-Montague regional school committee, and over a December decision by the Montague selectboard to create a 'Free Speech Zone' on the Montague Center town common led to a particularly heated exchange of opinion at the selectboard's Monday night meeting, February 5th.

Speaking for a group called the Organized Taxpayers, former highway department clerk and selectboard member Ed Voudren, of Stevens Street in Precinct 4, brought a sheaf of petitions he said contained the signatures of 1128 registered voters of the town of Montague, asking the selectboard to place a binding ballot question on the annual town election in May, calling for the Montague Center elementary school to be closed by September, 2007. Voudren said, "The taxpayers want to see a central campus. They've lost all the other community schools. They want to take the best of the best and give it to all our students. They do not want to spend any more money on bricks and mortar; they want to spend it on education."

On December 19th, the G-M school committee voted 5-3 with one abstention to expand the Montague Center School to a K-5

elementary school, adding grades 4 and 5 there, despite the fact that the building is old, in need of a new roof, possible system upgrades, and handicapped accessibility improvements including a wheelchair ramp to the front door and an elevator. The figure cited by the school superintendent for accessibility improvements at Montague Center was in excess of \$300,000. A group of Montague parents has been meeting in recent weeks to develop a fundraising plan to defray some of the costs associated with building improvements at the Montague Center School.

Also at the December 19th vote, the school committee voted to turn the fully accessible Hillcrest Elementary School into a center for pre-K early childhood education, closing half the building, and mov-

ing the K-2 classes there to the nearby Sheffield Elementary School. A petition generated after flyers were distributed by the Hillcrest PTO at various storefront locations in Turners Falls after New Year's Day led to the signature drive, and to Voudren's appearance at the February 5th meeting. Although no

see PETITION pg 8



DETMOLD PHOTO

Ed Voudren presents petitions to the Montague Selectboard on February 5th.

## New Senior Center May Cost Erving \$400,000

**BY KEVIN FOLEY**

**ERVING** - A new senior center for Erving may cost the town about \$400,000, for a project originally expected to be entirely funded by grant money.

"I was shocked when I saw the figures," said town administrative coordinator Tom Sharp, who said the town is working with the Franklin County Regional Housing and Redevelopment Authority to obtain grants for the project. Grants are now expected to cover just more than half of the final price tag.

The total project cost is estimated at \$1.2 million, although the actual cost will not be determined until a feasibility study is conducted. The study, which will cost

\$30,000, will provide project blueprints, said Sharp, helping to pin down the final dollar amount.

Although a precise estimate is still not known, the selectboard will present the \$400,000 figure at the February 12th special town meeting in order to avoid misleading Erving residents, according to Sharp. "We didn't want people to think that all we needed was \$30,000, and then come back the next year and ask for more."

Funding for the feasibility study will be voted on by Erving residents at the February 12th special town meeting at 7:30 p.m. at town hall, along with a number of items including articles to fund a position for a wastewater plant supervisor, and to pay for design and engineer-

ing plans for renovations at the Erving wastewater treatment plant. Sharp encouraged all Erving residents to attend the special town meeting.

The owners of the Usher Mill on Arch Street in Erving Center failed to make the building safe by the November 1st deadline set by Jim Cerone of the Franklin County Cooperative Inspection Program (FCCIP).

The old mill, which is owned by members of the Housen family, who also own the Erving Paper Mill, has been vacant for years, Sharp said. "It has been a thorn in Erving's side for quite a while. The real shame is that it wasn't maintained. It's a piece of history that

see ERVING pg 16

## PET OF THE WEEK A Gentle Guy



### Dude

The Dude is a five-year-old male brindle-colored greyhound in need of a good home. Tall, dark and handsome? You bet! The Dude is a gorgeous big guy with the softest, gentlest personality! He is crate-trained which will help him to make the adjustment to civilian life. The Dude should do well in a home with cats as well as with other dogs. He would love to live in a home with kids over 12. For more information on adopting the Dude, please contact the Dakin Pioneer Valley Humane Society at 413-548-9898 or via email at leverett@dpvhs.org.

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## CARNEGIE LIBRARY NEWS Valentine Party

BY LINDA HICKMAN  
**TURNERS FALLS** - There  
will be a Valentine Party at the  
Carnegie Library on Saturday,  
February 10th, at 2 p.m. Fun  
activities will include making  
valentines with Bev Whitbeck.

A wide variety of supplies will  
be available. Refreshments will  
be served. Children of all ages  
are invited. The program is free  
and no registration is required.  
For more information, call 863-  
3214.

## MONTAGUE CENTER LIBRARY NEWS Animal Tracking

BY LINDA HICKMAN  
**MONTAGUE CENTER**- An  
animal tracking program for  
families will begin at the  
Montague Center Library on  
Saturday, February 10th, at 10  
a.m. After a brief introduction  
inside the library, environmen-  
tal educator Dawn Ward of  
Montague Center will lead a  
nature walk looking for animal  
signs in the Montague Center

Conservation Land. In the case  
of unpleasant weather, a fun  
hands-on tracking program will  
be held inside the library.  
Children of all ages and their  
families are invited to the free  
program. The event is cospon-  
sored by the Community  
Partnerships for Children. For  
more information, please call  
the Carnegie Library, 863-  
3214.

## THANK YOU, SMOKIN' HIPPO!



The Brick House would like to thank  
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food for our pre-concert event free of  
charge! Our stomachs all say:  
"Thanks Gary!"

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## Calling All Performers for Variety Show

BY MICHAEL MULLER  
The 1st Annual Montague  
Community Variety Show will  
take place Sunday, April 22 at  
6:30 p.m. at the Montague  
Grange Hall. In celebration of  
the strength of this community,  
all kinds of performers are  
invited to share their acts:  
music, magic tricks, dance  
acts, spoken word, family  
skits, baton twirling, comedy,  
you name it. If you have some-  
thing wonderful or silly to  
share on stage, sign up in

advance to be a part of the  
show. Please limit your perfor-  
mance to a five minute piece,  
as we expect to have many,  
many performers on stage.  
Admission will be \$10 for  
adults and \$5 for children.  
Proceeds from the variety  
show will go to the Turn  
Children Education Fund.

We expect that there will be  
a lot of performers, so please  
sign up early. To sign up, call  
367-2483 or e-mail drad-  
way@verizon.net.

## SENIOR CENTER ACTIVITIES Feb. 12th - 16th

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

**Monday, 12th**  
10:15 a.m. Aerobics  
11:00 a.m. PACE Aerobics  
1:00 p.m. Canasta  
**Tuesday, 13th**

9:30 a.m. T'ai Chi  
**Wednesday, 14th**  
10:15 a.m. Senior Aerobics  
12:45 p.m. Bingo  
**Thursday, 15th**  
1 p.m. Pitch  
**Friday, 16th**  
10:15 a.m. Senior Aerobics  
11 a.m. PACE Aerobics

**ERVING Senior Center**, 18 Pleasant St., Ervingside (Old Center School, 1st Floor), is open Monday through Thursday from 9 a.m. to 2 p.m. for activities and congregate meals. For information and reservations call Polly Kiely, Senior Center director at 413 423-3308. Lunch daily at 11:30 a.m. with reservations a day in advance by 11:00 a.m. Transportation can be provided for meals, Thursday shopping, or med-

ical necessity by calling Dana Moore at 978 544-3898.

**Monday, 12th**  
9:30 a.m. Exercise  
9:45 a.m. Library  
12 Noon Pitch  
**Tuesday, 13th**  
9 a.m. Aerobics  
12:30 p.m. Painting  
**Wednesday, 14th**  
9:30 a.m. Line Dancing  
12 Noon Bingo  
**Thursday, 15th**  
9 a.m. Aerobics  
12:30 p.m. Shopping

**WENDELL Senior Center**, located in the town offices on Wendell Depot Rd. Call Kathy Swaim at 978 544-2020 for info, schedule of events or to coordinate transportation.

## FACES & PLACES

Memories of  
Valentines  
past are  
evoked by  
this window  
display from  
the former  
home of  
Glorious Day  
Tailoring on  
East Main  
Street in  
Millers Falls



FLORE PHOTO

## Video Deadline Change

The deadline for submissions to the Brick House's Young Moviemakers Festival on May 5th has been pushed forward from March 1st to April 2nd. Youth and youth groups under the age of 21 by May 5th are eligible to have their videos compared to their peers' and judged by a panel of experts. For more information, call 413-863-9576.

## Greenfield Women's Resource Center

**GREENFIELD** - On Monday, Feb. 12th from 1-4 p.m., the new Greenfield Women's Resource Center will open its doors at 278 Federal Street. The celebration (for women only) will include center tours, art space availability, free food and program sign-ups. Join us in painting a mural for the Center and view art created at our Turners Falls site. The Greenfield Women's Resource Center is a safe, welcoming space for women to come together to heal themselves, empower each other and build community.

Call the Greenfield Women's Resource Center for more information at (413)775-0010.

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# NMH to Screen Green Films

BY KATE SNYDER

**GILL** - Northfield Mount Hermon School will screen two films about sustainability, *An Inconvenient Truth* and *Kilowatt Ours*. The movies will be shown at Beveridge Media Center at NMH and are free and open to the public.

*An Inconvenient Truth* is former Vice President Al Gore's striking look at how global warming is changing our planet, and will continue to do so. It offers viewers inspiration and ideas about how to turn the situation around. It will be shown

on February 11th at 3 p.m. at the Beveridge Media Center.

*Kilowatt Ours* exposes the truth about the destruction to the environment wrought by coal mining and power plant emissions. It also provides concrete solutions on how consumers can reduce their power use and cut their electricity bills. It will be shown on February 25th at 3 p.m. at the Beveridge Media Center.

The movies are being shown as part of the Green Cup Challenge, where 15 independent high schools in seven

states this February are competing to cut their electricity use by the largest percentage, compared to a baseline measurement. Locally, NMH, Stonleigh-Burnham School and Deerfield Academy are participating. NMH, with Phillips Exeter Academy and the Lawrenceville School, is running the contest, and won last year's challenge.

For directions, go to [www.nmhschool.org](http://www.nmhschool.org) or call 413-498-3000.

# Native American Storytellers at Northfield Mountain

BY BETH BAZLER - Native American storytellers Loril Moondream and Peter Whitefox of Medicine Mammals Wildlife Rehabilitation in Wendell will host a free event for children, ages five and over, at Northfield Mountain Yurt.

The event, which will be held on Saturday, February 24th from 7:00 - 8:00 p.m., will consist of traditional Native American stories about winter and the promise of spring, classic animal tales like

those about coyote. Even a drumming and dancing game featuring bear and raven will be shared. Throughout the stories, Peter Whitefox will use animal skins and his fabulous sense of humor to add drama and fun to the presentation.

The Northfield Mountain Recreation and Environmental Center is hosting this event. Pre-registration is required and seats will be reserved on a first come first serve basis. To register, call 800-859-2960.

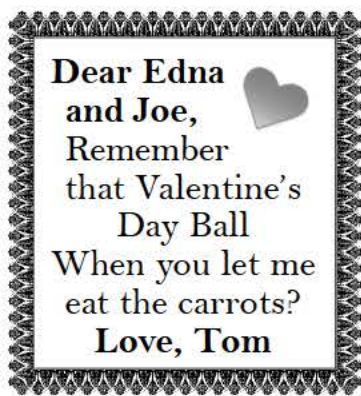
## Five Rivers Council Meeting

BY DANIEL BROWN

**GREENFIELD** - The monthly gathering of the Five Rivers Council will take place on Saturday, February 17th, from 9:30 a.m. - 12:30 p.m. at the Four Rivers Charter School, 248 Colrain Road in Greenfield. The Five Rivers Council was created to bring together individuals and groups in our region that are striving to build a healthy, equitable, and sustainable community. For further information, please go to [www.fiveriverscouncil.org](http://www.fiveriverscouncil.org), call 413-367-9673.



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## Montague Dog Licenses Available

Montague dog licenses are now available at the town clerk's office. All dogs six months and older must be licensed and tagged each year.

A license for a neutered or spayed dog is \$5.00. A license for an unaltered dog is \$10.00.

The clerk's office requires proof of rabies vaccination and also requires proof of spaying or neutering unless already previously provided. There is a late fee of \$20.00 after June 15th. The town clerk's office is open Monday through Friday 8:30 am to 4:30 pm. For more information you can contact the office at 863-3200, ext 203.

## Happy Valentine's Day to My Wife, Manya

and to the women of the *Montague Reporter* staff

**All My Love, Bud**

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## President's Budget Would Bring Iraq War Total to \$456 Billion

BY ANITA DANCS

**NORTHAMPTON** - President Bush presented a \$2.9 trillion budget to Congress on Monday, February 2007. While the president has requested an additional \$100 billion in war spending for fiscal year 2007, his proposed budget for fiscal year 2008 would cut \$13 billion from programs that serve low- and middle-income Americans, according to the National Priorities Project (NPP), a non-profit, non-partisan research group that studies the local impact of federal policies. An analysis of the President's budget and war spending requests, including state-level breakdowns, are available at the National Priorities Project website, at: [www.nationalpriorities.org/budgetresponse](http://www.nationalpriorities.org/budgetresponse).

Our analysis takes a look at how the President's budget request for fiscal year 2008 would impact each state in several program areas, including: Community Development Block Grants, Head Start, the Low-Income Energy Assistance Program, Special Education, Child Care and Development Block Grants, and the Low-Income Heating Assistance Program (LIHEAP).

The budget request released by the administration proposes

cuts in non-security related discretionary spending. Compared to fiscal year 2006, \$13 billion would be cut from these programs, while another \$100 billion would be added for more war spending, which, if approved, would bring the total spent on the Iraq War to date to \$456 billion.

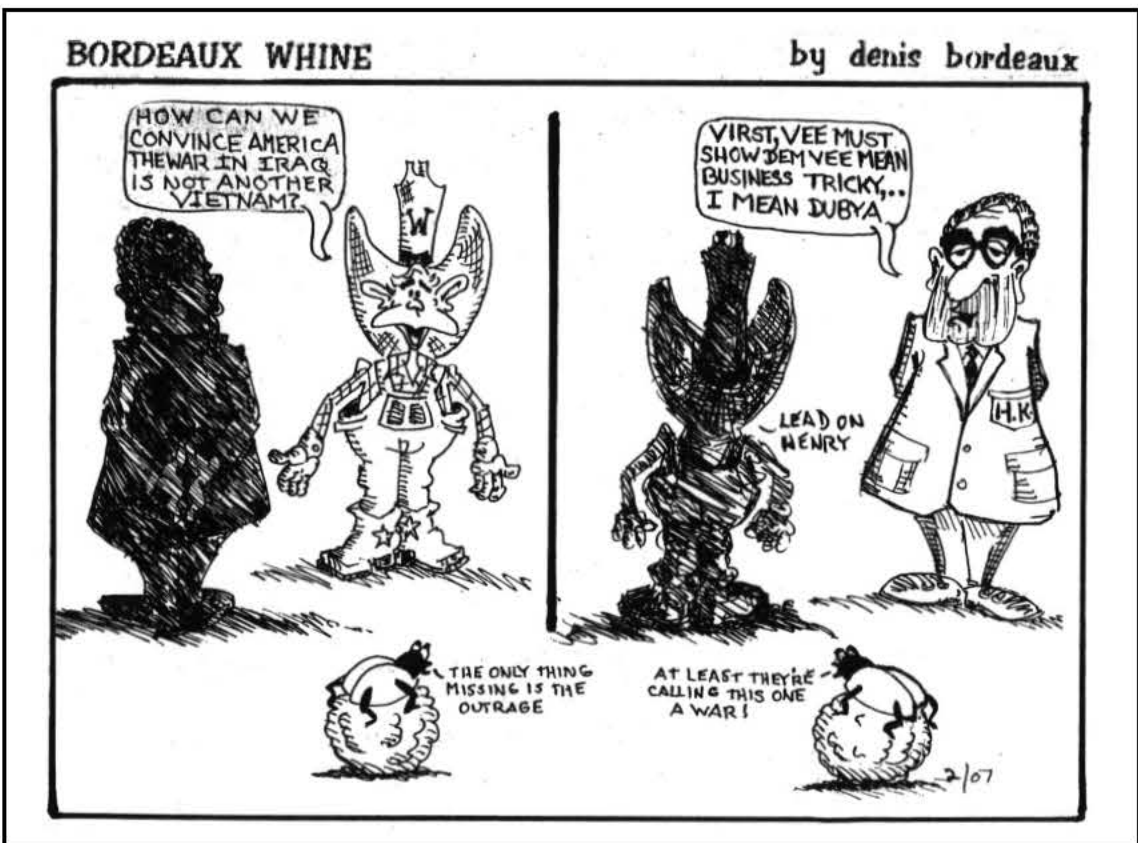
Greg Speeter, executive director of the National Priorities Project, said, "While the tab for the Iraq War continues to skyrocket, the President's proposed budget cuts more dollars from education, health care and a whole host of programs that serve our neediest citizens."

The National Priorities Project's analysis of the cost of the Iraq War, broken down by cities and towns across the country, shows that taxpayers in the town of Montague have contributed \$9,197,032 toward the war, as of 11:45 a.m. on Tuesday, February 6th. Montague taxpayers are continuing to pay for the war at the rate of about \$5 a minute. Taxpayers in the town of Gill have paid \$2,220,504 for the Iraq war, to date, while taxpayers in Erving have given \$1,885,523, and taxpayers in Wendell have put in \$1,387,787 toward the war so far.

By itself, Wendell's contribution toward the war could have paid the salaries of 24 public school teachers for one year. For more comparisons between the cost of war and the costs of domestic spending, go to the National Priorities Project website.

Anita Dancs is the Program Director of the National Priorities Project.

We welcome your letters.  
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FAX (413) 863-3050  
[reporter@montaguema.net](mailto:reporter@montaguema.net)



## GUEST EDITORIAL

### Friends Organize to Support the Montague Reporter

BY LYN CLARK

**TURNERS FALLS** - On Sunday, February 4th, while the Colts were achieving their goals in Miami, a small but dedicated group of Friends of the Montague Reporter were meeting to share ideas as they worked to reach goals of a different sort.

In the dead of winter, the newspaper experiences cash flow problems. The Friends would like to address this gap through a number of creative fundraising ideas that were floated that evening, including: the tried and true Bake Sale; calendars of historic village locations; a book of some of the poems that have appeared in the newspaper; a book of original Reporter cartoons; subscription dinners hosted by outstanding citizen chefs; an annual catered "Big Event" on the order of the Iron Bridge Dinner in Shelburne Falls - but held here along the village riverfront on the Bike

Path; or a Halloween pumpkin event in Peskeomskut Park. The group would welcome ideas from the Reporter's readers, and - as always - their participation.

There are many approaches one might take in raising money to support an organization or cause, and philosophies differ regarding the purpose or goal of the fund-raising. On the one hand, there is the 'specific-purpose' goal that could be advertised in advance to the community, for example, the purchase of (fairly expensive) newspaper racks, or an endowment fund to afford gift subscriptions for people moving into town. On the other hand, the Friends could raise funds specifically to produce a reserve fund on which the organization may draw in time of need. Both approaches were discussed.

Regardless of which approach is taken, raising awareness of the importance of the Montague Reporter's role in

the life of the community and raising money for its ongoing support must be the Friends' main objectives.

Because many who expressed interest were unable to attend that evening, the meeting was continued to Sunday, March 18th at 6:30 p.m. at 24 Third Street, at the Teen Center in Turners Falls. Please, mark that date on your calendar. Everyone in the community who is interested in the future of the newspaper is invited to attend.

Prior to that, on March 3rd, there will be a bake sale at the Wendell Full Moon Coffee House. The Friends are asking for donations of baked goods to sell at that event; several good souls to work the sale (and have a lot of fun!); and music-lovers to attend the coffee house that evening. Markamusic are the featured performers, advertised as "America's Greatest Latin-Andean Fusion Band." See you there!



**American Dead in Iraq as of 2/8/07**

US FORCES Casualties in Iraq as of this date	
Total	3,103
Afghanistan	356
Wounded in Action	23,815

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## GUEST EDITORIAL

# Binding or Non-binding, Montague is in a Bind!

BY PATRICIA PRUITT

On Monday February 5th, Ed Voudren, accompanied by several citizens, presented a petition signed by 1128 Montague citizens seeking to place a binding referendum question on the ballot in May. The selectboard accepted the petition with the understanding that it could go on the ballot only as a non-binding question. (By law the only binding referendum question is that involving a Proposition 2½ override.) With its impressive number of signatures, the petition expressed a clear, concise demand to close Montague Center School.

The focus of this demand to close MCS, as explained by Mr. Voudren, is the cost of needed repairs, updates and required ADA improvements. In short, said Mr. Voudren, enough is enough.

Let me accept for a few paragraphs that this petition is only about the cost of keeping the Montague Center School building open, maintained and ADA compliant. Certainly education costs too much money; unfortunately, as a friend used to complain, too much is never enough! This is certainly the experience of school districts throughout Western Massachusetts and elsewhere. I have a few questions about the cost of improvements at Montague Center School.

How is it that MCS is in need of so much work? The Capital Improvements Committee (CIC) over the years have fairly consistently recommended ADA improvements to the three elementary buildings: most extensively to Hillcrest

(which is ADA compliant now), and to lesser degrees in Sheffield and Montague Center Schools. The idea was to show that the town was making a "good faith" effort to comply with ADA, while still not doing anything that would trigger regulatory demand for total compliance. For example, last fall \$20,000 was appropriated to repair the front stairs at MCS. Those repairs were halted because they would have triggered more extensive compliance requirements. As a result, the minimum work was done. In contrast the CIC appropriated \$30,000 to redo the drop-off area at Hillcrest for safety reasons. That work was accomplished with little or no fanfare.

This approach to maintenance and ADA compliance has been the norm for several years. It amounts to a de facto decision to allow one school building to slide into its present #3 state rating. Should we now be astounded at the price to do what needs doing? Maybe these choices have always been dictated by the lack of funds; maybe there were other more pressing priorities; maybe there was just no federal or state agency breathing down the town's neck. What ever the combination of rationales, it appears from this vantage point as though 1128 citizens are adamant that the MCS, its parents, students, teachers and staff pay the penalty for these earlier decisions not to improve the building or make it ADA compliant.

As a town, maintenance of older buildings has not been our strong suit. I ask you, is it better to continue to use that building

as a vibrant asset in the town or to board it up?

New construction rates are running up to \$300 per square foot. Maybe it is time to revisit what acting in "good faith" means in terms of building maintenance.

To get back to the petition: the only problem I have with it is that it singles out one school which, in fact, has not had the most money invested in it. I wonder if this petition is a prelude to not wanting to pay for any school? Is Sheffield next? Furthermore this petition concerns itself only with the bottom line. As worded, the petition expresses no concern whatsoever for education, for students, staff, parents or teachers. This is what always makes me suspicious of bottom lines: they ignore values, higher goals and any vision for the future. Bottom liners often end up spitting their larger purposes to save a dime (or a hundred thou).

It is one thing to close the building; it is another to convince yourself - as some seem to be doing - that the educational work going on in the school is of marginal importance; that the involvement of parents is not an asset to an educational program; that parental satisfaction is negligible or discountable because they live in an area of higher real estate values; or that their kids are learning skills mainly because of their economic background. These are belittling and devaluing comments for every part of town. They are as useless in guiding us forward as the negative remarks I've heard expressed in other contexts about kids from Turners.

It may be that Dr. Ross accu-

rately characterized many people's attitudes at Monday's selectboard meeting when he noted that those living in Montague Center are better off, i.e., enjoy higher real estate values than those of us in other villages. He suggested that therefore Montague Center folks will fare better educationally than the rest of us in other villages. I don't know if Dr. Ross was speaking from experience or using sociological data. In any case, the doctor and others may wish to build their castle on the sands of economic destiny, but I hope that our school system is built on more solid principles such as the human potential to learn and contribute to the world and the benefit to us all to cultivate that potential.

To many people this economic difference accounts for and allows them to discount the fact that Montague Center School has a highly successful educational program, judging from MCAS scores, range of opportunities for learning, and the school's use of its surrounding environment for learning. This is what grabs me away from an exclusively bottom line focus and reminds me to keep my eye on the purpose of schools. This quality of educational achievement, this practice of kids learning to read, to write, to compute, to speak with confidence, to know their world and identify with their community - all of it is what a school is about. That is its high purpose and ours in helping it to thrive. My vote would have been to close no school, but to seize the opportunity the changing conditions of enrollment offer us.

We have an opportunity as a

District to take advantage of somewhat lower enrollments to redistribute students so smaller classes are possible in all schools. We can implement intra-district choice and a lottery to place kids in our own in-house school choice program. People participate readily in lottery selection for charter schools and to go to other districts. We can do it too for our benefit. Greenfield is this year running an excellent and affordable preschool program in a former elementary school. I see the positive effects of that program on my own grand twins. We can do that also and give our little kids a good start.

Parents, rightly upset about school costs, can take their concerns via letters or petitions to the state level as well. We can work to elect a pro-education president and keep the pressure on the folks we send to Congress. We can re-sort our expectations locally of what schools should provide. If health care is a big expense can we get it cheaper? If a COLA of 3% each is too much for the town or the school to keep up, how about going every other year?

These are challenging times for towns and schools, and for all of us. We are all called upon in various ways to get used to a "less is more" style. I believe if we, as a community, keep our eyes on our purpose educationally, we will be able to set our priorities reasonably well.

*Patricia Pruitt is the chair of the Montague selectboard. The thoughts expressed here are her own, and do not reflect those of the selectboard as a whole.*

## Gay Marriage Under Attack in Massachusetts

BY RICK DODGE

**MONTAGUE CENTER** - This coming May it will be three years since the first same sex couples received marriage licenses from the state of Massachusetts. As predicted by opponents of marriage equality, all Hell has broken loose. I'm not writing about the decline of heterosexual partnership, or the disintegration of the family.

These dire events - and many others - were predicted to come with the arrival of marriage equality. The warnings came from those titans of repressive thought, the four catholic bishops, the local pastors of fundamentalist churches, and the highest elected officials in the state.

We all know the debate that has ensued. Everything from

attacks on gay families by President Bush in two State of the Union speeches; more than thirty states constitutionally banning gay unions, and political leaders like Hillary Clinton, Mitt Romney, and John McCain coming out against gay unions. Locally, as well as statewide, signatures were collected in a petition drive to put the question of gay couples to a statewide

vote in 2008.

These signatures were collected in the fall of 2005, primarily at Catholic and fundamentalist churches. Approximately 4% of Massachusetts voters signed the petition.

The legislature has the next step in the petition process. It has to take two votes in consecutive sessions. These votes require 25% of our elected leg-

islators to vote in favor of the citizen petition, which they did, shortly after New Years Day. On January 2nd, 2007, 62 legislators voted to move the constitutional amendment forward. This is about 30% of our elected legislators voting to advance a referendum that would define marriage as between a man and a woman.

see MARRIAGE pg 6

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**MARRIAGE**

continued from pg 5

The legislature must vote on the referendum again in the 2007-2008 session. In this session, the number of pro gay marriage legislators has increased to at least 145 out of 200. But it only takes 50 anti gay marriage legislators to push the constitutional amendment ahead.

This upcoming second vote in the legislature will likely lead to all Hell breaking loose in the Commonwealth. Tens of millions of dollars would pour into the state from anti gay groups such as Focus on the Family, and the Catholic Church. The presidential

candidates would be asked for their opinion again, and with no pro gay marriage candidate currently on the scene, their voices will add fuel to the fire. Television ads would rake gay people over the coals once again, using centuries old hateful stereotypes to win votes to amend the constitution. Our state has already become ground zero in the marriage debate. The referendum battle will intensify it ten times.

For all my friends who want a popular vote on everything; two reminders. One, this will be a vote to take away a constitutional civil right, analogous to letting Alabama in 1955 vote on extending voting rights to African

Americans. In other words, the majority should not vote on the civil rights of the minority. And secondly, but tied to the majority/minority vote issue, is the sad fact that never in the history of the U.S. has a pro gay rights issue been positively voted on by statewide voters.

If the legislature votes this year or next on the constitutional amendment referendum, and gives it a 25% yes vote then it will go before the voters in 2008. This will happen, but not without a battle. It is no secret that there are many married same sex couples in Montague, and many more gay and lesbian people who may some day seek the cultural and monetary benefit of marriage. Yet tension already exists, as we see from the lists of voters who signed the referendum petition. This will only get worse if the question appears on next year's ballot.

In the many visits I have made to the State House in the past years, I have seen the vicious nature of the opposition to gay people, but I have also seen the great organizational skills of gays and lesbians and their allies. Hundreds upon hundreds of religious leaders have supported same sex marriage in Massachusetts, noting that

marriage in a religious setting is a different scenario altogether from the marriage license one picks up at a city or town hall. It is heartening that the progressive religious community is standing up against bigotry.

It is also a good thing to have nearly three quarters of the legislature on the marriage equality side, including our local legislators. In the western, eastern and northern Springfield suburbs, however, a mixture of Democrats and Republicans, are opposed to marriage equality. Indeed, these elected officials hold the balance in moving the constitutional amendment forward.

It is my hope that the marriage equality side can pick up the last few votes needed to stop the amendment from advancing. If that fails, then the gay and lesbian community is really going to need your help.

My friends who have married have an average of 22 years together. Some have children; some do not. All see their marriage as part of the century long struggle for gay and lesbian civil rights. It was not that long ago that one could be fired from a job, denied child custody, be put in jail and generally isolated

from society just for being gay. In Massachusetts, these violations of rights began to change with the passage of the gay civil rights bill 18 years ago. Most states do not have these simple but vital protections in place. It was no coincidence that Massachusetts was the first state to accept complete marriage equality.

National conservative leaders are just waiting to step in and eliminate marriage equality in Massachusetts. If they can stop it here, then the chance of further marriage victories would be limited. That is why they will put huge resources into the referendum question in 2008. We must all work together to deny them this victory.

A Western Massachusetts community meeting will take place this Sunday, February 11th, from 3 - 5 p.m. at the Unitarian Meeting-house in Northampton.



**MCTV Schedule**

Channel 17: February 9th - February 15th

<p><b>Barton Cove Eagles:</b> 7A-8A Daily, 2P-3P Daily, 4P-5P Daily, 10:30A - 12:30P (Tuesday), 10:00A - 12:30P (Wednesday)</p> <p><b>Friday, February 9</b> 8:00 am Discovery Center Presents: "What's Happening with the Eagles" 9:00 am Montague Selectboard 2/5/07 10:00 am Conservation Workshop: "Listen To The River" 12:00 pm Montague Update: David Detmold 1:00 pm Positive Profiles in Courage 6:00 pm NASA Destination Tomorrow #6 6:30 pm Journey to Wissatinnewag 7:00 pm GMRSD meeting 1/30/07 9:00 pm Living In The Shadow of Vermont Yankee</p> <p><b>Saturday, February 10</b> 8:00 am NASA Destination Tomorrow #6 8:30 am Journey To Wissatinnewag 9:00 am GMRSD meeting 1/30/07 11:00 am Living in the Shadow of Vermont Yankee 6:00 pm The Well Being: "Walk Yourself Well" 7:00 pm Friends Coffee House Series: Falltown String Band 9:00 pm Conservation workshop: "Listen to the River" 11:00 pm Rev. Carlos Anderson: "Cost of Freedom"</p>	<p><b>Sunday, February 11</b> 8:00 am The Well Being: "Walk Yourself Well" 9:00 am Friends Coffee House Series: Falltown String Band 11:00 am Conservation Workshop: Listen To the River 1:00 pm Rev. Carlos Anderson: "Cost of Freedom" 6:00 pm Wind Changer 10/17 #4 6:30 pm Montague Music Train 8:00 pm Discovery Center Presents: "What's Happening with the Eagles" 9:00 pm Montague Update: Josh Goldman 10:00 pm Prevailing Winds in Denmark</p> <p><b>Monday, February 12</b> 8:00 am Wind Changer 10/17 #4 8:30 am Montague Music Train 10:00 am Discovery Center Presents: "What's Happening with the Eagles" 11:00 am Montague Update: Josh Goldman 12:00 pm Prevailing Winds Denmark 6:00 pm An Interview with Steve Alves 7:00 pm Montague Select Board (Live) 10:00 pm There and Back with Karen Adams 11:00 pm Mass Wildemess: Winter</p> <p><b>Tuesday, February 13</b> 8:00 am An Interview with Steve Alves 9:00 am There and Back</p>	<p>With Karen Adams 10:00 am Mass Wildemess: Winter 6:30 pm GED Connection #27 7:00 pm GMRSD Meeting (Live) 10:30pm The Well Being " Walk Yourself Well"</p> <p><b>Wednesday, February 14</b> 8:00 am GED Connection #27 8:30 am The Well Being: "Walk Yourself Well" 6:30 pm NASA Destination Tomorrow #6 7:00 pm GED Connection # 28 7:30 pm Discovery Center Presents: "Tracking The Wily Coyote" 9:30 pm Montague Music Train 1/9/07 10:30 pm MCTV Year In Review</p> <p><b>Thursday, February 15</b> 8:00 am NASA Destination Tomorrow #6 8:30 am GED Connection # 28 9:00 am Discovery Center Presents: "Tracking The Wily Coyote" 11:00 am Montague Music Train 1/9/07 12:00 pm MCTV Year In Review 6:00 pm An Interview with Steve Alves 7:00 pm Montague Select Board 2/12/07 8:00 pm Friends Coffee House Series: Falltown String Band 10:00 pm Montague Update: Dave Lovelace 11:30 pm Positive Profiles In Courage</p>
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**HIGHLIGHTS OF THE ERVING POLICE LOG**

**Talking Cell Phones with Seniors**

**Wednesday 1-31**  
9:55 a.m. After a motor vehicle stop on Lester Street, a criminal application was issued to [redacted] for operating with a suspended license, failure to wear a seatbelt, and failure to inspect.

**Thursday 2-1**  
12:00 p.m. 911 hang up call from a Lillian's Way address. Spoke with subject, accidentally dialed.

**Friday 2-2**  
7:19 p.m. Assisted Fire

Department and Orange ambulance with medical emergency on Mountain Road.

**Sunday 2-4**  
10:20 p.m. Security check at Prospect Heights found side door to the garage open. Checked the vehicles parked inside. Nothing appeared out of place. Locked and secured door.

**Monday 2-5**  
11:45 a.m. Met with Seniors at Senior Center regarding cell phone program.

**Historical Reading**

**GREENFIELD** - Joseph A. Parzych will read and sign copies of Jep's Place: Hope, Faith, and Other Disasters, 7:30 p.m. on Tuesday, February 20th at the Greenfield Historical Commission Museum on the corner of Church and Union Street in Greenfield. The memoir is about growing up in a family of 13 children at the end of a dirt road on a small farm in Gill without electricity or running water. The talk will include memories of Parzych's work on the section gang of the B & M Railroad over 50 years ago, at age 16.

**Peace Service**

The Interfaith Council of Franklin County will sponsor a Peace Service at 7 p.m. Sunday, February 11th at Temple Israel, 27 Pierce Street, Greenfield. The event is titled "Ain't Gonna Study War No More: An Evening of Song, Story and Prayer for Peace" and is coordinated by Rabbi Efraim Eisen of Temple Israel. The service is open to the public.

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**GUEST EDITORIAL**

# North Street Land Chronology

**BY MICHAEL BOSWORTH**  
**MONTAGUE CENTER** - The "Bridge too Far" article in the February 1st edition of the *Reporter* covered the taking down of a temporary bridge over the Sawmill River off North Street in Montague Center. There is now no easy access to land across the river that is owned by Massachusetts Fish and Wildlife and open for public use for village residents and visitors.



*Shaded areas mark the land preserved in Montague Center.*

As one of the people who was closely involved with the fund-raising that helped set aside these lands for the pleasure of future generations, I thought it would be helpful to review the history of the effort, and I happen to have kept my notebook from that time. A solution to the current access issue may be a better-designed bridge that Mass Fish and Wildlife could approve of. Such a bridge would cost money, of course, so future citizen-led fund-raising may be needed. Furthermore, a look back at the earlier effort may help Fish and Wildlife understand the importance of the land to the local community.

A group of us began meeting in 1989. We called ourselves the Friends of the Sawmill River. Our initial goals were general in nature, to help conserve and protect land along and near the Sawmill River in Montague Center. We eventually concentrated on the project of the 50 contiguous acres at the end of North Street, spread on both sides of the river, owned by the Garbiel family. We ended up raising \$50,000 toward purchasing this land.

We were always an informal group, with no officers or bylaws. We would rotate meetings between our homes, and we met monthly and sometimes more often for about two years.

What precipitated our coming

together was hearing that the Garbiels wanted to sell some of their land. This included the property off North Street, and also the 15-acre field on Leverett Road just south of the village's well. The land off North Street was already near and dear to the hearts of many villagers, as the Garbiels allowed the public to use it for such activities as dog walking, skiing, fishing and hunting. The land on Leverett Road was more important for aquifer protection for the well, and for the general 'open space feel' when approaching the village from the south.

The article in last week's *Reporter* tells of the interactive, felt map we used to survey visitors to Olde Home Days in August 1989. This map allowed a person to place markers indicating the activities they enjoyed most on the land off North Street. The results affirmed what we already felt, that people put a very high value on being able to use the land.

We began seeking assistance from land protection professionals. We talked to Keith Ross of Mt. Grace Land Trust and Mark Zenick of Franklin Land Trust. Mt. Grace gave us a lot of assistance. We began to raise a small amount of money, and Mt. Grace acted as the non-profit that kept our funds (thus donations were tax deductible).

Sometime near the beginning of 1990, the Garbiels put the land off North Street on the market through Massamont Realty. At the same time they listed the Leverett Road property. Having the land on the market increased our worry that it might be developed. Our efforts went into higher gear, and we also decided to focus on just the acres off North Street.

The Friends put on three public forums in 1990. The first was held in February in the Congregational Church basement and concentrated on water quality issues. Lynn Rubinstein, the Franklin County Land Use Planner at the time, addressed the attendees. The second, on "What's Special about the Sawmill River," took place in June at the Montague Mill. The third was specifically about the land off North Street, and took place at the Montague Center Fire Station in October.

Jeanne Weintraub designed a T-shirt with the village, mill and stream logo that we consistently used thereafter for all our publications. Micky McKinley's husband Samuel Green put together our brochures and fliers.

That same year, David Kaynor organized a benefit contradance at the Grange in November. Al Ross led the organizing of the very first of the Sawmill River runs at the end of December, where the profit was over \$800 for our cause. (Mike McCusker would be the first male finisher in this race and Leslie Maerki the first female.) More money was raised at the next year's Run.

We continued fundraising during the first half of 1991. Karl von Kries, the youngest member of the Friends, wanted to put on a rock concert upstairs in the old Town Hall building, above the library. On Saturday, March 9th the band Minibus Sandwich

played rock, ska and funk and Borderland continued the rock theme. Unfortunately, the thought of a rock concert in that setting had some of us squeamish from the start. We did not help Karl much with the promotion and not a lot of people attended. While it did raise \$175, the concert also proved loud enough that neighbors called the police resulting in a shutdown around 11 pm!

Roger Tincknell organized a "Way Down upon a Sawmill River" concert in April, followed by another Dave Kaynor-led contradance benefit the very next evening. The contradance was preceded by a showing of a film produced by Rawn Fulton called *Root Hog or Die*, about life in rural Franklin County.

We had an independent appraisal done on the land, partly paid for by Mt. Grace Land Trust, by the Montague Conservation Commission and by the Franklin County Planning Office from special Earth Day funds. Keith Ross of Mt. Grace attempted to arrive at a selling price with the Garbiels in 1990. Negotiations were unsuccessful, however, and things remained in wait and see mode for a time.

On May 28th, 1991 we talked directly to Walter Garbiel, the patriarch of the family and a long time Montague selectboard member. He and his family did want to sell the land, it being of less value to the farm business than other of their holdings, but he also seemed amenable to working with townspeople. Terry Blunt, of the Massachusetts Department of Environmental Management and a board member of the Valley Land Trust, now entered the picture and had luck working with the family. By early fall of 1991, an option to purchase the land off North Street for \$110,000 was agreed upon, and the Garbiels said they would need \$50,000 of that by the end of the year in order to secure the deal.

The Friends of the Sawmill River now redoubled its efforts. Through private conversations, phone calls and mailings, \$20,000 was committed before we went more public with our

campaign. Over 80 people from Montague and surrounding towns ended up making contributions. A \$3,000 donation from the Montague Conservation Commission put us over the \$30,000 mark.

We still had a substantial gap to fill, and Terry Blunt and the Valley Land Fund helped us gain a challenge grant of \$10,000 from the New York-based Sweet Water Foundation. Since this was a matching grant it enabled us to reach our \$50,000 goal by the end of December!

There was, however, still the weighty matter of the remaining \$60,000. Because of their mission, Massachusetts Fish and Wildlife was the best candidate to help with this since the land included both a well-known fishing stream and fields where bird hunting took place. The decision to work with Fish and Wildlife, however, was not an easy one as some of those who had donated were most particularly against hunting taking place on the land, but in the end we agreed that having Fish and Wildlife step in was the only viable option. They came up with the remaining \$60,000 to complete the \$110,000 purchase and take title to the land.

The Friends of the Sawmill River disbanded not too long after, though continuing to weigh in on such matters as the Leverett Road land. Some of those involved would stay with conservation issues for many years. For example, Micky McKinley, Al Ross and John O'Keefe would all become board members of Mt. Grace Land Trust. Some said their thanks through contributing thereafter to the Valley Land Fund and Mt. Grace.

Most especially, people took advantage of what they and the Friends accomplished by continuing to love the land for fishing, skiing (when there's snow!), walking their dogs, bird watching and other activities. This opportunity for enjoyment of open space is the legacy also for those who are more recent arrivals to the area. This is what we would always like Massachusetts Fish and Wildlife to keep an understanding of.

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# PETITION continued from pg 1

mention was made of this at the selectboard hearing on the 5th, parents who have been involved in the petition drive have stated their goal is not only to close Montague Center School, but also to keep Hillcrest Elementary School open.

Voudren began by saying, "I've been asked by a group of concerned taxpayers of the town of Montague to deliver to the [selectboard] a petitioned article from fellow citizens of the town of Montague. The basis of the petition," he said, was summarized by a quote from Thomas Jefferson, third president of the United States: "The force of public opinion can not be resisted when permitted freely to be expressed. Whenever the people are well informed, they can be trusted with their own government."

He proceeded to read the petition. "We the undersigned instruct the Board of Selectmen to place a binding article on the 2007 annual ballot that requires the Town of Montague to permanently close the Montague Center School building by September 1st, 2007."

"There is exactly 1128 signatures of registered voters on this petition," said Voudren. "We trust the selectboard to place it forward with honor and dignity and place it forward as the people have requested. The people that signed this petition, the people that worked on this petition, I'm very proud of them. They didn't sling around any mud. They looked at the issues. They took their heartfelt convictions on this article, they took it forward out into the community with their neighbors and friends and voters and got the petitions signed. And I congratulate them on the hard work they've done on the issue, without making it worse than it already is."

Selectboard chair Patricia Pruitt, who once faced an intransigent selectboard majority headed by Voudren when she was part of a petition drive to force a reconsideration of the vote to strip Montague Community Cable Television of the town's cable access assignment, said, "I think it is always important that citizens get involved and make their points of view heard." In December of 2001, Voudren joined then selectboard member Sam Lovejoy in voting against the overwhelming advisory vote of a special town meeting, called by citizen petition, and gave the cable access assignment to

Greenfield Community Television.

Pruitt continued, "We do not have a provision for putting a binding referendum on the ballot. We can put a non-binding question on. We have checked with counsel on this."

Voudren replied, "You need to have a non-binding referendum on this. It's very straightforward. The language is very boilerplate. That is what the people of the town of Montague want to see. They want it to be binding because they do not want it [Montague Center School] to continue. The expression there of the 1128 voters is we need to go forward. We need to move on. They don't feel they were fairly represented as taxpayers in this decision. And they understand that building is part of their permanent infrastructure, never purchased by the school district. It belongs to them, and they want it shut down."

Pruitt quoted from a legal opinion from the town's counsel, Kopelman and Paige.

"Absent authorizing legislation, which is a lengthy process, as you know, 'the Board of Selectmen is not empowered to place a binding question on an election ballot. The Board of Selectmen may only act as specifically authorized by state statute. State law disfavors local government by referendum, and limits the occasions by which the Selectmen may use a referendum process to very limited and specific circumstances, for example, to place a Proposition 2½ override question on the ballot.' So that is the position we are in, by statute."

She continued, "We are allowed to place a non-binding question by petition on the ballot, to allow local government and the voters to take the measure of public opinion on matters of policy."

Board member Pat Allen proposed the board vote to place the question of permanently closing the Montague Center School on the May ballot as a non-binding article, pending review of counsel, and board member Allen Ross seconded her motion, which carried unanimously.

Voudren said, "I don't think the group would argue with that."

In response to a question from the floor, the board affirmed that only the school committee has authority to actually close a school, since the elementary school buildings are leased by the town to the regional school district.

While he did not specifically refer to the petition drive to save

Montague Community Television, which he opposed as selectboard chair, despite the more than 1000 signatures of registered Montague voters it contained, Voudren went on, "This is an issue that has come forth from the taxpayers. Very rarely have I seen a public outpouring by signatures such as this. So I would urge the board to do whatever they need to do to follow through on the wish of the people."

Pruitt rejoined, "I would just like to point out, 1100 signatures, plus, that's an impressive number, but it is not all the taxpayers."

Voudren countered, "In a contested presidential race, we get 1500 voters. When we had the Proposition 2½ vote, that was roughly 900 voters. This is 1100. The people have spoken, I believe."

Allen said, "It's unfortunate when the petition was created someone did not find out that we were not in a position to put a binding referendum on the ballot."

Ross said the town of Montague could no longer support "small, charming" schools like Montague Center. He said he favored the campus model of elementary education. He said an influx of students from Montague Center, where, in his opinion, high property values correlate to positive educational outcomes for students, could lead to a reenergized elementary education for all Montague students.

From the back of the room, Marie Colton, of Main Street in Montague Center said, "The school committee held forums, after 2½ years of studying the issue. There was lots of room for input. The school committee looks at these issues in depth. That's the point of having a school committee. They look at all the material." Speaking of the petition drive, Colton said, "There has been a lot of misinformation. I am just concerned with the direction of this. Rather than try to work together, it's a negative." Referring to the Montague Center School, she said, "There were many petitions to keep the school open. We gathered 900 signatures in three days during a Nor'Easter to keep Anna Garbiel in her position," as principal of Montague Center School in 2003.

Finance committee chair Jeff Singleton said, "A petition drive to close a good school does not create a good image for our town"

He added, "Jefferson did not believe in government by referendum."

## Town Common Protest Sign

The selectboard heard from Taylor Hill Road resident Eric Chester about the fate of a permitted war protest sign he had placed on the Montague Center town common over the past two weeks. The sign, according to Chester, had been vandalized on three different occasions, including one time when the hinges were broken and the signboard smashed. The sign read, "US Out of Iraq Now," and "Stop US Imperialism."

Chester said, "After six months of debate, the board passed some rules and made the Montague Center town common a free speech zone." Three different incidents of vandalism in three weeks is not a "very good record," Chester said. "It doesn't

What that sign said, in the first place, it's a downright disgrace.

"I was born in this town. I have never, ever seen a sign on the common, never. In Greenfield, if you have a sign, then stand with it. If you've got enough guts to say it, then stand there with it. In other words, keep your damn sign gone. There's no need of this. There's enough uproar in that country [Iraq], and everywhere today, without stirring the pot in a quiet, peaceful town. I'll bet you dollars to donuts Mr. Chester you don't come from Montague. You're an out-of-stater, and you don't really care. But I was born here, and this town means a lot to me."

Ross told her, "Just like the crèche is on the town common, that's a public expression, just like a political sign."

Jablonski interrupted him. "If you want to put a menorah on the end of my field, fine. I don't care." To Chester she said, "Everybody in the town of Montague should put a crèche on their front lawn. That would be my revenge to you."

Chester responded, "I don't understand these questions about 'Where were you born?' I was born in the United States. I'm a United States citizen. I have constitutional rights. It's up to the town of Montague and the state to respect these rights."

"The federal court, also provided for in the Constitution, ruled that if you're going to allow a Nativity Scene to go up - and the town didn't have to allow that, it was a decision the town made - you have to have content neutral rules. If you have content neutral rules, which the town passed, then I'm going to exercise my free speech rights. I could care less if you put Nativity Scenes up on private property. The town common is public property. It is now a free speech zone. The town determined that. Once the sign is up, if someone destroys it, they should be prosecuted."

Chester said he would be seeking permits to put up more signs on the town common soon, and urged others in town to do likewise.

## In Other Business

The town signed letters of intent to seek \$350,000 in Community Development Block Grant funding to repair sidewalks on Unity Street, 7th Street and Silver Street. Repair of these walks is a priority, town administrator Frank Abbondanzio said, because they are used by children walking to the elementary school

see PETITION pg 9

**"Everybody in the town of Montague should put a crèche on their front lawn. That would be my revenge to you."  
- Norma Jablonski of E. Taylor Hill Rd speaking to Eric Chester on Feb. 5**

show much respect for civil liberties in the town of Montague." Chester called on the selectboard to make a clear statement defending their decision to create free speech zones at Peskeomskut Park in Turners Falls and on the Montague Center town common. He also urged the board to call in the state police if future signs or displays are vandalized.

"The state police have the resources to find out who did it and to prosecute them. The people who are destroying my sign, it's a serious crime. These people are consciously trying to violate my civil liberties. That's a hate crime," under Massachusetts statute, Chester said.

Allen responded, "I think it is absolutely outrageous. I don't understand why people are doing this. I don't understand why people can't leave others alone. It can't be tolerated. Your idea of talking to the state police is a good one."

Another Taylor Hill resident, Norma Jablonski, rose to address the board on the topic of free standing political signs on the Montague town common.

"It's a shame," she said. "That green is for beautiful things, not like the sign we saw last week. If anyone wants to put up a sign in the town of Montague, let them put it up on their own property."




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# Petitions Reviewed by Town Clerk

BY KEVIN FOLEY

**MONTAGUE** - Stacks of petitions calling for the closing of the Montague Center School were handed to town clerk Deborah Bourbeau on Wednesday morning, February 7th. By Wednesday afternoon, Bourbeau and her assistant Mandy Hampp were given the daunting task of verifying signatures and determining if the people who signed the petition were registered voters of the town of Montague.

On Tuesday, the selectboard received an advisory opinion from attorney Rich Bowen of the law firm Kopelman and Paige which said, "The board may place a non-binding question on the ballot on its own initiative." The town had sought legal advice because the wording of the petitioned article had called for a binding ballot question to close the Montague Center School by September 1st, 2007. On Monday, the selectboard told Ed Voudren, a spokesperson for the group that presented the petition, that state law prohibited citizens from placing a binding question on a town election ballot by petition. The board voted unanimously to place the same question on the May ballot as a non-binding question, but asked counsel's advice as to whether the citizen's group should gather more signatures calling for a non-binding question. But Bowen said the town "doesn't need a new petition."



DAVOL PHOTO

Assistant town clerk Mandy Hampp and town clerk Deb Bourbeau went over the petitions handed in by the Concerned Taxpayers of Montague, to verify the signatures of registered voters on Wednesday.

On Monday, former selectboard chair Voudren told the board the petitions contained the signatures of 1128 registered Montague voters. On Wednesday, a review of the petitions found they contained a total of 1106 signatures.

A random sample of eight of the 56 pages of petitions found that 26% of the 141 names on those pages could not be verified as names of voters registered in the town of Montague. Signatures were not counted as registered voters if they were not on the voter list supplied by the town clerk, or if their name and street address were illegible. Some of those names were found to be names of people living in Gill, some signers were found to be too young to register to vote, some were unregistered, some were illeg-

ible, and one signer had died since signing the petition.

A large majority of people that signed the petition also indicated which voting precinct they lived in. From the entire list of names, people who indicated which voting precinct they lived in broke down as follows: Precinct 1 (Montague Center): 4% of the signers, Precinct 2 (Millers Falls and Lake Pleasant): 6%, Precinct 3 (the Hill, east): 27%, Precinct 4 (the Hill, west): 32%, Precinct 5 (downtown Turners Falls): 5%, and Precinct 6 (Montague City and the Patch): 15%.

Bourbeau, who reviewed the signatures on the petition, said she was surprised about the number of people from Montague Center who signed the petition.

## PETITION

continued from pg 8

or schools. The part of town where these walks are located meets income eligibility requirements for CDBG funding, and the walks in question are listed as being in poor quality in the recent FRCOG survey of roads and sidewalks in the town of Montague.

## New Police Station May Cost \$5 Million

The town also received news of the completed space needs assessment for the proposed safety complex, or new police station, to be built adjacent to the Turners Falls fire station, from the project's design consultant, Jacunski Humes Architects. The consultant has estimated a total of 16,600 square feet will be

needed for the new police station, not including the sally port. At \$3 per square foot, Allen estimated the new building could wind up costing the town about \$5 million.

"I think that is kind of large," Allen said.

The board has said it plans to bring a proposal to build a new police station to town meeting this year.

## HIGHLIGHTS OF THE MONTAGUE POLICE LOG

### Stolen: Four Tires, One Wallet and 30-40 Pens

#### Thursday 2-1

7:20 a.m. Report of a larceny at a Millers Falls address. Four tires were stolen from bed of a truck. Under investigation.

12:13 p.m. Report of a domestic disturbance at a 4th Street address.

[REDACTED] was arrested and charged with domestic assault and battery.

#### Friday 2-2

12:22 a.m. Report of a domestic disturbance at a Turner Street, Lake Pleasant address.

[REDACTED] was arrested on a default warrant.

10:19 a.m. walk-in to station reported a larceny at Exxon on 3rd street. A wallet was stolen from a car three days earlier. Report taken.

8:42 p.m. Seven calls reporting loud noises and explosions. Found to be fireworks at Eagle Brook School.

#### Saturday 2-3

7:56 p.m. After a motor vehicle stop on Millers Falls Road by Stewart's,

[REDACTED] was arrested on a default warrant.

#### Sunday 2-4

1:21 a.m. Report of a motor vehicle accident on Millers Falls Road just past Hillside plastics.

[REDACTED] was arrested and charged with operating under the influence of liquor and leaving the scene of a property damage accident.

#### Monday 2-5

9:53 a.m. Report of fraud at Family Dollar on Avenue A. Counterfeit \$20 was found. Under investigation.

2:12 p.m. Report of a larceny at Brooks Pharmacy on Avenue A. Thirty to forty pens were stolen from the loading dock. Report taken.

8:10 p.m. After a motor vehicle stop on 5th Street,

[REDACTED] was arrested and charged with operating with a suspended license and operating an uninsured motor vehicle.

#### Tuesday 2-6

5:54 a.m. Report of a fight at the Farren Emergency Shelter on Farren Avenue.

[REDACTED] was arrested and charged with assault and battery on a police officer, disorderly conduct, and disturbing the peace.

## Montague Center School Potluck


On Friday, February 9th a family potluck supper will be held at 5:30 p.m. for all MCS families at the Montague Center School. The evening will include skating on the pond, weather permitting, and board games. The event is sponsored by the Montague Center PTO.

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## Film Review

# Hidden Landscape

BY DAVID BRULE

**GREAT FALLS** - It is February 1st, the night of the full Snow Moon, and people are gathering in the hall of the old mill on the banks of the Great Falls. Tribal peoples from the Wampanoag, Mohawk, and Narragansett tribes are present, scattered throughout the seventy-five or so people quietly waiting. Native peoples and the rest of us, potential allies, waited. Most of us were on the verge of a voyage of discovery this evening. We were gathered in the Discovery Center after all! What most of us didn't know, but were about to find out, was that the Hidden Landscape portrayed by Theodore Timreck in his film, was all around us in our valley and hills, and we were about to learn how to see into it.

"This film is not offered as politics, not as science. It is offered as art." And with that, Timreck began the premier presentation of his film, a work still in progress. The filmmaker is a research associate with the Arctic Studies Center of the Smithsonian's National Museum of Natural History.

The film opened with some historical perspective, giving us context in the linear European way, in which to peer into and learn about the cyclical, four dimensional native people's sense of time. Timreck introduced us to generations of antiquarians who investigated the ancient stone formations and mounds in our national landscape and who often applied faulty scientific techniques with enthusiasm, determination, and visionary imagination. These antiquarians kept the mystery of sacred places alive through the colonial and modern eras of this country by wondering, exploring and questioning until finally, in this century, non-native people have begun listening and perhaps moving to action to protect these sites.

The film took us far afield, through landscapes far and near,

from Vermont and New Hampshire to Labrador, the Dingle Peninsula in the west of Ireland, to Stonehenge, to Carnac in the west of Brittany. Although this historical and geographical perspective also included visits to sites in Ohio, Virginia, Kentucky, a good part of Timreck's film focused more on some recently discovered stone ruins in our own region. Hills, forests, ledges and outcroppings, glacial erratics materialized in familiar shapes. This was our landscape, our hills and rivers. We were reminded that 450 generations of native people (12,000 years in linear terms) had kept this part of the world in a state of harmony and balance, and that they had left signs of their time spent here. We were reminded that there are places still around us, sacred places revered by generations of tribal peoples, many kept secret up to now, that are in danger.

When the lights came on, after 90 minutes of intriguing film, Doug Harris, Tribal Historic Preservation Officer for the Narragansetts stepped to the front of the hall, and took us to the next level of understanding. His message was carefully woven, using calm and inclusive language, circular open gestures to illustrate his meaning. He evoked the Pocumtuck, the native people who inhabited this spot, who had lived here for 12,000 years. He evoked the Great Falls, next to which we

were assembled, which had always been a place of truce, peace and harmony. Was it not true, he asked, that we are in need of peace, balance and harmony now, more than ever? Harris said the native peoples here before us knew, as do their descendants, the sites in this landscape that were honored for thousands of years, places where the physical world and the spiritual world met together in balance.

The tribal peoples now need the help of allies. "There are not enough of us to go around," said Harris. On the local level, Harris asked his audience to enter a pact with one another, towns and tribes, to protect these sacred sites. The United South and Eastern Tribes Association has been working on a way to reach out to non-native people so that all may assume stewardship of these sites in the Hidden Landscape.

The assembly in the long hall drew to a close, with small groups lingering, getting acquainted and re-acquainted. Outside, the full moon with a wide snow ring shone down through the frosty air. Geese slept on the rocking dark waters of the Connecticut not two hundred yards from us, the eagles shifted on their perch near the nest towering over the cove. Each of us left with our own thoughts about what to do with this new inspiration, what path next to take.



Native American storytellers Loril Moondream and Peter Whitefox will appear at Northfield Mountain on Saturday, February 24th, from 7:00 - 8:00 p.m. See page 3

## PILOTS from pg 1

doing."

Airport commissioner Gary Collins said the commission is very satisfied with Sweeney's performance. "He's saving the town all kinds of money." He pointed to the imminent harvesting of trees to make way for the 1200-foot runway expansion as one way in which new revenues will be brought in to the airport this year.

(Numbers for the airport revenues were not immediately available from Montague finance committee chair Jeff Singleton, reached by phone. Singleton said the airport's annual budget request to the town had increased from \$46,596 to \$49,610 for the coming budget year.)

But several pilots interviewed spoke of the loss of a feeling of cooperation between management and airport users, and a nostalgia for the way things once were. "It was the friendliest, most wonderful airport to go to," said one pilot whose father, who also used to fly out of Turners Falls, began taking him to the Turners airport in 1940. "It's one of the prettiest airports to land at, nestled in the bend of the river." This pilot, who declined to have his comments attributed by name for fear of retribution, said, "Before we lost our mechanic and avionics people, you used to go over there to visit with the aeronautics community." But now, "The Turners Falls Airport is becoming a ghost town," he said.

Fairbrother countered this impression by saying, "We're trying to bring ourselves up to good operating standards, for the pilots and for the town, which is footing the bill for this." Before the current commissioners and Sweeney took charge, Fairbrother said, "The infrastructure was falling apart," including a third of the runway lights out, beacons not working, and an obsolete VASI landing system now slated for replacement. "Bills had gone unpaid for years," added Fairbrother. "We've gone to great lengths to make sure all leases are in

order."

But those updated leases are a source of much of the tension that has been simmering between the pilots who use the airport and Sweeney, who they claim has been punitive to pilots with pre-existing leases, and aggressive in his attempts to increase lease fees to the point where he is driving away business.

Kip Miskinis, an electronics store owner in Turners Falls who said he had been piloting airplanes at the airport for 30 years, now owns a Piper Comanche 250 retractable, and a hangar at the airport. He said when he bought the hangar, the previous manager, Larry Beaudoin had told him he would be assigned a lease at the same rate as the former owner, but when Sweeney came on board, he tripled the lease fee, from 23 cents a square foot, "which is typical for small airports around here," to 65 cents a square foot, for non-commercial pilots. He said he had received a quote from the nearby Orange Airport for \$705 a year for his hangar. He is paying \$1,248 a year at Turners now.

"I was told I would have to cease and desist," said Miskinis, until he signed the new lease. "But they had me over a barrel," since he had already purchased the hangar. "Other people left because of harassment," he said.

He said Sweeney told him he could no longer keep a television in his hangar, or a couch, or a coffee table, or a bicycle which he kept hanging on the wall to ride over to the nearby Pioneer Aviation office. "The FAA says you cannot use hangars for storage, but these are not business related items. These are personal."

Miskinis said the rates for commercial leaseholders at the airport have increased far more steeply than for non-commercial pilots. Commercial leases are now rated at \$3.52 a square foot, as compared to 25 cents a square foot in Orange, he said. Miskinis said the Orange Airport manager, Len Bedaw, told him business at the Orange Airport is up at least 52% in the last two years.

see PILOTS pg 11

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**BOOK REVIEW**

# Courage of Conviction

## A BIOGRAPHY OF WILLIAM TURNER BY LARRY CADRAN

REVIEWED BY FRAN HEMOND

Larry Cadran has written an eminently readable and informative narrative biography of William Turner, the namesake of Turners Falls. The Captain is remembered as the leader of the tragic incident of the Falls Fight in 1676. His actual place in the history of the time is not understood. *Courage of Conviction* is a telling title, and all of us who think we understand the reality of us earthlings may think again.

Cadran grew up in Turners Falls, and is well acquainted with the historical scene. Local historian Lionel Girard encouraged his interest in research. This book is the result. Cadran's bibliography and glossary, maps and records of the times are treasures in themselves.

Turner starts out in an England torn by Royalist and Puritan struggle, which made the common man cannon fodder for the controlling side in the fac-

tional strife. He escaped to Jamestown from the English civil war, but after experiencing the disillusioning tragedy of that colony moved on to New England.

Will Turner was a competent tailor and apparently a charismatic man. His skills made him an asset to any community, but his strong conviction as a Baptist and his refusal to submit to the outward religious forms demanded by the group in power made life in Boston difficult.

Cadran tells an almost unbelievable story of Turner's family life, his eventual year in jail for his religious beliefs, his wife's death and his friends' support of his family. At this time, the western towns had been so ravaged by King Philip's War that the Boston government was mandating the evacuation of Hatfield and the towns on the western side of the Connecticut River. Anyone, prisoners included, who could raise a company of soldiers

would be given a commission as their captain.

Cadran includes the stories of many of the leaders and participants on both sides of this struggle of mind and land as background for this narrative biography of Will Turner. The story ends in his death at Turners Falls, the salvation of the colonists' Western Massachusetts villages, and the preservation of the May 19th, 1676 event in his name.

The narrative acknowledges Cadran's Native American mentor, Roger McLeod, of the University of Massachusetts at Lowell, alias Sagamo Pawa Matagamon, of the Greater Lowell Indian Council for the perspective of the Indians in the battle for their country.

As Cadran states, Will Turner's experience with intolerance in government may well have been one of the markers which led to our Constitution to mandate the separation of church and state.

### PILOTS from pg 10

Josh Simpson, an artisan from Shelburne Falls who uses the Turners Falls Airport for his business, said commercial lease fees at Turners are now, "Ten times the rent for land at any airport within a 100 miles of here. That effectively chased off a mechanic and aviation technician from the field." Simpson said the lease for one business, Maintain-a-Plane, that had operated at the Turners Field increased from \$600 a year to \$1200 a month under Sweeney's tenure, which caused the business to move elsewhere. He said Pioneer Aviation, which continues to operate on land they own abutting the airport, has seen a reduction in the number of planes renting tie-down space from their company from 30 in the year 2000 to 7 today, and sales of fuel have declined accordingly.

Sweeney said that each airport operates differently, and "easy square foot to square foot com-

parisons" are not possible for lease fees.

A number of pilots complained that Sweeney had instituted new rules and procedures that made their ability to continue using the airport more difficult, such as a new regulation regarding flight instructors and professional pilots assisting on flights originating from Turners Falls. The local pilots say they are required to receive updated flight instruction by the FAA, but there is only one flight instructor presently working half time at the Turners Falls Airport. Other flight instructors were willing to fly into Turners to assist local pilots, but are now prohibited from doing so unless they abide by the new regulations, which include maintaining an office and classroom space at the airport, staffed 40 hours per week, with a minimum of two aircraft available, conditions local pilots say are impractical for an airport in

our area. The say this requirement compromises their safety.

Of the 1200-foot runway expansion approved by Montague town meeting last year, Miskinis said, "We were supposed to have new T-hangars built. They sold the town a bill of goods."

Gibson said, "Sweeney is imposing a development agenda at the airport that involves evicting current residents and replacing them with corporate clients. But the idea any corporate clients will come to Turners is absurd," when lower priced rentals are available at airports nearby.

The pilots said they had attempted to communicate with the airport commission and the manager about their concerns, and wrote the Montague select-board detailed complaints about the way the airport is being managed a year ago, but have made no progress in resolving the issues raised. raised.

**THEATER REVIEW**

# Red, White & Screwed

## LEWIS BLACK AT THE CALVIN

BY SEAN LEVEILLE

**NORTHAMPTON** - If you just read this headline and knew what it stood for then kudos to you because that means you are an avid Lewis Black supporter. I can also guess you purchased a ticket to the Calvin Theatre in Northampton to catch Lewis Black on the local stop of his "Red, White, & Screwed" tour on Feb. 1st. The tour stretched from Seattle to Las Vegas to New York, NY; we were lucky to get even a piece of him up here in the Happy Valley.

Most of you know Lewis Black from his weekly work on Comedy Central Network's "The Daily Show," with his segment called "Back in Black." You may also be familiar with him from his newest book "Nothing Sacred" and comedy CDs such as his Grammy-nominated "Carnegie Hall Performance."

I was lucky enough to get a ticket to see the comic for my birthday from a friend of mine. Good thing, too, because the show was sold out a couple weeks after they went on sale. Which was apparent when we arrived and waited for the walk signal to cross the street and watched every corner of that intersection merge towards the Calvin at once. I could not think of a better way to start off a new month than by going to see one of my favorite comedians, in a beautiful venue. After I walked up about three flights of stairs to my seat in the balcony area, I could not help feeling as I looked around like I was in a school auditorium waiting for an assembly to begin, that is if my school had chandeliers hanging from the ceiling.

I wish I could quote you some of his material from that night. Anyone who has ever seen or heard even a little of a Lewis Black stand-up comedy knows the only way that could even be possible would be with a lot of

black bars, or asterisks standing in for every other word. Which would leave my review posing as a piece of Swiss cheese or resembling a transcript in Morse code. I can tell you though, no one was safe from this cynical, head-shaking, arm and finger-waving comedian. He made fun of everyone from the vice-president (OK, an easy target) to Christians; reasons why we got into the Iraq War, to the President's immigration policy, just to name a few. At the end of the show everyone was on their feet giving the man a standing ovation. I laughed so hard at the show, I woke up the next morning and my stomach muscles were still killing me, but it was worth the discomfort. I would do it all again if I could.

Oh what the hell, here's Lewis Black on Dick Cheney: "Going quail hunting is like going over to a gold fish bowl, reaching your hand in, and going, 'Got one!'"

On FEMA: "Louisiana, Mississippi, and Alabama all got hit by Katrina, and the government watched it like it was a Made for TV movie. Wondering where they got the extras. And the special effects were great!"

On President Bush: "About six months ago, I was home alone watching the President speak on television. So it was just the two of us in the room, and as I listened to him speak I realized one of us was f\*\*\*ing nuts, and for the first time ever I went, 'Wow! It's not me!'"

If you ever get a chance to read one of Lewis's books, hear one of his CDs, watch one of his DVDs, or catch him on the Daily Show on Comedy Central, then by all means go for it, and enjoy. And if you ever get a chance to go to the Calvin Theatre in Northampton, then by all means do so. The only downside is if you are over five foot five, I would not suggest getting balcony seats, because you do not get a lot of legroom.

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## THIS WILD PLACE

# Unnatural Selection



ILLUSTRATION BY ANJA SCHUTZ

BY KARL MEYER

**COLRAIN** - I'm writing on Groundhog Day. But a woodchuck won't be popping from its burrow this February day. And if one did it would have no bearing on the duration of winter cold.

Still, Groundhog Day has a basis in nature. For centuries the date marked the mid-point between the winter solstice and spring equinox to pagan Europeans. But these days where the weather is concerned - even for woodchucks - all bets are off.

Nonetheless, the woodchuck is an impressively adapted creature. When fall frosts arrive it has doubled its stored fat and heads to a snug burrow some five feet below the surface. There, this vegetarian reduces its body temperature from one similar to ours to something below 40 degrees F. Its heart rate drops from 100 beats per minute to 4. Breathing slows to a near standstill - one respiration every six minutes. Groundhogs won't warm those bones again until true spring arrives in March or early April. The males emerge first - hustling out not to gobble greens, but to visit burrows of available females. Valentines Day for groundhogs.

In recent days, I've bumped into other animals seen as symbols. The first was an adult bald eagle in a riverside poplar. Our national symbol, nearly destroyed by pesticide use, has returned to relatively healthy numbers. The eagle sat resting in late-January sun. Ironically,

the next day I glimpsed what I consider its counterpart, a wild turkey pumping impressively strong wings to haul its bulk into a tall pine at dusk.

For all the hoopla about eagles, I've always been more wowed by sporadic sightings of wild turkeys in flight. From the standpoint of pure physics it's no contest: the turkey has to catapult some 16 - 20 pounds into the atmosphere, while the long-winged eagle needs only raise about 9 pounds to be airborne.

I like eagles as much as the next person. It's the myths and misrepresentations that make me laugh. Though many folks know the bald eagle won out in a Congressional vote to become the national bird, likely for its "hawkishly-regal" appearance, few remember the wild turkey lost the bird ballot by just one vote. It was the Bush vs. Gore of the birds, back in the 1780s. Ben Franklin was a turkey promoter. He characterized the wild turkey as "courageous."

An intelligent fellow, Franklin did not fail to also note aspects of the game bird's character he found "vain and silly." But I too have witnessed wild turkey courage, a hen bravely exposing herself to harm so her chicks could run to cover.

Even more curious about Franklin's observations is that he understood what a sedentary creature the bald eagle is. He pointed out, rightly, that it often just sits perched for hours, happy to come by its livelihood 'dishonestly' by waiting for an osprey to catch a fish, and then shaking down the smaller fish-hawk to carry off its prey. It may be unfair to call the eagle lazy, but the eagle is content, even when live fish or small mammals are present, to settle for a meal of

carion rather than expend energy to kill for itself. Bald eagles do hunt - skimming surface fish in graceful fashion - but a winter-killed deer, dead rabbit, or rotting perch often suits them just fine.

I do wonder - had the wild turkey been adopted as our national symbol, would our national posture toward the world be different? Would it be less steeped in myth and symbolism than it is today - with our cold, hawkish eagle on the banner? Heck, we could handle being a little more "vain" now and then - if it was tempered by the earth-bound "courage" and occasional "silliness" of the turkey.

Cooling thought: As far as using wild animals as symbols, my vote is for the polar bear. Make it our new national symbol. Push it in State Houses, public schools and universi-



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ties. Polar ice is melting. The bears can't count on summer ice floes to help them hunt ringed seals. Some are starving, as we humans raise the planet's temperature. Our survival is linked to theirs.

The polar bear is currently up for listing as threatened and endangered under the Endangered Species Act. Seven weeks remain in a public comment period that will help the US Fish and Wildlife Service make a decision. Listing the polar bear will not force our government to take decisive action against planetary warming - but the symbol could be picked up by ordinary citizens who have the right and

power to steer their country's policy. Letters to US F&WS could hail from grammar school classrooms, town councils and senior centers across the country.

Go to: [www.fws.gov/ endangered/12mo\\_finding\\_polarbear.pdf](http://www.fws.gov/ endangered/12mo_finding_polarbear.pdf)

Mail comments to:  
Supervisor, US Fish and Wildlife Service  
Marine Mammals Management Office  
1011 East Tudor Road  
Anchorage, AK 99503

Karl Meyer's book, *Wild Animals of North America*, was published in November. [karlm@crocker.com](mailto:karlm@crocker.com).

## THE GILL GOURMET

# Twice Baked Potatoes

BY JOSEPH A. PARZYCH

### Ingredients:

Baking potatoes  
Butter or butter substitute  
Sour cream  
Chives  
Pepper  
Salt  
Paprika  
Parsley  
Woodstove

This recipe was a favorite of our family on cold winter days. My sister Emmy used to bake stuffed potatoes in our wood stove when we lived on Jep's Place. I would estimate oven temperature at about 350 degrees. Baking needed a hot fire, and on a cold winter day, there was nothing more com-

forting than a glowing wood stove. It was my job to carry in firewood. When someone was baking, I'd try to supply plenty of hardwood for even heat. We didn't have any of those U-shaped aluminum skewers to hasten the baking, but they work great. Cooking time will vary. Giving the potatoes a quick squeeze is the best way to check on their progress. It doesn't matter if they are not completely baked, just don't burn them (the potatoes, or your fingers.) Don't worry if the potatoes are not quite done, they will get baked, again, anyway.

Cut the baked potatoes in two. Scoop out the insides, leaving the half shells intact.

Mash the potatoes with butter, sour cream, chives and pepper. I can't come up with exact quantities. Just prepare the stuffing as you would for mashed potatoes. If you are any kind of a cook, you'll figure it out. If not, head out to a restaurant, because you're never going to make it as a cook.

Stuff the shells with the mixture, sprinkle with paprika, pop them back into the oven. Stoke up the fire and bake for about 20 minutes. You can garnish with fresh parsley when done. You can use an electric or gas stove, but you won't get to toast your backside at the same time, as you would with a woodstove.

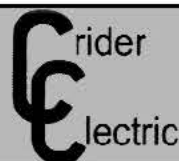
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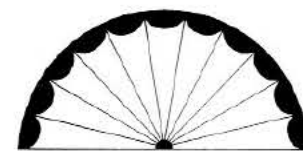


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**TO THE PUBLIC'S HEALTH**

# Reducing Saturated Fat and Trans Fat in Your Diet

BY JOAN PAJAK, RN



Two related issues in the media of late are the movement to ban trans fats and the endorsement by the First Lady of the "Go Red For Women" program, an awareness campaign of the American Heart Association (AHA). According to the AHA, about 480,000 women die of cardiovascular disease annually, more than the total number of cardiovascular disease-related deaths in men, and more than the combined totals for the next four causes of death - lung cancer, breast cancer, prostate cancer and stroke - for the population at large.

Trans fats have been in the news, especially since New York City moved to ban trans fats in restaurant food. Since January, 2006, the Food and Drug Administration (FDA) has required trans fat to be listed on nutrition labels. Although changes in labeling are important, they aren't enough, since many fast foods contain high levels of trans-fatty acids (TFA). There are no labeling regulations for restaurant food, which can be misleadingly advertised as cholesterol-free and cooked in

vegetable oil.

The AHA notes that eating one doughnut at breakfast (3.2 g of TFA) and a large order of french fries at lunch (6.8 g of TFA) can add 10 grams of TFA to your diet, so the lack of regulations for labeling restaurant foods can be harmful your health. Couple this with the current AHA recommendation that trans fats should contribute less than 1% of your total caloric intake each day, and it is no wonder heart disease as well as obesity are so high in the US.

The American Heart Association's Nutrition Committee strongly advises that healthy Americans over age 2 limit their intake of saturated fat to less than 7 percent of total calories, as well as reducing trans fats to less than 1 percent of total calories. People should limit their total fat intake to 25 to 35 percent of total calories, adjusted to meet their caloric needs. The remaining fat should come from sources of monounsaturated and polyunsaturated fats such as nuts, seeds, fish and vegetable oils. For example, a sedentary female who is 31 - 50 years old needs about 2,000 calories each day. Therefore, she should consume less than 14 grams saturated fat, less than 2 grams of trans fat and between 50 and 70 grams of total fat each day.

To regulate the intake of trans-fatty acids, the American Heart Association recommends that consumers follow these tips:

- Use naturally occurring, unhydrogenated oil such as canola or olive oil when possible.

- Look for processed foods made with unhydrogenated oil rather than hydrogenated or saturated fat.

- Use margarine as a substitute for butter, and choose soft margarines (liquid or tub varieties) over harder stick forms. Shop for margarine with no more than 2 grams of saturated fat per tablespoon and with liquid vegetable oil as the first ingredient. Look for those labeled "trans-fat free."

- French fries, doughnuts, cookies and crackers are examples of foods that are high in TFA. Consume them infrequently.

- Limit the saturated fat in your diet. If you don't eat a lot of saturated fat, you won't be consuming a lot of TFA.

- Eat commercially fried foods and commercial baked goods infrequently. Not only are these foods very high in fat, but that fat is also likely to be very hydrogenated, meaning a lot of TFA.

Monitoring one's cholesterol in the blood is another way to keep tabs on heart health. Total blood cholesterol level will fall into one of these categories:

Desirable: less than 200 mg/dl

Borderline High Risk: 200-239 mg/dl

High Risk: 240 mg/dl and over.

The Montague Health Department offers cholesterol screening to residents every Tuesday & Thursday from 8:30 - 11:00 a.m. in the nurse's office at the town hall in Turners Falls, and at the Gill-Montague Senior Center the 4th Wednesday of every month at 9:30 a.m. Appointments are needed at the Senior Center location only. Adults 65 and over - \$2; adults under 65 - \$7.

**THE HEALTHY GEEZER**

# Warning Labels

FRED CICETTI  
LEONIA, NJ - Q.  
*What do the warnings on the bottles under my kitchen sink mean? I find them confusing.*

Many of the household products we use contain poisons. These include pesticides, oven cleaners, detergents, polish, paint and drain uncloggers.

Manufacturers use a low-medium-high system on labels to alert you to hazards. The following are brief descriptions

If the label on a container says "caution," that means the contents could hurt you. For example, the product's fumes might make you sick.

If there is a "warning" on a label, that means you could be injured seriously if you don't handle the product properly. A "warning" on a label can mean that the contents are flammable.

"Danger" indicates that you should handle the product with extreme care, because it can be lethal. A possible explosion is among the hazards that require a danger label.

If you have an emergency with a household product, here are some steps you can take. The order of the steps depends upon the severity of the problem. You can call 911, call your poison control center at 800-222-1222, read the label for instructions and an emergency phone number.

The following are some general first-aid instructions.

- If you get a poison onto your skin or in your eyes, rinse the affected area in the shower for at least 15 minutes.



ILLUSTRATION: JESSICA HARMON

- If you inhale toxic fumes, get to fresh air immediately.

- If poison is swallowed, do not use an emetic medicine such as syrup of ipecac to induce vomiting. Doctors no longer recommend using these medicines because there is no evidence they prevent poisons from entering the bloodstream.

And now for some tips to prevent exposure to dangerous substances:

- Don't keep flammable products inside your home.

- Check household products regularly for loose caps.

- Keep products in their original containers; this prevents confusion and keeps the labels around for reference.

- Don't store toxic household products near food or medicine.

- Never throw these products in the trash-cans where children can get to them. Call your local government to find out where you can dispose of these products properly.

The following is some information about the dangers in common household products.

- Paint can irritate the eyes and skin. Paint fumes can give you headaches, nausea and dizziness.

- Clothing detergents, if ingested, can cause nausea, vomiting, shock, convul-

sions, and coma.

- Ammonia fumes can irritate eyes and lungs. Never mix ammonia with chlorine bleach because the combination produces a potentially lethal gas.

- Oven cleaners that contain lye can burn you and are potentially fatal if swallowed. Spray cleaners pose a threat to your lungs.

- Toilet bowl cleaners rely on acids that can burn.

- Mold removers can cause breathing problems.

- Drain cleaners contain lye and sulfuric acid that can blind you if they splash in your eyes.

- Carpet cleaners that contain perchloroethylene cause dizziness, sleepiness, nausea, loss of appetite and disorientation. Carpet cleaners that use naphthalene can damage your liver.

- Furniture polish is an irritant that, if ingested, can cause nausea and vomiting.

- Air fresheners contain chemicals that can irritate skin and eyes, cause fatal lung problems and brain damage. They can be highly flammable, too.

- Mothballs can cause headaches, dizziness, irritation, cataract formation and liver damage.

- Weed killers can irritate the eyes and skin, and cause vomiting and diarrhea.

- Insect repellents can depress the central nervous system and cause forms of mental illness.

- Rat killers contain warfarin, a blood-thinner. If you swallow a lot of it, it will create internal bleeding.

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

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# JEP'S PLACE: Faith, Hope and Other Disasters Part XIX

**STILL MORE STORIES**

**GILL** - Arriving in America in 1910, Grandpa didn't find his skills as a tailor of sheepskin coats much in demand. He got work in the Chicago stockyards, saved money and sent for his wife Aniela and three of their children - Ma, eleven, her brother Frank, nine, and Jan, four. Baby Aniela stayed behind with relatives in Poland. Three years later, they sent for Aniela. For her trip to America,

relatives in Poland entrusted little Aniela in the care of a man from their village who was also bound for Chicago. They pinned the name and Chicago address of Aniela's family to his coat lapel so he wouldn't lose it. When Aniela and her protector got to Ellis Island, he got drunk celebrating his arrival, and lost the address card. Because he could not read, the man had no idea what was written on the card. With no address they'd be sent back to Poland,

immigration authorities said. But Aniela said she could remember what the numbers and letters looked like. The officials gave her pencil and paper. From memory, she wrote out the address -Blazef Gawel, 8870 Houston Avenue Chicago, IL. Immigration authorities took her word that the address was correct. Aniela and her "caretaker" left detention on Ellis Island and continued on to

Chicago.

"When my Matka got here," Ma said, "She and my father opened a boarding house. When fellows hear about a boarding house serving Polish food and where people speak Polish, they come from all over. Sometimes three men, who work on different shifts, sleep in the same bed at different times. Someone was always sleeping in the bed. It was hard to change sheets."

For five years, Ma's parents prospered. Then, life took a dark turn.

"Fella' comes in with a side of beef, slams it on the table and says, 'Give me money'. Charges more than it worth, and it stolen for sure. My Mama gets scared and says to Tata, 'Better we go back to Poland. We already saved enough money. We can live good in the old

country and not be scared of gangsters bringing stolen meat.'

"My Mama goes back to Poland. But she leaves me and Tata to sell the furniture and the house. One day, I'm poking the coal fire to start cooking for boarders. I'm about fifteen then. A man comes in the kitchen - Tata is away. He grabs me and kisses me. I say, 'Let go,' but he just laughs. He says, 'What you going to do? No one here, but you and me.' He won't let go. I get scared and take the hot poker out of the fire and hit his face. It gives him a scar. After that, nobody grabs me. But my Tata says I have to go to live with relatives in Housatonic in Massachusetts if I want to stay in Ameryka."

Ma left Chicago for the little town of Housatonic in Massachusetts.

*continued next week*

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## Sudoku by willy white

		6	8	2				
	7	8		3	5			1
					7			4
			4	8				2
	5					8	6	
			5			4		
						9		
7	1				3			
8			2		9	5		7

The numbers 1-9 must appear only once in each column, row and shaded square. Answers will run in next week's newspaper.

*The Sudoku puzzle above is the first of a series of puzzles that will run weekly in the Montague Reporter. If you would like to contribute an original crossword puzzle, we would be happy to receive them. Send original contributions, with your name and address, to the Montague Reporter, 24 3rd Street, Turners Falls, MA 01376.*

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JACK COUGHLIN ILLUSTRATION

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**SUNDAY, FEBRUARY 11TH**  
Serendipity Series at the New Salem Town House: *Melanie & The Blues Shots*, house-rockin' blues & more. 4 p.m. \$10 (kids 12 & under FREE). [www.1794meetinghouse.org](http://www.1794meetinghouse.org), (978) 544-5200. The Blues Shots are rooted in blues, but not afraid to dust off an old jazz standard, breathe new life into a traditional folk song, cover classic rock & roll, country, or anything else that's good.

**SUNDAY, FEBRUARY 11TH**  
Scandinavian Dancing at the Montague Grange, Montague Center. Live music played by Marilyn Butler, Amy Parker & friends. All levels of experience welcome, no partner necessary. 3 to 6 p.m. Info. 774-7771 or [scandia2ndsunday@aol.com](mailto:scandia2ndsunday@aol.com).

The Montague Bookmill Presents: The Dead of Winter Free Films for the Frozen: *Il Postino*. Food & drink at the Lady Killigrew Pub or The Night Kitchen Restaurant, 7 p.m.

**MONDAY, FEBRUARY 12TH**  
Live Jazz at Ristorante DiPaolo, Avenue A, 6 to 9 p.m. Information 863-4441.

**WEDNESDAY, FEBRUARY 14TH**  
Athol Bird & Nature Club Monthly Meeting: Banding Monarchs. Join Kathi Duprey who maintains a certified Mass way station and has raised and released over 40 Monarchs this year as she leads us into the world of migrating Monarch Butterflies. Meet at Millers River Environmental Center, 100 Main

Street, Athol. Open to all. 7 p.m.

**THURSDAY, FEBRUARY 15TH**  
North Quabin Garden Club - Savoring Heirloom Vegetables Choosing, Planting and Saving



*MarKamsic, a high-energy, multi-national musical ensemble performs Latin music with Andean roots. At The Full Moon Coffee House in Wendell, Saturday, March 3rd. Proceeds benefit The Montague Reporter.*

Seeds for the Tops in Taste, with Lula Field of Warwick. 7 p.m. at the Millers River Environmental Center, 100 Main St., Athol. Open to everyone.

**THURSDAY TO SATURDAY, FEBRUARY 15TH TO 17TH**  
Northfield Mount Hermon Winter Dance Concert. Featuring works in many different styles, including hip-hop, lyrical jazz, ballet en pointe, modern, and traditional Korean dance. Created and performed by the NMH Dance Company students & faculty. Thursday 7 p.m., Friday 7:30 p.m. and Saturday 8 p.m. Performances in the Grandin Auditorium. Tickets \$5 general admission, \$2 NMH community members. Proceeds donated to the Coalition to Save Darfur. [www.nmhschool.org](http://www.nmhschool.org) (413) 498-3000.

**FRIDAY TO SUNDAY,**

**FEBRUARY 16TH TO 18TH**  
Ja'Duke presents *Peter Pan* at The Shea Theater, Turners Falls. Info. and reservations 863-2281 ext. 2. Friday and Saturday at 7 p.m., Sunday at 2 p.m. Continues February 23rd to 25th.

**SATURDAY, FEBRUARY 17TH**  
Rt. 63 Road House, Millers Falls, *Ottomatic Slim*. Come to dance! Updated rock & roll. 9:30 p.m.

**SUNDAY, FEBRUARY 18TH**  
The Montague Bookmill Presents: The Dead of Winter Free Films for the Frozen: *Diva*, a French neo-noir.

Beautifully shot with one heart-breaking aria and a lot of Gauloises. 1981. Food and drink available at The Lady Killigrew. 7 p.m.

**MONDAY, FEBRUARY 19TH**  
Live Jazz at Ristorante DiPaolo, Avenue A, 6 to 9 p.m. Information 863-4441.

**UNTIL FEBRUARY 18TH**  
Exhibit: Paintings and sculptures by artist Robert Markey at Green Trees Gallery, Northfield. Markey's vibrant oil paintings invoke both cosmic and inner worlds. His sculptured torsos, finished in 23 carat gold, precious and personal, glow with light. Info. (413) 498-0283.

**TUESDAY, FEBRUARY 20TH**  
Joseph A. Parzych will read and sign copies of *Jep's Place: Hope, Faith, and Other Disasters* at the Greenfield Historical

Commission Museum on the corner of Church and Union Street in Greenfield. The memoir is about growing up in a family of 13 children at the end of a dirt road on a small farm in Gill without electricity or running water. The talk will include his working on the section gang of the B & M Railroad over 50 years ago at age 16. 7:30 p.m.

**SUNDAY, FEBRUARY 25TH**  
Family-style Contra Dancing for all ages. \$7-\$10 per family. Simple dances with easy instruction geared for little feet. Held on the last Sunday of each month. 4 - 5 p.m. Includes a light snack. Visit [www.MontagueMA.net](http://www.MontagueMA.net)

**UNTIL FEBRUARY 23RD**  
An exhibit of paintings by members of a monthly critique group facilitated by Louise Minks. Range of subject matter includes animals, figures, landscapes in acrylics, oils and watercolors. At Greenfield Community College Downtown, 270 Main Street, Greenfield.

**UNTIL FEBRUARY 27TH**  
*The Interconnectedness of Things*, an exhibition of photographs by Jean Stabell of New Salem, will be on display at Haley's, a mile west of Athol center on Route 2A. Her images of apparently ordinary sights, especially around her New Salem farmhouse and former tree farm, suggest poetry and fresh insight.

**UNTIL MARCH 18TH**  
Hallmark Museum of Contemporary Photography, Turners Falls. *Face to Face: Portraits from Fifty Years*, photographs by Douglas Kirkland.

## HOT SPOT TEEN CENTER

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

## Upcoming at the Discovery Center

Open Friday & Saturday 10 a.m. to 4 p.m.

Groups by Special Arrangement, Tue.-Thur.

**UNTIL MARCH 31ST**  
Stephen Gingold's Nature Photography. Explore the world of nature, both at a landscape scale and focused at close range for details, through the eyes of Stephen Gingold as you see his photographs in this special exhibit.

**FRIDAY, FEBRUARY 9TH**  
Watershed Wonders. Explore the wonders of water with refuge staff; how warm and cold weather affect water, and how it flows over the ground. Includes hands-on explorations with water. For children and adults. Free. 11a.m. to 12 p.m.

**SATURDAY, FEBRUARY 10TH**  
Tracking Wild Canids at Northfield Mountain with David Brown Outdoor snowshoe tracking program that will take us off-trail into the wilds of Northfield Mountain in search of the tracks and sign of Eastern coyotes, red foxes and even the elusive gray fox. Held at Northfield Mountain. For ages 10 and older. Fee: \$15 per person, \$27 with snowshoe rentals. Pre-registration required, call 800-859-2960. 9 a.m. to Noon.

**SATURDAY, FEBRUARY 10TH**  
Accessible Birding with the Hampshire Bird Club. An excursion

to investigate bird life at wheelchair accessible and lively birding locations in the Connecticut River Valley. Binoculars and scopes are available for use as well as other assistive technology such as portable folding chairs, large print field guides, monopods, and listening devices. To find out more about additional accessible birding opportunities and locations, call (413) 545-5758. 10 to noon.

**FRIDAY, FEBRUARY 16TH**  
Animal Food Chain. Hands-on program for families with young children, learn about the importance of wildlife's food chain, and who eats

whom. Free, 10:30 -11:30 a.m.  
**SATURDAY, FEBRUARY 17TH**  
Nature Journaling with Annie Chappell. No experience necessary to have fun drawing. If you can bring a sketch book you can hold, we will have pencils, paper and clip boards. 10 a.m. - noon. Suggested donation \$10.  
**THURSDAY, FEBRUARY 22ND**  
2nd Annual Caribbean Day! Travel to the Caribbean through hands-on activities and crafts to learn where the migratory birds we know in summer are wintering and what you can do to get ready for their spring return. Free. 11 a.m. to 3 p.m.

Great Falls Discovery Center, 2 Avenue A, Turners Falls

(413) 863.3221

[www.greatfallsma.org](http://www.greatfallsma.org)

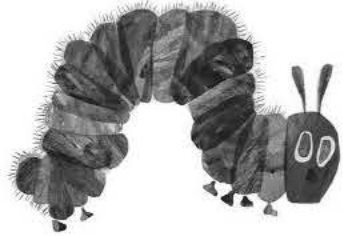
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OFF THE BEATEN TRACK



# The Eric Carle Museum

BY FLORE

**AMHERST** - Perhaps now not only Alice can enter this wonder world of imagination.

You and I, all of us, have the possibility!

Have you ever been tempted to push open the door, as a child or as a grown up, of the Eric Carle Museum of Picture Book Art?

I have been fortunate to do this on two occasions. Remember, the formal memorable opening date of the Amherst museum, on November 22nd, 2002? Since then, the Eric Carle Museum has received 250,000 visitors, including more than 800 buoyant school groups.

In that time, the museum has also offered more than 70 art orientation workshops for teachers, and 37 high caliber

exhibits have unfurled amidst the luminous walls of its three galleries.

The man behind the project? Eric Carle, a valiant character, who along with his well-known children's book *The Very Hungry Caterpillar* has published more than 70 other children's books? *Incroyable!*

At this moment, the guest of honor at the Eric Carle Museum of Picture Book Art, on 125 West Bay Road in Amherst is Quentin Blake, who is holding stage in an exhibit entitled "The Theater of the Page."

Numerous agitators flap out of the page, you may be sure!

Some you already know, others await you to discover!

This marvelous English-born draftsman was first noticed at the early age of... (give a wild guess) ...seventeen!

The famous, hilarious magazine *Punch*, published his first

caustic drawing. Matilda, and other witty personages, practically jump off the paper, out of their frames. *Une vraie bonne bouffée satyrique d'oxygène* (an energetic whiff of oxygen)!

Take note, Blake's exciting work is being presented at the Eric Carle Museum until March 11th.

Another creator shares the central gallery of the museum, not to be missed, until April 29th: the watercolorist Richard Yarde. He teaches art at UMass Amherst.

Well known for his visual attraction to movement, dance and music, he proposes: *Stompin' at the Savoy*. (From 1926 to 1958 the New York ballroom was the rendezvous of the best dancers from around the world...)

This is his first venture in illustrating a children's book.

*Stompin' at the Savoy* is writ-

ten by Bebe Moore Campbell. It tells of the experience of a little African American girl named Mindy.

Also on the museum's agenda, on February 14th and 17th: Printmaking and Picture Books.

Call the museum for registration details at: 1-413-658-1100, or contact: [info@picturebookart.org](mailto:info@picturebookart.org), or [www.picturebookart.org](http://www.picturebookart.org).

Home schoolers may explore, "Meet at the Museum Thursdays."

Also, "Meet the coming artists," to name a few happenings you might want to attend, before bouncing through the lookin' glass...

History buffs take note: the *Montague Reporter* too, entered, officially into the printed world as the Voice of the Villages, the very same year the museum opened its doors! Coincidence?

**ERVING** from pg 1 will probably be torn down."

The Usher Mill was formerly used as a shoe factory, and after that as warehouse space for the nearby paper mill.

A piece of equipment sitting on top of the building, which closely abuts the town road to the Arch Street pump station and a bridge to Wendell, started caving in this fall, Sharp said. "The roof might cave in, making the front of the building collapse. I think people are concerned that it might fall on one of our residents."

Andrew Tessier and Linda Downs-Bembury appointed a committee to survey the property and report their findings to the FCCIP, which has issued orders that the building be either torn down or made safe. The selectboard appointed committee members Leonard Clark Jr., deputy fire chief, Mitchell LaClaire, fire chief and Don Mailloux, pending their notification.

Members of the selectboard and finance committee are concerned about the stiff increase in the elementary and secondary school budgets proposed for fiscal year '08. The elementary school's proposed budget of \$1,935,667 represents a nearly 10 percent increase from the last year.

The Franklin County Technical School will hold a meeting to present their budget for fiscal year 2008 on March 28th. The school receives a small percentage of their funding from Erving, according to Tom Sharp, who said approximately six students from Erving attend the school.

Jeff Dubay, selectboard member, wasn't present at the February 5th meeting because of personal reasons. Police chief Chris Blair could not come to the meeting, during which he was scheduled to address the board about recommended candidates for the police force.



## Winter Visitors



BY FRAN HEMOND

**MONTAGUE CENTER** - Who would believe that 'south for the winter' means coming to New England? We are hosts to birds who nest and bring up their families in northern Canada and above the tree line to the Arctic, but come here for vacation time.

This open winter a new group of customers has found the Breakfast Club to their liking. In addition to our native chickadees and titmice, the American tree sparrows have become regular attendants. They are lively little sparrows with a bright rusty cap on their head, and a dark spot on a clear breast. Two white wing bars complete a neat appearance for these 'Winter Chippies,' so-called because their rusty cap recalls the smaller chipping sparrow, whose busy ways and constant chip makes him a cherished part of the summer scene. The real chipping sparrow has gone further south.

The small flock of tree sparrows generally shares the flat feeder with the juncos and cardinals, and leaves the round feeder that requires small size and precision perching to the chickadees who deign to get

seed without some flashy acrobatics. The sparrows like weed seeds and seem content to enjoy the mix that the



Breakfast Club offers. Last year a few of them stopped by, and the word seems to have spread.

The juncos, too, are birds that spend their summers in the North. However, they do make the Vermont hills a good nesting place among the many warblers that really go south for

the winter. Juncos are such good basic birds. They show up nicely against the snow with their dark gray head and

back, their white belly and light bill, which is often pinkish. White tail feathers announce them when they fly in and join the cardinal in checking the ground under the feeder for stray seed before they hop around in the rhododendron and wait for a spot in the tray. Some years ago, accidental

juncos from the west that have brownish black and rusty sides were called Oregon juncos, but apparently now they are called northern juncos. The "Oregons" have been rare, and the slate-colored are fine, without ornament.

Another winter visitor that is sometimes spotted in the Montague meadows is the snow bunting. They come down from the arctic regions in flocks some winters and subsist on weed seeds in open areas. Flying over they look something like a flock of fat white sparrows, but on the ground their brownish backs and white wings blend in. It is worth checking out a flock of small whitish birds flying over or feeding in a country meadow.

The Breakfast Club has a 1973 record of snow buntings sighted here in the Center, and among early 1900s snapshots from the farm is the picture of a feeding flock of the winter visitors in the field in back of the house. We're vacationland for the northerners.

*Pictured here: Top Left, cardinal; top right Snow Bunting; center, a pair of Juncos.*

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