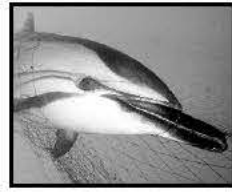




**LISTEN FOR BOBCAT**  
January's poetry page / Page 9



**EARTH TALK**  
Drift Nets / Page 12

LAKE PLEASANT MILLERS FALLS MONTAGUE CENTER MONTAGUE CITY TURNERS FALLS

# The Montague Reporter

YEAR 5 - NO. 15

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THE VOICE OF THE VILLAGES

JANUARY 18, 2007

## Rodman Receives MLK Day Award



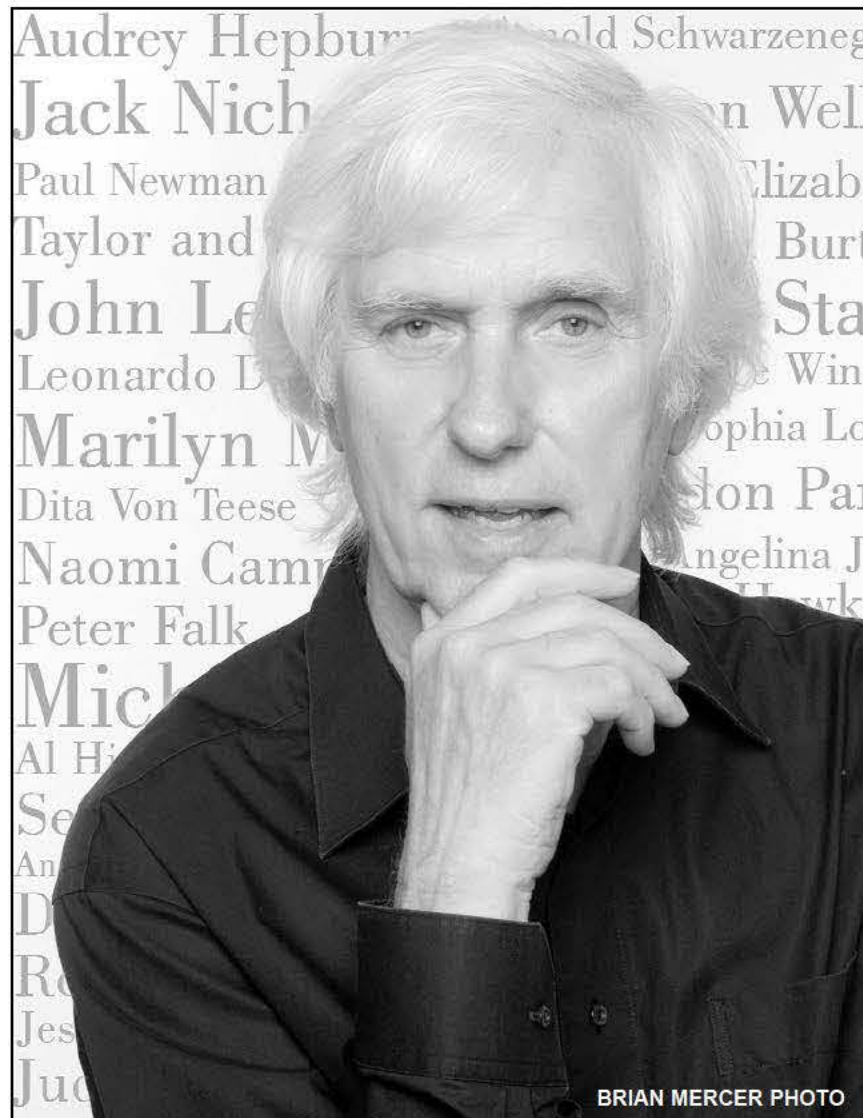
BY DAVID DETMOLD

**GREENFIELD** - Maria Rodman, executive director of the Montague Catholic Social Ministries, (MCSM), the social service agency that under her leadership has expanded an interwoven network of support services for women and children in Turners Falls, is this year's winner of Greenfield Community College's 'Living the Dream Award' at the annual celebration of the life and work of Reverend Martin Luther King, Jr.

In presenting the award on Monday, January 15th, G.C.C. president Robert Pura called the Cuban-born Rodman, "a born leader who epitomizes the caring and compassionate presence in our community," through her work with MCSM, and credited her with "increasing the resources of that program and services that empower women and their children to heal and to grow," and "to recognize the basic rights to food and shelter and self esteem in their role in the world."

Montague Catholic Social Ministries, founded eleven years ago, see **RODMAN** pg 7

## INSIGHT TO THE STARS



BRIAN MERCER PHOTO

*"You always have to be reaching, finding, discovering, inventing,...you've got to try as hard as you can every time. You gotta invent, explore, question, search..." - Douglas Kirkland*

ILLUSTRATION BY ANJA SCHUTZ

### The Photographs of Douglas Kirkland

at the Hallmark Museum  
of Contemporary  
Photography

BY ANN FEITELSON  
TURNERS FALLS

Marilyn Monroe, covered only by a thin white sheet, her eyes half closed, her mouth half open, faces the doorway of the Hallmark Museum of Contemporary Photography. Her image was caught on film by Douglas Kirkland, who has photographed numerous other idols and icons of our day including Audrey Hepburn, Arnold Schwarzenegger, Jack Nicholson, Orson Welles, Paul Newman, Elizabeth Taylor and Richard Burton, John Lennon and Ringo Starr, Leonardo di Caprio and Kate Winslett. They are all there, on the corner of Third and Avenue A.

Kirkland's exhibit, "Face to Face: Portraits from Fifty Years" - or, as he alternately subtitled it, "Favorite Encounters from a Half-Century Love Affair with

see **KIRKLAND** pg 8

## Montague Catholic Social Ministries Seeks \$62,000

in Grant Funds to Expand  
Family Support Program

BY DAVID DETMOLD

**MONTAGUE** - The town of Montague held a public hearing on Tuesday, January 16th to go over proposals for the town's \$1 million Community Development Block Grant request for 2007. Topping the list of projects the town would like to see funded are new sidewalks, housing rehab loans, and money to expand a family support pro-

see **MCSM** pg 10

## Petition Drive Mounted to Close Montague Center School

BY DAVID DETMOLD

**TURNERS FALLS** - Shortly after the holiday break, yellow flyers began making their appearance at stores up and down the Avenue in Turners Falls. Produced by members of the Hillcrest PTO, the flyer, titled "Hillcrest Closing," urges people to "speak up today" about the closing of the Hillcrest Elementary School.

On December 19th, the Gill Montague Regional School Committee voted to expand Montague Center School to a K-5 or K-6 elementary school, and to move grades K-2 from Hillcrest to nearby Sheffield School, leaving only pre-K classes at Hillcrest.

The Hillcrest PTO flyers that have been distributed since early this month read in part, "Shortly, there will be a petition circulating around town. Through this petition, we hope to bring the school closing issue to a town vote. We hope by doing this, it will give a chance for the majority of registered voters to make the decision and not the local minority."

On Wednesday, January 17th, Casey Elliot, a spokesperson for a newly formed group called The Organized Taxpayers, said parents were standing in front of Hillcrest School at closing time gathering signatures for the petition mentioned in the flyers. He gave the

wording of the petition as follows:

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

Pam Grimard, a parent of three children in the G-M schools, said she is a member of the newly formed group. She said she had carried the petition to friends' houses over the weekend, and found it was easy to gather their signatures. Though her children are no longer attending Hillcrest, (one is in Sheffield,

see **PETITION** pg 16

## PET OF THE WEEK

### Stylish in any Decor



### Apollo

Apollo is a four-year-old male shorthair cat in need of a good home. This boy is just too lovely! He has the softest pale blue eyes and he is perfectly white, head to toe. We suspect he was someone's cat who got outside and couldn't find his way home. He tells me he is looking forward to curling up by a fireplace.

He also claims to have an excellent sense of style and he looks fabulous in any décor. Stop by and visit, this handsome guy is sure to win your heart. For more information on adopting Apollo, please contact the Dakin Pioneer Valley Humane Society at 413-548-9898 or via email at leverett@dpvhs.org.

## Great Falls Middle School Students of the Week

### Grade 7

Stephanie French  
Christopher Gordon

### Grade 8

Nichole Baxter

## Gill Reval Begins Jan 24th

The town of Gill has contracted with Mayflower Valuation to assist the board of assessors with the upcoming revaluation of all properties in Gill, recently approved by town meeting. Mayflower staff members will begin collecting data January 24th, visiting each property in town. These individuals will carry proper identification, as well as registration with the Gill police department.

For the reval, a full exterior measurement, as well as

interior inspection, is necessary for each property to obtain a fair and equitable assessment across town.

When no one is home, a notice will be left requesting the homeowner to make an appointment for a return visit to complete the inspection. If you have any questions, please call the assessors office at 413-863-0138.

The Gill board of assessors will meet on Monday evenings instead of Wednesdays, beginning January 22nd.

## FACES & PLACES



Miner Kids with Kids, in Montague Center. Emma (age 6) with Jaymie, Kaitlyn (age 4) with Carla, Christopher (age 2) with Thomas. (Photo: Sandy Miner)

## Millers Falls & Montague Center Library News

BY LINDA HICKMAN

The bookmobile visited the Millers Falls on Wednesday, January 17th and also recently visited the Montague Center Library. The bookmobile is a vital resource that only serves towns under 10,000 population in western Massachusetts. It rotates books, movies and books on tape and CD to small libraries throughout the region. The bookmobile comes from and is funded by the Western Massachusetts Regional Library System.

The bookmobile visited the Montague Center Library two weeks ago. Several of the Montague Public Libraries

staff selected an assortment of books, videos and DVDs from the truck, which will be available for borrowing until the next visit in 11 weeks. The books for adults include general fiction, mysteries, science fiction and fantasy. For children and teens, there are picture books, easy readers, high interest non-fiction, novels and paperback fiction. Many videos and some DVDs were selected, including action films, classics, family fare and children's titles.

This week, the bookmobile visited the Millers Falls Library, where similar items were chosen, along with collections of westerns and large

print mysteries and romances. They will also be available for the next 11 weeks.

If they can not find what they are looking for at the Montague Public Libraries, library patrons are encouraged to place orders for books, videos, DVDs, books on tape and CD, and music tapes and CDs at their local library or online at [www.cwmars.org](http://www.cwmars.org). Delivery vans from WMRLS transport library materials to and from libraries across western Massachusetts daily.

The Millers Falls Library, 23 Bridge St., 659-3801, is open on Tuesdays and Thursdays from 2 -5 and 6 -8

p.m. The Montague Center Library, 367-2852, is open Mondays and Wednesdays, also 2 - 5 and 6 - 8 p.m.

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"Feeding Kids Right" a healthy, nutritious approach to eating with young children.

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Alicia Walker, MS. RD. is a registered dietitian with over 14 years nutrition experience working with people of all ages.

Thursday, January 25th

5:30 to 8 p.m.

Shutesbury Elementary School, 23 West Pelham Rd. Shutesbury  
Information or to pre-register, call Naz Mohamed 423-3337  
RSVP by January 23rd; childcare and supper provided.

## The Montague Reporter

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## SENIOR CENTER ACTIVITIES January 22nd - 29th

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

### Monday, 15th

10:15 a.m. Aerobics  
11:00 a.m. PACE Aerobics  
1:00 p.m. Canasta

### Tuesday, 16th

9:30 a.m. T'ai Chi  
**Wednesday, 17th**  
10:15 a.m. Senior Aerobics  
12:45 p.m. Bingo  
**Thursday, 18th**  
1 p.m. Pitch  
**Friday, 19th**  
10:15 a.m. Senior Aerobics  
11 a.m. PACE Aerobics

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

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

### Monday, 15th

9:30 a.m. Exercise  
9:45 a.m. Library  
12 Noon Pitch

### Tuesday, 16th

9 a.m. Aerobics  
12:30 p.m. Painting

### Wednesday, 17th

9:30 a.m. Line Dancing  
12 Noon Bingo

### Thursday, 18th

9 a.m. Aerobics  
12:30 p.m. Shopping

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



(413) 773-3622

# Raging Grannies Go to Court

BY ERIC WASILESKI  
GREENFIELD

On Wednesday, January 10th, five local women, members of the activist organization 'the Raging Grannies,' a group of grandmothers who demonstrate for peace, were arraigned in Franklin County district court to answer to the charge of trespassing, stemming from a November 15th, 2006 incident at the Army recruiting center on Federal Street in Greenfield.

On November 15th, a large group of grandmothers and their supporters entered the office with the intent of disrupting the recruitment process. When they were asked to leave, five refused to do so, and were arrested two hours later.

The women arrested were Hattie Nestle of Athol, Ann Wilson of Buckland, Paki Weiland of Northampton, Ellen Graves of West Springfield, and Dusty Miller of Northampton.

Buz Eisenburg, an Ashfield

attorney known for recent advocacy work on behalf of detainees in Guantanamo Bay, is representing four of the women. He told the court, "The majority of the American people are against this illegal and immoral war [in Iraq]. Most feel powerless to stop it. These heroes feel they can't *not* do something. They are morally compelled to make a statement by their action, that speaks to the need to stop recruiting soldiers to suffer and cause mayhem."

Nestle, representing herself *pro se*, wore a shirt that read "Bush Lied, Thousands Died. Impeach Bush.org." She said, "This action is a moral imperative." She said she acted according to the dictates of her conscience, and continued, "All wars are unconscionable and immoral."

Reached by phone, Ann Wilson, 77, who missed the pre-trial conference due to poor

health, at her doctor's advice, she has a nephew who has served three tours in Iraq with the Marines. She said, "This action is out of character for a retired school teacher. I have

"This action is out of character for a retired school teacher. This is the first time in my life I have ever been arrested."

-Ann Wilson, 77  
Buckland

been following foreign policy closely for the last five years on my computer, especially reading the foreign press like the BBC, *Guardian* and *the Independent*. The illegality of the war, without approval of the United Nations, the events that continued to unfold like Guantanamo Bay, the destruction of Fallujah and the atroc-

ties of Abu Ghraib: these things are just plain wrong."

Wilson said she started protesting the war with T-shirts, buttons and bumper stickers but felt she had to do more. Speaking of the Raging Grannies' disruption of the army recruiting office, Wilson said, "In my heart I was committing an act of spiritual obedience rather than civil disobedience. This is the first time in my life I have ever been arrested." When asked what her family thought of her action, she replied, "My sons have always told me they love me, but after my arrest they told me that they were proud of me, and that felt good." She added, "There are many people who want to take part but can't, so my action is for them. I am hoping my act will lead others to take action as well."

Peggy Anderson of Granby, a supporter and member of the Raging Grannies said, "Most court cases are basically because of poverty. Our Grannies are here because this huge expense on war is taking money out of all citizens' pockets, making it impossible for good government projects to help the poor."

Dusty Miller has two grandsons who live in Franklin County and have been contacted by the recruiting office. She

said, "I don't want them to be recruited or drafted into this or any other illegal war of aggression America may propose. I had to do this to follow my conscience to stop a massive global crime of violence. Sometimes one has to take a stand."

Ellen Graves of West Springfield said she took part in the action, "because the poor are being ignored," and paraphrased President Eisenhower, saying, "All war machines are in the final sense a theft from those who are in need."

Paki Weiland, a professor at Antioch college, said, "the Raging Grannies are a nationwide egalitarian group open to all women 45 and older, whether you are an actual grandmother or not. I hope that anyone who is fed up with this war can come and support us."

In the courtroom, a prosecutor's motion to attach the cases of the four women represented by Eisenburg to Nestle's case was approved by Judge Tobias. He agreed with the prosecutor, "the facts of the case are the same, and in the interest of judicial economy I am approving the prosecution's motion." The matter was continued to a second pre-trial conference on March 2nd, when the Grannies must appear by 8 a.m., when a trial date for a jury trial will be set.

## FROM THE MONTAGUE POLICE LOG

### High Speed Fatality on Millers Falls Road

Wednesday 1-10

8:40 p.m. Report of a motor vehicle accident on Millers Falls Road with injuries.

[redacted] was arrested and charged with operating under the influence of liquor, motor vehicle homicide, leaving the scene of personal injury and death, operating to endanger, speeding, racing a motor vehicle, failure to operate a motor vehicle within marked lanes, person under 21 in possession of liquor, and manslaughter by motor vehicle. An eye witness report had [redacted] vehicle reportedly traveling 75 mph in a 45 mile zone when it left the road near Lauralyn Brown's veterinary, hit a cement post, and flipped over several times. Nicholas E. Stone, 18, of 38

West Street, Montague Center, was transported to Franklin Medical, and pronounced dead on arrival.

Friday 1-12

12:34 a.m. Walk-in to station reported an assault. Found to have happened in Gill. Gill police came to station to investigate.

11:07 p.m. [redacted]

was arrested on a straight warrant.

Saturday 1-13

7:09 p.m. Report of an unwanted person at an L Street address. Subject placed in protective custody.

Sunday 1-14

3:14 p.m. Report of shoplifting

at Food City on Avenue A. A group of youths were harassing customers. One youth was seen putting item in his pocket and running off. Officer located and subject paid for item.

9:38 p.m. Report of a fight at the corner of 5th and L Streets. Caller reports loud screaming and swearing. Found to be kids arguing. Sent on their way.

Monday 1-15

10:37 p.m. Report of a fight at a 5th Street address. Two females were arguing. One left before officer arrived. Found to be verbal only.

Tuesday 1-16

10:55 p.m. Report of a larceny. An ATM card was stolen and used in Brattleboro. Referred to Brattleboro police.

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# The Montague Reporter

24 3rd Street, Turners Falls, Mass. 01376

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## Caution: School Crossing

On November 9th, we editorialized in favor of keeping all three of Montague's elementary schools open, arguing a move to close either Hillcrest or Montague Center without hard and fast budget numbers balanced against the likely loss of revenue from students lost to school choice was unlikely to achieve real savings for the district. We urged the school committee to weigh the pros and cons of school closing carefully, since any decision was likely to be followed by a period of divisive finger pointing, with the potential to undermine district unity, accelerating a downward spiral in enrollment and revenue, and further burdening the property taxpayers of our towns.

After a long and careful - and very public - process, the school committee voted narrowly, 5 to 3 with 1 abstention, on December 19th, to practically close Hillcrest, and to expand Montague Center to a K-5 or K-6 school.

There were a number of reasons why the school committee made this choice, among them the fact that enrollment has already declined at the elementary schools, so three buildings are no longer needed to house Montague students. The committee also weighed the further loss of students to school choice due to the convenience of geography if elementary education should be confined to the north end of town. The loss of 30 more students would wipe out any gains in savings from closing Montague Center; the loss of more than that number would result in an increased burden to local taxpayers for educating the students who remain in district schools. The committee reviewed the research showing

improved educational outcomes for students who attend broad grade span neighborhood elementary schools, and reached a consensus favoring broad grade spans for all district schools.

In addition, it did not take a new math curriculum to figure out that eight votes are required to close an elementary school - according to the district agreement - while only a simple majority is needed to move most students out of an elementary school, but keep it technically open. That is what the committee finally decided to do with Hillcrest, which will remain open as an early education, pre-K center.

Now that the vote has been taken, the predicted fallout - one group of parents and taxpayers angry and organizing to reverse the decision - has regrettably come to pass. Had the vote gone the other way, a similar reaction would have no doubt taken place, with more parents in Montague Center choosing to simply pull their kids out of the system and send them to nearby schools in Leverett, Sunderland or South Deerfield, schools located in close proximity to their homes or on their way to work. But the result would have been the same: a district on the verge of unraveling amid bitter recrimination, with parents not content to simply blame the school committee for their choice, but actively rebelling against the decision.

We would now ask parents of Hillcrest students, who will still have a fine neighborhood elementary school at Sheffield, would you have wanted Montague Center parents to organize to overturn the school committee's vote had it gone the other way? If the committee had voted to shut down the elementary school in Montague Center, extinguishing the community building activities for that village that parents in Turners Falls have long taken for granted and can still enjoy, would you have wanted them to finally accept the decision, however much they may have worked against it to

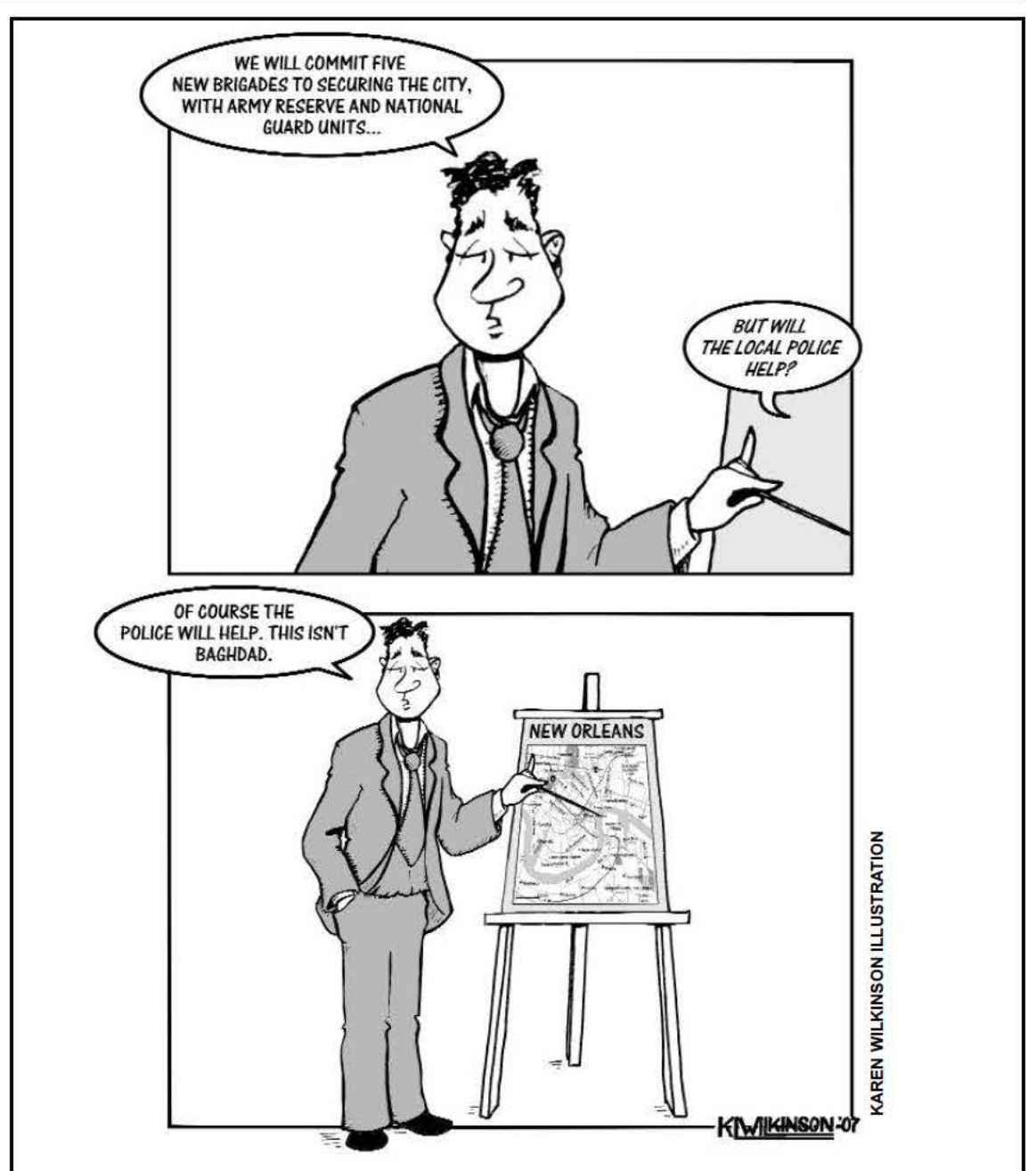
begin with?

Parents in Gill must be watching the strife in Montague with a certain amount of alarm. If the group of parents and residents supporting Hillcrest succeeds in overturning the school committee's decision - or, as some say they intend - if they succeed in petitioning town meetings to reduce the number of votes required to close a school to a simple majority of the school committee, parents in Gill would have real cause to be alarmed.

After all, the slim majority that voted to expand the elementary school in Montague Center and shift the K-2 grades from Hillcrest to Sheffield based their decision - at least in part - on a clear rationale to support improved educational outcomes at broad grade span, geographically convenient, K-5 or K-6 elementary schools. If that rationale is swept away, what leg does the Gill Elementary School, with less than 100 students in its K-6 classrooms, have left to stand on?

Put another way, if the district agreement were revised to allow a simple majority of the school committee to close a school, then Montague's six school committee representatives could outvote the three Gill members in a future school consolidation drive.

We urge all sides to consider their actions carefully before our school district is affected irreparably. All taxpayers, parents and students, will suffer if district enrollment - and state aid - continues to shrink. Open warfare over the school committee's reconfiguration decision is a recipe for just that kind of disaster.



## LETTERS TO THE EDITOR

### Closing Hillcrest Will Hurt Taxpayers, Children

I have been trying to understand the decision of the school committee to close Hillcrest Elementary School in Turners Falls. It makes no sense in terms of finance, quality of education or what is in the best interest of the majority of the population of Montague.

The campus school model works very well. The principal of Sheffield Elementary, Chip Wood, was concerned about mixing K-5th grades. The present set up of two separate elementary schools is much better for the children.

My twelve-year-old daughter went to the Greenfield Center School for grades K-4th. We chose to enroll her in the Gill-Montague School system because we were so impressed with Hillcrest and Sheffield Elementary Schools. My daughter enjoyed making new friends, participating in the school play and the challenging academics.

My son has received speech therapy since he was four years old from specialists at Hillcrest. He is now in first grade at Hillcrest and is reading ahead of his grade.

Hillcrest School is ADA approved. The Montague Center School is not. No one knows how much money will be needed to make Montague Center ADA compliant. Instead of saving the school district money, the school committee's decision to close

Hillcrest will cost taxpayers much more money. It will divide the town into two separate districts instead of having the two sections of town mix. How many students are we affecting in closing the Montague Center School? What is the number of students affected by the closing of Hillcrest Elementary School? Younger students attending their school will affect students at Sheffield.

Instead of serving the greater good of the most number of people in Montague, I believe the school committee has adopted a plan that will hurt Montague more than help it.

- Jane Foster  
Turners Falls

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Wounded in Action **23,813**

Source: Oak Ridge Detachment  
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GUEST EDITORIALS

# School Configuration is No Fairy Tale

BY JOYCE PHILLIPS

*"Mirror, mirror on the wall, who makes the fairest decisions of all?"* According to Webster, 'fair' is impartiality and honesty; free from self-interest, prejudice, or favoritism. Was it 'fair,' when the Gill-Montague Regional School Committee created a new option requiring only five votes to change the elementary school configuration in Montague? Was it fair, when decisions were made because of the late hour and just to get it done? Was the decision 'fair', when school committee members ignored the responses of public forums, delivered pre-disposed data and with arrogance repeatedly disputed educators?

*Mirror, mirror on the wall, what are the anticipated expenses and savings?*

According to school committee member Ted Castro-Santos' self-fulfilling, personal data, the new configuration will "maximize the retention of students and bolster the budget." Furthermore, he states "the cost of closing Montague Center would far exceed savings."

The superintendent quoted \$93,000 to close Hillcrest except for the pre-K program. Although

in listening to budget discussions, the real savings may be closer to \$80,000 for FY '08. The expenses for readying Montague Center include, but are not limited to: kitchen equipment - \$29,000; server upgrade - \$16,800; telephone replacement - \$10,000; sewer line upgrade - \$5000 (estimated).

*Mirror, mirror on the wall, what are the requirements of upgrading to code, ADA and the physical needs of the facility? Who will be expected to pay?*

Estimates for the additional capital improvements that will be requested from the town or state (SBA) include, but are not limited to: a front entrance handicap ramp: \$80,000; roof \$150,000; ADA elevator \$250,000; building wiring upgrade: \$50,000; plumbing: \$50,000; ADA restrooms: \$60,000; floors: \$128,000; insulation: \$25,000; and lighting: \$50,000.

Other areas of concern: A healthy learning environment does not allow children to remain in a building for a full day where a toilet has overflowed and flooded a room, making it necessary to turn off the water in the school, as described last March by former



Joyce Phillips

Montague Center principal Bob Mahler. Students used the bathrooms (no flushing) and water was brought in for hand washing and drinking. Parking: Have we really found all the space required? Safety at bus drop-off: An issue recently resolved at Hillcrest with capital improvement money.

*Mirror, mirror on the wall, will the GMRSD be eligible for funding from the SBA?*

As a regional school district, a vote of the committee authorizing the superintendent to submit the statement of interest to the Massachusetts School Building Authority is required. The deadline for submitting a statement of interest is July 31st, 2007.

In a conversation with Katherine Craven, executive director of the MSBA, she said, "Communities should outline what they believe are deficiencies in an existing school facility and demonstrate how those deficiencies fit the statutory priorities for funding." MSBA is interested in hearing from local educators, executive officers and taxpayers about potential problems that may exist in a local school facility.

Pursuant to M.G.L. c. 70B, § 8, the Authority shall consider applications for school construction and renovation projects in accordance with the priorities listed below:

- (1.) Replacement or renovation of a building which is

- structurally unsound or otherwise in a condition seriously jeopardizing the health and safety of school children, where no alternative exists;
- (2.) Elimination of existing severe overcrowding;
- (3.) Prevention of loss of accreditation;
- (4.) Prevention of severe overcrowding expected to result from increased enrollments, which must be substantiated;
- (5.) Replacement, renovation or modernization of the heating system in any schoolhouse to increase energy conservation and decrease energy related costs in the schoolhouse;
- (6.) Short term enrollment growth;
- (7.) Replacement or addition to obsolete buildings in order to provide a full range of programs consistent with state and approved local requirements; and
- (8.) Transition from court-ordered and approved racial balance school districts to walk-to, so-called, or other school districts.

Information regarding the SBA can be found at: <http://www.massschoolbuildings.org>

*Mirror, mirror on the wall, what makes a fiscally responsible budget for the district and community?*

A budget that supports staff, students and programs is fiscally, ethically and morally responsible.

Currently the GMRSD faces a \$394,438 shortfall in FY '07. The state requires that a plan be in place and no deficit exist by the end of the school year. Anyone with knowledge of the past six or seven years of cuts in the school budget undoubtedly recognizes that the 'plan' is

going to impact staff, programs and students. FY '08 has directives from the EQA audit, the District Improvement Plan, and the GFMS Improvement Plan that must be in place. What about the NEASC accreditation? With GFMS and TFHS under one principal, it will now be 7-12.

There is a responsible and effective way to advocate for state funding. A collaborative representation of all public schools must take their voice to the State House. However, in the meantime, there is a responsible and effective way to advocate for our students today. It's call accountability and responsibility. The whole purpose of education is to turn mirrors into windows.

Currently there are some school committee minds that resemble either convex or concave mirrors, which represent objects such as they receive them, but never receive them as they are. We have a board that sees the future of our district in the rippled mirror of the amusement park, distorting reality.

I would suggest the GMRSD take its vision from the educators of our district. Educational growth and vision was explained and supported by TFHS principal Jeff Kenney, Sheffield principal Chip Wood and Sheffield teacher Janet Diani at the January 9th school committee meeting for our sixth grade, proving once again the educators watch over the students. They never forget that as we worry about what a child will become tomorrow, we cannot forget that he or she is someone today.

*"Mirror, mirror on the wall, who makes the fairest decisions of all?"*

## Taxpayers Organize to Close Montague Center School

Currently, in the town of Montague, there is a taxpayer effort to correct, by fact, what is wrong with the decision making process in closing a school. The simple majority will vote on what is proper by fact. There is a petition in town, issued by the taxpayers, to bring this issue to a town vote at annual election. The petition asks for the

building that houses Montague Center School, a building owned by the taxpayers of the town of Montague, to be closed by September 1st, 2007. Petitions are circulating door to door and are at fixed locations around town.

- Casey Elliot  
Turners Falls  
the Organized Taxpayers

## Montague Center Parents Organize to Raise Funds for School Capital Improvements

BY SARAH THAYER - A group of Montague Center parents met Saturday afternoon, January 13th, at the Lady Killigrew Café to lay the groundwork for a non-profit organization with the stated purpose of raising funds for specific capital projects at the Montague Center elementary school. Several projects, including van accessibility and a new roof, loom for the Montague Center School, as it assumes an

expanded grade span in the new configuration of district elementary schools approved by the Gill-Montague school committee on December 19th.

Our "main point is to have funds raised by parents, not by the town," explained organizer Sue Dresser. "This is a very polarizing subject, and we are interested in raising the money without forcing people to pay for something they don't want to be part of." The parents

attending the meeting included Montague Center Parent Teacher Organization president Amy Johnson, PTO member Jim Harris, Marie Colton and Stacey Langknecht. Dresser, also a member of the Montague Center PTO, said eight other parents had responded by email to the proposed fundraising activity to express interest, but were unable to attend the group's first meeting.

"We have a vote by the

school committee, and we're here to get ideas out on the table," said Dresser. All present agreed that, as they proceed, it is important to be mindful of the many fundraisers already ongoing for the district schools. "There are a lot of good efforts in the school district and it puts people in an awkward position if they feel we are competing with each other," Dresser said.

The group intends to set a three- to five-year plan, with

their initial focus on raising funds and investigating creative methods to provide van accessibility to the main floor of the school. Dresser has established open lines of communication with town officials regarding her intention to help establish a non-profit fund. She attended Thursday's meeting of the capital improvements committee. She has also scheduled a meeting with town administrator see PARENTS pg 6

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## PUBLIC HEARING

### Erving Community Development Strategy

Erving's Board of Selectmen will hold a Public Hearing on January 29th, 2007 at 7:15 p.m., Town Hall, 12 E. Main Street to discuss and solicit public response to the update of the Town's Community Development Strategy (CDS) and to prioritize the projects and activities the Town plans to undertake in the next 3 - 5 years.

Residents are encouraged to attend the Hearing where any person or organization wishing to be heard will be afforded the opportunity. The CDS and list of projects are available at the Selectmen's office in Town Hall.

## PARENTS from pg 5

Frank Abbondanzio.

The group will seek to establish non-profit status, or find an existing non-profit such as the Montague Center PTO to take them under their wing. They plan to research costs of capital projects at the elementary school and prioritize them. They plan to establish a board to direct their activities.

A second meeting time was set for next Saturday, January 27th, 1:00 p.m. at the Lady Killigrew Café. On the agenda for the next meeting is choosing a name, setting an ongoing meeting time and place, discussing public relations, creating a major donor category, exploring grant opportunities and establishing a board.

Undaunted by the tasks ahead, Dresser thanked parents in attendance. "We want to stay positive and move forward," she said.

## If Elected ... I'll Order New School Supplies

Last fall, sixth graders from Joanne Rabideau's class wrote essays about what they would do if they were elected to be leaders of their community. We will print some of these in the weeks to come, starting with this fine essay:

BY JEREMY PEFFER

**GILL** - If I am elected leader of my community I will make sure all the schools have good enough materials to efficiently teach.

My school has old tattered math books that are literally 10 years old. That's almost as old as I am! You can't learn efficiently with math books with ripped pages and lots of writing in them. Ripped pages make it sometimes hard to understand the book's lesson and the writing in the book distracts kids and makes them take the answer written in the book instead of their own answers.

My school has out of date history books with writing in them. Kids cannot have a good education if we're learning some

history that has recently been proven wrong, or not learning very important recent history.

In my school, we have something called writers workshop where we as a class read a book together. All of the books are old, and the pages are ripping. Sometimes the books will even be missing pages. If a person has a book with a missing page and doesn't realize that there was a page missing, he or she might write a report with missing information, so he or she will get a completely horrible grade when it isn't their fault!

In my schools we have microscopes, but when you look in one you will not see what you expect. You will see dirt or a blurry image. You might as well not use the microscope at all, because the dirt is stained on. Also, they are so old the ones with no dirt won't focus!

I will not stand for this, and if I am elected I promise to fix everything that prevents good learning in this school!

## Land Protection

# "Window of Opportunity" for Land Conservation Expires by end of 2007

BY JOHN HANOLD

**GREAT FALLS** - The federal tax code is tweaked regularly, but only occasionally does it address issues that are specifically timely in the lives of people in Western Massachusetts. Area landowners and residents alike may be interested in a provision available only until the end of 2007 that encourages the donation of a conservation restriction on working farms, woodlands and recreational areas.

On Thursday, January 11th, Rich Hubbard of the Franklin Land Trust and Bob Levite of UMass Extension gave an overview of the new tax code provisions at the Great Falls Discovery Center, and answered questions from an audience of two dozen.

Hubbard opened with a reminder of the value of land trusts in the preservation of agricultural land and woodlands, and recognized the local efforts of the Deerfield and Mount Grace Land Trusts as well as his organization. Among their activities, the trusts assist landowners to establish conservation restrictions on their property, which leave landowners free to continue their ownership and use of their land in traditional ways, while realizing a tax deduction for the value of the donated restriction. The trusts receive the donated conservation restriction, and assist in ensuring that present and future owners operate in accordance with the restriction by actively using the land as intended.

Levite, an attorney

practicing in Worcester, described the legislative change, which dates from late summer 2006. Under the prior law, a landowner could use the value of the donated restriction to offset up to 30% of Adjusted Gross Income (AGI), and utilize the deduction in the year of donation and up to five years beyond. Because of the 30% limit in each year, and the six-year 'horizon' for deductions, some landowners might not have been able to use the

poor.' (A condition similar to homeowners with modest income who occupy a home that has risen in value, who feel they are 'house poor.')

If these landowners wish to preserve the traditional use of the land for agricultural or recreational purposes, rather than releasing it to residential or industrial development, donation of a conservation restriction accomplishes their purpose and recognizes the financial impact of abandoning the development route. It's expected that the larger annual limit on deductions, and the ability to use the value over a longer period, will be an incentive to landowners to act during 2007. But the time required to utilize the new rules makes it urgent to start the appraisal and donation process early in the year.

It goes without saying that an attorney should be consulted by owners who wish to consider this opportunity. The quality of life in the less densely-settled parts of Massachusetts will certainly benefit from the donation of conservation restrictions, and the land trusts and municipalities involved are likely to be of assistance as well.

“...trusts assist landowners to establish conservation restrictions on their property, which leave landowners free to continue their ownership and use of their land in traditional ways, while realizing a tax deduction for the value of the donated restriction.”

entire value of a large donation. The temporary liberalization of the deduction enables landowners to deduct more of the value, and faster, than under the prior rules.

Under the revised calculation, the restriction's value can offset at least 50% of AGI, and the carry-forward period is lengthened from five to fifteen years. If an owner meets the definition of "qualified farmers and ranchers," the annual deduction can be 100%. Many farmers and other landowners may not have high earnings in a year, but still have land with considerable value. This is a condition many folks in Western Massachusetts (as elsewhere) are familiar with, referred to as being 'land

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**RODMAN**  
continued from pg 1

years ago by the combined parishes of St. Anne's and St. Mary's in Turners Falls and Sacred Heart Church in Greenfield (since merged in Our Lady of Peace in Turners Falls), has offered a variety of grant-supported programs over the years at their Third Street headquarters in the Moltenbrey Building, including after school programs for children, self-help courses for women, home visitation family support services, homework tutorials, and parenting support classes.

In an article printed in the *Montague Reporter* four years ago, Rodman, then recently arrived at the helm of the MCSM from her former position as the Southeast Program Director of the U.S. Save the Children Foundation, was described as "standing at the center of a whirlwind, yet strangely calm. Her four-room multi-service agency... is a nexus of support for women and children, from pre-schoolers to

seniors, who come to take the free programs in computer literacy, creative writing, self-help, art, and a wealth of after school tutoring and pre-school play groups. In the midst of all this, Rodman manages to exude a serene positivity that infects those around her."

Accepting her award, Rodman credited the hard work of her eleven-member staff, calling it a "collective recognition."

"I am very honored and very humbled. I work with a staff and board of directors that embodies the social justice teachings of Dr. King and a community of social agencies that have chosen to co-operate rather than compete for scarce resources, and a community of citizens who dare to tell their stories so that change can happen. I really believe love has power over hate, compassion has power over selfishness, and forgiveness has power over revenge."

She paraphrased civil rights leader and Georgia congressman John Lewis, saying "Beyond merely

commemorating the work of Martin Luther King, it is essential that we carry it on." Lewis has filed legislation to make Martin Luther King's birthday a day of community service and action, rather than just another day off from work.

"Dr. King was more than a teacher or a preacher," Rodman said.. "He was a man of action." She quoted King:

"Everybody can be great, because everybody can serve. You don't have to have a college degree to serve. You don't have to make your subject and your verb agree to serve. You don't have to know about Plato and Aristotle to serve. You don't have to know Einstein's theory of relativity to serve. You don't have to know the second theory of thermodynamics in physics to serve. You only need a heart full of grace, a soul generated by love. And you can be that servant."

Monday's award ceremony at G.C.C., which took place during an ice storm in the hill towns yet still managed to draw a full house at the Sloan Theater, also honored a group of

young people from Leyden Woods, who have worked with community organizer Diane Sargent over the past decade to develop recreation, tutorial and support services and reverse the stigma that had attached to that 200-unit apartment complex in the north end of Greenfield, where poverty, drugs and crime had been endemic before the complex was acquired by the non-profit Community Builders, Inc. Sargent and her young colleagues told the audience of summer sports clinics, homework clinics (expanded to four days a week at the kids' request), computer labs, teen support groups and holiday parties.

The multi-racial team of young people who showed up to accept a collective 'Bright Lights Award' from Pura in recognition of their work spoke of the growth of a mutual support network among the young people at Leyden Woods that has helped them gain confidence in school and resist peer pressure to engage in destructive behaviors.

"I want to give what I was given," said Anthony Ford. "I help other kids with their homework."

"I don't do drugs; I don't drink; I don't smoke. I just got

accepted at the Culinary Institute of America," said Joshua Setler. "I help people. That's what I will always do."

A young girl who at the age of nine wrote a poem that stands to become the youth group's theme song, recited her work for the crowd, concluding: "We aim high. We're Leyden Woods Kids. And we're the best!"

Reverend Jonathan Rehmus, of Colrain, took advantage of the open microphone section of the event to quote from a speech Martin Luther King gave 40 years ago in Los Angeles, in February of 1967, denouncing the American involvement in Vietnam. He quoted King saying: "I am disappointed with our failure to deal positively and forthrightly with the triple evils of racism, extreme materialism and militarism. We are presently moving down a dead-end road that can lead to national disaster." Rehmus drew a parallel to modern day America. "\$40 million leaves Massachusetts each week to pay for the war in Iraq," he said. "America spends \$500,000,000 each year on our military. That money goes to recruit kids like you to occupy a land that is not ours in search of oil that is not ours."



# NMH Students to be on the Martha Stewart Show

BY KATE SNYDER

**GILL** - Two juniors at Northfield Mount Hermon School have taped an interview that will air on The Martha Stewart Show on Friday, January 19th, at 10 a.m. Nicholas Anderson of Conway and Ana Slavin of Sherborn traveled to New York City where they were interviewed by Martha Stewart about Dollars for Darfur, a website they founded that challenges high schools to raise money for the Darfur region of Sudan in northern Africa. Through the website, 628 high schools have raised \$21,000 so far, and have pledged \$1.2 million. NMH has raised \$1,200.

The site encourages teens to use MySpace and Facebook web networking systems to spread the word about Darfur.

Across the country, high school students involved in the challenge have become involved in stopping the genocide in Darfur, where government-sponsored militia have been terrorizing people,

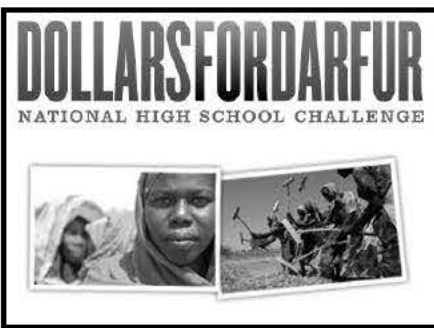
causing a human rights catastrophe. In Nevada, for example, a high school held a fundraising walk down the Las Vegas strip to raise money for the cause. In other places, students have sold homemade jewelry and handbags, held dance-offs, and hosted benefit concerts. The high school that

paid \$2 each and arm-wrestled and played pool, ping pong, foosball and air hockey. About 50 NMH students are involved in the Dollars for Darfur challenge. They are planning to sell pizza in the student housing and to hold a benefit dance to push their total higher.

Anderson and Slavin have appeared on BBC News; the *New York Times* Upfront, WBUR, an NPR affiliate in Boston; the *Christian Post*; and JVibe, an online newsletter about teens and Jewish culture. Slavin was also interviewed by *Teen Voices*, a feminist web publication. She recently e-mailed local public high schools to invite them to be part of the fundraising challenge.

"We started Dollars for Darfur because we got tired of waiting for others to change the world," said Anderson.

Dollars for Darfur is at [www.savedarfur.org/page/content/dfd/](http://www.savedarfur.org/page/content/dfd/).



raises the most money through Dollars for Darfur as of mid-April will win an as-yet-unannounced prize.

Half of the money raised funds humanitarian efforts for Darfuri refugees and the other half funds the advocacy efforts of the Save Darfur Coalition.

NMH held a tournament earlier this winter that raised \$600 in one night. Students

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## KIRKLAND

continued from pg 1

Photography" -- runs through March 18th.

The photographs are worth seeing, as much for their subjects as for their intimacy, and also for what they reveal about the photographer. Kirkland's love affair is with his posers as well as the medium. The camera serving as intermediary, Kirkland negotiates access to a private world, and focuses on his subjects lovingly. They blossom accordingly; the photographs record that synergy. Kirkland has won the trust of many stars otherwise reclusive or elusive, and found unique ways to portray them.

"Photography is connecting with people," he said at the thronged (almost 500 attended) opening of his exhibit last Saturday afternoon. In the case of the Marilyn Monroe photograph, it was a connection not just between photographer and sex symbol, but, as he writes in his book *An Evening with Marilyn*, between a provocative 36-year-old woman with preferences for silk, Sinatra, and champagne; and an ambitious yet innocent 24-year-old man -- she called him a boy -- who shared the champagne and then cantilevered and pretzeled himself into position from a balcony above her in search of the best vantage point. Somehow he kept his head. The delicately misty, seductive picture was on the cover of *Look* magazine.

The same year that he photographed Marilyn Monroe, 1961, Kirkland shot Art Buchwald in Paris, leaping, improbably spread-eagled in mid-air, the Eiffel tower splayed behind him. In his Saturday evening lecture at the Hallmark Institute of Photography, Kirkland explained that the photo was taken during his first



KIRKLAND PHOTO

*This photo of Marilyn Monroe is one of the most famous of Kirkland's images on display at the Hallmark School of Photography Museum through March 18th.*

trip to Europe; it expresses "the essence of joy of being in Paris."

Kirkland himself, now 72, leapt for joy, and for emphasis, at least a half-dozen times during his talk to an overflow audience of approximately 300 photographers, students of photography, fans and the general public looking for inspiration and insight into a legendary career.

Lanky and silver haired, energetic and enthusiastic, Kirkland leapt as he advised the aspiring photographers in the audience: "You have to make something happen." He sprang up and down when telling of his thrill and pride the first time his photo made the cover of *Look*. He related a story of meeting Hasselblad, the camera manufacturer, by chance on the street in New York, and leapt again, to underline "photography is fun." He jumped when telling how he wanted to lift up Marlene Dietrich from her sorrow over Hemingway's death. And he jumped yet again, to convey, "I have been so lucky," about the many adventures

his camera has provided a passport to, all over the world. He has worked on all the continents (excluding Antarctica).

Was Kirkland's seeming luck in being in the right place at the right time a coincidence? Maybe not: "You always have to be reaching, finding, discovering, inventing," he said. And, "You've got to try as hard as you can every time. You gotta invent, explore, question, search..." Wonderful words to live by.

Turners Falls certainly felt like the right place to be last Saturday. The band Viva Quetzal played all afternoon at the museum entrance; the stunning vegetable *hors d'oeuvres* table with radish lollipops was as luscious a display as it was sustaining, and constantly replenished. The scene was more New York City than humble Western Massachusetts. Even a cameraman from CBS Channel 3 in Springfield filmed the gallery-goers. Parking for the evening lecture was more what you would expect at the Franklin County Fair than a serious

lecture. Following the talk, the line of people waiting for Kirkland to sign books of his photographs was three people wide and 25 long, stretching past the dessert array (the lollipops this time were bananas dipped in chocolate) and back to the vast lecture hall.

How does a portrait express or evoke the inner world with only black, white and grays?

To answer that, look at three of Kirkland's photos from the mid-90s on the left wall, towards the back of the gallery. The first, of Elena Bepalova, an art historian who wrote an introduction to Kirkland's book of nudes, is very high contrast, geisha-like, almost solely black and white. Her angled arms form a dynamic V-shaped buttress supporting her face. The arch of her eyelid rhymes with her arched lip, and again with a notch in her bangs; these repeated upward-pointing shapes imply vivacity, aspiration, elevation. Next, a melancholy Rod Steiger is all murky grays, very low in contrast. Every form bespeaks heaviness: his

cheeks sag, his head presses on his arm and dents it. His arms are crossed, and he fills the space to bursting, suggesting imprisonment.

In the third photo, cinematographer Philippe Rousselot is at the bottom of the photograph, looking up, with only one eye visible, the other in shadowy obscurity. His hand on his cheek pulls his skin upward, distorting his face. It is not a familiar configuration. The tiny brilliant glints on Rousselot's revealed eye and shining from his hidden eye indicate incisiveness, quirkiness, the ability to see in the dark. This man would be fascinating to know.

As well as having insight and intuition, being a good photographer requires mastering a massive amount of technique and technical information. Kirkland is proficient with more types of cameras and film than you knew existed. He showed a 1960s photo of himself standing with every piece of equipment he used in one year at *Look*, and a veritable camera shop of stuff it was: tripods, lenses, filters, flashes, flares and strobes -- not to mention numerous cameras.

Kirkland has kept up with the times and has fully embraced digital photography. Every one of the pictures at the museum is an ink-jet print via computer, not a gelatin silver print. All of Kirkland's past work has been archived and scanned into computers with mega memories of eight terabytes (the next order of magnitude after a gazillion gigabytes is terabytes). This has allowed him to go back and revive neglected moments and to resee the past.

Digital technology gives better -- "amazing," he says -- archival quality, guaranteeing prints for 200 years. Kirkland's fans will be looking at them then.



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**the poetry page**

It is difficult to get the news from poems yet men die miserably every day for lack of what is found there.

- William Carlos Williams

**Zacatecas Express**  
for Jonathan Skinner

Things like these come frightfully close to the heart, conjure up madness, desire for transmutation of the flesh, when the risk of apotheosis would suffice.

Suddenly clouds, dark as Piranesi's famous skull, come out of hiding, waste their rain on yellow grass. Squirrels scatter. Birds nestle under the cracked eaves.

There are ways to account, yet no way to account. It's a real Mexican standoff complete with sombreros, cilantro, chiles, dusty streets with dank burros.

Not a mnemonic interlude, not an odd figment but a viable visible exit from the quotidian matchmaking of future ideas and past things.

--Christopher Sawyer-Lauçanno  
Turners Falls

Translated from Spanish by the poet



**Caldera**  
Judy said, Get in the truckbed!

Our hair rising. Lightning so close I could smell it.

She was married to a man I'd loved once. Her niece crouched with us, motherless

from cancer. All afternoon we had spiraled a fist of rock, listening for bobcat.

*If you meet one, the guide had said, you'll have to fight it. Running's the worst thing you can do.*

By the time she came back, we were bug-eaten, rained on, elation carrying us into the open where elk tried to gallop past thunder,

panic ecstatic, a line in me reeling toward them.

--Trish Crapo, Leyden

**There's Another Name in the River**

Safely lodged in the river rock. Hammer the sign into town commons and you might receive a knife up to Green River.

Men and peaveys beat down the Connecticut. Spiked boots in the red spruce in return.

Whisky, she said. Was it Helen? Lula remembered.

Artifacts in ice rather than rags in New York City. By the tent, a yellow daisy.

The pulse of logs tended by dynamite and whisky.

Canal men drain the power. Beavers implement Plan B.

Downstream of the North woods, ammosaurus footprints, antique Robinson bricks, buffer zones and that winter dog look in Joe's eyes already.

With the logger's pox leaving permanent scars on chests.

White pine needles carpet the most recently ruined. A Samsung from Miskinis TV.

What the white pine needs is reassurance.

Snow erases them all but the bells.

--Janel Nockleby, Turners Falls

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**Under Snow: for Wally on his 70th Birthday**

Do you remember how winter came last year? It pounced.

As a dozen pair of hands lifted into place the massiveness of that first stud wall of rough four by sixes Snow descended and winter, with little ceremony, charged in to stay, staring us down through all those many months, While we stared at that lone wall And fretted that our frantic efforts to enclose the sorely needed second room had so miserably failed, Chance lost to put those cold months of garden lull to account working on the interior (there being as yet no exterior except that one see-through wall).

Still, the effort had been necessary And so we neglected other necessities Like the woodpile which dwindled under our anxious watching. Long before winter's end we were foraging for each day's fuel like the most improvident of householders. (You, of all people, addicted to a dwelling warm enough that you had

neither to wear layers of clothing nor hug the stove; boastful that, as youngsters, you and brother Merrill put the neighbors to shame with your cords of wood neatly stacked by late summer, swinging axes instead of bats at sacrificed ball games.)

Last year you were reduced to searching out slim dead trees, able to saw them only after clearing a circumference of snow around their bases. We panted them up the slope, one awkward heavy pole under each arm, like horses in harness. Finally, remember? Thaw - And the discovery that we had been not so improvident as unbelievably careless. One muddy March morning we spied half a cord of wood cut and split, buried under snow and quite forgotten. It was just days before your birthday... Has there ever been a gift so fit, so welcome?

--Juanita Nelson  
Deerfield

**Hangmen**

Ghouls! Ghouls!  
You made a tyrant look graceful!  
Damn you!  
Feeding on the entrails of vengeance,  
"Moqtada! Moqtada! Moqtada!"  
Some fate for you,  
raping one another in the bowels of hell,  
fat and bloated,  
worms crawling behind your masks!  
When the hangmen also need hanging,  
how dare you utter the word 'Justice'!  
You dare soil her name  
with your breath stinking of blood  
and feces and decay  
and those other rank odors of death.  
Out of the festering body of a worthless tyrant,  
a thousand snake-headed wretches rise,  
grasping the ship of state by its keel,  
plunging us further into the rot of war.

--R. J. DiDonato  
Wendell



**CONTRIBUTORS' NOTES**

Christopher Sawyer-Lauçanno co-edits this poetry page with Janel Nockleby and Jamie Berger.

Trish Crapo lives in Leyden, MA. Her poems have appeared in anthologies and journals, most recently *Southern Poetry Review* and *Bark* magazine. Her chapbook, *Walk Through Paradise Backwards*, was published in 2004 by Slate Roof. She writes a regular fiction

review column for *The Women's Review of Books* and offers manuscript consultation from her office in Greenfield. She is writing a novel.

Raymond DiDonato resides in Wendell with his wife and children.

Janel Nockleby lives in Turners Falls and is working on her MFA in poetry at UMASS Amherst.

Juanita Nelson is an organic farmer and war tax refuser who lives on Woolman Hill in Deerfield.

Ed Rayher, poet, printer and publisher, runs Swamp Press in Northfield, producing fine letterpress handmade books of poetry in limited editions. He has a MFA in poetry from UMass Amherst as well as a doctorate in philosophy.

**Nature's Back Yard**  
for Katherine

& although the dead friend is not done with lying down, she lives on the patience of sleep. Mourners count on bone buttons to suspend their clothes, to herd needling desire. One cannot blame cancer for its will to live in our closets, swim in our pools of tears & for walking the dog over a cliff. Likewise cigarettes cling to the living, without whom no stories are worth repeating, while a grackle sucks flight from stones,

spitting out their descents. This is nature's back yard, where every day needs salt & the heart's barbecue gets rained out. Be good to her, for everything must grow, or die.

--Ed Rayher  
Northfield

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**Jean Donovan, CRS, ABR**  
BROKER

# Protest Sign on the Montague Town Common

**BY DAVID DETMOLD**  
**MONTAGUE CENTER** - Half a year after making his initial request, Taylor Hill Road resident Eric Chester has finally received a permit to put up a sign opposing the Iraq War on the Montague town common. The roughly

lettered poster board sign, mounted on a plywood A-frame, calling for the U.S. to get out of Iraq, will be up for two weeks. Although newly approved town guidelines allow for a free standing display to remain for three weeks time on either the Montague

Center town common, or at Peskeomskut Park in Turners Falls, the two areas the select-board designated as "public forums" at their meeting of December 11th, Chester said he decided to only apply for a two week permit, to parallel the duration the Firemen's Relief Association kept their crèche up on the town common this past December.

Chester said he had originally asked for permission to put up an anti-war sign in June of last year, for two reasons. "I want to express my opposition to the war and U.S. foreign policy." Chester said his other motivation was "to clarify the use of the town common for free expression."

Chester said rules for the use of public space need to be "content neutral." Like the Firemen's Relief Association, Chester included a disclaimer with his



*Eric Chester's sign has finally found a home on the Montague town common, for the next two weeks.*

voted in favor of a non-binding referendum last November to bring the U.S. troops home from Iraq. "I don't believe adding 20,000 troops is really the issue, when there are 140,000 troops over there now. We shouldn't let the Democrats off the hook that easily. We need to pull out all of them."

Chester said he did not buy the argument that a hasty withdrawal of US forces would lead to further chaos in Iraq and the Middle East. "What's destabilizing the region is the Israeli occupation of Palestinian territory. What's destabilizing the region is the U.S. occupation of Iraq. That's what is infuriating

the people throughout the region and the world. I don't believe the U.S. occupation of Iraq is stabilizing the region. Quite the contrary. I think everyone realizes the Iraqis are going to have to resolve these issues."

display stating it does not represent the view of the town, as the regulations specify. Since June, Chester said, the need to protest the war has become more imperative. He said 80% of the voters in Congressman Olver's district

ing the people throughout the region and the world. I don't believe the U.S. occupation of Iraq is stabilizing the region. Quite the contrary. I think everyone realizes the Iraqis are going to have to resolve these issues."

## HIGHLIGHTS FROM THE ERVING POLICE LOG

### Domestic Disturbance

#### Wednesday 1-10

3:00 p.m. Report of a minor motor vehicle accident at town highway garage. Minor damage to a piece of equipment. No injuries.

#### Sunday 1-14

3:23 p.m. Assisted Orange police with a motor vehicle accident.

#### Tuesday 1-16

10:30 a.m. Report of a domestic disturbance at a North Street address. [redacted] of Erving was arrested for domestic assault and battery.

4:30 p.m. After a motor vehicle stop on Route 2, a criminal application was issued to [redacted] for speeding, seat belt violation, and operating after suspension.

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### MCSM

continued from pg 1

gram of the Montague Catholic Social Ministries (MCSM).

MCSM is seeking \$62,000 in Community Development Block Grant (CDBG) funds, and pledges to apply \$43,000 in matching funds towards expanding the program, according to a handout provided at the hearing.

Presenting the request for MCSM, Family Support Program coordinator Lorena Norwood said, "The money will fund another full time staff member to do family support work," for 18 months in Turners Falls. Adding another staff member to what Norwood termed "a very successful program," will allow MCSM to extend the home visit family support network beyond the program's current reach. According to the limits of grants received, MCSM can now serve only families who are involved with the Department of Social Services, or families with children under the age of five, with their Family Support Program. But

the need for such services has grown to include a waiting list for families in both those categories, as well as families who are not involved with DSS, or who have children older than 5 years old, Norwood said.

(For more information on the program, please call MCSM at 413-863-4805.)

"Families are the experts with children and themselves," Norwood told the hearing. "They often need support in the community, with issues ranging from poverty, to education, transportation and job opportunities. Families are dealing with complex issues, and are experiencing more difficulties meeting basic needs."

Norwood said the program allows for long-term trusting relationships to be established with MCSM support workers, who help families connect with needed services in the community, or access internal strengths to overcome obstacles confronting them.

She told the story of one family, where the child was placed outside of the home through DSS, but after working with the family for a period of time on communication

skills and money management, "By the time we closed with the family, the family was intact, the child was back in the home, they had cleared up all their debt and purchased a home, with the help of Franklin Regional Housing and Redevelopment Authority (FRHRA) loan programs."

Speaking of one of those programs, an ongoing loan program to help low and moderate income families correct code violations in their homes, Bruce Hunter from the FRHRA said his agency currently has a waiting list of 25 families waiting to access the zero interest, deferred repayment loans his agency makes available through CDBG funding.

Hunter said homeowners repay the loans at the time they sell their houses. Loans come with a 15-year affordability deed restriction in the case of landlords rehabilitating rental property.

The rehab funds can be used for lead paint abatement, insulating, new wells or septic systems, weatherization work, or correcting building code violations. He said 10 to 12 of

the families on the waiting list would be served with the CDBG funds the program received in 2006, leaving the rest of the waiting list, and others who may apply, to be served with the \$366,000 being requested for 2007.

A family of four would qualify for program funds if they earn less than \$57,350 a year. Hunter said CDBG funds would allow his agency to "leverage" \$50,000 in additional loan money from the Greenfield Savings Bank at a quarter percent below market rate, for homeowners who qualify for bank lending for some of the work they will undertake.

Abbondanzio said the town would seek funds for design and reconstruction of three sidewalks schoolchildren use to walk to school, in parts of downtown that meet income eligibility guidelines for the federal grant funds, which are distributed to cities and towns in Massachusetts through the state Department of Housing and Urban Development. The sidewalks are on 7th Street between Park and High, Spring Street between L and

Central, and Unity Street between 3rd Street and Millers Falls Road.

Abbondanzio said, in addition to the \$350,000 the town would be seeking to replace these three stretches of "poor condition" sidewalks, the DPW would also be applying the \$250,000 that town meeting allocated last year to repair poor condition sidewalks in other areas of town, according to the priority list prepared for the town of Montague by the Franklin Regional Council of Government planners last year. According to this list, Abbondanzio said, only 9% of the sidewalks in town are in poor condition, at present.

"The town has a 25-year history of successful grant writing," during which time the town has received at least "\$15 to \$20 million" in CDBG funds, in tandem with the FRHRA, which administers the grants for the town, Abbondanzio said. The purpose of CDBG funding, generally, is to help towns alleviate blight and implement programs to assist low or moderate income populations.

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**HIGHLIGHTS FROM THE WENDELL SELECTBOARD**

# Kopelman and Paige Chosen as New Town Counsel

**BY JOSH HEINEMANN** - On January 10th, the selectboard tapped the Northampton-based law firm of Kopelman and Paige to take over town counsel duties from the Greenfield firm of John Gates, who is retiring. Two weeks earlier, the board had postponed that decision, and though none of the board members had changed their opinion significantly, they agreed the time had come to make a choice.

Selectboard member Dan Keller said he appreciated board chair Ted Lewis' reservations about hiring a big box law firm, but he still felt working with a firm with the size and depth of Kopelman and Paige was the best choice for Wendell. Kopelman and Paige will be able to respond to questions quickly without using billable time for research, Keller said.

Lewis said, "I don't like Mr. Kopelman," and he said David Doneski, who would be the town's main lawyer, would do as he was told within the firm. Kopelman and Paige serves close to 100 towns, Lewis pointed out, and he said there will be problems having all those towns covered by one firm, as for example when Wendell and New Salem have differing views on the Swift River School contract. Having 100 towns represented by one firm "is like having a one party government. When they are the last firm, they can do what they want."

Selectboard member Christine Heard said she shared Lewis' preference for the local firm of John Gates, but she also appreciated the size and depth Kopelman and Paige offer. She said whatever the board decides now can be changed later, but Lewis countered that with ongoing situations, changing firms later would not be so easy. Once

you take the competition away, Lewis opined, the quality of representation will go down.

"You will be here to deal with the problems (of one large firm), not me," he said.

Heard replied, "Where do you think you're going?"

Keller made a motion that the board accept Kopelman and Paige as the town's new legal counsel, and Heard seconded the motion, which passed 2 to 1.

Mark Ceria barged into the board meeting, making accusations about ongoing harassment in connection with his former Mountain Laurel Road trailer home, condemned and demolished as unfit for human habitation some years ago by the Wendell board of health during Ceria's absence. The board heard him out for a quarter of an hour, at which point he demanded \$10,000 from the board, in return for which he promised to leave Wendell for good and drop a threatened lawsuit against the town and its officials. The board declined his offer.

Bob Shulman came into the office for his 8:30 p.m. scheduled appointment with the board, and Keller told Ceria, "Your time is up; we have another appointment." Ceria left saying, "I've had enough with this town, and [former board of health chair] Andy Hamilton. You took everything from me."



HEINEMANN PHOTO

The new town office building under construction in Wendell.

Shulman said he had received a letter to come in and discuss a vegetative screen between his house and the new library and wanted to see what the selectboard had in mind. With the tornado damage and loss of the shrubs and trees from library foundation work, his house is now out in the open.

Lewis said the lot looks like it did years ago when there was a blacksmith shop there. He suggested the lilacs already planted there could grow into a hedge, but Shulman said lilacs do not grow tall. He suggested arbor vitae, and Keller said the price of arbor vitae is reasonable. Lewis said that the building committee can work with the highway department to get them planted.

**PLANNING BOARD FILLED**

Planning board member Jenn Gross was scheduled to meet the board as the meeting opened; she said two people volunteered for the vacant positions on the planning board: Pru Smith, and Heather Reed, who is a soils scientist at the University of Massachusetts. Trish Casimira is willing to be

the planning board clerk.

Lewis asked if the positions had been posted, and town coordinator Nancy Aldrich said, "many times." All three appointments were approved by the selectboard, filling all the open planning board

slots. Gross said the new appointees were eager to begin work on the Pelham Hills grant, which provides funds for land use and forestry conservation planning.

**CONSTABLE NEEDED?**

Town constable Anne Diemand met with the board next, with four items of concern. Since town clerk Anna Hartjens has requested that a constable be present during all elections, Diemand asked that the town hire more constables. The November election day is an especially difficult day for her to take 14 hours off, during her busiest season at the Diemand Farm. She asked if a part time constable could be hired just for elections.

As a member of the agricultural commission, Diemand has asked for a meeting on February 6th at 7:00 p.m. for discussion and clarification of the National Animal Identification System (NAIS). Michael Kahill from the Massachusetts Department of Agriculture will attend. She said the Northeast Organic Farming Association is upset with the implications of NAIS,

because of its disproportionate impact on small farmers.

Diemand also wanted clarification about how appointments to the agricultural commission will be staggered, and which member will require the first re-appointment. Together she and the board concluded that Linda Hickman's appointment will be up first, then Bill Facey's, then Diemand's. The agricultural commission wants to add more people, two at a time to maintain an odd number of commissioners.

Her fourth concern was a right to farm bylaw, which she thought the town might need soon. Keller said there are samples of such bylaws she could get from other towns to use as models, and said she should confirm those bylaws have been approved by the Attorney General. He suggested if Wendell passed such a bylaw, it could be shown to people interested in buying property in town, so they are not unpleasantly surprised by roosters crowing, manure smells, or early morning machinery.

**MOVING WAR MEMORIALS**

Wendell historic commission member Jean Forward met the board to discuss plans for moving the war memorials from in front of the library to the area of the town common near the gazebo. Forward does not want the memorials damaged.

Lewis said no one knows if the granite mill wheels that form the memorials even have a base. He said the digging around the memorials would have to be done using hand shovels. He said the memorials would be lifted with straps, not cables or chains, to avoid breakage.

Forward said Mass Historic had told her the same thing. She

continued next page

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# EARTH TALK

## Dear EarthTalk:

Is it true that some commercial fishing nets are 40 miles long? I heard a TV commentator accuse fishing fleets of "strip-mining the oceans." If their nets are really that large, it certainly sounds like that's what is happening!

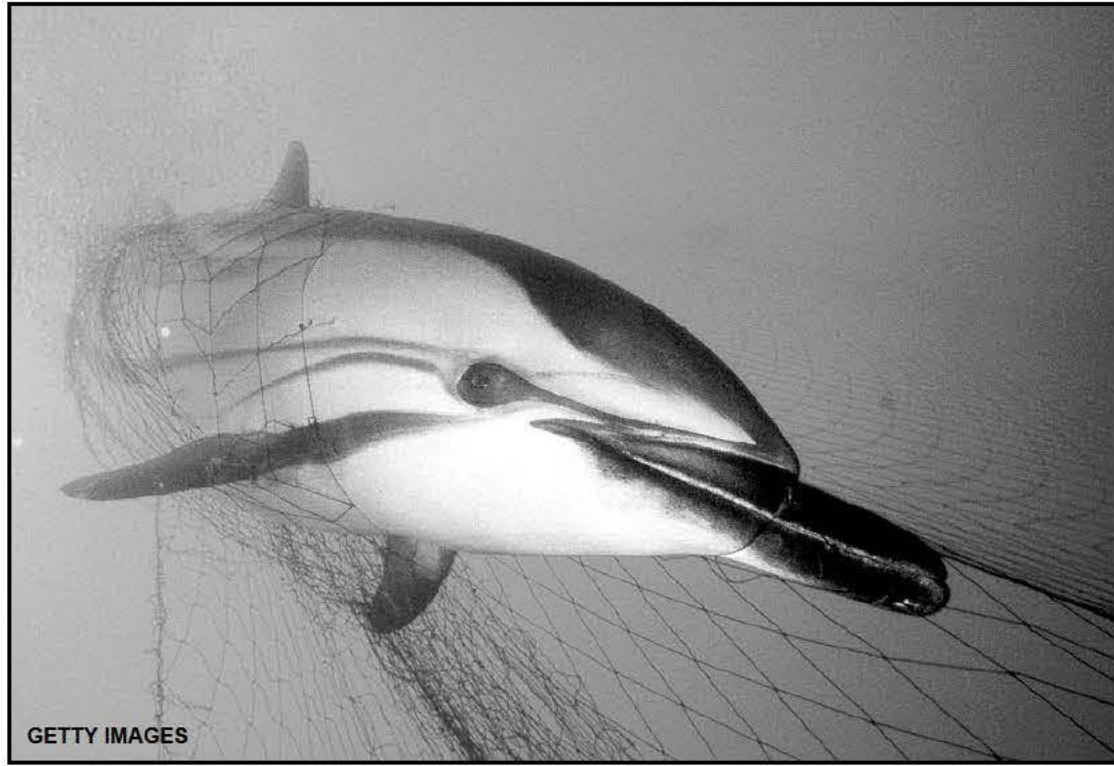
- B. Johnson,  
Port Chester, NY

Considered the most destructive fishing technology ever devised, commercial "drift netting" involves vertically suspending near-transparent nylon nets in ocean waters with floats attached to the top and weights fixed to the bottom. Some are known to be as much as 50 miles wide, with a vertical height of about 50 feet deep. Once set, the nets are allowed to drift with the wind and currents (hence the term "drift net") and to snag just about everything in their paths. Drift netting is considered to be the most efficient way to catch large amounts of the ocean's biggest fish, including tuna, swordfish, marlin and salmon.

The problem with these gigantic nets is that they don't discriminate between fish that can be sold for dinner tables and so-called "by-catch" - marine life not intended for food but which get hauled up anyway and then subsequently

## Drift Nets: Strip Mining the Oceans

from the Editors of *E - the Environmental Magazine*



GETTY IMAGES

A Striped Dolphin caught in a driftnet in the Northeast Atlantic Ocean.

discarded dead back into the ocean. Drift netting is responsible not only for killing fish that will never be sold commercially, but also for the unnecessary death of hundreds of thousands of dolphins, seals, whales and sea turtles every year, despite international agreements outlawing the practice.

Driftnets also sometimes break loose, sailing through the oceans unattended, "ghost fishing" until they sink to the bottom under the weight of their victims or wash up onshore where they snag seabirds, seals and other unsuspecting

wildlife.

First developed by Japan in the 1970s, drift netting quickly caught on elsewhere and within just a decade scientists began to notice that the practice was taking a severe toll on marine biodiversity. Various experiments were conducted that bore out these concerns. A 1989 test using driftnets to catch tuna, for example, killed an average of four and a half marine mammals in every 'set' - one whale or dolphin for every 10 tuna caught. Meanwhile, analysts observed a Japanese boat kill 59 dol-

phins and small whales in just 30 sets - a rate of almost two per set.

With commercial fishing fleets legally deploying some 30,000 miles of driftnets around the world daily during the 1980s, the toll on marine life was no doubt staggering.

The first major effort to stop drift netting was the Wellington Convention, which was signed in New Zealand in 1989 and put into place a driftnet ban in the South Pacific. Four years later, the United Nations called for an international moratorium on the prac-

tice.

Meanwhile, in 1992 Russia, Japan and the United States created the Convention for the Conservation of Anadromous Stocks in the North Pacific, banning all driftnets more than 1½ miles in length. (Anadromous refers to fish like salmon that live in salt water but spawn in fresh water.) South Korea signed on but China did not, though it agreed to let the U.S. Coast Guard help police its fleet. In 2002, the European Union banned drift netting by its member countries.

According to Earthtrust, a U.S. nonprofit committed to ending drift netting, despite such commitments, commercial fishing fleets around the world still deploy tens of thousands of miles of driftnets on a daily basis.

While efforts to stop the practice have no doubt had some effect, drift netting remains one of the biggest drivers of over-fishing today. As long as demand for tuna, salmon and other big fish continues, drift netting - illegal or otherwise - is likely to continue to wreak havoc on the world's marine ecosystems.

For more information, contact: Earthtrust's DriftNetwork, [www.earthtrust.org/dnw.html](http://www.earthtrust.org/dnw.html).

Got an environmental question? Email: [earthtalk@emagazine.com](mailto:earthtalk@emagazine.com).

## WENDELL

from previous page

said it is a miracle the memorials have not been hit by a car or a snowplow, but Lewis told her they had, and one of the plates had been knocked off. Forward asked to be told when they will be moved; she would like to help with the digging.

## FELTMAN ABATEMENT

Town assessors Paul Sullivan and Tom Mangan asked to consult with the board because they were unsure how to interpret a recent ruling from the state. The bill the legislature passed to allow Neal Feltman to continue receiving Chapter 61 abatement on his property on the corner of Jennison Road and New Salem road required that he file his Chapter 61 application within 60 days of that bill's being

signed into law. Feltman was unaware of when the bill was signed, and did not file within 60 days, though he had filed before the legislation passed. He has been paying taxes on the property as if it could be developed, and before the assessors allow him an abatement of \$50,000 as a Chapter 61 restriction would allow, they wanted to make sure they were on firm legal ground.

After reading the document the assessors presented, Keller said he understood it to mean that Feltman had to submit his application before the 60 days had passed; the will of the town was also clear, because the vote to request the legislation had passed at two town meetings. He made a motion to approve the tax abatement for Feltman, and the board voted unanimously to approve the abated tax

payment.

Keller also had news for the assessors; a potential third assessor has expressed interest in joining their board.

## CONSTRUCTION PROJECTS GOING SLOW

Keller said work is progressing on the new town office building, and the new library, but the going is slow. The buildings are now connected to the water supply lines, but some work still needs to be done on Cooleyville Road, where Whitney Trucking ran into ledge. The pump is in place, though the septic system has not been tested yet.

The library has standing water in the cellar and some floor joists are showing black mold, which Lewis said would only spread. The mold was shown to Handford employees,

who cleaned it up. But the question of removing the standing water in the cellar remains to be settled. Handford Construction has proposed installing a sump pump and drain leading out the back of the building. Heard suggested a perimeter drain or a drain dug under the cellar floor would be a better solution.

Another issue involves materials the town has paid for that are not going to be put to use in the project. Clerk of the Works John Flemming has an itemized list, so the town should receive credit.

The town office building has been insulated; interior walls are up.

## NO CURMUDGEONS

Finance committee member Michael Idoine came in to tell the selectboard that the finance committee's other member, Jim

Slavas, had created a spreadsheet program that integrates with the town's accounting program, a fine piece of work. Keller asked if the finance committee could use another member, as someone had contacted him to inquire. Idoine said he hoped it was someone who isn't a curmudgeon.

As the open meeting came to a close, the assessors returned and met with the selectboard in executive session.

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# Good News for Communities that Care Coalition

BY BETSY CALVERT

**GREENFIELD** - The news was fairly upbeat - for a change - at a gathering last week of human service stalwarts working toward reducing drug and alcohol abuse among teens in Franklin County and the North Quabbin region.

Alcohol drinking is down substantially among younger teen-agers, a recent survey suggests, and teens are beginning to think the community cares about whether they do the right thing, project organizers reported at a large annual meeting held January 12th at Franklin Medical Center in Greenfield.

About 50 people gathered for the meeting of the Communities that Care Coalition, which was formed in 2002 to address problems in drug and alcohol abuse among area teens. The meeting happened two days after a local teen-ager, 18-year-old Nicholas Stone of Montague Center, died as a passenger in an underage drunk driving accident in Montague.

Participants came from non-profit agencies, from local businesses and from the Northwestern District Attorney's office to share information and ideas and to hear results of the past four years of work.

Some of the news was released earlier this past fall, when the Community Coalition for Teens announced that drug and alcohol use had dropped dramatically in the past three years among Franklin County's younger teens. These conclusions come according to the results of two teen surveys taken first in 2003 and second in 2006. The surveys ask teens at local high schools about their activities in the month before the survey, among other things.

An ecstatic coalition announced this fall they had exceeded their 2009 goal by 2006, in some key areas. Use of alcohol in the past 30 days had decreased by 27 percent among

eighth graders compared to the 2003 survey of a different group of eighth graders. Use of marijuana in the past 30 days had decreased by 41 percent among the same age group.

The coalition was aiming for a 10 percent reduction by 2009, said co-chairwoman Kat Allen, so it will have to set new and higher goals.

"We can make a difference," Allen declared.

The same results did not hold for 12th graders, for whom binge drinking in the past two weeks stayed the same between 2003 and 2006. Kat Allen of the Community Coalition for Teens explained that this was not unexpected, because it is harder to change the behavior of older teens.

Community Action Director Jane Sanders asked if results varied by school. The survey included Mohawk, Frontier, Gill-Montague, Pioneer and Greenfield. Mahar Regional School in Orange joined in 2006.

Allen said there was some variation by school, but not much. Also, she said, school administrators agreed to participate in the survey only if the results by school would not be released to the public, thus setting up competitive comparisons. Schools receive their own survey results, however. They use the data to put up posters showing the numbers of students using drugs and alcohol, which is invariably lower than students expect. This is expected to reduce the perception of peer pressure.

The survey also showed substantial improvements in the setting of social norms in the schools and the community in opposing substance abuse.

Those improvements were less noticeable in families, which Allen said is a tougher goal to achieve. Examples of setting social norms are more recognition of accomplishment for teens

in the community and in the schools.

Schools in particular have made great strides in projects that praise students who make attempts to participate positively in community life, Allen said.

Starting in 2002, the coalition adopted extremely structured intervention models to reach its goal of reduced substance abuse. Drawing on experts working throughout the community, coalition members worked to hone its vision, and to identify problem behaviors among teens, so-called risk factors and protective factors, and finally, strategies to effect change.

Risk factors include community laws and norms as well as family attitudes that fail to discourage use of illegal substances. A protective factor was identified as rewards to youth for positive involvement in the community, schools and their families. Strategies include projects such as compliance checks at local liquor stores selling to underage customers, youth recognition programs at schools and in communities, parent education programs and youth prevention education programs.

In the family, the two surveys showed in some cases that teens are not seeing much improvement, Allen said. Positive norms may mean that teens believe their parents will be upset by their use of alcohol and that there will be negative consequences, as opposed to parents seeing teen recklessness as a rite of passage, she said.

"This is not a risk factor we can expect to change quickly," Allen said. "A lot of parents have a great relationship with their young children, but they don't necessarily talk about drugs and alcohol."

Projects aimed at helping families took a hit in recent months, said Ruth Ever, youth and education coordinator for the Northwest District Attorney's office, and chair of

the parent education work group. That's because the state Executive Office of Public Safety just cut funding for a coordinator's position. The coordinator, Michelle Houghtaling of the Franklin County Regional Council of Governments, was working with schools to organize training programs with parents. Before funding was cut, about 100 families in the region had undergone training, and 15 people were trained to be trainers, Ever said.

"I really can't even say what a huge loss this is," Ever said. "As a society, we put very little resources into teaching parents how to raise healthy, well adjusted children."

Houghtaling said she has been continuing her work on volunteer basis whenever possible.

One measure of a community's social norms is the degree to which liquor stores and restaurants enforce the under 21 laws for liquor, said Lauri Turkovsky, senior prevention science coordinator for the Western Massachusetts Center for Healthy Communities as well as co-chair of the coalition's Community Laws and Norms sub-group. In this area, Franklin County appears to be somewhat behind the curve compared to the rest of the state, she said. The state Alcoholic Beverage Control Commission conducted so-called sting operations in 2006, and found compliance in the county at 82 percent, somewhat behind the state average of 90 percent, she said. Rates were lowest in western Franklin County in the region of the Mohawk Trail Regional School, she said. There, only three of five liquor stores passed the compliance test.

Compliance in the Frontier region was 78 percent, or 14 out of 18 stores and restaurants, she said. Compliance was 88 percent in Greenfield, or 23 of 26

establishments. The state, which is way behind its schedule, has not done a check recently in the Gill-Montague area, she said.

Rates tend to be higher in areas that have colleges, according to Turkovsky, where merchants are under constant surveillance. Also, she said, in the eastern part of the state, Mothers Against Drunk Driving is headquartered and is active in monitoring compliance.

"We're the Wild Wild West out here," she remarked.

The coalition also conducted its own surveys recently in which it hires youths in their early 20s to see if merchants check identification, as required, Turkovsky said. Compliance was lower than the state average here too, she said, except in the Pioneer Valley Regional School area, where the rate was four out of four stores in compliance. Gill-Montague's compliance here was 86 percent, or six of seven stores.

The audience debated the ethical issues in another kind of sting called the 'shoulder tap' in which underage teen-agers hang out in a liquor store parking lot and approach someone to buy liquor for them - a common approach. The coalition is considering taking on this operation. The issue is whether to arrest the adult who agrees to break the law, or whether to just release them with a warning. Local police tend to prefer arrests, Turkovsky said.

In one parking lot in eastern Massachusetts, she said, an adult actually approached the teens first, saying he was sympathetic to their 'dilemma.'

State officials were surprised with the Franklin County results, Turkovsky said, but she added that they kind of like some non-compliance, because it makes the job interesting.


The Communities that Care Coalition has been operating with state and federal grants.

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# Jep's Place: Hope, Faith and Other Disasters Part XVI

**Church Collection**  
 By Joseph A. Parzych  
 Gill - One Sunday, after I was considered old enough to go to church, the usher sat us way up in the front of the church. During collection, he waved the collection basket close to Pa's nose when he didn't drop in any money. Pa quickly ducked his head back to keep from getting hit. The priest glared at Pa from the pulpit, "Some people don't have money to give to God but have money to spend on drink."  
 The muscles in Pa's jaw started working. I felt ashamed, and wished Pa had more money.

I began wondering why God would need money since He could do anything He wanted to do.  
 Soon after that, Pa went to see the priest to make arrangements for our first communion. There were five of us who had yet to do so. When Pa came home his eyes were wild looking.  
 "The priest said it would cost \$10 for each kid. I told him that would be more than I made in a month if I was working steady. But he wouldn't budge. I told him that he should be hung from a lamp post."  
 Ma tried to calm him down,

but Pa hit the table with his fist. I hid in the built-in wood box. We didn't go to church for a long time after that. Time went on. And when it didn't look like we would get a new priest anytime soon, Ma went to St. Mary's, the Irish church, to see if we could go to church there. The priest was very nice about it, and Ma enrolled us in Sunday school. When it came time to make our first communion, Pa told us to ask the nuns how much it would cost. The nuns said an offering of 50 cents would do - if we had it.  
 By now, Gladys, who was four years older than me, was already in high school and didn't want to parade in the public procession with all the little kids. I wasn't all that crazy about it either. I felt embarrassed, towering over the other little kids going to the altar to receive first communion from a visiting bishop.  
 Soon, so many parishioners of Our Lady of Czestochowa switched to St. Mary's that the diocese began sending a Polish-speaking priest to St. Mary's to hear confessions during Lent. Pa never got over the shabby treatment by the Polish priest during Julia's burial and vowed to have Julia transferred to the St. Mary's cemetery. But when we heard some of the parishioners saying, "Why don't they stick with their own kind and go to their own church," Pa gave up.  
 He stopped talking about having Julia's body moved, and quit going to church altogether. Years later, after the Polish church lost a large majority of

parishioners, a fine priest took over. Membership surged back strong, but Pa was disgusted with the whole thing and said he would deal direct.  
 Sometimes on Sunday afternoons we'd drive up to the cemetery to see Julia's grave. There wasn't any marker - just a little mound of dirt out in the bushes. Ma would kneel to pray, and her eyes would fill up as she tugged at the sprigs of brush that crowded in on the grave.  
 Mama always worried that the brush would take over and no one would know where Julia was buried. But there was no money for a gravestone. She began getting so worked up when we visited the grave that Pa would put it off as long as he could. But that just made it worse the next time when she saw more brush had crowded in.  
 One day, when we went to the cemetery, we saw the grave had settled. Ma began to cry. I wanted to tell her it was O.K. because that meant Julia had somehow gotten out of there and had gone up to heaven to be with the angels. But Ma never seemed to smile anymore. I hoped Pa would get more steady work so we could buy a stone, but the mill laid workers off more often. Pa began spending more time at the Polish club. His heart trouble and ulcers got worse.  
 While money was scarce, we usually had enough to eat because we raised a lot of our own food. But the coal bin had long since been empty, and the wood fire in the kitchen stove did not last the night. If a water

glass anywhere in the house were left out, the water froze and the glass broke. The door to the upstairs bedrooms, where we kids slept, was kept closed. On windy nights, curtains moved by gusts that found their way around the loose-fitting windows.  
 The wind howled and the windows rattled all one wintry night. In the morning, Emmy found a little pile of snow next to her bed. "Time to put on more quilts," She laughed. "I thought I'd freeze to death last night."  
 Emmy hunted for more quilts and, when she found none, she piled old coats on us. In the end she took Johnny's army overcoat from the CCC and laid that on, too. But by the time she piled on enough quilts and coats to keep us warm, we could scarcely breathe from the sheer weight. The sheets were ice-cold when we first went to bed and seemed to take forever to warm up.  
 Sometimes, we heated flat irons on the kitchen stove to take to bed to warm our feet. The irons held heat for quite a while. But one night Louis and I tried something different. We filled two quart whiskey bottles with hot water to take to bed. During the night, the bottles banged together, or maybe the bottles got too far down to the foot of the bed, froze, and broke. Next morning, icicles hung from the foot of the bed. Ma began crying when she came up to wake us for school. Soon after that, she announced we were going to make down quilts.  
*continued next week*

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## FRIDAY, JANUARY 19TH

Charlie King & Karen Brandow and The Prince Myshkins (Rick Burkhardt & Andy Gricevich) perform at All Souls Unitarian-Universalist Church, Greenfield. Doors open at 7 p.m. Tickets at the door are \$17 per person and \$30 for two people. Proceeds will benefit the Western Mass coalition of Jobs with Justice. 7:30 p.m.

Rt. 63 Road House, Millers Falls, *Curly Fingers Dupree Band*. Full band and horns. 9:30 p.m. Come to dance!

## SATURDAY, JANUARY 20TH

Shea Theater Charitable Concert featuring *Final Hour*. Proceeds to benefit The Brick House Community Center. Also featuring *King Rex*, *There Was Change* and *The Mystery Tramps*. Doors open 7 p.m. and showtime is 7:30 p.m. 863-2281. **Tickets are now only \$10** and available at Strawberries, World Eye Books, and at The Brick House. The concert is being put on by PH Productions out of Greenfield and is being sponsored by The Smokin' Hippo BBQ, Strawberries, The People's Pint, and 106.9 WCCC.

Echo Lake Coffee House presents the award winning Bard Insurgent, Tom Neilson. Tom specializes in political satire, parody and social commentary. 7:30 p.m., Leverett Town Hall. Opening for Tom are the equally outrageous *Raging Grammys* of Western Mass. Admission is \$12/\$10 for seniors. For more info, call (413) 548-9394.

Rt. 63 Road House, Millers Falls, *Outerspace Band*. 40th anniversary show, tickets on sale now! 9:30 p.m. Come to dance!

## SUNDAY, JANUARY 21ST

Deja Brew, Wendell, Classical Piano by Adam Bergeron. 7 to 9 p.m. No cover.

The Montague Bookmill Presents: The Dead of Winter Free Films for the Frozen: *City Lights*, 1931, Charlie Chaplin. Free, 7 p.m.

## MONDAY, JANUARY 22ND

Rt. 63 Road House, Millers Falls, Singer Song-Writer series, hosted by Rob Skelton and Pitchfork. 8 to 11 p.m.



"Final Hour" an up and coming rock band kicks off the benefit series at the Shea Theatre. Saturday January 20th, 7:30 p.m. Tickets \$10!

## WEDNESDAY, JANUARY 24TH

Rt. 63 Road House, Millers Falls, Ottomatic Slim, rocken blues great harp. 8 to 11 p.m., no cover.

## FRIDAY, JANUARY 26TH

The Montague Elks Lodge #2521 "Italian Night" dinner fundraiser to benefit the new lodge. Tickets \$8, open to all Elk members and guests, age 21 and over. Only a limited number of meals will be available. Begins at 6 p.m. until sold out. Dessert sold separately.

Rt. 63 Road House, Millers Falls, *Soul Sensation*. Rock and roll, come to dance! 9:30 p.m.

## SATURDAY, JANUARY 27TH

Ja'Duke's 10th Anniversary Party at the Shea Theater, Turners Falls. Celebrate the past, present and future! Free and open to all. Sign up on line at [www.jaduke.com](http://www.jaduke.com) or call the Shea 863-2281 to reserve tickets. Limited seating, 7 p.m.

Rt. 63 Road House, Millers Falls, *Loose Change Back In The House*. Rock and roll, come to dance! 9:30 p.m.

The Montague Elks Lodge #2521 annual "Caribbean Night", 1 Elks Avenue, Turners Falls. This event is open to all Elk members and guests. A pot luck dinner is planned and all attendees are encouraged to bring a pot luck dish to share. The lodge's house committee will also be providing roasts of pork for the dinner. The event is free. 8 p.m. Entertainment will be provided by VJ Slade with dancing until midnight.

## SUNDAY, JANUARY 28TH

Montague Family Dance with caller Jim Fownes Family-style contra dancing for all ages. Montague Grange, 34 Main Street, Montague Center. 4:00-5:30 p.m.

The Montague Bookmill Presents: The Dead of Winter Free Films for the Frozen: *Napoleon Dynamite*. By popular demand and funny enough to see multiple times, 2005. Films are Free (with a passed hat). Food & drink available at the Lady Killigrew Pub or The Night Kitchen Restaurant. 7 p.m.

## WEDNESDAY, JANUARY 31ST

Friends Coffeehouse: Falltown Stringband in The Great Hall, Great Falls Discovery Center. Accessible facilities. \$5 - \$10 per person. 7 p.m.

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## UNTIL JANUARY 31ST


Hello Iraq. How Are You? An Exhibit of Art from children in Iraq and in the USA created especially for this cultural exchange project, and documenting photographs by Claudia Lefko at Green Fields Market, Greenfield. The display features art from local children, as well as art from Iraqi children living in exile in Amman Jordan. Children are invited to make their own pictures for children in Iraq or Jordan. They can bring their paintings or drawings to Green Fields Market throughout the month; it will be sent, as part of the Iraqi Children's Art Exchange. Info: Claudia Lefko, (413) 584-0068 or [iraqichildren-sart@verizon.net](mailto:iraqichildren-sart@verizon.net)

## UNTIL MARCH 18TH

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

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**SATURDAY, JANUARY 20TH**  
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**THURSDAY, JANUARY 25TH**  
Listen to the River - Trust for Public Land Public Meeting. Contact [Stella.Lensing@tpl.org](mailto:Stella.Lensing@tpl.org) for more information. 6 - 9 p.m.

**SATURDAY, JANUARY 27TH**  
What's Happening with the Eagles? Join Refuge staff to view the LIVE Bald eagle cam at the Center & learn about where they are in the nesting process. Program includes interactive eagle trivia game! 10:30 a.m.


**WEDNESDAY, JANUARY 31ST**  
Friends Coffeehouse: Falltown Stringband. A night of local entertainment performed by the Falltown Stringband and refreshments. \$5 - \$10 per person. 7 p.m.

**UNTIL JANUARY 31ST**  
Daniel Goettel - Landscape Photographs. Human & natural landscapes in black and white photography. A sample of his work on the web [www.danielgoettel.com](http://www.danielgoettel.com)

**THURSDAY, FEBRUARY 8TH**  
Tracking the Wily Coyote and other dog family members of central & Western Mass with expert tracker and naturalist, David Brown. 7 - 8:30 p.m. For ages 10 and older. Fee: \$5

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*The Hooded Merganser*

**BY FRAN HEMOND**  
**MONTAGUE CENTER** - As more light returns to our earth after the winter solstice (December 22nd) the sunrise at the Breakfast Club horizon stops moving too far south to be seen from my window, and starts returning north. Solstice means 'sun stands still,' and indeed sunrise this day (7:10 a.m.) is only a minute earlier than it was at the beginning of winter. However, sunset is twenty-five minutes later, at 4:40 p.m., and gives us shoppers time to get home before dark.

The good *Old Farmers Almanac*, a true "calendar of the heavens" in its own words, alerts us to coming celestial events, gives us specific times of each sun and moon rising and setting and the widely varying periods of the visibility of the planets and other astronomical data. The *Almanac* is based in Boston, and here in New England we don't have to adjust its tables for time and location.

To equate the sun moving north from its position over the Tropic of Cancer with the changing ecliptic (sun's apparent path across the sky) never gave me pause until it affected areas of light and shadow on the ponds and garden. With the sun shining down over the south pond, the ducks in the north pond can revel in the shade

undetected. My little tree sparrows can hide in the dark rhododendron, only brought to attention because the flashy cardinal feeds near them.

As spring equinox approaches, and the sun's path is approaching midpoint, the bushes and the north pond will light up, and my favorite little hooded merganser who has stopped here some years will be apparent, if we are still on her itinerary. One year she brought a drake for a few days.

And so the Breakfast Club sightings are partly dependent on the specific spot on the forty-six degrees of my eastern horizon that launches the sun's apparent journey for the day. It's a shorter trip to sunset when the ecliptic is to our south. As the path moves north, the trip, and our daylight, grows longer.

Right now, we've gained almost half an hour from the nine hours and four minutes of the shortest day of the year. We cheer the coming of brighter days and warmer sun from a prosaic world. Our own 'where and when' determine the light and shadow in our lives. The sun is the constant.

Helios drives his chariot, the sustainer of light and life, as he has for eons. And we appreciate and adjust to the benefits and conditions of the eternal as we have the wit.

## PETITION

continued from pg 1

the other two are in the high school), Grimard said she was motivated to carry the petition out of concern for the cost to taxpayers of bringing the Montague Center School up to compliance with the Americans with Disabilities Act.

"Why should we put money into a building that needs a lot of work, when we have a building that is ready to go?" Grimard asked.

Speaking of the petition drive's goal she said, "If the vote passes and Montague Center closes, I don't think it would be wise to put all the elementary school children in Sheffield. We all want Hillcrest to stay open."

Whether a townwide referen-

dum could force the closure of a public school leased to the regional school district is a matter some have speculated about since the topic of a petition drive became known.

One Montague official, Mike Naughton, a member of the capital improvements committee, commenting on the possible outcome of a petition drive to get the voters of the town of Montague to weigh in on closing Montague Center School said, "The school committee is an independent political entity and not bound by voters in just one of the member towns."

The yellow flyers also contain a fact sheet, citing statistics on the cost of renovating Montague Center School compiled by Joyce Philips, a former school committee member. The fact sheet states:

"Montague Center construction estimates... for upgrades to bring the school up to code (plumbing, mechanical, electrical) were \$3.6 million. This estimate is 10 years old! What would be the cost today?"

At the January 9th school committee meeting, superintendent Sue Gee laid out a plan for expanding the grade span at Montague Center, in accordance with the school committee's vote, that included initiating the process of seeking Massachusetts School Building Association funds for a school building project at Montague Center School. In earlier meetings, Gee estimated renovations to bring the school into ADA compliance could cost more than \$330,000.



## MCTV Open House

**BY ANNE HARDING**  
**MONTAGUE** - It has been a little over a year since MCCI was awarded the Montague Public Access Cable television contract in December 2005. Much of our focus in the past year has been getting the studio functioning and streamlining the video setup at the Town Hall. At the same time, we've greatly

increased local programs. In celebration of an eventful year, MCTV is hosting a first anniversary Open House at 34 Second Street, Saturday, January 27th, beginning at 4 p.m.

The public is invited to visit the studio, find out about our free trainings, try out the cameras, sample some fine food and get to know the board of directors and staff of MCTV. At

the same time, we hope you'll consider joining the station and learn to use the equipment through our training series. Membership entitles you to borrow equipment to do your own shoots on the road. If you belong to an organization or group that hosts special events we'd love to get you on the air. Please call the studio for more information at 863-9200.

## MCTV Schedule

Channel 17: January 12 through January 18

Day	Time	Program	
Friday, January 19	7:00 am	Barton Cove Eagles	
	8:00 am	Montague Update: Lorraine York-Edberg	
	8:30 am	Montague Selectboard 1/8	
	10:30 am	Iraq War Vigil	
	11:00am	Family Friends	
	2:00 am	Barton Cove Eagles	
	6:00 pm	NASA Destination Tomorrow #2	
	6:30 pm	TFHS Week in Review	
	7:00 pm	GMRSD meeting 1/9	
	10:00 pm	Montague Update: Habitat for Humanity	
Saturday, January 20	7:00 am	Barton Cove Eagles	
	8:00 am	NASA Destination Tomorrow #2	
	8:30 am	TFHS Week in Review	
	9:00 am	GMRSD meeting 1/9	
	1:00 pm	Montague Update: Habitat for Humanity	
	2:00 pm	Barton Cove Eagles	
	6:00 pm	The Well Being: Growing A Green Community	
	7:00 pm	Montague Update: Dave Lovelace	
	8:00 pm	sustainable energy	
	9:00 pm	This is Montague: Rod & Gun	
10:30 pm	Mass Wilderness: Winter		
Sunday, January 21	7:00 am	Barton Cove Eagles	
	8:00 am	The Well Being: Growing A Green	
Monday, January 22	7:00 am	Barton Cove Eagles	
	8:00 am	Teachers At Sea	
	8:30 am	Source To Sea	
	9:00 am	TFHS Week in Review	
	9:30 am	On The Ridge: Coyote Hunting	
	10:00 am	Sawmill River Run	
	2:00 pm	Barton Cove Eagles	
	6:00 pm	Farmers Market Concert	
	7:00 pm	Montague Select Board Live	
	10:00 pm	Montague Update: David Detmold	
11:00 pm	The View and Vision Denmark		
Tuesday, January 23	7:00 am	Barton Cove Eagles	
	8:00 am	Farmers Market Concert: Stephanie Marshall	
	9:30 am	Montague Update: David Detmold	
	10:00 am	The View and Vision Denmark	
	2:00 pm	Barton Cove Eagles	
	Wednesday, January 24	6:00 pm	Iraq War Vigil
		7:00 pm	GMRSD Meeting Live
		10:00 pm	GED Connection #26
		10:30 pm	Villages of Montague
		7:00 am	Barton Cove Eagles
8:00 am		Iraq War Vigil	
8:30 am		GED Connection #26	
9:00 am		Villages of Montague	
10:30 am		The Cost of Freedom	
2:00 pm		Barton Cove Eagles	
6:30 pm	NASA Destination Tomorrow #2		
7:00 pm	MCTV Open Forum		
9:00 pm	The Well Being: Growing A Green Community		
10:00 pm	The Montague Music Train		
11:00 pm	The Prevailing Winds of Denmark		
Thursday, January 25	7:00 am	Barton Cove Eagles	
	8:00 am	NASA Destination Tomorrow #2	
	8:30 am	MCTV Open Forum	
	10:30 am	The Well Being: Growing A Green Community	
	11:30 am	The Montague Music Train	
	12:30 pm	The Prevailing Winds of Denmark	
	2:00 pm	Barton Cove Eagles	
	4:00 pm	Barton Cove Eagles	
	6:00 pm	MCTV Open Forum	
	8:00 pm	Montague Select Board 1/22	
11:00 pm	Montague Update: Josh Goldman		

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