



BOTH SIDES NOW

'the Chop'
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INTERVIEWED

State Rep. Kulik says mid-year cuts to local aid not a done deal... yet
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LAKE PLEASANT MILLERS FALLS MONTAGUE CENTER MONTAGUE CITY TURNERS FALLS

The Montague Reporter

YEAR 7 - NO. 15

also serving Gill, Erving and Wendell

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REPORTER@MONTAGUEMA.NET

THE VOICE OF THE VILLAGES

JANUARY 15, 2009

Fire at Ste. Anne's Rectory



DETMOLD PHOTO

Chief Ray Godin of the Turners Falls Fire Department (front right) coordinated the response to the fire at the former Ste. Anne's Rectory Monday, which originated in the second story bedroom on the far right.

BY DAVID DETMOLD

TURNERS FALLS - A fire that apparently started in a 12-year-old boy's bedroom quickly spread to adjoining hallways in the former St. Anne's Rectory on Sixth Street in Turners Falls on Monday afternoon, before

firefighters from Turners Falls arrived to put out the blaze.

The fire started as the present owner of St. Anne's — John Anctil — was meeting in the office of the former church next door to prepare a submission to the state of Massachusetts for

historic tax credits to renovate the church into a folk music hall.

Aidan Connelly, 12, who has lived at the rectory for the past six months with his brother, his mother, Jordan Quinn, and Anctil, who is married to Quinn,

away from the move to their new home, the air in their small apartment was filled with expectancy, sunshine, and the happy pandemonium of three kids at play.

The Speeks have worked hard to gain their share of the American dream. John, 32, teaches English at Mahar Regional, while also serving as the school's junior varsity soccer coach and advisor to the National Honor Society. Both parents are community-minded; he spent two years at one point as a Mormon missionary in Russia.

John graduated from Brandeis University with a major in English and American Literature and is currently attending graduate school during the summers at Middlebury College. Christine has both a B.S. and M.S. in accounting from Bentley. She is a stay-at-home mom handling the care of

see HOUSE pg 10

said he was the only one in the rectory at the time the fire started around 3 p.m. He said he did not know the cause of the fire on Monday, as he shivered in the cold and watched firefighters work.

On Tuesday, after further interviews, Turners Falls fire chief Ray Godin said the cause of the fire was "officially being ruled an accident, due to improper use of matches."

Quinn said she had just spent \$30,000 on renovating the rectory, redoing a lot of the electrical wiring, as well as sanding the floors and painting. She said an electrician had been planning to return on Thursday to complete work on replacing the old wiring in areas of the rectory that still needed it. Now, the repairs needed will be far more extensive.

"The insurance adjusters say it will be six months before they can reoccupy the building," said Godin Wednesday. "There is extensive smoke damage throughout the building, and water damage to the room of origin, the kitchen beneath, hallways, and some on the third floor."

Godin said the family is staying at a hotel for now, and seeking longer term accommodations. Power has been turned on

again at the church, which is on a different circuit than the rectory, and the boiler in the rectory basement will be wired separately to restore heat to the damaged building.

Chris Sawyer-Laucanno, who formerly worked for Anctil, preparing a submission for historic tax credits on the Strathmore Mill which Anctil bought last April for \$50,000, a week after he purchased St. Anne's Church and the rectory for \$325,000, said Anctil had called him back to work on the St. Anne's tax credit submission, with Northampton architect Tris Metcalf, last week. They were present in the room when the boy came running in.

"We all went running into the rectory," said Laucanno, gazing grimly at the damage on Monday afternoon. "John and I got fire extinguishers. The second floor hall was on fire. Chris and Jordan both called 911. John was trying to fight the fire with the extinguishers, but I called to him to get the f_____ out of the building. I've been in fires before," added Laucanno, who is a town meeting member from Precinct 5.

Anctil, whose hair and eyebrows were badly singed in his efforts to put out the blaze, said

see FIRE pg 11

A House of Our Own



The Speek Family moves into their new L Street home this weekend

BY JOE KWIECINSKI

TURNERS FALLS - On Saturday, January 17th, Pioneer Valley Habitat for Humanity will turn over a set of keys to the family of John and Christine Speek, in a special ceremony at the couple's new home at 53 L Street in Turners Falls.

The house dedication will

begin at 11 a.m. The public is encouraged to attend this gala event, and refreshments will be served.

"A house of our own has always been our dream," said Christine, in their third-floor walkup on the corner of Fourth Street and Avenue A. On this chilly afternoon, several days

Gill Takes a Stand

BY P.H. CROSBY

GILL - A worsening economy and dire fiscal predictions by the state were apparent factors in Gill selectboard members getting more than they bargained for at Gill's January 12th special town meeting, as finance committee members and citizens minutely questioned and debated almost every item on the eleven-article town warrant.

After approving a motion to use \$677.50 from free cash to pay legal bills incurred by the tax collector in the prior year, voters also approved, after some discussion, a motion to transfer \$5000 in the highway machine earnings account to pay for repairs to the front end loader.

Before voting unanimously to approve this motion, the finance committee, chaired by Tupper Brown, and several of the approximately fifty Gill citizens who turned out for the



SHAWN WOOLSEY PHOTO

Highway Boss Mick LaClaire detailed the front end loader's woes.

meeting, wanted to know what the machine earnings account was, and what it could be used for, how much was in the account, and what kind of repairs were needed for the front end loader, since the town had already approved funds last May for the highway department to use for repairs.

Selectboard member Ann see GILL pg 16

PET OF THE WEEK**Dixie Dog****Cooter**

My name is Cooter and I'm a two-year-old male Bassett hound mix in need of a good home. I'll love to go on walks or hikes with you – as often as you want – of course, but I don't require hours of daily exercise to keep me sane. Hanging out on the couch, watching TV, is just as good! I'm a great choice for homes with kids eight and older, but I'd prefer to have all your attention to myself, and not have to share with another pet. I am a Dixie Dog, about 50 pounds. For more information on adopting me please contact the Dakin Pioneer Valley Humane Society at 413-548-9898 or via email: leverett@dpvhs.org.

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MONTAGUE LIBRARY NEWS**Music and Movement Fundraiser at Rendezvous****BY LINDA HICKMAN**

TURNERS FALLS - On Sunday, January 18th, from 4 - 7 p.m., a Family Dance fundraiser will be held at the Rendezvous on Third Street. The performers will include Tom Carroll, Laurie Davidson, Linda Hickman, Michael Nix, Stephanie Marshall and Donna Lee. The fun family event will benefit the Montague Public Libraries' Music and Movement program. This very popular weekly series recently had its

funding from Family Network cut.

Tickets at the door and 10% of food sales will go to the music program. The Friends of the Montague Public Libraries will match the proceeds. A coffee can raffle will be held, with prizes from many area restaurants and businesses. There will also be craft activities for children during the event. The event is sponsored by the Rendezvous. For more information, call Linda at 863-3214.

ERVING LIBRARY NEWS**Report from the Open House****BY BARBARA FRIEDMAN**

ERVINGSIDE - The trustees of the Erving public library - Beth Bazler, Marion Overgaard, and Marcia Bernard - held a reception on Sunday, January 11th to give me a chance as the newly hired library director to meet and greet residents and town officials, and to give them an opportunity to meet our new assistant librarian, Elizabeth Oedel.

The reception was attended by library patrons, allowing them an opportunity to say goodbye to the trustees in their capacity as employees of the library - they ran the library for a number of years in the absence of a library director - and to welcome the new employees.

Since 2003, Bazler, Overgaard, and Bernard simultaneously served as trustees and ran the library. They are credited with combining the two branch libraries of Erving, automating the library and joining the Central Western

Massachusetts Automated Resource Sharing network (C/W MARS), and providing new materials and programming for the residents of Erving for the past five years.

Oedel has been on the job since July, completing her studies at Simmons College in May, 2008. She is also employed at a branch library in Springfield. I came on board in mid-October. I was the former library director of the Westminster Library from 1998 to 2003, and also was assistant director in Lunenburg.

We were delighted to have the opportunity to meet with the community, and encourage everyone who was unable to attend to stop at the library soon.

The library will soon announce extended hours, starting February 1st, including Sunday hours. A Monopoly marathon for children over the age of 10 is being planned for the week of February vacation and a new book club will be forming in March.

SENIOR CENTER ACTIVITIES -- Jan. 19th to 23rd

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

Monday, 19th

10 a.m. Senior Aerobics.

12:00 p.m. Pot luck Lunch followed by Bingo

Tuesday, 20th

9:00 a.m. Walking Club.

Weather permitting

1:00 p.m. Canasta

Wednesday, 21st

10:00 a.m. Senior Aerobics

12:45 p.m. Bingo

Thursday, 22nd

9:30 a.m. Fall Prevention - Unintentional falls are a threat to the lives, independence and health of adults ages 65 and

older. The VNA & Hospice of Cooley Dickinson, in cooperation with the Montague Senior Center and supported by a grant from Franklin County Homecare Corporation, would like to invite you to the "Falls Prevention" program at the Senior Center. Jeanne Ryan, a falls prevention specialist and the Executive Director of the VNA & Hospice of Cooley Dickinson, will present the program. The two hour session will include: falls risk assessment, strengthening exercises, balance activities, strategies to manage your medications, visual concerns, and a home safety assessment and recommendations. Participants are asked to sign up for the program by January 20th.

1:00 p.m. Pitch

Friday, 23rd

10:00 a.m. Senior Aerobics

11:00 a.m. Easy Aerobics

Only Aerobics Classes are scheduled for the week between Christmas and New Year's

ERVING Senior Center, 18 Pleasant St., Ervingside (Old Center School, 1st Floor), is open Monday through Friday

FACES & PLACES

SHAWN WOOLSEY PHOTO

Volunteers Muriel Bruso and Peg Gradowski were sad to see the gift shop at the Farren Care Center close last week. The remaining items will be distributed at the Salvation Army and the Survival Center.

WENDELL LIBRARY NEWS**Notary Public Available****BY ROSIE HEIDKAMP**

WENDELL - A notary public will be available at the library Wednesday mornings from 10 a.m. to noon. Long time Wendell resident and notary public, Byron Ricketts, is available to assist individuals wish-

Learn to Weave

A beginner's weaving class will be held Saturday, January 24th, at 10 a.m., at the Wendell Free Library with gifted handweaver Dvora Cohen. Register by January 21st; call the library at 978-544-3559.

Last spring, Dvora loaned her 100-year-old floor loom to the library. Since then, with her guidance, a number of individuals have learned to weave at the library, and have created beauti-

ing to have documents notarized. They should bring some form of photo identification such as a drivers license or passport. There is a minimal charge per document. For more information, contact 978-544-3559

(Beginner's class)

ful scarves and place mats for themselves and others.

The loom is now available for a new group of students.

Interested adults or older teens must attend one weaving class at the library in order to use the loom. Dvora will continue to assist students on an as need basis as they progress. The loom can be used by students during regular library hours and by special appointment.

Great Falls Middle School Students of the Week**Grade 6**

Jackie MacConnell

Grade 7

Kenneth Sroka

Sam Danford**Grade 8**

Jayna Kelly

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CLAUDIA WELLS ILLUSTRATION

BY BRIDGET SWEET

TURNERS FALLS - Salt. It's everywhere. Runny white stains amid the jelly ice. Elderly hippies cautiously picking their way over the sidewalk chunks. And even while I'm trudging through the salted sidewalks I can't stop thinking spring is coming! (Told ya last week . . . and I'm sticking by it.)

I ambled through the snow banks this week to discover Arnie's Thrift Shop of 102 Avenue A has everything on sale 25% off until Saturday, January 31st. Arnold Houle it seems (we've known him as Arnie forever, and aren't about to stop now) is closing his shop "because the economy is killing us!"

Arnie's not leaving the Ave though. (Who could? Who would want to???)

Arnie's 22 years of business experience will launch a once-a-

Sweet Talk on the Ave

Everybody Wins. Wheel of Fortune Spins a Little Salty, a Little Sweet.

month Auction Barn, tentatively slated to start the last week in February. Houle sez his Auction Barn will have novelties, tools, housewares and furniture. Customers will be able to preview the selection from 1 to 4 p.m., and then attend the auction from 4 to 8 p.m.

"Most of it will be sold 'As Is', with some seven-day guarantees," said Houle. He will also accept, "Left bids" also known as Absentee Bids.

Another Sweet Bridget's All-Knowing Tidbit for the week: An Absentee bid is a bid placed by a buyer who is not attending the sale in person. The bidder might have attended the preview... These absentee bids, which detail the lots in which the bidder is interested as well as the extent to which she is willing to bid, are executed on behalf of the bidder by the auction house. As a rule, these bids are rendered without the passion that auctions usually — and are intended to — instill. In other words, they tend to be saner, more rational, bids. And, as a result, they also tend to be less than successful in winning an item.

Courtesy of www.pbs.org/wgbh/antiquesfyi. But tell them you heard it here. Arnie will accept cash,

money orders, checks and credit cards, as he does now. He plans to hire three people to work the auction with him. The Arnienator will not go down without a fight! The current shop hours are Wednesdays to Sundays from 11 a.m. to 5 p.m. and he can be reached at 413-863-3704 for more information.

Down at Ristorante DiPaolo, 166 Avenue A, the wine will flow and the jazz will glow at their new Wednesday Wine Nights and Thursday Night Jazz Scene.

On Wednesday, all appetizers are \$10, all bottles of wine are \$20, and all glasses of wine are \$5. (If you want \$5 bottles of wine, you want Ray's Café.)

The Thursday Night Jazz kicks off this week with the Charlie Apicella Trio, next week solo guitar with Karl Rusch, from 6:30 p.m. until the last cork is popped and the last gnocchi noshed. DiPaolo's is the place to see and be seen on the Ave, and you can double that on Thursday nights at the Jazz Scene, like, wow.

Now we hop on up the Hill to Sheffield Elementary School. Teacher Amy Bernard was thrilled to announce that her recent graduate school student teacher, Kristin Rabbitt, won

\$18,700 on Wheel of Fortune earlier this month. How cool is that?

Rabbitt, of Medford, MA happily gave me her third interview on her recess break.

"It was a once in a lifetime opportunity," she stated.

Rabbitt signed up last year to be a contestant, then was invited to New York City last summer. Later, she received a phone call to pack her bags for LA, and went.

Rabbitt said, "All the contestants were really nice, we did six tapings in a day and I was in the sixth taping."

She missed the questions about Yuma and Phoenix (which, it turns out, are cities in Arizona ... This kind of obscure information is somewhere on Sweet B.'s radar, but it hardly seems reasonable. Phoenix and Yuma do not sound like cities at all. Not like Omaha and all those other former provinces that are now aspiring to statehood. Do over! Sigh . . . when will they ever learn.)

At any rate, Sweet Rabbitt won enough to shop and pay off her University of Massachusetts Amherst student loans.

She says "Hi" to Mrs. Bernard and all her fifth graders! It pays to stay in school! And to

teach!

In my next column, hot flashes from the Montague Business Association 'Coffee and Convo' at Gallery 85 of the Hallmark Museum of Contemporary Photography. Two local radio stations and two local newspapers (can you guess which ones?) sent representatives to speak to the gathered tycoons of Turners on Wednesday morning (and to sample the excellent donuts provided courtesy of the Greenfield Savings Bank). Each ad rep outdid themselves singing the praises of their competitors and cutting side deals with audience. It was very entertaining and educational. But who needs an expensive advertising package when you can read all about it right here? Sweet!

There will be an Inauguration Day Event at the Brick House at 24 3rd Street next Tuesday the 20th, from 12 to 8 p.m. They can be reached at 413-863-9576 for more information. Happy Martin Luther King Jr. Day too!

Think Spring! Ta-Ta for now, dears. (And to all you dears in the great unfathomed territories of Boise, Provo, Casper, and Queensland, we offer a hearty Gort! Klaatu Barata Nicto! You're gonna make it someday!)

Green Your Business, Lower Your Costs Seminar

BY AMY SHAPIRO

GREENFIELD - More and more business owners want to reduce their environmental impact but figuring out how to do that cost effectively can sometimes be a daunting task. This seminar lays out a practical approach to incorporating "green" best practices into your business operations and the support to convert a plan into results.

Small and medium sized businesses will learn how to track and reduce energy consumption, make environmentally-conscious purchases, implement waste reduction tech-

niques, minimize travel costs, increase recycling and composting and dispose of problem wastes like plastic, batteries and fluorescent lamps. Presenters will also cover the value of starting an internal Green Team to help formulate and implement your business's "green" plan.

Businesses will also learn how to let customers know about the greening steps they are taking, as the public is increasingly educated and curious about businesses' green practices.

This seminar is on Thursday, January 22, from 5:30-8:30pm at the Franklin County CDC, 324 Wells St., Greenfield. The cost is

\$50 with a sliding fee which includes dinner. Register by sending payment to the Franklin County CDC and call 413-774-7204 ext 107 or email amys@fccdc.org.

This seminar is presented by Center for Ecological Technology (CET) a non-profit community organization with a 30-year commitment to renewable energy and energy efficiency.

Seminar is co-sponsored by Franklin County CDC, Greening of Greenfield Energy Committee and the Franklin County Chamber of Commerce.

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Editor

David Detmold

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Kathleen Litchfield

Editorial Assistants

Hugh Corr

David Brule

Circulation

Suzette Snow Cobb

Don Clegg

Layout & DesignClaudia Wells
Boysen Hodgson
Karen Hoyden
Karen Wilkinson
Suzette Snow Cobb**Photography**Joe Parzych
Shawn Woolsey*"The Voice of the Villages"***Technical Administrators**Michael Muller
Michael Farrick

Keep the Unity in Our Community

**STACEY LANGKNECHT
MONTAGUE CENTER -**

It was an amazing, organic process, watching people work through an emotionally charged, difficult issue. The hearing the school committee called for Monday, at the Turners Falls High School auditorium about the Tomahawk Chop fight song started out on shaky ground. There were students and parents upset about the moratorium on the marching band's use of 'the Chop,' the motivational song played at sports events to help the players and fans get revved up.

The concern was that the Tomahawk Chop was offensive to some people in the Native American community. The result, last summer, was that the school administration, in trying to quell those concerns, overlooked the feelings of those in their own community - their school community - by initially banning the Chop, then opening the door for discussions on the ban to just a select few. And finally, this open hearing.

Student after student courageously came up to the microphone to state their feelings about the situation. Most supported the Chop, explaining that they loved the song for the school spirit it brought to events, not for the ugly history behind it. They talked about how they didn't want to offend the Native American community, but rather honor them. Some talked about how they've thought about the situation and changed their minds, that now they could see why it was offensive and had decided that it wasn't so important to continue playing the song after all.

But most also spoke about community, begging the school committee not to take the song away because it was important to their school community. I heard this word from students over and over again and was

impressed, but not surprised, at how strongly they felt about their school and its community. I think - I hope - it was a lesson learned by our school administration not to underestimate the intelligence, the passion, and the ethics of their own students.

We adults are often guilty of this. It's so easy to say that we know what's best for kids so we'll make decisions for them, thank you very much. And there are certainly circumstances where it's appropriate and the right thing to do. But there are also many situations where listening to our students can lead to greater opportunities, more creative solutions, and, perhaps most importantly, a stronger school community.

I know many of these students through various venues (besides being a parent of one freshman, one middle-schooler, and one recent TFHS graduate). I've seen them in groups and have had conversations individually with them. These kids care about their community. They care about what happens in their school. And because of that, and because we have the advantage of having a small, close-knit school community, I hope the school administration thinks twice in the future about how they make decisions like this, that have a large impact on the life of our students.

So, is there an outcome from the hearing? Not yet, at least not in the form of a decision as to whether or not to keep the Chop. But there was open communication, respectful listening, honest opinions stated. The school community and the Native American people who attended seemed to start out on opposite sides but ended on a positive note, understanding that this situation is a process that offers opportunities for learning and coming together. That's a pretty good outcome, for starters.

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KIWILKINSON '09

KAREN WILKINSON ILLUSTRATION

LETTER TO THE EDITOR

Unhappy with Editor's Response

Whatever deChristopher's role with the skate park is, (MR VII #14, Letters: A Good Public Spanking) it deserves coverage, not omission. You took more space responding to my letter to the editor and puffing deChristopher up than the letter to the editor took. So, you are not just an editor but a kingmaker? This is a prime example of why I am concerned activists like you are running the

Montague Reporter. Give us the news, David, don't bend or twist or omit it when it befits your personal agenda. Don't use the *Montague Reporter* as a platform. DeChristopher deserves public accountability, not puffery.

- Peter Fisher
Turners Falls

Regarding the Tomahawk Chop

The woman featured in the news, the Native American from Greenfield who is offended by the Tomahawk Chop that has been part of Turners Falls sports fight songs, may not be aware that the village she visited on Monday is named after the

captain that slaughtered the Native American settlement down by the river. Shall we start submitting ideas on the new name of our village?

- Margaret Pyfrom
Turners Falls

Ted Martin Would Have Been Proud



Ted Martin with his daughter
Charlene

I read the article in last week's issue of the Montague Reporter about Ted Martin. It was extremely touching and I thank those who thought to write about a man who should never be forgotten. I did not know him, as I only moved here in 1980.

However, I do know his daughter, Charlene Berniche. Few people probably know the 13-year old girl Ted Martin left behind, or the fine woman she became. Charlene and her husband Mike have a dairy farm here in Gill. A 24-hour, 7-day a week job with no vacations or days off. She has a heart larger than her five foot frame.

A few years ago, my husband was working in New York and I

had no one to help me. One of my cows was flat on the ground. I knew this meant trouble. I called the veterinarians in the area, but no one was available. I called Charlene. She immediately came and used all of her knowledge as a veterinarian's assistant and saved the cow's and the calf's life. This was not an easy task. She worked tirelessly, with determination, so she could prevent those deaths, and she did.

If you were to go to their farm, you would find many dogs and cats that Charlene can not turn away. She extends her love for animals far beyond anyone I have ever met.

When Charlene's mom needed help, Charlene was there. Her mom lived with her for many years before her passing.

Few daughters do that for their parent.

Ted Martin must have been a wonderful man. I do hope that he can see that he left behind a daughter he would have been proud of. A daughter who would carry on his great name. As Benny Rubin said about Ted Martin, "You couldn't ask for a nicer man." The same can also be said about his daughter. You couldn't ask for a nicer woman.

Thank you, Charlene!

-Nancy Williams
Gill

American Dead in Iraq and Afghanistan as of 1/12/09

US FORCES	
Casualties in Iraq as of this date	
4226	
Afghanistan	637
Wounded in Action	30,934
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We Welcome Your Letters!

Montague Reporter

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(Casualty sign temporarily located next to Wagon Wheel Restaurant on Rte. 2 in Gill)

NOTES FROM THE MONTAGUE SELECTBOARD**Block Grant Application Hearing Held**

BY DAVID DETMOLD - The Montague selectboard held a public hearing on the town's 2009 application to the Department of Housing and Community Development for (CDBG) block grant funds. Montague will be applying for about \$900,000, and the Franklin County Regional Housing and Redevelopment Authority will once again be asked to administer the grant.

Also, as for many years past, the agencies that are jointly applying to receive what amounts to the only large infusion of discretionary state and federal funds the town can hope to receive from year to year are the same three, along with the town of Montague itself: the Brick House Community Resource Center, the Montague Catholic Social Ministries, and the Regional Housing Authority. Last year, the town reserved the right to apply for all the funds - \$700,000 - to help offset the con-

struction costs of the town's new \$5.6 million police station; that application was denied, so Montague got no CDBG funds in 2008.

This year, the grant application will be considerably more diversified: with the two downtown social service agencies hoping to split up more than \$100,000 to fund programs that will be of benefit to low and moderate income residents, and the town hoping to win funding for a 'slum and blight' inventory of Millers Falls, and design funds for a renovation of Unity Park in Turners Falls. Also, the FCRHRA will be seeking \$357,457 funds to provide zero interest loans to up to at least eleven eligible low and moderate income homeowners in Millers Falls and Turners Falls, (with 20% of that sum available for emergency repairs elsewhere in town), to bring their homes up to code and make them "safe decent and sanitary."

Speaking for the Montague Catholic Social Ministries, board president Cynthia Johnson (who said the agency's new executive director would be introduced this week), asked the board to include \$61,273 in the grant application to allow MCSM to offer a Bridge to Success program, which would provide 48 participants with job skills training, confidence building programs, web site development, and money management skills.

MCSM served 1700 people in their various programs last year, said Johnson, an almost incredible figure in a town of less than 9000 residents.

The Brick House will seek \$50,000 to provide in school and out of school youth with classes at the Turners Falls High School over the next three semesters in a program Brick House director Prakash Laufer called Intro to the Green Economy. Laufer said the program, which will take place in partnership with the Gill-Montague school district and provide a series of community workshops open to everyone in town, presented by Coop Power, would "prepare our community to cooperate with the economic stimulus package from the Obama administration," which is likely to emphasize Green, environmentally benign jobs and a transition to renewable, non-polluting forms of energy production.

Selectboard member Pat Allen said, "It seems both the Brick House and MCSM have done enormously positive programs for a large number of residents in Turners Falls and Montague. We are very lucky."

Speaking in support of MCSM's grant request, Gill-Montague Regional Schools technology director Marty Espinola said, "In 2007, census data showed 69% of households beneath the poverty level in Turners Falls were headed by women." MCSM's programs, which are available to people of all faiths and backgrounds, primarily serve women and children.

Karen McLaughlin, coordinator of the Gill-Montague School Community Partnership, (which recently received a grant of its own, for \$125,000 for a drug-free community mentoring program) spoke in favor of the Brick House's Green Jobs program for young people. "This community has a long tradition as a blue collar town," she said. "We have an amazing opportunity to switch our blue collar to a green collar now."

Jon Dobosz, director of the Montague Parks and Recreation department, is seeking \$51,270 for design funds for renovations to Unity Park, which he called "our flagship facility." The playground needs resurfacing and the old equipment needs to be

replaced, along with one of the ballfield backstops. The park could use a walkway to bring together the various components, better signage, a redesigned parking area, and a more welcoming entrance to the main office, among other things. Dobosz said the master plan would examine the potential of including a skate park within the borders of the park, "but there are a lot of elements we really do need to address."

Bruce Hunter, of the FCRHRA, said an inventory of approximately 100 properties in Millers Falls would be conducted to see if the village meets the 25% threshold for "slum and blight" designation, which would make Millers eligible for targeted CDBG funding for ten years. If found to be eligible under the federal guidelines, Hunter said, funds could flow to the community to improve access to Highland Park, to improve the park itself, a façade program for downtown buildings, commercial and housing rehab, signage and new sidewalks and parking areas.

He said the Franklin Regional Council of Governments would be contracted to do the inventory, with \$110,000 in grant funds, and would look specifically at ownership issues and vacant buildings which have impeded downtown redevelopment

see GRANT pg 7

An Open Letter to the Wendell Police Chief

Dear Chief Chase,

From my heart, I thank you and the Wendell Police Department. Your help in the aftermath of the ice storm last month probably saved at least one life, possibly two.

Like most in Wendell, I was without power from Thursday night, December 11th, to Wednesday, December 17th, and without phone service until the 14th. My situation was particularly serious because I have multiple disabilities that prevent me from walking, speaking, and other forms of functioning. Further, because of severe chemical sensitivities, I cannot use gas, propane or wood. I was without heat, water, or power, but because I'm essentially bed bound by illness, evacuation was impossible.

The first few days, I was able to stay warm and functional with the help of my partner, Betsy, who drove to and from Northampton, and my terrific personal care assistants. But by Sunday, I couldn't get warm anymore. My thinking was fuzzy. I realized I might be in trouble.

Thank goodness my phone service came back that day, and a PCA called me with the news that the Wendell Police had gen-

erators to lend. Betsy called, and you and another officer quickly arrived to set up a generator.

We plugged in a space heater and my telecommunication device, allowing me to search for a disabled friend in a nearby town. As I had feared, she had been alone in her home, without heat, electricity, or phone. Her body temperature had dropped, and she was becoming hypothermic. A member of her town fire department brought her to my home. Thanks to the generator, both of us were able to keep warm and run our assistive equipment until the power returned on Wednesday.

Many people helped us get through the crisis, but I believe the generator from the Wendell Police saved my friend's life. Indeed, another disabled friend in West County, who didn't get the support I did, ended up in the hospital. She is still struggling to recover.

I pray none of us goes through such an ordeal again, but it is good to know that if we do, we can turn to the Wendell Police Department.

-With gratitude,
Sharon Wachler

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Apparition in the medicine cabinet

pressing the button several times, but it makes a mess and it's a pain. I am on my third can, code 7c27 22.33. Please send an email address. I have interesting photos of the can oozing shaving cream that I would like to email you.

- Joseph A. Parzych
Gill

Universal Group replied:

Thank you for contacting Universal Group regarding our Noxzema products. We're sorry to see your having this problem with our product. Were these 14 oz. or 11 oz. cans that you purchased?

And Joe responded:

It was a 14 oz. size with 33% more shaving cream, designed to deposit 33% more shaving cream in your medicine cabinet.

I have to admit that each day it creates a lovely picture. I can hardly wait until the next morning to see what lovely

apparition has appeared in the medicine cabinet. The attached photo is a good example.

People are selling images on e-Bay for big bucks of the Virgin Mary, found on potato chips, tree bark, cookies and all manner of things. If you look hard at the attached photo of the shaving cream foam oozing into my medicine cabinet, you can distinguish the image of the Virgin Mary taking a bubble bath. Maybe it will become famous like Andy Warhol's picture of a Campbell's Soup can.

Question: when I sell these images, do I have to pay Noxzema or Universal Group a royalty?

Your faithful connoisseur

Joseph A. Parzych,
*on his third 33% more can
of Noxzema shaving cream
filling his medicine cabinet .*

I read your article in the December 24th edition of the Montague Reporter with interest, and thought about your belief that the marketing copy "sear-sizzled" was a noun-verb compound (something to think about while plowing).

I do not see the connection between sear-sizzled and the other noun verb compounds you used in comparison. To me, "flame-broiled, hickory-smoked, grass-fed, jet-propelled and horse-drawn" all seem to be words where the noun could stand alone. And as you point

Rogue Editor Replies: I am familiar with usage of "sear" as a stand alone noun — along with being a mark or scar left by cooking with intense heat, it's my understanding that a proper sear (left on a piece of steak, for example) can enhance flavor. But Mr. Quinn-O'Connor is correct in saying that "sear-sizzled" does not follow the same pattern as the other examples, where it is clearer the noun is the item used to execute the action of the verb. In this case, the sear is not used to execute the action of sizzling - rather, it would seem to be the effect of that action.

-Neil Serven

Letter to the Rogue Editor

Seared and Confused

out, the nouns are acting as adjectives to explain something about the verb, (i.e. broiled by a flame, smoked with hickory). But is anything sizzled by a sear?

Dictionary.com defines sear as a noun only when it is meant as "a mark or scar made by searing." And even that seems to be generous. Who describes a mark as a sear?

I'm not a grammarian, so this is not a challenge but rather a request for more information or clarification.

- Robert Quinn-O'Connor
Montague

"I had lots of reasons to quit smoking. Meet one."

No matter what *your* reason is for quitting cigarettes, now there's help to get you started. Call 1-800-Try-To-Stop for a **FREE**, 2-week supply of nicotine patches.

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Tito Alvarado quit smoking 16 months ago.

Lucia Alvarado 16 months.

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GRANT from pg 5

efforts to date in Millers. Brownfields funding may also be available for some lots that could have contaminated soil near West Main Street.

In other news, the selectboard approved a "final" change order for code compliance issues at the wastewater treatment plant, for \$125,470. Project engineer Paul Gilbert from Camp Dresser McGee said this would leave a balance of \$400,000 remaining in the funds allocated for the treatment plant and sewer line upgrades.

These final funds are from a USDA grant, and must be returned if not spent. The town would prefer to wait until after February to determine how to spend the final sum, hoping that more federal dollars for the wastewater treatment plant upgrades will be forthcoming from Congressman Olver's office and possibly from the Obama stimulus package.

Wastewater treatment plant supervisor Bob Trombley said if those funds materialize in hoped for amounts (up to \$2 million), and could be added to the \$400,000 on hand, "We could get all the original work done in the original project, and then some." But if the stimulus package funding does come through, and if some of it can be spent on this particular local project, Trombley said they would have to work fast, and complete all the work within two years. Gilbert seemed to be up for that challenge.

Town administrator Frank Abbondanzio delivered a preliminary budget forecast to the finance committee and selectboard at a joint meeting

earlier in the afternoon. At the evening meeting, he summed the forecast up in four words: "It doesn't look good."

Abbondanzio said three proposals had come in from architectural firms interested in providing a feasibility study for re-use of the Montague Center School.

Acknowledging the public hearing being conducted that evening up at the Turners Falls High School, all three selectboard members weighed in on the controversy about the use of the Tomahawk Chop fight song by the Turners Falls band backing up the sports teams, who go by the name Indians.

"There are other songs and other gestures that could be come up with," said Patricia Pruitt, referring to the hand motion crowd members make during the performance of 'the Chop' at high school sporting events, where a chopping motion is meant to symbolize the crushing blow of a tomahawk.

"The administration is probably correct in what needs to be done," said Pat Allen. The GMRSD administration called a moratorium on the use of the chop at the beginning of the school year. Interim superintendent Ken Rocke and TFHS principal Jeff Kenney have called 'the Chop' offensive to Native Americans, and a violation of school anti-discrimination policy.

"I'm totally supportive of the administrative position," said board chair Allen Ross, who added, "I find it something that should certainly be replaced. I hope parents and students can see the bigger picture and go with the change."

**Zoar Zip-Line**

Charlemont - The commercial outdoor recreation center, Zoar Outdoor, in Charlemont on the Mohawk Trail, received approval this week to build the first zip-line canopy tour in Massachusetts. The tour will lead adventurers on an aerial trek through the woods by

means of zip lines and sky bridges suspended in the trees, and will open June 1, 2009. In addition to an exciting ride, up to 60 feet in the air, participants will experience stands of oak, pine, maple, hemlock, and birch trees that comprise a typical New England second growth forest.

Brick House to Host Inauguration Celebration

BY KAREN STINCHFIELD

TURNERS FALLS

The Brick House Community Resource Center, at 24 Third Street in Turners Falls, will be hosting an all-day "Inauguration Celebration" on Tuesday, January 20th. The event, which will celebrate both the inauguration of the 44th president and the Brick House's newly-renovated community arts and performance space, will begin at noon with a viewing of the inauguration on a large screen and continue with an afternoon and evening of activities in the beautiful new space.

Following the inauguration, visitors can watch *Citizen King*,

a documentary about Martin Luther King, Jr.'s "I Have a Dream" speech that changed the world's thoughts on racism.

Then, once the schools are dismissed, the inauguration will be shown again, in order to give our younger citizens the chance to experience this event.

From 5:00 p.m. to 7:00 p.m., everyone is invited to enjoy a reception with live music and light refreshments. Stephanie Marshall, DeAngelo Nieves, and other local musicians will perform, while guests enjoy *hors'dourves*, sweets, and beverages donated by the 2nd St. Baking Co., Green Fields Market, Clarkdale Fruit Farm, and more. At 7:00 p.m., visitors

can watch *Martin Luther King: I Have a Dream*, which contains King's entire inspirational speech.

The Brick House Community Resource Center is a non-profit organization that supports the well being of individuals, families, and communities in Montague and Gill. This is done through collaboration on economic development, youth development, leadership development, and education.

For more information on this event or the Brick House, please visit www.thebrickhouse-inc.org, or call 413-863-9576 or 9559.

HOUSING REHABILITATION PROGRAM

The Franklin County Regional Housing and Redevelopment Authority (HRA) is currently applying for funding for the Towns of Bernardston, Buckland, Charlemont, Colrain, Heath, Leverett, Montague, Rowe, Orange, Shelburne, Shutesbury, Warwick & Whately. At this time we are establishing a waiting list for each town.

Income eligible applicants who qualify for a full-deferred payment loan will be able to borrow up to \$30,000.00. This is a 0% interest, deferred payment loan, the loan is secured by a lien placed on your property, and the loan is due when you sell or transfer the property.

The goal of this program is to enable low to moderate-income homeowners to bring their homes into code compliance, handicap accessibility, do needed repairs and weatherize their homes.

Homeowners must have an annual gross income equal to or less than the following amounts:

# In Household	Gross Annual Income
1	\$41,450.00
2	\$47,350.00
3	\$53,300.00
4	\$59,200.00
5	\$63,950.00
6	\$68,650.00
7	\$73,400.00
8	\$78,150.00

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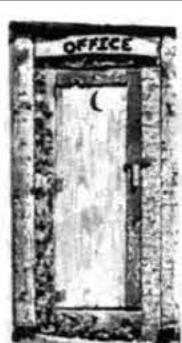
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NOTES FROM THE ERVING SELECTBOARD**Tax Rate Set**

BY DAVID DETMOLD - The town held a tax classification hearing on Monday, January 12th, to determine the shift between commercial/industrial and residential categories of property taxation. This year, the board chose a formula that will raise the residential property tax rate from \$6.68 per thousand dollars of valuation to \$6.92, and for commercial and industrial properties from \$11.59 to \$11.77. This shift in the split tax rate will close the gap slightly between the two categories, according to town administrative coordinator Tom Sharp, and will result in minimal increases in actual tax bills to both categories of taxpayers. Erving has largely escaped the decline in property values that has plagued communities further to the east last year.

Eugene Klepadlo visited the Erving selectboard on Monday, January 12th, to seek permission to hold a 'Klondike Derby' for local boy scout troops on Saturday, January 24th from 9 a.m. to 4 p.m., on town owned land off Route 63. The selectboard approved the plan, conditional on Klapadlo filling out the

proper form for use of public space.

Kelpadlo is scoutmaster for Erving boy scout troop 7. Reached at home, one of the four scouts in that troop, Klepadlo's son Jeremy, said unlike a Klondike Derby in the far north, this one would not be run with dogsleds, but instead by competing boy scout troops demonstrating their skills at a series of seven or eight stations.

Jeremy Klepadlo said orienteering, shelter building and fire building would be among the skills demonstrated and contested between the various troops. "We judge it on points," said the youngster, who has been a member of Troop 7 for about four years. Since Erving's troop is so small, they will combine with Northfield Troop 9 for the contest. "It tests your scouting skills."

In other business, the selectboard approved the seven article warrant for an upcoming special town meeting on January 26th, where among the other items voters will be asked to approve \$11,000 for Hazmat training for the Erving fire department.

The board signed an offer to

purchase the real estate from the Dorsey estate off Route 2, adjacent to the water tower across from the former Smokin' Hippo restaurant. The land will allow the town to better maintain the water tower, clearing surrounding trees. "We hope to close on that by February or early March," said administrative coordinator Tom Sharp. The town approved \$20,000 for the three quarter acre purchase at the November 24th town meeting.

The board also signed an agreement with VADAR Systems, of Maynard, MA for new software for the tax collector's office. Town meeting authorized \$20,000 for this purchase, and accompanying tech support in September. Sharp said the initial purchase will cost more than \$11,000.

The board asked police chief Chris Blair to look into a complaint from a Mountain Road resident about a persistent barking dog on Mountain Road. The problem will be discussed again on January 26th. The board will not meet next week, due to the Martin Luther King Day holiday.

Dan Hammock was reappointed as inspector of animals.

At Blair's request, the board also talked about marijuana, to try to clear up some confusion resulting from Massachusetts' recently passed decriminalization referendum. The Erving police department has developed a citation for a \$100 fine for possession of small amounts of marijuana, as provided for in the new law, and will come to the board in person on the 26th

to discuss enforcement further. One problem police departments now face is that the law requires the police to take marijuana away if people are found in possession of it, but it doesn't say what the departments are to do with it then.

Blair has recommended the town strengthen their no smoking in public places bylaw to include not just tobacco but also marijuana.

HIGHLIGHTS FROM THE ERVING POLICE LOG**Barking Dog Leads to Correspondence**

Tuesday, 1/6

9:50 a.m. Assisted Western Massachusetts Electric Company with removing a power line from the former Jillian's on the 2 restaurant.

4:25 p.m. Officer called to a Warner Street residence for a dog complaint.

Thursday, 1/8

5:20 p.m. Report of domestic disturbance at a North Street address. Verbal altercation only, situation calmed.

6:20 p.m. Report of suicidal male walking enroute to the French King Bridge. Located same, transported to Baystate Franklin Medical Center for evaluation.

7:35 p.m. Assisted Montague Police with a large fight in the Fourth Street alley.

Friday, 1/9

6:35 p.m. Suspicious motor vehicle at the Copper Angel Restaurant. Spoke

with driver, all okay and moved along.

9:00 p.m. Arrested [REDACTED]

for unlicensed operation of a motor vehicle and failure to use care in passing.

Saturday, 1/10

10:43 p.m. Suspicious motor vehicle in the municipal parking lot in Erving Center. Checked same.

Sunday, 1/11

3:26 p.m. Three car motor vehicle accident without injuries. Investigated same.

Monday, 1/12

10:10 a.m. Barking dog complaint at a Warner Street address. Letter sent to owner.

11:15 a.m. Medical emergency at a Prospect Street address. Assisted Erving EMTs and ambulance.

MUSIC REVIEW**In Outerspace, They Can Still Hear the Wail**

BY AMY LAPRADE

MILLERS FALLS - There's a little petty larceny in everybody's soul, and New Orleans brings it out.

That, courtesy of Compton Maddux, singer songwriter and guitarist, says a lot about The Outerspace Band and its audience.

Oh, yes, and about New Orleans. The band attributes a lot of its style to New Orleans, though it formed in 1969 at Trinity college in Hartford, CT, incubated for long time in Wendell, and has been the stuff of local legend for 40 years. Or so.

Mike Whiskey - drums / vocals, Klondike Koehler - bass/vocals and sound, Elliot Osbourne - keyboards/vocals, Johnny Moses "aka Johnny Jupiter" - lead guitar/vocals, Wailin' Dave Robinson - harmonica/vocals, Uncle Al - Trombone, Fiddle/vocals (not at Roadhouse last Friday), Ricky Page, from the band Trailer Park, on Tenor Sax, and Artie Adams - sound and recording, can still strut their stuff.

The Outerspace Band has not only opened for very big acts like Commander Cody, B.B.

King, and Bonnie Raitt, but have also played roadhouses, festivals, and concerts from Maine to Washington DC. They've even performed in white tux at the White House for Susan Ford's prom.

The Outerspace Band mem-

seemed the perfect thing to do," said Maddox, grinning playfully as he recalled last year's Summer Of Love Festival, where the Space opened for bands Jefferson Starship and Beautiful Day.

"It gave and still gives so

friends."

Maddox went on to say how much the guys loved their time on the road, but that after five years of touring, became burnt out from going from club to road, road to club, then home for a fleeting spell, then on the

annual reunion mini-tours, one in the winter, one in the summer.

With the winter tour kicking off, fans from all around Franklin County braved the treacherous elements last Friday to see their beloved Outerspace Band as it tore up the Rte. 63 Roadhouse. Stamping, clapping, and cheering, diehard fans filled the comfortable bar with an essence of old school hippy psychedelic fervor, especially when Dave Robinson's son Jacob sat in on drums for a few numbers.

With mostly originals, and the occasional cover tune, the Outerspace Band draws its musical style from American greats such as Little Feat, The Band, John Hiatt, and Ray Charles.

But this band is tight, and has a flare all its own as they weave Blues, Hillbilly, Country, pop fusion, and even a touch of Reggae over Maddox's John Mellencamp style vocals. A jumping party band, fit to rock out at any roadhouse across the U.S., the Outerspace Band looked like they were not only having the time of their lives on stage, but looked like there was nothing else they'd rather be doing. And the same could be said of everyone in the place.

For more info, dates, and discography, go to outerspaceband.com.



Last Saturday, the Outerspace Band rocked the Route 63 Roadhouse

bers are tight enough to be brothers, and what brought them together in the first place was their thirst for adventure and the pure joy that music and traveling in a band can bring.

"It was the times we were living in that inspired us. It

much pleasure, and if you can make money too, great. And you get to be known for your music. It's a great feeling to have people know your music. And it's such a gift to see that not only is everyone in this band still alive, but we're still

road again. After a while it became a grind, and they began seeing the same old clubs, so they peacefully went their separate ways.

But now, fans new and old will still be able to catch the Outerspace Band for their bi-

Kick the Habit this Winter with a Free Patch from CCT

BY JOE KWIECINSKI

TURNERS FALLS — January and February are going to be important months for smokers in Turners Falls and Montague, according to Glen Johnson, substance abuse prevention coordinator for the Community Coalition for Teens.

And, based on the impressive record CCT has compiled over recent years, organizers are hoping even more people will be able to kick the smoking habit, as Community Coalition for Teens will be providing smokers in the area with free nicotine patches.

The Community Coalition for Teens, a program of the Franklin Regional Council of Governments, located on Main Street in Greenfield, coordinates the Communities that Care Coalition, which won national recognition last year by being chosen for the top Coalition of the Year Award from the Community Anti-Drug Coalitions of America, an organization of more than 5,000 anti-drug coalitions nationwide.

In addition, Co-coordinator Kat Allen of the CCT and a co-chair of the Communities that Care Coalition, was recently chosen as one of three recipients of the "Advocate of the Year" award by CADCA. Allen's devotion to the cause has helped result in important legislation that has benefited the substance abuse prevention field.

Prevention coordinator Glen

Johnson said, "As part of our overall anti-smoking effort we're doing a broad-based promotion we hope will reach many people in Turners Falls and Montague."

During the months of January and February, the Community Coalition for Teens will be providing smokers in the area with free nicotine patches.

affordable ways to continue using the patches if they need more than two weeks' worth of the materials.

Recent figures from the Massachusetts Department of Public Health indicate that, in Montague, 22.5% of adults over the age of 18 smoke. That's 25% higher than the state average. Look at this statistic:

out there. If information were all that were needed, all those who smoke would have already quit. We have to change the environment surrounding smokers. For example, when laws prohibited smoking in the workplace, people complied, and smoking was reduced in the workplace. Whenever you raise the price of cigarettes by raising



Kat Allen and other Coalition members advocated for increased federal support for substance abuse prevention at a recent meeting with Senator Kerry.

Those who would like to kick the habit can call the quit-smoking hotline (1-800-TRY-TO-STOP). They will receive a free two-week supply of patches. Hot-line personnel will also work with smokers to identify

17.4% of pregnant mothers smoke in Montague. That's 121 percent above the figure for the state.

"People know that smoking is harmful," observed Johnson. "The information is certainly

taxes, smoking rates go down."

State-wide records, Johnson said, show that 84% of teenagers in Massachusetts do not smoke, and recent survey data show Franklin County teens are matching that average.

But Johnson is aiming for further changes in the environment in these next two months with the offer of free nicotine patches and an all-out media campaign featuring billboards, ads, and flyers.

Rachel Stoler, who serves as Co-coordinator of Community Coalition for Teens with Kat Allen, also sees an important component of her group's work as helping to build a positive overall environment for youth development and for healthy decision-making in the community.

"Youth take their cues from what adults do," said Stoler. "Youth observe adult behavior. Parents, for example, send countless messages on what is appropriate behavior. And people in the community send messages on what is proper behavior."

In addition, Stoler stresses that CCT has a very definite style of communication. "We stick with a positive message," she said, "and we strive to empower people to make healthy decisions. We don't use scare tactics, but we don't try to hide the dangerous aspects of substance abuse. Instead, we try to send a positive overall message about the community to empower people to make their own healthy choices. We like to use a concept called 'social norms' which uses actual data to highlight positive attitudes and behaviors most people have."

Alice Urban Named to Dean's List

MIDDLEBURY, VT - Alice L. Urban of Millers Falls, daughter of Corinne F. Urban of Millers Falls and the late Mark E. Urban, and former High School Highlights columnist for the *Montague Reporter*, was named to the Dean's List during the fall term at Middlebury College.

To be selected for the Dean's List, students must carry a full

course load of four or more classes during the semester, achieve a grade point average of 3.3 (on a 4.0 scale) or higher and earn no grade lower than a B minus.

While at Middlebury, Urban, a freshman, is working as a lifeguard, a photographer for the campus newspaper and a Community Friends participant.

Gill Gourmet in Hospital

Jep's Place author, and frequent *Montague Reporter* photographer and contributor Joseph A. Parzych was taken to BayState Medical Center in Springfield on Tuesday after a mild heart attack. He had been scheduled to speak to the students at Four Rivers Charter School about Gill history, but called from Franklin Medical to say he would be unable to keep his appointment.

On Wednesday evening, his son Joseph R. Parzych called from the hospital in Springfield to say he was resting comfortably, awaiting quadruple bypass surgery Thursday morning.

"My dad is in good spirits," said the younger Parzych. "He



Joe Parzych with his wife, Edna, in younger days.

promised to take a photo and file a story on the ordeal, as soon as he recovers from the anesthesia."

Nurses be warned, he's a caution. And Joe, we're pulling for you, but lay off that cherry cheesecake.

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K OF C COUNCIL 737 TO SPONSOR YOUTH FREE THROW CHAMPIONSHIP

All boys and girl ages 10 to 14 are invited to participate in the local level of competition for the 2009 Knights of Columbus Free Throw Championship. The local competition will be held January 17th, 1:00 p.m., at the Sheffield School in Turners Falls.

The Knights of Columbus Free Throw Championship is sponsored annually, with winners progressing through local, district and state competitions. International champions are announced by the K of C international headquarters based on scores from the state-level competitions. All boys and girls 10 to 14 years old are eligible to participate and will compete in their respective age divisions. Last year more than 179,000

sharpshooters participated in over 3,000 local competitions.

All contestants on the local level are recognized for their participations in the event. Participants are required to furnish proof of age and written parental consent. For entry forms or additional information, contact Stephan Smith at 413-863-9042

The Knights of Columbus is an international Catholic family fraternal service organization with nearly 1.7 million members in over 12,500 local councils. Last year, Knights donated 60 million volunteer hours and \$130 million to charitable and benevolent causes, sponsoring projects to benefit their church, councils, communities, families and youth.

GCC to Hold Financial Aid Information Nights

BY LINDA DESJARDINS

GREENFIELD - What is financial aid, and are you eligible? Did you know there are other options and scholarships available to help pay for college?

To learn the answers to these questions, you are invited to attend a financial aid information night on Monday, January 19th 2009 (snow date Tuesday).

Greenfield Community

College will offer convenient opportunities to meet with financial aid representatives who will answer your questions about financial aid and how to get started in the process.

Sessions will begin at 6:30 p.m. in Room 125, East Building, Main Campus and last approximately one hour. For more about financial aid information workshops, call: 413-775-1109.

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HOUSE from pg 1

three young ones: brothers, Noah, 6, and Abram, 5, along with their two-year-old sister, Quinn.

"We put ourselves through college mainly on loans," said the low-key, thoughtful father. "We tried to borrow to buy a house, but our debt-to-income ratio due to the school loans was too high."

Enter Pioneer Valley Habitat for Humanity, headquartered in Northampton. With the help of volunteer labor, donations and discounts on materials, Habitat is able to offer below market homes with long term, zero interest mortgages to qualifying families.

"Because of the size of our family and income, we meet their requirements," said John. "We have insufficient housing for our needs (two-year-old Quinn sleeps with her parents, since she has no bed of her own), and we are delighted to partner with this wonderful organization."

Doris McLeod, clerk of the board of directors for Pioneer Valley Habitat for Humanity, returned the compliment. "The

Speeks are an absolute model family. They and their children are exactly what you think of when imagining an American family with strong moral values."

One of the main reasons the Speeks wanted their own house was to be able to accommodate his mother on her visits. Afflicted with pervasive rheumatoid arthritis, she literally has to crawl up the steep stairs to visit her son, daughter-in-law, and children in their third floor apartment.

Christine grew up in the projects of Norwich, CT. "I remember," she recalled, "my dad always saying he wanted his family to have their own house. Now our new family will. We'll have our own space, and we won't have to worry about disturbing the neighbors down below. Although we've tried to have our children respect their surroundings, kids are naturally exuberant."

Young Noah and Abram are

subscribes to the belief that all young people deserve to have their basic needs met, and their diverse strengths nurtured by a caring community's support and effort.

This is not an agency content to rest on its laurels, or immune to the tough economic conditions facing all non-profits. As one longstanding program winds down due to loss of funding, another is gearing up to take its place at the newly renovated three story brick building at 25 11th Street in Turners Falls, according to Dial/Self director David Voegele.

Seven years after the agency



The Speek family's new home on L Street, built by volunteers for Habitat for Humanity

thrilled with the prospect of more room and conveniences. "I'm excited about getting a bunk bed," said Abram. Noah said, "I like how close our new house is to the park. And I like the view from the room where you can see the river and some trees."

The new home on L Street is the result of the efforts of a large cast of community volunteers. One of the key partners in the construction of the two story house, and the twin Habitat

house completed two years ago next door, was the Franklin County Technical School, with John Carey of the business trades curriculum playing a central role.

The chance to work on a Habit for Humanity house has afforded Tech School students the opportunity to practice skills in such trades as electrical, plumbing, and carpentry. Alicia Wells, a senior in the latter trade, said the learning experience at the site was invaluable, remarking that study and preparation in carpentry at the school are good, but "you have to actually do it," to complete the educational process.

There were many other people who lent their talent and grit to the all-volunteer work of building the new home. To begin with, the Speeks themselves have put in 250 hours of labor, which Habitat requires as a "sweat equity" investment in their new home. Other volunteer groups and individuals who worked on the project include a Habitat for Humanity group from UMass and Mount Holyoke College, a local Quaker delegation, and representatives of the Church of Jesus Christ of the Latter Day Saints in Greenfield. Not to mention, "those who have come out on their own after signing up on Habitat's website," John said.

An especially dedicated volunteer has been Gary Snyder, a chemistry professor who serves on the PVHH building committee. "He's probably put in about 500 to 600 hours himself into the building of our home," said John.

Christine and John are looking forward to the January 17th dedication of their new

see DIAL pg 17



Phil Ringwood, operations manager for Dial/Self, shows off an available apartment at the newly renovated Turners Falls facility

So, the original pact will be ending, but a second part of the Step program will continue thanks to new federal funding sources earmarked to provide services for homeless teens 18 years of age and over, who are not affiliated with the Department of Children and Family Services.

Staff members Maylea Spence and Melissa Terry will continue their work with area youth at the 11th Street site. "Maylea and Melissa play important roles," said Phil Ringwood, operations manager

see HOUSE pg 18

~ Powered by Sunlight ~

With the help of the worker owners of PV-Squared, a Greenfield-based electrical contractor specializing in renewable energy systems, green power, micro-hydro systems, wind turbines, and solar electric power systems, the new Habitat for Humanity home the Speeks will move into this week will see up to three quarters or more of its yearly electric usage provided by a 2.5 kilowatt photovoltaic array, mounted on its roof.

Phillipe Rigolaud, system designer for PV-Squared, said, "We worked with Habitat first on a house down in South Amherst. After we created a system for that house, we secured grant money from the Massachusetts Renewable Energy Trust for \$8,820," for the Speek's house on L Street, Rigolaud said.

"We got reduced costs from the manufacturer," a Massachusetts photovoltaic firm named Evergreen, with factories in Marlboro and Fort Devens, "and the delivery costs were donated as well. All our design costs and grant preparation time for the project were donated," he added.

Rigolaud estimated the photovoltaic panel's annual system AC power output at 2,935 kW hours per year. "At 18 cents per kW hour, the system in a sense will create an equivalent of \$528 in electricity per year," he said.

But what about when it snows? "Wait for the snow to melt and slide off the glass." Rigolaud, who grew up in the southwest of France and speaks with a euphonious accent, said, "It is not recommend these people climb a ladder," to clear the snow when it covers the array. "Light can penetrate through the snow. You will generate some electricity even then," about 10% of the panel's normal output. With the small amount of heat this creates, the snow should slide off fairly quickly — usually within a day, or longer if snow changes to ice in adverse wind conditions. He said the power output estimates for this region are calculated on an average of "sunny days, rainy days, hazy days; worst case scenario: two hours of usable hours of sunlight in wintertime, 3.5 of sun peak hours in spring, summer and early fall."

He said New Englanders actually have a regional advantage in installing photovoltaics, because the panels perform best in cooler temperatures.

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FIRE from pg 1

he had emptied "about six" fire extinguishers on the fire before firefighters arrived.

"Thank God we didn't lose the whole building," said Anctil. "Our kids are OK." He added, "We're survivors. We'll continue on with the process, and deal with the mess."

The first call came into the Turners Falls Fire Department at 3:37 p.m.

Lauanno said the first fire truck got to the scene within five minutes of the call.

Captain John Zellman and Mike Morin were driving that truck. Zellman, his helmet black with soot, said when he arrived on the scene he was already suited up with his air pack. Reaching the second floor he found, "heavy fire in the two hallways and second floor bedroom." With Morin's help, he said he largely had the fire extinguished "within 15 minutes," as other fire trucks began to arrive from Turners



DETMOULD PHOTOS

Smoke pours from the south bedroom of the former rectory

Falls, Montague Center, Greenfield, Erving, Gill, and South Deerfield.

WMECo cut power to the entire block, including the U.S. post office, shortly after 4 p.m. Representatives of Berkshire Gas were on hand to make sure any gas lines to the rectory were shut down.

Firefighters knocked out windows to the second floor bedroom where the fire originated, and to rooms on the third floor, to release the heavy smoke, which was also pouring up through one of the rectory's prominent chimneys.

Firefighters were still checking for hot spots as night fell.

Sixth street was a frozen mass of hoses and ice, with firefighters standing about telling battle stories and taking turns entering the building, first with air packs, then without, carrying tools to probe the walls and ceiling bays, looking for embers that still needed to be extinguished.

Up the grand central staircase, a turn to the right revealed a dark line of smoke on the hallway walls, and badly damaged interiors near the southern wing. Though windows were open to the 15 degree air, the interior was still

extremely hot from the blaze.

Police had blocked off a section of Avenue A, and traffic was diverted. The Bank

*Pouring sweat from the heat and heavy gear, one of the many area firefighters who responded to the call at the rectory fire*

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of America was dark.

Zellman said when he entered the burning building, he heard a fire extinguisher being discharged upstairs.

He called, "Is anybody in here?"

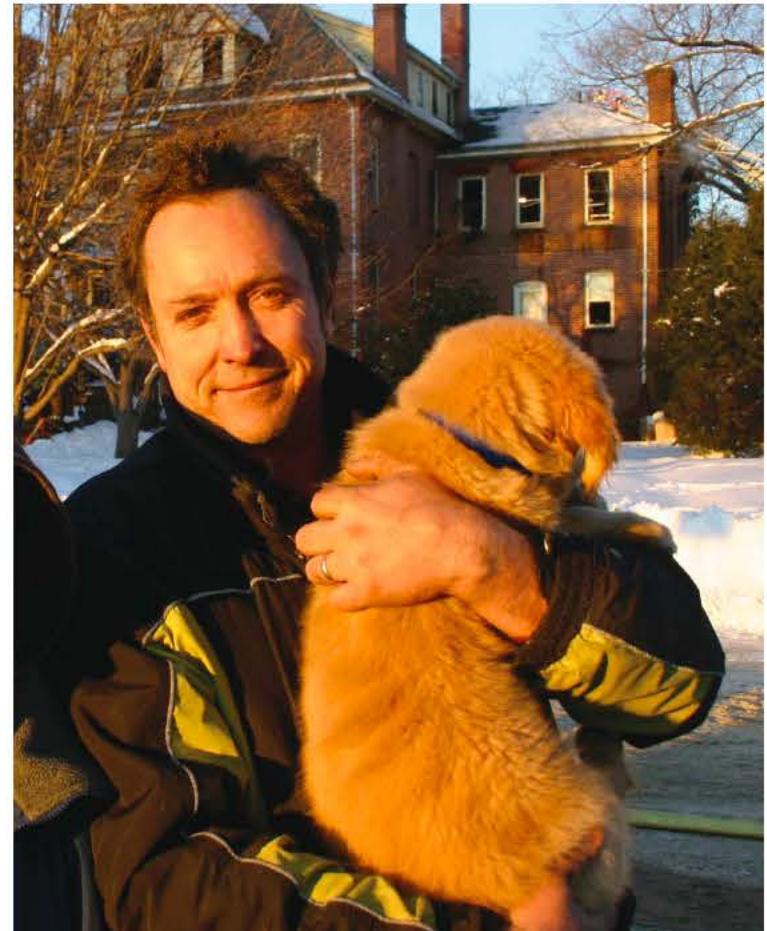
Anctil called back, "Yes."

"Are you able to get out of here?" Zellman asked next. Again the reply was "Yes," from Anctil. "Then get out of here!" Zellman yelled. "We don't want to turn this into a rescue operation!"

Anctil held the family's golden retriever puppy, Preacher, as he shivered on the side of Sixth Street next to Connelly and Quinn and watched the firefighters do their work.

"Look at all the damage," said the youngster, struggling to hold back tears.

"Thank God nobody's hurt," said Anctil, over and over again.

*John Anctil, holds the family's five month old Golden Retriever, Preacher, rescued from the fire.*

NOTES FROM THE GILL/MONTAGUE REGIONAL SCHOOL DISTRICT

This Is Still Your School District



DETMOLD PHOTO

Jeff Wulfson

BY ELLEN BLANCHETTE

The Gill Montague Regional School District school committee and the state associate commissioner of the Department of Elementary and Secondary Education Jeffrey Wulfson discussed the scope of the state's involvement in the school district's budget process. Telling the committee, "This is still your budget, your school district," Wulfson made it clear the state has no desire to "take over the district" operationally.

He said the DESE will "try to set some parameters." He will be involved in the budget process until the fiscal '10 budget is agreed to by the district and the towns, but it is still up to the school committee to set goals and priorities for the district.

Much of the conversation between Wulfson and the school committee, with some additional input by town officials in attendance, revolved around the question of what budgetary and programmatic goals are realistic, given the current economic situation of the towns, state, and nation at large.

There again, Wulfson stated

his position very positively, stating his opinion that "Good quality education is not just a constitutional guarantee in good times."

The general tone of the discussion was congenial. School committee member Michael Langknecht stated, "I hope we'll be able to develop a real positive relationship," with the state, adding, "This is an opportunity for change."

There was some discussion of the position apparently taken by the state that broader regionalization may provide a solution to many of the fiscal problems facing small school districts, like the ones here in Franklin County. The state has recently used supplemental school aid as leverage to prompt local school districts to take further steps to examine the possibility of joining with other districts, or to collaborate to combine resources and purchasing.

Wulfson presented the example of a small school district with limited resources joining with a larger, wealthier school district to gain access to a wider variety of services than the

smaller district could afford on its own.

Mike Naughton of the Monatague finance committee rose to express his concern that with the current economic crisis, it seemed obvious the towns and the district could not keep all programs and staff in place. He added that putting together a bunch of poor school districts just makes a bigger poor school district, with no real advantage to either district. He said he was not convinced this was a good answer to Gill-Montague's problems, and he would like to see more from the state.

Wulfson responded the state will be announcing the first group of grants to the districts very soon. These will provide the funds and support necessary to do a thorough analysis of the question of regionalization. Emphasizing the strong commitment of the state to see the local districts move in the direction of regionalization, though, he added that though the state does not want to mandate this change, preferring to allow districts to work things out themselves, if they don't see some movement in the direction of regionalization the state might move to mandates.

Wulfson will be invited to attend the school committee meetings once a month as part of the process of developing next year's budget.

Mary Kociela, school committee chair, presented the committee's plans for moving forward with the budget process. But Linda Kuklewicz, a member of the budget subcommittee, said she felt the process as it now exists is not working well and should be changed.

She said the subcommittee has the full burden of making budgetary decisions, with the full school committee simply

voting, with little discussion, on the budget as presented in the regular public meetings. This means the public never sees the full decision-making process. Most school committee members attend the sub-committee meetings informally.

Kuklewicz recommended the full school committee meet to discuss the budget in open public meetings, so that members of the public can be directly involved and informed, and can have an opportunity to participate by attending meetings and addressing their concerns to the school committee.

After a discussion where many members spoke in support of this position, it was agreed by the committee they would meet on alternate Tuesdays at TFHS to discuss the budget. This new process will take the place of budget subcommittee meetings.

With the mandated deadline for a preliminary budget of February 1st approaching, the committee set the next budget meeting for 4:30 to 6 p.m. on Tuesday, January 20th. Because it is a meeting of the full Gill-Montague school committee, it will be posted, broadcast on TV, and of course open to the public.

Interim superintendent Ken Rocke presented information he has gathered regarding the impact on the district of school choice, along with a comparison with other districts in Franklin County. Though there had been great concern about the impact of closing the Montague Center School on school choice numbers, Rocke said it appeared that the impact of school choice for FY 2009 was essentially zero in terms of new students coming in and new students leaving the district, though nearly a half a mil-

lion dollars in school choice losses overall are still posted as a line item in the district budget.

In looking at the overall trends within Franklin County, Rocke noted a migration of students from poor districts to wealthy districts. He posed a question, reflecting on the original intent of the school choice law. He said the law "was crafted to allow students to choose out of failing districts, but we now have districts that are failing because so many students are choosing to choose out."

Rocke suggested the state should consider a change in the legislation, because the law is not working as intended.

Further discussion led to questions: Should the government consider a modification of school choice? Should Franklin County have a moratorium on choice or set a limit of how many students can choose out of a district? Kociela suggested the GMRSD put the school choice issue on their agenda for the January 27th school committee meeting.

Addressing the matter of the regional transportation costs, Langknecht stated the district can be reimbursed for intra-regional choice transportation, as from Montague to Gill, or vice versa. He suggested the GMRSD put this matter on a future agenda, as it seemed the district has not applied for these funds.

Terry Lapachinski reported on the communications task force, saying her committee wants to encourage the administration to get out the word that the GMRSD has good schools. They want to develop a brochure, and encourage more coverage in local papers of the positive things happening in Gill-Montague schools.

GUEST EDITORIAL:

BY JOYCE PHILLIPS

TURNERS FALLS - Sadly, the tone at Montague's Special Town Meeting on December 16, 2008 was one of disagreement and contradiction. Although some spoke of a "collaborative development" in our budget process as well as an interest and desire to work together with the district and the state, the voices that sounded loudest involved punishment, insults, and damaging rhetoric toward the district.

I felt like an outsider, not someone who lives in the community, pays taxes, and shares the financial impact of any loss of services to the community. My immediate response was to protect that which is most precious - our children and their

future. Taking a deep breath and stepping back, though, I saw the driving force behind the negativity: fear, and a desperate anger. The struggles of the past eight years have brought not only our community, but our country, to the threshold of helplessness. And yet, I believe it's not too late. I challenge my community to look with hope, confidence and optimism to a future that we can and must build. If we remain stuck in this quicksand of doubt, anger, fear and uncertainty, we will certainly sink out of sight. If we continue to struggle and fight each other, we will lose control of our future.

We seem to have forgotten that there is a connection

Public Education Needed Now More Than Ever

between public education and the wellbeing of our world.

Now more than ever, we must strengthen our understanding of and commitment to the principles behind public education.

The Center for Public Education (an initiative of the National School Boards Association and the National School Boards Foundation) outlines the following key points regarding public education on its website. They point out that public education in America means:

"A tuition-free education for all students

"The promise of equal educational opportunities no matter race, religion or ability

"A commitment to high standards and high expecta-

tions for all students

"A system of governance that ensures public accountability

"A benefit to society by teaching democratic principles and common values

If we want to build a strong future for our families, community, state, and world, we must build an educated workforce. Similarly, we cannot expect to solve our current challenges or those of the future without an educated society. We all have a responsibility to prepare future generations. This requires investing in education.

Education is not an expense; it is an investment for every individual and for the world.

The Gill-Montague Regional School District's

strengths are found in the commitment of its school committee, administration, staff, students and, community who support and implement the qualities, values and opportunities of public education. How can we show our students and educators that we value their work if we aren't willing to provide the tools they need to achieve? It's time for all of us to re-examine the value of public education as we work with each other across Franklin County and the state for its future.

Joyce Phillips is a member of the Gill-Montague Regional School Committee

Community Dialogue Seeks Common Ground on 'the Chop'

BY DAVID DETMOLD

GILL-MONTAGUE - On Monday evening, Turners Falls High School students, parents, alumni, and a handful of Native Americans who live in the area gathered in the auditorium to discuss the school marching band's use of the Tomahawk Chop fight song during sports events.

The school sports teams are named the Turners Falls Indians, the team mascot is an Indian in profile wearing a Plains Indian style eagle feather headdress.

More than fifty students were in attendance, and many of them spoke in favor of keeping the Tomahawk Chop.

Sarah Hewitt, captain of the cheerleading team, said, "Music brings people together. This is our school. It unites us. When we go out on the field, we aren't relating (the Tomahawk Chop) to any kind of violence. We're taking pride because we are Indians. It's not a long song. It's four to six notes. It's a drumbeat. But it means the world to us. It does to me at least. We have a privilege to have a song like that. I was upset when we couldn't play 'the Chop' anymore. It should be a community decision, because we are the community."

Topher Gordon, said, "I'd like to say, all throughout history, every form of civilization has had some form of music or chant to raise their spirits when they go into battle. In modern day, we don't have bloody warfare. We have civilized sports. Our expression to unite our team is music. We have chants. We have spirit days. We are together and standing for our school. Our colors. Our paint. The blue and the white, and people are proud to wear it. What our school stands for is very close to what the Indians are."

Sam Colton said, "I think instead of focusing on the dynamics of the unity of the school, which is important, and whether it offends people in the community, which is most important, we need to look at the

educational opportunity of keeping this, which isn't really being looked at. I've heard there is a Native American organization planning to build a large complex here. So there may be opportunity for them to come into our school for a day, or for us to take field trips. This should be taken into consideration."

After a number of students and parents and alumni had spoken in favor of the Tomahawk Chop, Cris Carl, of Greenfield, stood up. "I'm a Lenape Indian, and this offends me. Look at me. I'm a person in this community and this offends me. No one has asked me why does this offend me. Everyone is telling me what I should feel, what the Indians feel, what my experience is. But to see someone doing this (imitating the hand gesture that accompanies the Tomahawk Chop), I'd never bring my child to one of your games. It would be horrifying to me."

Referring to a recent article about the Tomahawk Chop in the neighboring daily, Carl asked listeners to go to the Recorder's website and read the comment posted there about the article. "You will see people hating. See how much hatred it brings up. I almost threw up. I was terrified to come here. Are you guys really that uncreative that you can't come up with some song that doesn't hurt other people?"

Later in the hearing, Carl pointed out that the oppression of Native Americans is not past history. "These things are still going on for us. As of 1986, they were still putting our children in boarding schools, taking away their language, their culture, their hair. It wasn't till the 1950s that we were even allowed to vote. We're thought of so much as savages."

She added, "I honor you for sharing your feelings. You are all really great people. You are willing to open your minds."

A cheerleader named Jolena Blier spoke next. "This song is much more than a song to our school. It's a tradition. It actually

means something to us. It's much more offensive to us to be told we're not smart enough to do something, than anything in a song."

Zach Boisvert said, "The Native Americans and the settlers from England were at war. Even today people are paid to kill people and get their heads. But that's in the past. [The song is about] celebrating who the Indian people were."

Howard Clark, a historian

means something to us. It's much more offensive to us to be told we're not smart enough to do something, than anything in a song."

She said she had read the Recorder website comments about the Tomahawk Chop moratorium. "I think it's bad, the hatred and feelings rising from this. In my opinion, this was brought up in a negative manner. I do have to say, I've been very disappointed with the way the

would the memory of the Indians that once lived here."

Joe Graveline, a resident of Northfield of Cherokee, Abnaki and French descent, said, "This is not a judgment on these fine students. They don't bear the weight of history. It's easy to understand their emotions are deep about something that is sacred to them."

But he continued, "There's history to something like the Tomahawk Chop. A tomahawk was a stone implement embedded into a hard wood. It was used to crush bones and split somebody's skull open so their brains fall out. So when a tomahawk is expressed as strength, as warrior energy, when it's expressed without the weight of history, what we have here is Ms. Carl, saying, 'Nobody asked me why this offends me.' That's really important. You each have your voice. It's time to bring a balance and weigh history. Understand what other people think about their culture. It can be done without offending any particular culture."

Stacy Langknecht, PTO member, said the Gill-Montague schools are blessed to have students who have such a strong school spirit and community bond. "These kids have a lot of heart. They felt left out when this door was slammed in their faces.

continued next page



Howard Clark of Greenfield detailed the history of paying bounties for Indian scalps in Colonial Massachusetts

from Greenfield of Cherokee descent, gave a brief history of the practice of gathering scalps in the period of contact between Colonial settlers and Native tribes. He said contrary to prevalent opinion, it was not only, and perhaps not primarily, Native Americans who practiced scalping. Though the English settlers may have used knives or hatchets, not tomahawks, to take them, they were paid large bounties for the scalps of Native American men, women, and children starting at 20 shillings in 1695, and increasing to 100 pounds by 1745, in the Bay Colony.

When the GMRSD administration banned the Tomahawk Chop at school events earlier this year, Gammon said little information was given as to why the decision had been taken. "Some students were threatened - including my son - if they continued to play it would have detrimental effects and could lead to them being removed from the National Honor Society."

Gammon talked about her Native American great, great grandmother using plants for medicinal purposes. "We should be inviting Indians to do [programs on their culture] with our students, not this animosity."

She concluded, "What would our ancestors want us to do? The Indian mascot is a way to remember the Indians that once lived here, the Native American heritage that once was on this land. If the mascot goes, so

College Financing Workshop at TFHS

Parents and students are invited to attend MEFA's free comprehensive presentation on financing college. The seminar will be hosted by Turners Falls High School on Wednesday, January 21st, at 6:00 p.m. An experienced MEFA counselor will have information about scholarships, grants and loans, applying for financial aid, and completing the FAFSA. Families will receive a copy of MEFA's Guide to College Financing. Time is allowed for questions and answers.

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Your Pace at Your Place



CHOP from pg 14

They do so much to support this school." Langknecht, who is Jewish, said, "I've been in enough classrooms to see these kids are open to other cultures. This dialogue should be unifying. This shouldn't be the end of it."

Another student said, "A lot of kids say why would we have a mascot if we didn't respect it. The Indian is to represent those lives that have been lost here to a massacre. That's why we should keep 'the Chop.'"

Toby Wissman, a parent who said he had initiated a petition to save the Tomahawk Chop at one of the first football games of the year, said, now, "Learning there are people that are upset by this, I would think the school committee shouldn't do anything

MCTV Schedule January 16th through 22nd

visit www.montaguema.net for the complete schedule

Friday, January 16th
2:30 PM Town Forum-Unity Park Hearing
4:00 PM Veterans Day 07
5:00 PM GMRSD "Tomahawk Chop" Hearing
7:00 PM GMRSD 1/13/09
11:00 PM Valley Idol Finals 2008
Saturday, January 17th
2:30 PM Turkey Day Game 2006
5:30 PM TWD Sexual Abuse Healing
6:30 PM UNpanel1
8:30 PM Carlos W. Anderson "Big Fat Lie"
9:30 PM Block Party Parade 08
9:35 PM Block Party 08
11:30 PM Christmas Candle Light Service
Sunday, January 18th
3:30 PM John Root-Wild Flowers
5:00 PM Dodging The Bow
7:00 PM Over The Falls The Eddie in Eddies Wheels
8:00 PM On The Ridge Deer Huntin
9:00 PM Mik TV with Joe Landry pt1

9:30 PM Montague Update: Tim Neuman
10:30 PM Teachers at Sea.
11:00 PM The Flow of Time
Monday, January 19th
2:00 PM The Looming Crisis in Oil Depletion
4:00 PM Sculpture Fest '08 Firedance
5:00 PM Seabrook 1977.
6:30 PM Seneca Falls
7:00 PM Select Board 1/12/09
8:30 PM GMRSD "Tomahawk Chop" Hearing
10:30 PM Amandla
Tuesday, January 20th
2:00 PM Michael Nix
3:30 PM Falls Table Mike Ryan
4:30 PM Mind Control
5:00 PM Mik TV: Gentling The Bull
5:30 PM Mohawk Select Chorus
6:00 PM Montague Machine
7:00 PM Select Board (Live)
10:00 PM GMRSD 1/13/09
Wednesday, January 21st

3:00 PM Franklin County Matters Cogeneration
4:00 PM Grouse Attack
4:30 PM Green by 2015
5:00 PM Independent Voices
5:30 PM Journey to Wissatinnewag
6:00 PM The Katie Clarke Band
8:00 PM Living Along The River
10:00 PM MCTV Video Camp 2007
10:30 PM Mohawk Holiday Concert 2008
12:00 AM Encore Body Art #10
Thursday, January 22nd
2:30 PM Physician Focus Young Athletes and Sports Injuries
3:30 PM White House Chronicles
4:30 PM The Well Being - HIV
5:30 PM The Western MASS Democrat Senator Stan Rosenberg
6:00 PM Exploring New Worlds in New England
6:30 PM Seneca Falls
7:00 PM Select Board 1/20/09
10:00 PM Physician Focus Young Athletes and Sports Injuries
10:30 PM Power Canal Draw Down
11:00 PM Preachin the Blues

HIGHLIGHTS FROM THE MONTAUGUE POLICE LOG
Telephone Fraud

Thursday, 1/1

4:58 p.m. Report of hit and run accident in the First and Second Street alley. Services rendered.

8:21 p.m. Following a traffic stop, arrested [REDACTED]

[REDACTED] on a default warrant.

10:21 p.m. Officer initiated warrant arrest of [REDACTED] on a probation warrant.

Friday, 1/2
1:46 p.m. Report of restraining order violation from Greenfield police department. Arrested [REDACTED]

Charged with violation of an abuse prevention order, assault and battery, domestic, threatening to commit murder and assault with a dangerous weapon.

4:35 p.m. Report of vandalism at a Turnpike Road address.

Sunday, 1/4
12:55 a.m. Following a traffic stop, arrested [REDACTED]

Charged with operating a motor vehicle

while under the influence of liquor, second offense, operating to endanger, motor vehicle lights violation and failure to wear a seatbelt.

Monday, 1/5
12:47 a.m. Following a traffic stop, arrested [REDACTED]

Charged with operation of a motor vehicle with a suspended license and for being a minor transporting an alcoholic beverage.

Wednesday, 1/7
4:08 p.m. Report of domestic disturbance at a Hillside Road address. Peace restored.

11:13 p.m. Following a motor vehicle stop, arrested [REDACTED]

Charged with operation of a motor vehicle with a suspended license, no vehicle inspection sticker and obstructed license plate.

Thursday, 1/8

7:56 p.m. Report of a fight in the Fourth Street parking lot. Juvenile, age 16, taken into protective custody.

Friday, 1/9

6:56 a.m. Report of fraudulent phone call at a Clark Avenue address.

7:44 a.m. Report of a fraudulent phone call at a Bulkley Street address.

8:07 a.m. Report of a fraudulent phone call at a Turnpike Road address.

9:55 a.m. Walk-in to station arrest of [REDACTED]

on a straight warrant.

9:39 p.m. Report of a general disturbance at Thomas Memorial Country Club on Country Club Lane. Investigated.

Saturday, 1/10

1:19 a.m. Report of domestic disturbance at an Avenue A address. Investigated.

Sunday, 1/11

3:34 p.m. Officer wanted at a Park Street address. Peace restored.

Monday, 1/12

1:59 a.m. 911 abandoned call investigated at an East Main Street address. Arrested [REDACTED]

[REDACTED] on a default warrant.

11:08 a.m. Report of burglary / breaking and entering in the Second Street parking lot. Investigated.

11:19 a.m. 911 open line investigated at a North Park Street address.

Tuesday, 1/13

1:18 a.m. Report of loud noise disturbance at a Third Street address. Peace restored.

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Janice Gammon, who is of mixed European and Native American descent, asked, "What would our ancestors want us to do?"

an alumna of TFHS and a parent of a student in the district said the Tomahawk Chop has not been a long tradition at the high school. "It was not used when I was in high school. It is a recent tradition."

Student council member Lindsey Wilson said, "We are being kind of selfish. I do believe we need to weigh history. We're taking a selfish stand.

The Native Americans have had much more taken away from them than a song. They've had their entire culture taken away from them."

School committee member Terry Lapachinski, speaking as

3:00 PM Franklin County Matters

Cogeneration

4:00 PM Grouse Attack

4:30 PM Green by 2015

5:00 PM Independent Voices

5:30 PM Journey to Wissatinnewag

6:00 PM The Katie Clarke Band

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11:00 PM Preachin the Blues

ence that has occurred. It began as a very polarized discussion and very polarized sides. This is a discussion. This is healthy. This is a meeting of minds. We can find a healthy alternative that not only honors the people who came before us but unites the students."

Addressing the few members of the audience who had identified themselves as Native Americans, he said, "On behalf of all the students and alumni for the last 126 years, please let us apologize. No offense was ever meant. It is our sincere hope that we can find a middle ground, that could replace a simple arm movement that represents a thing of violence, as you so eloquently shared."



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GILL from page 1

Banash explained the account contained unused Chapter 90 (highway) funds from previous years that the state allows towns to carry over. The balance in the account was \$16,480. The \$5000 would be used to pay for unanticipated repairs to the front end loader.

After some discussion about what else the account could be used for (purchasing equipment and offsetting expenses not

article.

The going wasn't so easy with the next motion, to approve the transfer of \$13,631 from the building inspector stabilization fund to the general stabilization fund. The request was closely related to the subsequent article on the warrant, which asked voters to then transfer the \$13,631 from the general stabilization fund to support general operating expenses of the town.

The building inspector



Carrie Stevens, Cemetery Commissioner

SHAWN WOOLSEY PHOTO

covered by the budget were cited), and why finance committee members knew so little about the account (the newness of some committee members was acknowledged), voters unanimously approved the request.

Voters also hesitated over the next motion, to reduce the amount reserved for erosion prevention at the Center Cemetery from \$20,000 to \$7,000. Some citizens were concerned the state would not approve the partial and less costly fix the town has devised to the problem of seasonal flooding toward the rear of the cemetery, where Unadilla Brook is threatening to erode several graves. However, after reassurance from the selectboard that there was still \$2000 in the line item for additional erosion control work if needed, voters unanimously approved the

stabilization fund was created and funded at the May 2008 annual town meeting, but voters did not approve an override last week that would allow the town to fund the account through an increase in property taxes. That left the town \$13,631 short in operating expenses. Moving \$13,631 out of the account to general stabilization would help the town with its operating expenses for the current year, but it would leave the building inspector stabilization account at zero.

The finance committee's unanimous recommendation was to leave the funds in the account for the purpose for which they were intended--to pay for building inspector services provided by the Franklin Regional Council of Governments as part of Gill's cooperative agreement. "This money has been reserved to pay a

known debt," said Brown. "If we spend it for other purposes now, where will we find that money next year?"

Selectboard member Ann Banash argued the money to replenish the building inspector stabilization fund could be found in free cash, which has been recently certified by the state and is almost 50% higher than last year, at \$182,000.

Several voters noted there are no indications that next year's economy or levels of state aid will improve, and the town will likely be turning to the free cash account for a number of reasons, without adding more.

"We should tighten our belts and work with what we've got," stated Sandy Brown.

Borrowing from a fund we know we have to replenish "is simply not prudent," agreed finance committee member Clare Chang. "It's like borrowing from your child's college fund."

Alden Booth, also on the finance committee, added: "It's even worse...you could decide to postpone or change college plans. But in this case, you've spent the money and you've still got the bill to pay."

Selectboard chair Nancy Griswold felt the alternative--cutting town services--was unacceptable. "We have gone over this budget again and again," she stated. "We have already asked departments to cut, and then we have cut some more."

Nevertheless, the finance committee had suggestions for cuts, proposing that the \$13,631 in cuts be shared relatively equally by the highway, police, and fire departments, which--next to the school--comprise the largest share of the town budget.

Adeptly facilitated by town moderator Ray Steele, wide and varied discussion finally led to a close vote (24-26) in which the motion to move the funds out of the building inspector stabilization was defeated.

With only \$90,000 in the general stabilization fund, the question then became whether to draw on that for the \$13,631

needed for town services. Selectboard members were adamant in their belief that such a move was appropriate. "We absolutely need the funds. This is what a 'Rainy Day' fund is for," asserted Ann Banash.

"We've already cut our third police officer and sold a cruiser," noted Nancy Griswold. "We've asked town departments to cut enough."

Finance committee members again disagreed, recommending that voters reject this transfer as well. Those approving the use of stabilization funds to balance the budget actually outnumbered by one those voting against (24-23). However, since a two-thirds majority was required to approve, the motion failed.

Short work was made of the next agenda item, since it involved freeing up \$10,000 originally slated for fire truck pump repair but no longer needed, thanks to funds available in the Northfield Mount Hermon gift account, which the school donates each year in lieu of taxes, with the understanding the town will use the funds for emergency services.

But the next article brought voters back to the subject of cuts in town services, since Article 7 was a motion to amend the omnibus budget approved at annual town meeting on May 5th, 2008, to match the amount approved by voters in the override election on January 5th of this year. Cuts bulleted in Article 7 already totaled \$79,713.57, and now, due to the aforementioned votes, \$13,631 in additional cuts needed to be found.

The selectboard had little choice but to consider the finance Committee's proposal that the Fire, Police, and Highway Department share in additional cuts.

A number of different scenarios for reductions were proposed and discussed, with citizens expressing a wide variety of concerns about public safety, police capacity, and the condition of the highway department garage roof, which is

deteriorating and will need repair. Selectboard members and others warned the police department was already being cut from three to two full-time officers. The additional cut of \$6000 proposed in one scenario would reduce the amount of funds available for part-time police hours--in effect allowing for two shifts a week of part-time policing instead of three.

In the end, voters approved a proposal which reduced the police department budget by an additional \$6000; the fire department by an additional \$4000, and the highway department by an additional \$3631, allowing for some funds in the highway department budget to be used to address problems with the roof.

Approving the increase in the regional school assessment was not a difficult task, since the \$9,684 increase in Gill's assessment will be covered by a \$10,000 'Pothole' grant from the state. But then Gill town meeting turned its attention to a proposed non-binding resolution modeled after one passed by Montague town meeting in December.

The proposed resolution declared the 2009 school district assessment "unsustainable," and maintained that "any increase in Gill's assessment next year is fiscally irresponsible." It went on to assert that "we, the town meeting members of Gill, recognizing the serious budget constraints of the town, state, and nation... cannot and will not support a 2010 school assessment that is greater than the level set by the state this year..."

Again, selectboard members seemed surprised by a quick and firm reaction against their proposal, as one voter after another stated they thought the resolution was "the wrong way to go," "not helpful," and "arbitrary."

"It's the wrong message to send," stated former finance committee chair Paul Nowill. "The message we want to send is that we need good schools and that we need to find a better way

see **GILL** page 17

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JESSICA HARMON ILLUSTRATION

BY FRED CICETTI

LEONIA, NJ - Q. *I have this ringing in my ears almost all the time. My doctor says it is age-related tinnitus. I tried some of his recommendations to deal with it, but haven't been successful. Any suggestions?*

Most tinnitus - a symptom, not a disease - comes from damage to the microscopic endings of the hearing nerve in the inner

ear. People who suffer from tinnitus hear phantom noises that include not just ringing but whistling, hissing, buzzing, roaring and clicking. There is no cure yet for tinnitus.

The noises may vary in pitch and volume, and they can affect one or both ears. Tinnitus can be intermittent or continuous.

Hearing loss can cause tinnitus. For many, the ability to hear diminishes with age. Tinnitus is most common in people over 65.

Tinnitus may also be caused by more than 200 medicines, head injuries, ear-wax blockage, allergies, abnormal blood pressure, tumors, diabetes and thyroid problems.

Here are some treatments for

reducing tinnitus:

Hearing aids. If you can hear more clearly, you will experience less tinnitus.

Maskers. These are small electronic devices that use sound to make tinnitus less noticeable. Tinnitus is usually more bothersome in quiet surroundings. White-noise machines are helpful for getting to sleep.

Medicine. Some drugs may ease tinnitus. These include medicines prescribed for depression, anxiety and alcoholism.

Therapy. A combination of counseling and maskers can help people to avoid thinking about their tinnitus.

There are also techniques for dealing with tinnitus.

Music. Many people find focusing on music helps them ignore their tinnitus.

Noise. Avoid noise, which can make your tinnitus worse. If you can't escape a noisy environment, wear ear plugs.

Salt. Cut your salt intake. Salt impedes blood circulation. Good circulation can help relieve tinnitus.

Blood pressure. High blood pressure can affect tinnitus. Get your pressure checked.

Stimulants. Stay away from coffee, tea, colas and nicotine.

Exercise. This improves circulation.

Fatigue. Get enough rest.

Stress. Stress can intensify tinnitus. Try relaxation tech-

niques.

There are commercial products that claim success in treating tinnitus. You can find many of them by running an internet search for "tinnitus treatment." Two products I found have been cleared by the U.S. Food and Drug Administration. You can read more about them at:

www.neuromonics.com/ and
www.tinnitusphase-out.com/

I can't endorse either of these products because I have no experience with them. If I had tinnitus, I would research them fully.

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

DIAL from pg 10

at Dial/Self. "They're great at connecting with the participants of the program."

Eight guests are served at a time at the Turners Falls facility, which has four apartments, with two to a room. The program not only offers housing, but also a weekly allowance for food, laundry, and transportation.

"We also provide the participants with case management," Voegele pointed out. A youth worker meets with them on a weekly basis to help the young people develop an action plan, set goals and identify means to accomplish them, and focus on practical skills.

"We want to help kids to develop life skills," Voegele stressed, "to be effective out in the adult world. We want our participants, for example, to learn money management, shopping skills, how to look for a job, how to obtain health care insurance, and how to find a good doctor."

Another program staffed locally by Dial/Self is Resources Invested in Student Excellence. Ashley Brooks is the coordinator of this initiative. An AmeriCorps worker, Brooks assists students

at Great Falls Middle School and Turners Falls High School.

RISE is an ambitious program focused on student academic achievement, helping them remain in school, and preparing them for their adult lives.

"At the start of the school year," said Voegele, "the staff person meets with the students, faculty, and administrators to identify unmet needs and to leverage resources from the community to help meet these needs."

Recently, Brooks partnered with local music producer David Westbrook, a former Greenfield school committee member, to bring Undefyed, a Connecticut pop-punk band, to Turners Falls High for a free concert on Friday, January 23rd. The show was rescheduled following a recent snowstorm.

Another Dial/Self initiative is TeenLine, an information and referral service based out of Dial/Self's central building at 21 Abbott Street in Greenfield, that links teen callers with area resources.

In addition, the Dial/Self staff tours area schools each month to provide information and referrals to services teens or their families require.

Dial/Self maintains the Night Owl Teen Warming Center at the Abbott Street location. The "Night Owl" serves as a drop-in center, enabling teens to develop connections with responsible adults who, in Voegele's words, "care about them, give them a hot meal, and allow the teens to just have a place to be."

Voegele is highly enthusiastic about the Night Owl. He said, "We like to call it a warming center because we can indeed keep kids up to 19 warm and safe if they have no other place to go. Also, if the teens are homeless, we can offer them temporary housing on a night-by-night basis."

Dial/Self also sponsors a YouthServe AmeriCorps program in conjunction with the Brick House, 24 3rd Street, in Turners Falls. "We have placed an AmeriCorps person at the Brick House to work with youth as a mentor, organize activities, and supervise the drop-in space." Since 1995, Dial/Self has hosted AmeriCorps youth workers in various capacities in Franklin and Hampshire counties and the North Quabbin area.

Dial/Self has organized the ACT Community Service Center, a regional volunteer cen-

ter for the two area counties. "If a youth would like to volunteer," said Voegele, "he or she can call or go online and we can help them find a volunteer opportunity of interest to them. Similarly, if there's an organization in Turners Falls or elsewhere that's looking for a volunteer, they can

GILL from pg 16

to fund them."

"This sets the wrong tone for productive discussion between the town and the schools as we enter the new budget year," agreed Tim Storrow.

Gill school committee member Sandy Brown noted the towns' concerns were already being heard, and that the school committee recently passed a motion to invite town representatives to be part of budget discussions from the very beginning of the process.

When selectboard members contended that the school district wasn't listening and was continuing to expand services and hire new teachers, town meeting members gave permission to GMRSD business manager Lynn Bassett to speak, who clarified that the district has not been

call our program to find a volunteer that matches their needs."

For more information on any of Dial/Self's programs, call 413-774-7054. Nancy Pollard can be reached at extension 105 or Kelsey Wessels can be reached at extension 102.



adding entirely new "regular" teachers, but rather, staffing grant-funded programs, replacing staff who have left, or — at most — hiring an additional teacher when sharply-increased class size absolutely required it.

Tupper Brown suggested an amended version of the resolution which continued to maintain the "unsustainability" of increasing assessments and proposed as a solution that the school district administration actively and specifically involve town representatives and school committee members in school budget development from the start. The resolution was passed as amended.

The last major article on the warrant was the Right-to-Farm bylaw, basically a re-statement and affirmation of the Right to Farm accorded to all

see GILL pg 20

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JEP'S PLACE: Part CVI

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BY JOSEPH A. PARZYCH

GILL - My hand still had the pins and needles feeling, and even though it was numb, it still hurt to touch it. The doctor gave me some iodized salve to apply each day. I don't know if I was supposed to see him for a checkup, and I don't know if he ever got paid.

One of the stitch holes opened up and juice started coming out. I didn't want to tell anyone for fear they'd start squeezing my arm again. So, I squeezed it myself. The hole didn't heal over for about a year. My fingers were numb and stiff for years after that, but I learned to write left handed, just as

Magrini had done.

After a year or so, I got enough feeling in the injured hand to switch back to writing with my right hand. But the nerves didn't grow back correctly, so that when I cut myself in one place, it hurts somewhere else. The feeling never entirely returned in three fingers, and reflex action never returned in any of the hand. When I touched a hot stove, I would get some wicked burns before I took my hand away. The burns were slow to heal because of poor circulation. But I learned to be careful and the numbness never got in the way of anything I wanted to do. Like Magrini, I knew I could work around it.

I think one of the reasons I felt so close to Emmy was that when Ma and Pa went away for the afternoon or took off for days or even weeks at a time, it was Emmy who took care of us. She was only 12 when they began leaving her in charge, and because I was only 6, she seemed all grown up to me.

I'll always remember her the day she was leaving to walk to grammar school. That was before I'd begun first grade. She wished me happy birthday and gave me the customary spanking. She just gave me a few love pats but she called it "spanking". I was already resentful of getting spanked at every turn and began throwing stones at her. She just dodged the stones and laughed good-naturedly.

Emmy looked after both us and the farm animals when our parents were gone. She was cheerful even when I knew she was scared to be alone with all that responsibility. She kept her sunny disposition and never complained.

Peddlers and strange characters would sometimes come to the farm. When they found out we'd been left alone and our parents weren't coming back for a good long time, they'd begin to look around with shifty eyes. It gave me shivers down my spine, and I was glad she was there to guard us.

One day, when we spotted a weird character walking down

the road, Emmy told us to hide. She didn't answer the door when he knocked. We peeked out the window as the man prowled around the barn area.

"Keep quiet," she whispered. "Don't let him see us. He'll think no one's home and he'll go away." We scarcely dared to breathe. Soon he tired of rummaging and left without taking anything.

Leaving us to fend for ourselves, made me feel that our parents had little regard for our safety. Having Emmy to guard us against all evil endeared her to me. I loved her with all my heart. When we got sick, it was Emmy who took care of us and comforted us. When I had a high fever, I had a tendency to hallucinate or sleep walk. One night I went to sleep feeling terribly sick and woke up feeling rested and refreshed next morning.

"How'd you sleep last night?" she asked.

"Oh, wonderful; I feel so much better."

Emmy smiled.

"What's so funny?" I asked, wondering why she had dark

circles under her eyes.

"You hollered your head off and were going wild all night - even tried to jump out the window," she said with a laugh.

She was good-natured with a ready smile, someone I could confide in. It was a sad day when she left home. I felt lonely and depressed after she left. Her rare visits home were a special treat.

Irene, who was two years older than me, took over Emmy's role as best she could after Emmy left home. She cooked meals, looked after us, and sometimes even baked a cake from scratch at age twelve. She had the job of filling the kerosene lamps, trimming the wicks and cleaning the soot from the glass lamp chimneys with crumpled newspaper.

Remembering Emmy's experience with the stove flaring up, Irene didn't dare build a fire in the stove or light the lamps, the first time our parents took off somewhere. We waited in the dark - cold and hungry until they came home.

—Continued Next Week

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THURSDAY, JANUARY 15th

At the Rendezvous, Turners Falls: Jim Olsen's WRSI Back Porch: Country, R&B, Gospel and Rock n' Roll, 9:30 p.m., no cover.

Deja Brew, Wendell: *Wailin'* Dave Robinson, Tommy Filault & Co., blues based roots music, 8 to -10 p.m.

Jazz at DiPaolo's, 166 Avenue A, Turners Falls: Charlie Apicella Trio - guitar, violin & piano, 6:30 - 9:30

FRIDAY, JANUARY 16th

Deja Brew, Wendell: Josh Levangie, Country Folk Guitar Featuring Johnny Cash favorites, 9-11 p.m.

Route 63 Road House, Millers Falls: Equalites, reggae, 9:30 p.m.

SATURDAY, JANUARY 17th

Recycle, Reuse, Reduce: It's Fun! Greenfield Public Library Levanway Room, Greenfield. Join educator Rachel Roberts for a free children's workshop reusing recyclables into fun activities. Recycled Village: geared for school-aged children, fun for all! 10 to 11 a.m. Register at Green Fields Market or contact Rachel Roberts at robertsml@verizon.net or 774-7290.

The Turners Falls Knights of Columbus Free Throw Contest! Boys & girls age 10 - 14 competing separately to make as many free throws as possible. Also separated by age category. Winners advance to regionals. Free, 1 to 3 p.m., Sheffield Elementary School Gym.



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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.

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- Friday, January 16th - Thurs., January 22nd
1. **PAUL BLART: MALL COP** DAILY 6:30 9:00 PG
 2. **HOTEL FOR DOGS** DTS sound DAILY 6:30 9:00 PG
 3. **THE CURIOUS CASE OF BEN-JAMIN BUTTON** DAILY 7:10 PG13
 4. **BEDTIME STORIES** PG FRI, SAT, SUN, MON 12:00 3:00
 5. **BRIDE WARS** DAILY 6:40 9:20 PG
 6. **MY BLOODY VALENTINE** R DAILY 7:00 9:30 in DTS sound
 7. **GRAN TORINO** R DTS sound DAILY 7:00 9:30
 - FRI, SAT, SUN, MON 12:30 3:30



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Country Folk guitar & Johnny Cash favorites: *Josh Levangie*

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Wendell's fav: *Blame It On Tina*

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Thief at the Altar

By Susan Middleton

*For days I keep to the woodstove,
unwilling to dog through winds and drifts
for company.*

*So it comes to me, loping
along the telephone wire, thundering
down the roof, plummeting to the squirrel-proof
shelf outside my window, where a yellow
tray of birdseed sits.*

*Flailed arms and curses
don't move her, nor bug-eyed devil faces.
fingernails clattering on the pane.
Still she sits, pouching kernels
into bulging cheeks.*

*I rip the window
caulking out and yank the sash, bleeding away
morning's carefully pent-up heat.*

*Shocked
visible, my breath twines with her breath
as she rafts toward the white net below.
To wait, to ratchet up
a nearby tree
to come again.*

*She comes again.
Hunched
at my desk in two sweaters, gloves
with the fingers snipped off, I pull words
on a string from a cold pen.*

*remembering
her animal smell, how her tail fleeced
about her like a prayer shawl,
and the black-oil rosary hummed
between her paws and teeth.*



From Seed Case of the Heart (Slate Roof Press, Northfield, MA, 2007). Also available at the Discovery Center Gift Shop. Susan Middleton lives in Ashfield, MA.

SCIENCE & NATURE POETRY & PROSE OPEN MIC AT THE DISCOVERY CENTER

Featuring Paul Richmond
Friday, Jan. 23rd, 7:00 p.m.

Some people find spirit in nature, soul in science; the places where experience, emotion, and intellect meet.

If that sounds like you, come join the Friends of the Great Falls Discovery Center on Friday, January 23rd, at 7 p.m., for our *Science & Nature Poetry & Prose Open Mic Night*.

If you have some writing you'd like to share, or just love language and hearing it read, come enjoy an evening of literary conviviality in a comfortable atmosphere. Bring along your own work or read something by your favorite poet or science writer. We ask only that the topic have something to do with nature or any of the sciences. Dead seriousness is welcome but not required.

For one example from last year's reading, see the poem above.

Poet Paul Richmond will read from his own work, then open the floor to the open mic. The opportunity to read will be in the order of sign-up, so if you want to make sure you get your chance, come when the doors open at 6:30 p.m. Admission is free to all.

Light refreshments and beverages will be available. Proceeds and donations are used to support the Discovery Center's mission of protecting the plants and creatures of the Connecticut River watershed. Snow date: Friday, January 30th.

The Great Falls Discovery Center is located at 2 Avenue A in downtown Turners Falls and is wheelchair accessible. For more information, please call the Friends of the Great Falls Discovery Center at (413) 863-3221, ext. 3

The Breakfast Club

Epiphany in the Snow

BY FRAN HEMOND

MONTAGUE CENTER - The Breakfast Club has become more elegant with the years. And '09 has a self-confident downy woodpecker spending much of his time swinging on a songbird feeder, sampling the mixed seed goodies.

It was a lady downy who first appeared. The lack of any little red patch on the back of her head attested to her sex. She seemed to share nicely. The chickadees and titmice, nuthatches and occasional cardinal came and went as usual. However, since the male downy discovered the free food, she has not been seen. Maybe she thinks someone in the family should be working on the insect infestations on the treetrunks.

Perhaps this downy is a descendant of the little bird at my grandmother's feeder here at Cold Brook, many years ago. I had brought a small son to see his great-grandmother, Rose. Bored with adult conversation, the little boy looked out the living room window. A small black and white woodpecker was

GILL from pg 17

Massachusetts citizens under Article 97 of the Constitution and a number of Mass General Law statutes. True to the spirit of obstinacy that seemed to be reigning in the hall, some town meeting members expressed an interest in changing the language of the two-page bylaw in a few sections.

A proposed amendment emerged which would have changed the phrasing of community recognition and acceptance of "agricultural activities... associated with normally accepted agricultural practices" to a statement of support and acceptance of "agricultural activities... associated with established best agricultural practices."

After some discussion as to the pros and cons of tinkering with the language and fundamental purpose of the bylaw, the proposal to amend was defeated and the original motion passed.

Tired and a little punchy after two and a half hours of intense but civil and productive debate, Gill citizens left with a sense of having demonstrated once again that the concept of town meeting and direct democracy is alive and kicking.

enjoying a suet feast.

"Hey, Mom, Downy!" he announced and had the instant approval of the lady who had given her best to the farm for some sixty years.

The cardinals are more in evidence this year. They are no longer just ground feeders, but manage well on the small twirling feeders that discourage blue jays and squirrels. His gorgeous red against the white snow of the icy pond and trees is complemented by the soft yellow brown tinged with red and rosy bill of his mate.

Cardinals were birds of the south some years ago. I saw my first cardinal, a female in Mystic on the Connecticut shore and could not imagine what this lovely might be. But now this self-assured bird has established himself in an area of snow and cold, and scatters seed from the feeders for the plebian juncos to feed on below.

A couple of juncos, most of whom scrounge around the ground, have become adept at managing the feeders. It seems difficult for them without prop-

er equipment. Their problem seems to be a fat tummy, which bumps the feeding mesh, and legs and feet that are not as adept at maneuvering the circular feeders.

In the early years the Breakfast Club had a rectangular open feeder, swinging out from a porch roof. A clever squirrel traveled down a slim rope and entertained, but never fed on the ground as behooved him.

The open feeder and the squirrel have gone, and now I cheer on the juncos who brave the world of titmice and chickadees and nuthatches, and try to make their little red feet, great for scratching up seed in the snow, adapt to the intricacies of a metal feeder.

A real miss this year is the flock of American tree sparrows, who nest in the Arctic and have wintered for some years in Montague. But every year brings some of the past, and a bit of the future, perhaps the way of the world.

— January 26th,

Feast of the Epiphany.

Banish Winter Fundraiser for The Montague Reporter

Thursday, Jan. 29, 5 - 9 p.m.

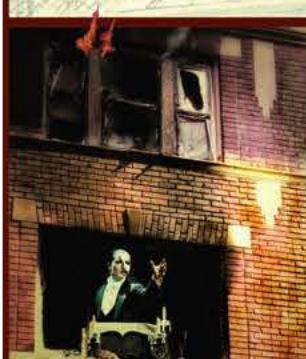
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