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THE VOICE OF THE VILLAGES

JANUARY 22, 2009

Impressions:

Jubilation in the Nation Barack Obama's Inauguration

BY DAVID DETMOLD

TURNERS FALLS - You could feel it as soon as you walked into the room: the large open community room on the first floor of the Brick House, with the overstuffed sofas and armchairs filled with young people from the Four Winds School in Gill, glowing with anticipation, their eyes glued to the giant TV screen in front of them, where the pageant of the 44th presidential inauguration was playing live before them. The back of the room was filled with adults: carpenters, teachers, social workers, equally caught up in the moment. Many were crying openly as the ceremony unfolded.

Reverend Rick Warren of the Saddleback Church in Orange County, California gave the invocation, his anti-gay rhetoric left behind for the occasion, as he prayed, "Forgive us if we fight amongst ourselves and when we fail to treat our fellow human beings with the respect they deserve."

The crowd at the Brick House listened in silence to his remarks, then gave a rousing cheer as Senator Diane

Feinstein, (D-California) chair of the inauguration committee, introduced the First Lady of Soul, Aretha Franklin.

The odd juxtaposition of Warren, whose 20,000-member evangelical congregation was a major backer of the anti-gay marriage Proposition 8 referendum campaign, which passed in California the same day Obama was elected, and Feinstein, whose grief stricken face is seared into the consciousness of moviegoers who recently flocked to view Gus van Sant's biopic on San Francisco's 1970s gay rights champion Harvey Milk, was not lost on many in the audience. It was Feinstein who, as president of the board of supervisors in San Francisco on November 27th, 1978, during a time of backlash to groundbreaking equal rights legislation for gay and lesbian citizens, when the nation's first openly gay city official was assassinated, delivered the news to a stunned public, "Both mayor Moscone and supervisor Harvey Milk have been shot and killed."

On Tuesday, playing the role of M.C. for the inauguration of

the nation's first African American president, Feinstein handled the joyous responsibility with equal gravity.

But the millions gathered on the National Mall, like the 50 or so gathered in the Brick House in Turners Falls, held nothing back for solemnities in giving Aretha her propers as she totally reinterpreted "My Country 'Tis of Thee", injecting it with indelible soul and providing the old song with new reason to be considered our pre-eminent national anthem, rather than a perennial runner up. Who can sing the "Star-Spangled Banner," anyway?

The crowd applauded wildly again when Joe Biden took the vice presidential oath of office, with its strange injunction against "mental reservation or purpose of evasion." Couldn't they have settled for "wholeheartedly"? The image of a vice president with mental reservations conjures up memories of Thomas Eagleton, for some reason.

There is no such reservation in the presidential oath, which is short and sweet and set down in black and white in Article II,

Section One of the Constitution.

But before Obama ascended to the podium, the nation was treated to a musical interlude, courtesy of a truly stellar quartet: cellist Yo-Yo Ma, violinist Itzhak Perlman, pianist Gabriela Montero and clarinetist Anthony McGill, playing a composition by John Williams based on the old Shaker hymn, "Simple Gifts".

It was during this interlude, with its competing buoyant strains, alluding perhaps to the multitude of democratic influences that have carried the nation forward to this day, before resolving into melodious harmony, that many in the room began to let their deeper emotions show, as they stood and cried openly while the great musicians played.

Then Barack Obama took the stand, facing a man he voted against during his confirmation hearings for chief justice of the Supreme Court, John Roberts. But if Obama still felt Roberts tended to use his formidable legal skills "on behalf of the strong in opposition to the weak" he didn't seem to hold it against him, even when Roberts

stumbled in assisting the new president on the first lines of a very short oath.

First Roberts cut in on Obama as he tried to repeat the words, "I, Barack Hussein Obama," causing him to halt at I, Barack," before he recovered with "I, Barack Hussein Obama, do solemnly swear." Then, Roberts mangled the order of the succeeding phrase, "to faithfully execute the office of the president of the United States," which Roberts had: "that I will execute the office of President to the United States faithfully." Obama, detecting something amiss in that phrasing, followed Roberts' lead only as far as the word "execute" and then stopped, as the nation hung trembling.

But Roberts, reciting from memory, then repeated the phrase in proper sequence, as did Obama, who carried off the rest without a hitch: "and will to the best of my ability, preserve, protect and defend the Constitution of the United States."

And, with his hand on the Lincoln Bible, he added, as

see **OBAMA** page 8

Witness to Suffering: Photographs by Colin Finlay, at Hallmark Gallery 85



Egypt, 1996; among the Colin Finlay images on display at Gallery 85

BY ANN FEITELSON

TURNERS FALLS - The opening of the exhibit, "A Matter of Conscience," photographs by Colin Finlay at the Hallmark Museum of

Contemporary Photography on Saturday, was somber.

Visitors shed their wool sweaters and down coats at the door and looked in silence at horrifying images of naked,

emaciated people; decapitated skulls; child laborers; children scrounging in the trash; children blistered with AIDS.

Despair is evident here, in photographs of Haiti, Rwanda, Darfur, Romania, Bosnia, Bolivia, Bangladesh, Egypt, Northern Ireland. Finlay has circled the globe the equivalent of 27 times to "make a difference," he said at the opening, "in the lives of the people I'm photographing."

This exhibit is difficult to see, and to write about. We do not usually confront so many tragedies in one place. We do not usually see faces of such utter agony, such forsaken loneliness. We do not want to see these images. But we need to, to know the world, to remember the dignity of all people, and to access our capacity for empathy.

Like his subjects, Finlay has been held at gunpoint, gone

see **WITNESS** pg 6

Budget Clouds Gather

BY DAVID DETMOLD

MONTAGUE - The chair of the finance committee and the town administrator of Montague agree: this is going to be an extraordinarily difficult budget year.

Even as the nation as a whole takes courage from the positive message of the incoming administration — and the promise of an \$800 billion economic stimulus package in February — local budget makers like John Hanold and Frank Abbondanzio in Montague are grappling with the growing likelihood of budget cuts heading down the pike. And not only for the budget cycle about to begin for Fiscal 2010.

"My guess is we are looking at a 10% cut on lottery aid for the current budget year," said town administrator Abbondanzio on Tuesday. "We'll know that within a matter of weeks. The Governor has to file his budget by January

see **MONTAGUE** page 12

Work to Begin on G-M Bridge by Summer

BY DAVID DETMOLD

GILL - Two important announcements were made at Tuesday's meeting of the Gill selectboard. Construction will begin on the long-awaited Gill-Montague Bridge improvement project, starting as soon as May, but certainly by early summer. And Juanita (Bunny) Caldwell, who has been the director of the Gill-Montague Senior Center for almost as long (but not quite) as the bridge project has been on the drawing board, will be retiring at the end of June.

"When you get to be older than the seniors, the time has come," joked Caldwell, reached by phone on Tuesday at her office in the former Turners Falls Athletic Club on Fifth Street, now home to an array of programs for seniors from both towns. Caldwell has been senior

see **GILL** page 5

PET OF THE WEEK

Dixie Dog



Layla

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

MONTAGUE LIBRARY NEWS

Saturday Children's Program at the Carnegie Library

BY RUTH O'MARA
TURNERS FALLS - This Saturday, January 24th at 10:30 a.m., there will be a snow globe making workshop with children's programmer Ruth O'Mara at the Carnegie Library in Turners Falls. Children of all ages can create a wintry scene out of a small jar, glitter, small figurines, and their imaginations! This is a free program. Parents and other caregivers are welcome to come and help create a special snow globe. For more information, contact Ruth O'Mara 863-3214 at the Carnegie Library, 201 Avenue A, Turners Falls.

BY LINDA HICKMAN
TURNERS FALLS - The Family Dance Fundraiser for the Montague Public Libraries' Music and Movement program on Sunday, January 20th was very successful. On the stage

were Laurie Davidson and Tom Carroll, followed by Michael Nix and Linda Hickman, Donna Lee and Clark Honeywell, and Stephanie Marshall. Children danced until exhausted, or until the crowd proved to be too much for them. At the far end from the music, children made musical shakers and colored winter scenes. Enough money was raised to fund the program through June. Many thanks to the Family Network which has funded the weekly series for the last eight years, the Friends of the Montague Public Libraries for matching the donations, the Rendezvous for hosting the benefit, the performers who donated their time and talent, everyone who attended, the volunteers, Rist Insurance, Greenfield Farmers Cooperative Exchange, Peaceful Palm Studio, DiPaolo's, Hope and Olive, China Gourmet, the Monkey



Guest Chefs at Winslow Wentworth House: ServiceNet representatives made a beautiful Inauguration Day lunch for seniors at the Winslow Wentworth House in Turners Falls on January 20, (L to R): Kathy Renaud, RN, Ellie Harris, Case Worker and Shelter/Housing Director, and Joe Renaud. Would you like to guest chef? Contact Margo Townley, Winslow Wentworth House manager, at 413-773-5555 or 978-544-2259 or info@fcbcc.org.

Tree and the Turning Point Salon.

Most of all, thank you to all of the Music and Movement fans who have made the program incredibly successful!



It was standing and sitting room only at the Music and Movement benefit at the Rendezvous.

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ERVING LIBRARY NEWS

New Library Hours

BY BARBARA FRIEDMAN
ERVINGSIDE - Starting in December, I included a survey in the *Around Town* newsletter to poll library users in Erving about their preferences for library hours. One of the survey comments summed up all of the others: "Give us a more consistent weekday schedule and more weekend hours."

Although we would like to be open every day, all day, as one person suggested, the budget won't allow. However, we did find a way to squeeze in a few more hours. The hours the library will be open will increase from 17 to 21, starting February 1st.

Accordingly, the trustees and staff are happy to announce the new hours for the Erving Public Library: Sunday, 1-4 p.m., Monday, 1-7 p.m., Wednesday,

10-4 p.m., and Thursday, 1-7 p.m.

Why did we choose these hours? The new hours are more consistent, with openings at 10 a.m. or 1 p.m., and closing times either at 4 p.m. or 7 p.m.

Because we will now have Sunday hours, we offer a time for library patrons from neighboring towns to easily access our facility. None of the neighboring small town libraries are open on Sunday. Since the Erving Library participates in the C/W MARS system, and all of our patrons can use other libraries, we hope that Erving residents will take advantage of Saturday hours offered at other libraries, and we hope residents of neighboring towns will enjoy using the Erving Library on Sundays.

I'm also excited to be partici-

pating in a promoting the author talk to be held at the Erving Elementary School. Award winning author Kathleen Duble will be speaking to classes on Tuesday, January 27th. Contact Erving Elementary School librarian Jane Urban for further details. The library is happy to reserve any of Duble's books.

The Erving Library will also be participating in the "On the Same Page" reading and discussion groups that will be held throughout Franklin County Libraries next month. The book to read is *The Ha-Ha* by Dave King.

Don't be fooled by the title, it is not a funny book, but reviewers say it is an astonishingly hopeful book because the main character, a Vietnam veteran, unable to speak and barely able

to read, must overcome not only handicaps but addiction to be able to care for his girlfriend's son after her death. It should provide for a great group discussion, and there will be many opportunities to hold them at area libraries during February.

Please reserve the book online by logging in with your library card number at wmars.cwmars.org/search. If you would prefer, give us a call at the Erving Library, 978-423-3348 and we will reserve a copy for you, or send us an email at ervinglibrary@netscape.net

Erving residents will see more library news in the *Around Town* newsletter, an updated library website coming soon, and in future issues of the *Montague Reporter*.

SENIOR CENTER ACTIVITIES -- Jan. 26th to 30th

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

Monday, 26th
 10 a.m. Senior Aerobics.
 11 a.m. Easy Aerobics
 Tuesday, 27th
 9:00 a.m. Walking Club.
 Weather permitting
 1:00 p.m. Canasta
 Wednesday, 28th
 10:00 a.m Senior Aerobics
 12:45 p.m. Bingo

Thursday, 29th
 1:00 p.m. Pitch
 Friday, 30th
 10:00 a.m. Senior Aerobics
 11:00 a.m. Easy Aerobics
 AARP Tax-Aide volunteers will be providing free tax return preparation for Montague and Gill Seniors at Montague Senior Center. Please call to make an appointment. A few openings are still available on March 24. AARP Tax-Aide volunteers work in conjunction with the IRS to bring you this service. If filing a joint return, both spouses should attend the appointment unless impossible. Call the center for details.

ERVING Senior Center, 18 Pleasant St., Ervingside (Old Center School, 1st Floor), is open Monday through Friday from 9 a.m. to 2 p.m. for activities and congregate meals. For information and reservations call Polly Kiely, Senior Center Director at 413-423-3308.

Lunch daily at 11:30 a.m. with reservations a day in advance by 11:00 a.m. Transportation can be provided for meals, Thursday shopping, or medical necessity by calling Polly Kiely at 413-423-3308.

Monday, 26th
 9 a.m. Exercise
 12 Noon Pitch
 Tuesday, 27th
 9 a.m. Aerobics
 12:30 p.m. Painting
 Wednesday, 28th
 8:45 a.m. Line Dancing
 12 Noon Bingo
 Thursday, 29th
 9:00 a.m. Aerobics.
 Friday 30th
 9 a.m. Bowling
 11:30 a.m. Lunch: Pot-Luck
 12:30 p.m. Embroidery

WENDELL Senior Center is located at 2 Lockes Village Road. Kathy Swaim is the director: (978) 544-2020.

Great Falls Middle School
Students of the Week
Grade 6
 Samantha Currier
Grade 7
 Lauren Grimard
Grade 8
 Andy Peters
 Katie Brunell

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WENDELL LIBRARY NEWS

Printmaking with Potato Blocks with Potato Print Artist Helen Haddad

BY ROSIE HEIDKAMP

WENDELL - On Saturday, January 31st, from 10 a.m. to noon, the Wendell Free Library will hold a free program for adults and teens on Printmaking with Potato Blocks, with potato print artist Helen Haddad. The program will begin with a Gallery Talk, introducing the types of printmaking employed in Haddad's work, which is currently on display in the library's Herrick Room.

A demonstration showing exactly how the prints are created, from start to finish, will follow.

As time and numbers permit, participants may then try making a print (materials provided).

"My art involves an unusual printing block - the lowly potato," said Haddad. "I have explored the medium of potato

printing far beyond the kindergarten stage, perhaps now approaching the Ph.D. level."

Haddad's largest print to date is of a seven foot long dragon installed in the new library's children's room. While Haddad's potato printing techniques are self-taught, she also studied art at Smith College and at the Boston Museum of Fine Arts.

A follow up workshop, also free, devoted entirely to making prints is scheduled for Saturday, February 28th, 10 a.m. - noon at the library. Enrollment for the February workshop will be limited to 15 participants and pre-registration is required. Please call 978-544-3559, or stop by the library

The Potato Block Print Exhibit, by Helen Haddad will be on display in the library's



Herrick Room until the end of February, and is available for viewing during library hours: Tuesday 3 - 6 p.m., Wednesday 10 a.m. - 8 p.m., and Saturday 9:30 a.m. - 3:30 p.m.

Court Dorsey Receives Living the Dream Award

BY ELLEN BLANCHETTE GREENFIELD - Court Dorsey, of Wendell, was given the "Living the Dream" award for his work in the community and his commitment to teaching in the Peace and Social Justice program at GCC. Dorsey is an actor, musician, mediator and teacher.

the Seabrook nuclear power plant in the mid-70s. His original community theater works, like the 1984 *Cabaret* at the Greenfield YMCA, his visionary



Court Dorsey, accepting his award

Dorsey has worked with prisoners and ex-cons in the Performance Project, bringing their stories to life on stage in words and sound and motion. He has worked with students at the Franklin County Tech School to confront difficult issues in their community, like drug and alcohol abuse, through theater. He has worked with grade school students throughout the county to turn their visions into musical theater. He has worked with the mayor of Holyoke to train street mediators in that racially diverse city. He has been a tireless activist for peace and social justice since his first foray to New England from native DeKalb, IL, where he was a musical mainstay of Juicy John Pinks, before heading east to help coordinate the Clamshell Alliance's early occupations of the site of

Ubu Roi, not to mention his tour de force solo interpretation of Franz Kafka's *the Burrow*, are still talked about in the bars and boardrooms of the county.

Dorsey will appear in a starring role next Thursday at 6:00 p.m. at the *Montague Reporter* benefit at the Rendezvous, along with Suzy Polucci and friends, in the original one act *the Phantom of the Strathmore*.

At the Martin Luther King event at GCC, he regaled the audience with songs and stories of freedom and struggle, accompanied by his banjo.

You Can Help Shut Down Vermont Yankee

Come meet Bob Stannard, 'the People's Lobbyist' for the Citizens Awareness Network. Hear about his work in the Vermont statehouse, and how we can become a nuclear-free community.

Bring your questions, your energy, and your friends. The meeting will take place Sunday, January 25th, from 5:30 - 8:30 p.m. Food and live music will be provided, at Robin Conley's home, 21 Old Bernardston Road, Northfield. Call: 413-498-2881 for more information. Take the main entrance to Pioneer Valley High School, then take first right, second house on right.

Also, Charles Neville and Friends will perform a benefit concert for CAN that afternoon, at the Butterfly Restaurant Route 2 in Hadley, at 2:30 p.m.

Gill Gourmet Recovering

SPRINGFIELD - The Gill Gourmet is recovering well, following quadruple bypass surgery last Thursday at

Baystate Medical in Springfield, said Joseph A. Parzych's son Joseph M. Parzych, also of Gill. Never content to do anything halfway, Joe said, his dad wound up having six veins replaced, instead of four.

Daily updates from the hospital revealed excellent post-op progress. We learned, "He was joking around on Friday. He's out of ICU." By Monday morning, "He is in very good spirits, and charming the nurses."

The Gill Gourmet will be taking a few weeks in rehab before he returns to his duties sautéing lettuce, preparing square meatballs, and offering recipes for 'Sinfully Delicious Strawberry-Rhubarb Cheesecake.'

A little more Splenda and a little less sin might be just the ticket now, Joe.

Get well cards and fan mail can be directed to: Joseph Parzych, 180 Main Road, Gill, 01354.

We still have not learned whether Joe wore his hardhat into the operating room, but as soon as we hear, we'll let you know.

No Waiting List for Home Energy Audits

Could your home use more insulation or other energy efficiency improvements? Now is a great time to take advantage of generous incentives! If your home is served by National Grid, Western Massachusetts Electric Company, or Berkshire Gas, your cost to insulate or seal your home through the MassSAVE program could be reduced by 75% (up to \$2000)! Call 1-866-527-7283 to speak to a MassSAVE representative about scheduling a free energy audit and getting an insulation proposal. CET provides most of the MassSAVE energy services in Western Massachusetts. Whether energy costs are high or low, buildings are responsible for almost 50% of greenhouse gas emissions. An energy efficient home saves money and helps the environment.

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Corrections:

In last week's write-up about the public hearing on the Tomahawk Chop at TFHS (*MR VII: Community Dialogue Seeks Common Ground on 'the Chop'*) the captain of the cheer-leading team was misidentified. Her name is Sarah Underwood. We apologize for that error.

Also, Stacey Langknecht was incorrectly identified as a PTO member. She is a PTO member at the middle school, but at the high school she is a member of the band boosters. Again, our apologies.

Happy Birthday to Boysen Hodgson, this week, from all his old and younger Gillbilly Friends!

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Best Education We Can Afford

BY MIKE NAUGHTON

MILLERS FALLS - Last week (*MR, VII #15, Public Education Needed Now More than Ever*), Gill-Montague school committee member Joyce Phillips described how she listened to Montague town meeting voters argue that the district's budget assessments are not sustainable and heard only "punishment, insults, and damaging rhetoric." In response, she speculated, "We seem to have forgotten that there is a connection between public education and the well-being of our world," and invited "all of us to re-examine the value of public education."

That's like responding to someone who is worried about the high cost of heating oil by suggesting that they seem to have forgotten the connection between burning fuel and staying warm, and inviting them to re-examine the value of central heating. Good advice, I suppose — how many of us can say we have truly examined the value of either central heating or public education? — but ultimately she misses the point.

The problem is not that we don't value public education; the problem is that we don't see how the town can continue to pay the assessments requested by the school committee. That

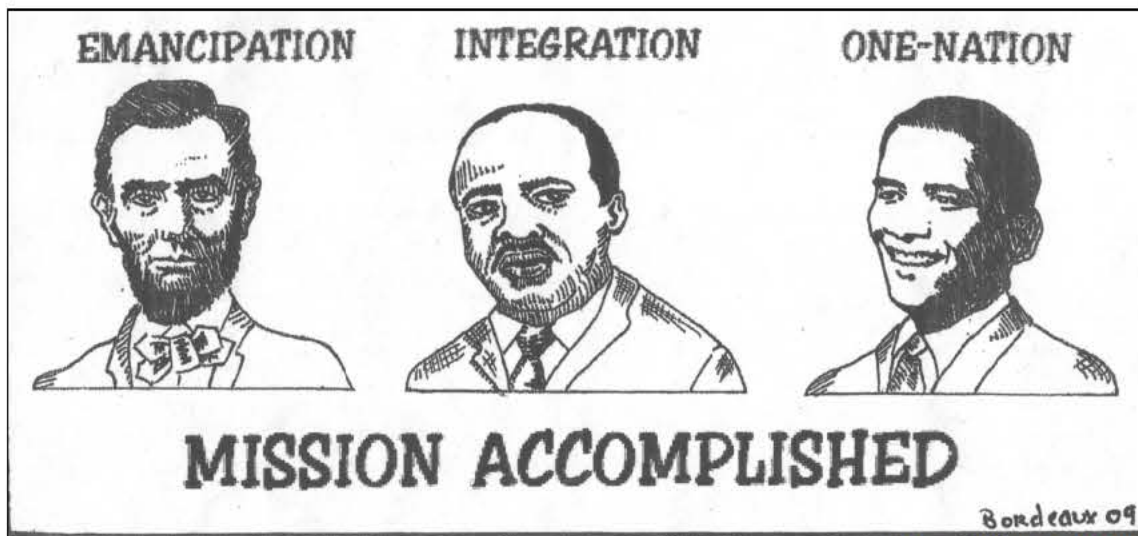
is a crucial distinction, though some school committee members still seem unable to grasp it. Given the number of times it has been explained, one wonders at their continued failure.

Montague finance committee chair John Hanold has commented that, "We want to provide the best education we can afford." Too often, the school committee seems to stop at the word "can," apparently believing that "afford" is somebody else's problem. This is the strategy that led to the Department of Elementary and Secondary Education's takeover of the district this year, and it's time for it to stop.

School committee members have every right — in fact, they have a responsibility — to lobby for the best public education system they can. But their responsibilities don't end there. They also have a duty to seriously consider how much money is really available, and to tailor their requests — and our school system — so as to make them affordable to the member towns.

It's high time they started taking that duty seriously.

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



DENIS BORDEAUX CARTOON

LETTERS TO THE EDITOR

Challenges are an Opportunity for Growth

Now that President Barack Obama has been inaugurated, it is perhaps time for Americans to look for ways to support a man that has inherited from his predecessor a number of economic, political and societal challenges. I have seen clips of President Kennedy, exhorting a 1960s America to "Ask not what your country can do for you, ask what you can do for your country." I might be bold enough to ask what we can do for each other, as well.

As individuals, we have much in common with our youthful, newly elected leader. While Obama faces the daunting task of a federal deficit run amok, millions among us have suffered layoffs, unemployment, or unforeseen debt as a result of an increase in the cost of living. Some of us were hit by all the aforementioned economic repercussions.

Those that have been lucky enough to retain work may have dealt with a new contract, through a union, that offered much less this time around. Large, medium, and small family businesses have shut their doors across Franklin County as the cost of staying in business became prohibitive.

Obama will most likely decide on the fate of the Big Three automakers, whether they will stay solvent or close their doors.

Remember, as each door closes, another opens. Foremost, we must remain open in our hearts, and our minds. We must remain open to the possibility of solution, rather than impasse. The door to our hearts and minds is our final refuge, but it is time we open that refuge and invite each other in, without fear. It is our soul that demands our mind remain open to new solutions for our problems.

During the next few years, in order to meet the challenges facing us, may we all grow individually and collectively.

-Timothy Adams
Montague City

Heartfelt Thanks

Late last fall, an article appeared in the *Montague Reporter* that told of Ricky, our grandson, who is successfully recovering from a bone marrow transplant as a result of childhood leukemia. The Richard Koscinski Leukemia Fund, established at the Savings Bank of Walpole, 84 Marlboro Street, Keene, NH, received several generous donations that will help defray the mounting costs not covered by insurance. Personal thanks have been mailed, but to those who donated anonymously we send this message to you as well. On behalf of the Richard Koscinski Leukemia Fund, we, his family, thank you for your care and compassion along with your donation. Your generosity in this time of need is most helpful and greatly appreciated. Thank you for touching our lives in an extraordinarily meaningful way. Heartfelt thanks from Ricky's grandparents.

- David and Nancy Stone
Keene, NH

GREAT FALLS GEOWALK GOES SELF-GUIDED

BY STEVE WINTERS

TURNERS FALLS - Ever wonder what all those people are doing walking around Turners Falls looking at rocks? As those of you who have attended one of my Great Falls geology walking tours (or "geowalks") know, Turners Falls has some of the most interesting geology of the Pioneer Valley — most of it is visible from sidewalks, footpaths, and bike paths. And unless you stop to look, and maybe talk about what you see, you'll never notice the wonder beneath our feet.

For the past three years, I've been leading geowalks up and down the streets of Turners Falls looking to glimpse the geologic history that's captured, like snapshots, in the rocks and stones of the village. Now, thanks to the Turners Falls RiverCulture project, and their co-sponsors: the Massachusetts Cultural Council, the town of Montague, Western Massa-

chusetts Electric Company, Hillside Plastics, Greenfield Savings Bank, and Fostering the Arts and Culture Partnership, the Great Falls Geowalk has gone self-guided.

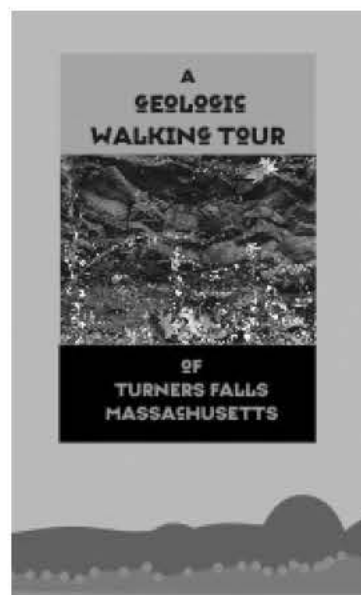
By next week, copies of the 18-page booklet *A Geologic Walking Tour of Turners Falls* will be available at the Great Falls Discovery Center, the Carnegie Library, town hall, and other downtown venues — free for the taking.

In a colorful and attractive format designed by local artist Nina Rossi, *A Geologic Walking Tour of Turners Falls* provides short but complete descriptions of ten of my favorite geologic stops in the village, including the "River Rock Overlook" at the fish ladder, the glacially polished sandstones at Our Lady of Czestochowa church on K Street, and the world famous mudballs at Unity Park.

What better way to learn about the fascinating geologic history of our village, town, and valley than by walking the sidewalks and bike paths of Turners Falls. Get your free copy and, come spring, make the tour.

For more information on the Turners Falls RiverCulture Project, please visit www.turnersfallsriverculture.org.

Steve Winters is a hydrogeologist and earth science educator, who teaches geology at Quinsigamond Community College in Worcester and Holyoke Community College. He lives in Turners Falls. Reach him at science_matters@yahoo.com.



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BY DON CLEGG

TURNERS FALLS

Subscribers and frequent newsstand purchasers of the *Montague Reporter* may not realize that in addition to local paper routes, each week we mail about 210 newspapers all around the country. Before I go into details of this fine-tuned operation, let me say we actually do mail newspapers locally, but we also have many out of state subscribers as far away as Seattle and even up into Canada. This week, we added one to Alaska. Hello, Pam Collier, how is the weather up there?

Five employees are involved in this mailing operation, and they are David Detmold, who doubles as editor and janitor, Suzette Snow-Cobb, who manages circulation when she is not busy managing the Franklin Community Food Coops, Rick Nickles, a former denizen of the Combat Zone who brings a Brahmin's *soigné* manner to our proceedings, the indomitable Lyn Clark and myself. Our particular duties start on Thursday mornings.

We don't follow the same procedures as other newspapers that are mailed out around the country, such as the *New York Times*, the *Wall Street Journal* or the *Washington Post*. Ours more resemble those of Benjamin Franklin's *Pennsylvania Gazette*.

Snow-Cobb and Nickles meet over at the *Reporter* office, a

hastily converted torture chamber where the kindly Dr. Charron once practiced a primitive form of dentistry, *sans* anesthesia. Many of his tools still lie carelessly about, in case any of the employees flag in their ardor for the task. At about 10:00 a.m., we start the drill: cutting, stamping and posting.

The first step is to cut a precisely sized piece of brown wrapping paper from a two-foot roll. The precise size varies from 12" to 18" long and 3" to 8" inches wide. Anybody that gets the newspaper in the mail knows this to be true. We use carefully calibrated garden shears to accomplish this feat of mass production.

These 210 pieces of brown paper are then rubber stamped with the indecipherable Montague Reporter return address, stickered with a mass mailing stamp, and labeled with subscribers' addresses, or reasonable facsimiles thereof. That little brown piece of paper has been handled four times on Thursday mornings, and Snow-Cobb and Nickles have spent about 90 minutes completing the work. If any of the upstairs cats have wandered into the room, it can take even longer.

It is now about 1:00 p.m. and we, the afternoon work crew, hope that Detmold is on his way up to Brattleboro, VT in his antique Jetta to pick up the newspaper, rather than following up leads at the Rendezvous.

Contrary to rumor, we don't print the paper in the basement of 58 Fourth Street. We print it in the basement of the *Brattleboro Reformer*, when they have nothing better to do.

Now Clark, Nickles, and I wait patiently for the tailpipe explosions of Detmold's ancient chariot — which runs on a combination of grass clippings and Moxie — to round the corner of Fourth and rumble to a halt outside the door, disturbing the peacefully sleeping pigeons who make the path from car to basement door treacherous for the uninitiated. We hope we hear the distant sound of his faulty exhaust system by 3:00 p.m., because the paper has to be dropped off at the Turners Falls Post Office by 4:30 to meet the afternoon deadline.

Can't you feel the pressure and stress building? Nickles pares his nails with a pearl handled knife while Clark tries to stay calm, separating all those stamped and carefully cut pieces of brown wrapping paper — maybe we should now refer to them as mailing wrappers — into zip code areas. When we bring the papers over to the post office they must be in their appropriate mailing bin. There are six different categories. Each of these towns goes into a separate bin: Turners Falls, Greenfield, Northfield, Montague Center, Agawam, Seattle. But which bin does Lake Pleasant go into? You

need to be a psychic.

While Clark is deftly arranging the mailing wrappers, (the fifth time the mailers have been handled) I am filling out the postal forms, figuring out this week's cost for mailing the paper, and beating Nickles one handed at canasta, all at the same time. Depending on where we mail each newspaper to, there is a different cost associated, and the total comes out differently from week to week, depending on the fierceness of Nickle's concentration on the game. After we figure the cost, a check is made out to the post office, who are frequently the beneficiaries of a particularly canny play by my opponent.

At about this time, Detmold descends the stairs with stacks of newspaper under an umbrella, and Nickles begins his precision folding of the paper into neat little thirds, to fit within those precise wrappers he cut earlier in the day. I start to wrap the mailers around the papers like a whirligig in a gale force wind, one eye on the clock, the other on Nickles, who is dangerous when bored. I tape both the inside and outside of the wrapper to secure it both to the newspaper (we have received complaints from Utah where subscribers say the occasional piece of brown paper arrives with their name on it, but no newspaper inside) and to itself, which is the sixth and final handling, in our office, anyway.

We only buy good tape for this chore. Detmold, in a fit of habitual parsimony, bought the cheap stuff one time and we haven't let him forget it.

While I am wrapping the paper, I usually let Nickles know how much I appreciate the fine job he has done in providing me so many various sizes of mailers to deal with. We then tuck the newspapers neatly into their appropriate bins, with pitchforks, and seal each by zip code area. When all is completed, the bins of newspapers are brought over to the post office, usually in a Food City shopping cart, which one of us has conveniently left just outside the *Montague Reporter* door the night before.

This afternoon operation normally last no longer than 90 minutes, but it is one of my most enjoyable times of the week. I have been doing this for almost three years and I would never want to give it up. The conversations we have are sometimes stimulating, but more frequently quite funny. So, if you are ever free on a Thursday afternoon and want to watch this fine tuned operation go off like clockwork, then stop by and lend a hand. Or better yet, go to the "Banish Winter Fundraiser" for the *Montague Reporter* on Thursday, Jan 29th from 5:00 to 9:00 p.m. at the Rendezvous, 78 Third St. Turners Falls.

We'll use the proceeds to buy more Scotch... tape.

Montague Democrats to hold State Convention Delegate Caucus February 2

BY JAY DIPUCCHIO

MONTAGUE - Registered Democrats in Montague will hold a caucus at The Rendezvous, 78 Third Street, Turners Falls at 6:30 p.m., Monday, February 2nd, to elect five delegates and three alternates to the Massachusetts Democratic Convention, to be held Saturday, June 6th, at the MassMutual Center in Springfield.

David Plouffe, President Obama's campaign manager, is the keynote speaker and the state Democratic platform is the subject of the convention.

The local caucus is a meeting open to all Democrats registered in Montague by December 31st, 2008. Registered attendees are eligible to vote and run for one of the five openings available to represent Montague Democrats

at the state convention. Delegates must be divided equally among men and women. Candidates must consent to nomination in writing. Candidates may make a one-minute statement to the meeting and may distribute materials.

This is a very straight forward and transparent process any registered Democrat may participate in, or just come to watch.

There will also be a brief meeting of the Democratic Town Committee immediately following the caucus that any registered Democrat may attend. The meeting place is handicapped accessible.

For info contact Democratic Town Committee chair Jay DiPucchio, 863-8656 or visit the party website at www.mass-dems.org

Thomas Cauley Remembered

Last week brought the passing of Thomas Cauley, a most remarkable man who has been the director of the Beacon Men's Recovery House for most of the last 20 years. I, like many others, assumed he was a permanent fixture there, and didn't stay in touch enough to know that he was ill.

Tom would hold court almost every day, with his glasses sliding down his nose, and he always had time in his wonderful Southie brogue to ask, "So what's up?"

He was an affable, loveable guy who took his and our sobriety very seriously. He helped hundreds of people, with his wit and sense of humor, to overcome their frustrations with trying to stay sober.

I used to call Beacon House 'Uncle Tom's Cabin', and he was a real Dutch Uncle to me. He was never one to pull any

punches. It took at least two tours to get me through the program. Usually three strikes and you were out, but Tom's heart, as big as a mountain, might make a rare exception.

A couple of years ago I gave Tommy John Grisham's book, *The Street Lawyer*, and told him I thought he was the real street advocate for the character in the book. He was tough, but always fair. I don't think the new men's and women's houses across from the hospital could have been built without his help.

All too often, when a great human being leaves us, we tend to forget just how special their influence was. But his legacy will live on through the Beacon Programs, and in all of us he mentored. He will be sadly missed.

-Gregg 'Hollywood' Williams
Turners Falls

Cartoonists and Illustrators Wanted

If you would like to apply your graphic skills to some editorial cartooning for your local community newspaper, please send a sample of your work to the *Montague Reporter* at 58 4th Street, Turners Falls, MA 01376, or to: reporter@montaguema.net. We are happy to receive original cartoons, or to suggest a topic for illustrators to draw. For more information, call 413-863-8666.

MLK Day Food Drive

TURNERS FALLS - Nina Rossi writes to inform us that the Central Street and Prospect Street neighborhood of Turners Falls held a very successful food drive and collected over 20 bags of groceries for the Franklin Area Survival Center Food Pantry on Martin Luther King Jr. Day, as a community service project. Thanks to everyone who contributed.

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WITNESS from pg 1

without food, been surrounded by death, baffled, attacked, beseeched. On the walls of the gallery, his words explain what sustains his effort:

“My sacrifice has been worth every hardship I have endured on the road. For me, the difficulty has not been in the creation of the images themselves, but rather, it is that I have not done enough for the people I have photographed. I feel they trusted me with their lives, and that it is my responsibility to tell the story of their lives.”

Moving stories are recounted of the people Finlay met in extremis: a boy whose father killed a man who had assaulted his wife the night before Finlay met him. A woman whose husband just died. A man whose three children died, who said to Finlay, “Please tell the world that we are the ones who are suffering.” Fragments of Finlay’s own biography; breakups, dead-end careers abandoned, stabs at explaining the attraction of violence, of laying down your life for strangers.

We can hope that the photographs are redemptive, that

compassion has been raised, along with money. Money has been raised — some, anyway. Finlay’s statement on the wall explains: “Recently, at a private fundraiser in Malibu, an anonymous donor was so moved by the images that they wrote a check for a million dollars. That is the greatest accomplishment of my life.”

Human Rights Watch raised \$60,000 auctioning one of Finlay’s photographs.

Museum curator Paul Turnbull said Finlay is being knighted this week for his work photographing some of the bleakest corners of the globe. He has worked under the auspices of the International Medical Corps, a global nonprofit organization dedicated to saving lives and relieving suffering through health care training and relief and development programs; Doctors Without Borders; and Proof: Media for Social Justice, a nonprofit that encourages social change through the use of photography; and many other non-profit foundations.

When the images become more than you can bear, when you give up trying to understand how anyone can witness all this

suffering, and walk away, when you no longer understand anything, when you want to walk away, but can’t, you can breathe somewhat more easily on the other side of the gallery, where, under the heading Journeymen, Finlay documents the passing of trades from fathers to sons. He pays tribute to his father’s, grandfather’s, and great-grandfather’s trade: steam engine engineers.

On the wall, his words, again: “I was the first in countless generations to break away from the tradition, the idea, that a son is to follow in the footsteps of his father. In searching through my family’s documents, I found a small black and white image taken of my grandfather in 1922. He was the first steam train engineer to run the trains from Edinburgh down to London and this one photograph became the inspiration for the entire project. I traveled the world over, photographing these disappearing father — son traditions. I made images of the last steam trains in the United States, the last days of the barefoot rickshaw wallahs in the City of Joy in Calcutta, the gauchos on the pampas in Argentina and many others.”

At the artist’s talk on Saturday evening, with a full audience in the airplane-like seats, and student photographers snapping

pictures of each other before the talk, Finlay showed another group of wrenching photographs documenting environmental change and devastation in Appalachia, Antarctica, Iceland, Mexico, and Canada. He led listeners to connect the dots between environmental change and human catastrophe: changes in temperature and rainfall cause famine elsewhere; industrial pollution brings poisoned fish. He warned there will be no edible fish left in the oceans by 2030.

“All our futures are at stake.” He attempted to conclude the talk on a sunny note, with pictures of personable Alaskan grizzly bears, telling of his “joy and ecstasy” in making portraits of these “graceful extraordinary animals. They are connected to each one of us.” They were

lovely. All his photographs are beautiful — that’s easy to forget in the emotional storm they raise.

Questions from the audience drew him into shop talk — the intimacy of 24 millimeter lenses, for example, black-and-white versus color — but the conversation is swept back to tsunamis of censorship, military leadership, inflation, illness.

He concluded with a few rays of hope about “solar technologies coming with hope for our futures.”

Finlay said, “The photographs are not about me; they are about the people I photograph, what they trust in me. I will continue to make a difference. That’s my calling; that’s my charge.”



Colin Finlay: Kigali, Rwanda, 1994

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GILL from pg 1

center director since 1997.

“My immediate predecessor was Paul Oldstrom, but he was only here for three months,” said Caldwell. “Before him was Bob Stowe, he had it for three years, and before him was Polly Sicard, for many years.”

Caldwell recalled she had initially withdrawn her name from consideration for the post, after interviewing for it, but a member of the Montague council on aging called her back in June of that year, when Oldstrom stepped down as director, to see if she would reconsider.

“I was substitute teaching at

the time,” Caldwell recalled. “I told them I would do it for two months, and see how I liked it.” She’s been there ever since.

“The seniors in these towns are very, very nice, and I really enjoyed working with them. I had wonderful support. It’s really been a good twelve years,” Caldwell said.

“We have started a lot of new programs: the senior aerobics class has tripled in size, and the foot clinic has doubled in attendance. We are doing a lot more of the one-shot educational programs, like tax assistance through AARP, or this week, fall prevention with the visiting nurse association. “We have a varied program.”

Caldwell said some seniors enjoy bingo at the senior center, others prefer the exercise classes, others sign up to take educational trips.

“We usually fill a bus, every month to six weeks. I went on the one we did down to Plymouth, where we learned how cranberries are grown, and how they are processed. I found that very interesting.”

Caldwell is looking forward to an active retirement. “I’ll be coming back for the exercise classes, and coming back for the trips, and in between times I’ll be babysitting for my grandchildren, going to some of my husband’s Navy reunions in

see GILL page 12

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The Inauguration at Turners Falls High School

BY JOSHUA GAMMON

TURNERS FALLS - "The world is watching," heralded Senator Dianne Feinstein, during her opening speech of the inauguration ceremony for the 44th president of the United States. "This morning will be remembered as a turning point in America."

Indeed the world was watching, and the students of Turners Falls High School were lucky enough to join them. Gathered in the auditorium, the students watched the ceremony on the school's large projection screen, viewing history in the making.

Students watched silently as the ceremony began to take shape, from the opening by Feinstein, to the singing of "My Country 'Tis of Thee" by Aretha Franklin, and even through the prayer of Dr. Rick Warren.

When they called for the men and women in Washington D.C.

to rise for the swearing in of Vice President Joseph Biden, the crowds of students were unsure what to do, but a few brave souls stood, and they were able to coax the entire student body and faculty to their feet in respect. A few cheers went up when Vice President Biden bellowed out the final "So help me God," as the weight of the moment hit home for some. But the full realization wouldn't come for most until a few minutes later.

The call finally rang out for the swearing in of President Barack H. Obama, and the school, already well rehearsed, quickly rose to their feet awaiting the new president's oath of office. The room was silent as every student and teacher carefully listened to the oath our president was taking, and when he uttered those last words the auditorium exploded with cheers and applause as the TFHS community welcomed in our

44th president of the United States of America.

Everyone intently listened to President Obama's speech, soaking up every phrase and nuance of this monumental event. As his speech came to a close, students were again ushered into their normal routines, but not without reacting to the history that had just unfolded before their very eyes.

"He gives us hope," Kelly Cardaropoli exclaimed after the ceremony. She echoed the words and thoughts of so many others throughout the nation as we look to our new leader for guidance and inspiration.

Sam Colton found a populist connection between President Obama and President Andrew Jackson, adding, "I hope he turns out the same [as Jackson]."

Many students also commented on the dramatic

effect President Obama's inauguration has had for black Americans. "One small step for a man, one giant leap for black

new vice president's traits, Boisvert concluded, is that Biden, "speaks his mind."

The morning proved especially moving for many students and faculty at the high school. Many expressed praise and excitement about the future, as well as the new hope ushered in by our new



men," Addison Ricketts solemnly voiced, altering the famous Neil Armstrong quote. Maghen Samal agreed, and equally noted the significance of the event, "It is a miracle that we finally have an African-American President. Martin Luther King Jr.'s dream has finally come true."

Much attention circled around President Obama, but Jordan Boisvert optimistically spoke of Biden, "Joe Biden really moved me," Boisvert stated, "I'm excited to see more of him because I connect with him better." The most admirable of the

President. "America has risen up and been united by a president who will be remembered for all of time," Shamari Kelly sincerely pronounced.

Senior Evan Brusco seemed to sum up the feelings of the morning with his statement: "January 20th, 2009 will forever be remembered as a great day in American history. I and many others are so proud to see how far this great nation has come since our founding, so long ago."

Joshua Gammon is a senior at Turners Falls High School.

Sheffield Says: "Yes, We Can!"

BY BRIDGET SWEET

TURNERS FALLS - On Tuesday, Sheffield students were able to eat lunch and view the inauguration of Barack Obama in their classrooms. After recess, they attended their very own Inaugural Ball in the gymnasium.

Principal Elizabeth Musgrave made American Flag decorated cakes for each class, and had cookies and ginger ale for the students to toast the new president with. Several students from each grade read aloud their own toast to the new president. Akeeva, Alexxis, Ivy and Richard of Grade 5 wrote:

"In this great moment in time that will be recorded in History, Barack Obama has become the

first African-American president in these United States.

We offer this toast in his honor.

We offer him our best wishes for a lot of very happy and wonderful years as president.

We hope you and your family are safe and well during your time being president of the United States of America.

We offer hopes and dreams for all our world's nations to come together in Peace.

We, the 5th grade of Sheffield School, gratefully offer this toast to President Barack Obama.

This is a Historic day and Yes, we can!"

Music Teacher, Steve Damon, played on the piano "We Shall Overcome," originally written

by Reverend Charles Tindley. Fourth grader Nolan's suggested verse, "We shall bring world peace," was followed by "Peace begins in Turners."

Director of elementary education Chip Wood played "This Land is Your Land" on his guitar. Visiting senior citizens also attended the Ball after having tea with Annemarie Hollowell's students in the cafeteria.

The students all listened attentively as their principal spoke to them about the historic inauguration.

Afterwards, fifth grader Alison summarized Sheffield's feelings about the day of pomp and pageantry. "I liked it. I'm glad we have a new president."

HIGHLIGHTS FROM THE MONTAGUE POLICE LOG

Burglaries on H and K Streets

Wednesday, 1/14

4:48 p.m. Officer initiated arrest of [redacted] on two default warrants.

Thursday, 1/15

4:08 p.m. Report of potential suicidal subject at a Sunderland Road address. Investigated.

4:28 p.m. Report of burglary / breaking

and entering at an H Street address.

Friday, 1/16

3:15 p.m. Report of illegal dumping in the Second Street alley.

Sunday, 1/18

10:30 a.m. Report of a fight at Farren Emergency Shelter, 15 Farren Avenue. Peace restored.

Monday, 1/19

1:46 a.m. Report of unwanted person at a Turners Falls Road address. Peace restored.

10:50 a.m. Report of burglary / breaking and entering at a K Street address.

Tuesday, 1/20

2:49 p.m. Report of general disturbance at Richardson Irrigation, 9 Industrial Boulevard. Referred to an officer.

7:26 p.m. Report of an unattended death at a Montague City Road address.

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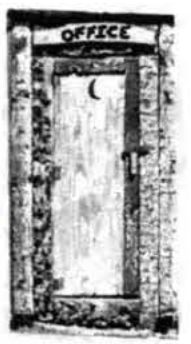
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from **OBAMA** page 1
 most presidents since George Washington have added, though the words are not written in the Constitution, "so help me God," despite an earlier attempt by a group of atheists to sue Justice Roberts to have that phrase precluded from the oath.

At that, great jubilation broke out in the Brick House community room, on the National Mall, and, in all probability, across the entire nation.

In the midst of deafening cheers, Feinstein stood once more at the podium to intone, "It is my great personal honor to present the 44th president of these United States, Barack Obama."

But his name had already been carried forward by popular acclamation, as the assembled multitudes, more than filling the mall from the steps of the Capitol to the Lincoln Memorial, and all the side streets in between, chanted "Obama! Obama! Obama!"

He did not stumble on his inaugural address, which lived up to expectations for one of the great orators of our time.

"I stand here today, humbled by the task before us," he began. He thanked George W. Bush, seated beside the podium, for his service to his country, a remark that elicited contrary opinion from the floor. ("I don't!" yelled one young person in Turners Falls.)

"Forty-four Americans have now taken the presidential oath,"

he said. But Bill Bickford, of Greenfield, hastened to point out to anyone at the Brick House who would listen that this was Obama's first presidential falsehood, as Grover Cleveland had taken the oath twice.

He said he was taking the oath of office amid gathering clouds of economic turmoil, domestically and globally. And he spoke of America as a nation at war against "a far reaching network of violence and hatred."

Yet as the camera panned to a disapproving Bush, whose last seconds of national leadership had just expired, Obama said, "As for our common defense, we reject as false the choice between our safety and our ideals. Our founding fathers, faced with perils we can scarcely imagine, drafted a charter to assure the rule of law and the rights of man, a charter expanded by the blood of generations. Those ideals still light the world, and we will not give them up for expedience's sake."

Speaking as much to youngsters like those gathered in the Brick House as to the nation at large, Obama talked of "a nagging fear that the next generation must lower its sights." He admonished his listeners, "Know this, America, the challenges will be met. We have chosen hope over fear, unity of purpose over conflict and discord."

In one of many lines that brought rousing cheers from the crowd, Obama declared, "Starting today, we must pull

ourselves up, dust ourselves off, and begin again the work of remaking America," for a future of good jobs rebuilding the nation's neglected infrastructure, new technologies based on the sun, the wind, and the Earth, and a transformed education system to meet the demands of a new age.

He spoke in lofty cadences about what "free men and women can achieve when imagination is joined to common purpose, and necessity to courage." He rallied his audience to meet the present hardships by evoking great battles of the past, and the Americans who fought them.

But, "The world has changed, and we must change with it," Obama said, and he offered himself as Exhibit A: in a country where, "A man whose father less than 60 years ago might not have been served at a local restaurant can now take this sacred oath."

He invoked George Washington's words from the winter of 1777 when the cause of Revolution was all but lost, and "nothing but hope and virtue could survive."

And he closed with these words: "Let it be said by our children's children that when we were tested we refused to let this journey end, that we did not turn back nor did we falter; and with eyes fixed on the horizon and God's grace upon us, we carried forth that great gift of freedom and delivered it safely to future generations."



LISA DAVOL PHOTO

At the party following Obama's inauguration, DeAngelo Nieves was among the local talent who performed for the inauguration of the Brick House's new community performance space.

John McGough, of Florence, age 12, called the speech, "Amazing. He's so confident and proud." He particularly liked the references to Concord, Gettysburg, Normandy and Khe Sanh, to prepare the nation for the modern day battles — real and metaphorical — that confront us.

Jasmine Serrano, 14, of Greenfield, said, "We're going to remember this day. He's the first African American president. The race card is over, and we are there to see it. Things are going to change for the better."

Asked how she thought they would change, specifically, Serrano, who said she is from the second generation of a family that immigrated to America from Mexico, said, "America will start to be more Green, and a little less racist

toward problems like immigration."

Olivia Smiaroski, 13, of Northfield said, "He's the best president yet. There was so much hope and joy in his speech. There's going to be change. He's going to lead us out of this war and make peace with other countries, and end violence, for the most part. His being president, it brings so many people together: gays and lesbians, African Americans and Jews. It is so great and wonderful!"

Judging by the reactions on camera on the national Mall, and elsewhere, she spoke for millions of people whose hearts were lifted by the stirring scene on Tuesday, as America's 44th president, Barack Hussein Obama, began his term in office.



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Skate Park to Be Considered in Unity Park Master Plan

BY ANNE HARDING

TURNERS FALLS - Unity Park is considered the flagship of the Montague parks and recreation commission, and the five parks under their control. Parks and recreation director Jon Dobosz met with townspeople, and officials on Thursday, January 8th for a public hearing in town hall to discuss the first overhaul of Unity Park in many years.

Dobosz reminisced about the time he spent in Unity Park as a youth, and noted that many of the playground fixtures have not changed since then. He even claimed his father's ball teams were playing with the same home run fence that today's teams are using.

Over the past year, Dobosz has met with the town planner and capital improvements committee to go over park renovations and begin the development of a master plan. Now, using \$8,250 from program income money, the

town has hired the Berkshire Design Group (BDG) of Northampton, the same architectural firm that designed the landscape improvements at the Great Falls Discovery Center, to conduct site assessments and identify the strengths and weaknesses of the park, and to develop the master plan for Unity Park.

The town hall public hearing was the first of several public meetings that will be held to solicit public feedback on the park improvement plans.

BDG was selected as the designer in the fall of 2008 in large part because of their extensive experience in park and recreation projects — over 350 projects, many in the western Massachusetts area. BDG principal Peter Wells brought a base plan for the public to view, showing the existing park layout and highlighting many of the current problem areas there.

Some areas of the park Wells said fit into the 'needs

improvement' category include the existing poor signage, inefficient and even dangerous parking areas, unsightly storage areas, a building that begs for a clearer entrance and improved sanitary facilities, conflicts between pedestrian access to the play area and DPW vehicles, limited shelter for inclement weather, accessibility issues and outdated and unsafe playground equipment

Wells referred to the equipment as "museum-worthy."

There was also discussion of safety issues relating to road crossings from both sides of the park, and the lack of clear crosswalks, signage and lighting.

The list was certainly daunting, but Wells also noted the strengths of Unity Park, which he said included tremendous shade trees, the overall size of the park, the considerable green space, the nearby riverfront park and bike path, and the convenient downtown location.

A public discussion followed,

and several people urged the parks and recreation commission to include a skate park in the master plan. Jean Hebden, of 4th Street, believes the frequently non-traditional appearance of some skaters might be intimidating to people, but she fondly referred to them as "walking works of art." She believes our teenaged youth "still need a place to play, and we need to keep the skaters close to us."

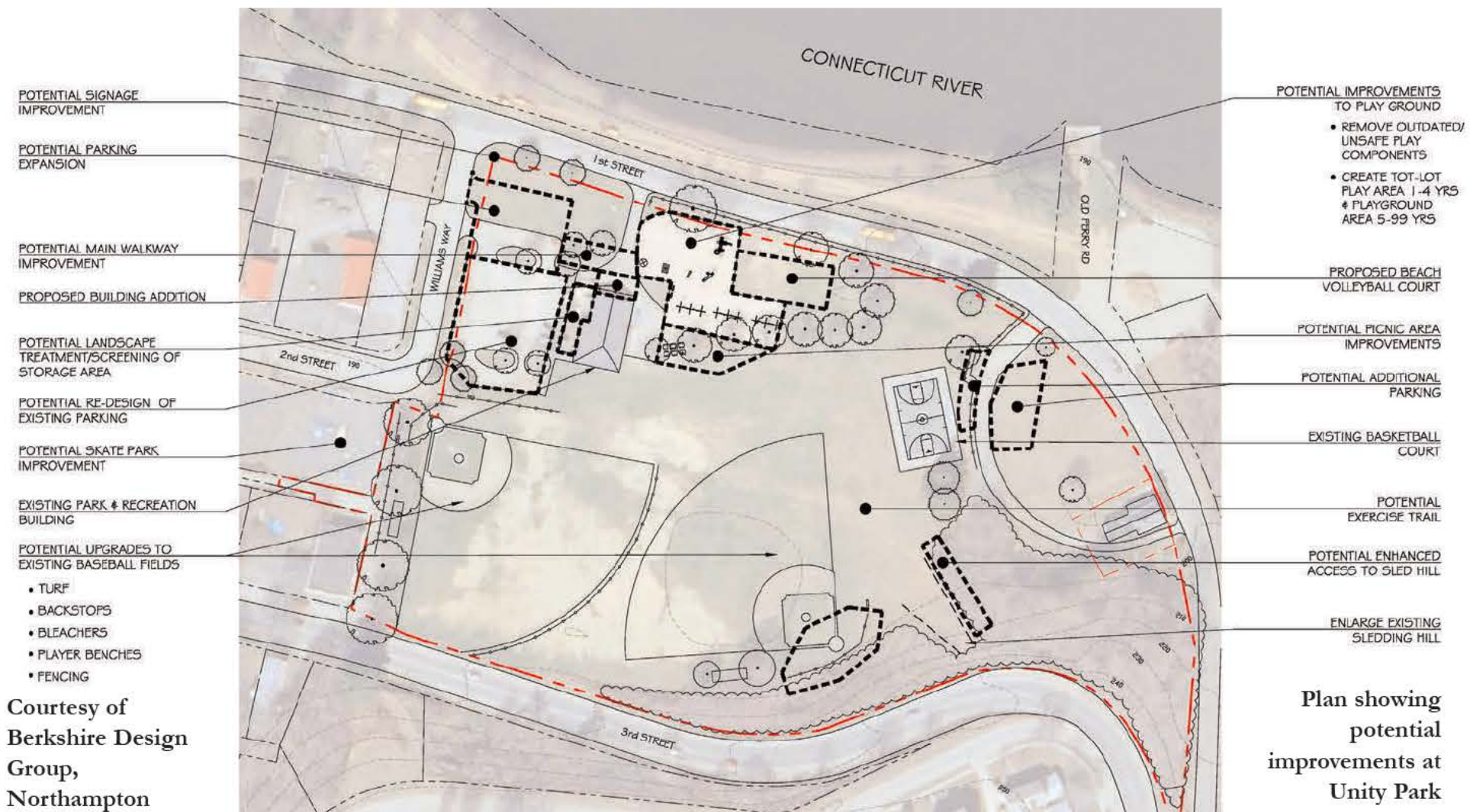
Hebden was referring to suggestions to move the skate park to a more remote location from downtown. Local cabinetmaker Bryan Dolan, though not a teenager, is an active user of the current skate park and echoed the plea for a new and improved park within Unity Park. He noted BDG designed Northampton's skate park, which draws in visitors from quite a distance.

Wells assured the crowd that BDG had received the message about including a skate park on the master plan.

The lack of safe or supervised swimming was also discussed. David Detmold of 4th Street suggested a modest wading area might meet a greater need downtown than tennis courts (since the middle school/high school complex has terrific ones available for public use). Another suggestion to provide cooling off space was the addition of a sprinkler park, similar to the one at Northampton's Look Park.

The subject of financing the park renovation was a concern to taxpayers. Dobosz noted that some revolving fund money would be used in the redesign phase, but the bulk of the funding for park improvements would be sought through phased grant applications.

Bruce Hunter of Franklin County Regional Housing and Redevelopment Agency was on hand to discuss the importance of the master plan for inclusion in a Community Block Grant application.



Courtesy of Berkshire Design Group, Northampton

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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

Poetry Page edited by
Christopher Sawyer-Laucanno,
Janel Nockleby and Jamie Berger

Readers are invited to send poems to the
Montague Reporter at 24 3rd Street,
Turners Falls, MA 01376;
or email us your poetry at
reporter-poems@montaguema.net

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Michael Farrick, and Michael Muller.**

TROPISM

for J.
You're free falling, my friend.
Hold fast to your parachute.
The grapeshot rattles the black

hole for your cells: white
waxing with fever that robs
every miniature moment of sleep.

Lovely, full, wounded,
a silken shirt of languid
sorrow, blue petals in my arms.

I dreamt of sores
beneath your tongue blue
diamonds in your jagged teeth.

I dreamt you
howling as they shot
your head full of holes.

I dreamt I made
a finger chain
of your bones.

Bind my mouth so I
can't say. Unbind my heart
so I can understand.

Before the damage,
the honey of your body
was in command.

Devotion races into open
veins; me, so thin-skinned,
you, pulling alone, colorless.

I sent you letter after letter,
believing that I could write away
disaster, the armor of your

life's winter suit; its size
and weight pinning your
wolfish body to this earth.

There must be thousands of us, beauty.
The selfish ones who ache some.
Our heads empty, hollow with words.

--Lea Banks
Shelburne Falls

Cleaning Up the Myth

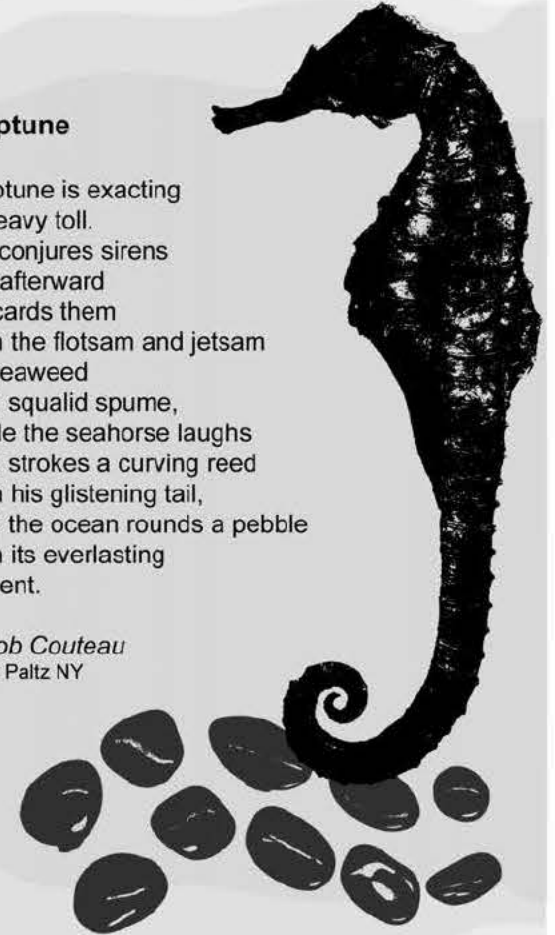
Across the street, the grave
of a neighbor's dead dog sparkles
brightly with the many lights
of Christmas. Power lines bristle
under ice as you skid drunkenly away,
head packed with big ideas, useful
as a mouth full of rotted teeth.
Left side of the bed cold and empty
as the jug of vodka someone tossed
into the hedge. I lie awake and remember
our loving. Taking comfort in
the sound of the plows, wild boars
harnessed and butting against the snow.
Wrestling Mother Nature to one side.
Trying to make order out of the mess
so that maybe, goddammit, life can go on.

--Kerry O'Keefe
Northampton, MA

Neptune

Neptune is exacting
a heavy toll.
He conjures sirens
yet afterward
discards them
with the flotsam and jetsam
of seaweed
and squalid spume,
while the seahorse laughs
and strokes a curving reed
with his glistening tail,
and the ocean rounds a pebble
with its everlasting
lament.

--Rob Couteau
New Paltz NY



It always shocks me

It always shocks me
when someone acts reasonably.
Insanity is rife in the cosmos;
the yellow jacket tries to sting
when it could just as easily
fly away.
Mothers crucify children
with screams;
fathers burn
in pyres of frustration.
The flesh crawls
or else creeps
but every now and again
a tender voice
or smile:
no ulterior motive,
no trapdoor,
no guillotine,
and this
leaves me
speechless.

--Rob Couteau
New Paltz NY

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FRIENDS

What can be said of the afternoon the man I went on to marry tried to convince me we should stay "just friends." In his wisdom and weakness, shifting back and forth between logic and charm. Like a city kid trying to dissuade the muggers before handing over his wallet. Hoping the beating wouldn't be too bad. How did he know what would be lost in that bed? A love that could have grown like a fine spring lamb if simply plumped and protected from the way sex brings down the gate and lets the wolves in to feed. He must have given in to my will because he knew about the children we would make, who would love and give us strength, patting our faces with chubby, tender hands. Their gleaming childhood need driven into the ground between us like an ancient warrior's shield. Holding us apart yet together those years as we readied ourselves to say goodbye. After that, with the furor and sorrow of opposing generals, smoking in their separate camps, secretly missing the enemy, the irreplaceable friend.

--Lea Banks
Shelburne Falls

EL DIABLITO

Returning from Mexico, I light
a cigarette with the Devil
on a matchbox. Incinerated train wreck.

Yes, you with your wild pop eyes.

I'm crazy. Crazy for beating myself
again. Tempted by priests in wounding red robes
hawking tiny Virgens de Guadalupe.

They're the ones you get for \$1.00, right?

Made at the Miracle Candle Company; yee haw,
Laredo on the night shift, ruby hooker nights,
freeze-dried sheen and glean in the A & W brights.

Are you sleeping through all this?

A tired-ass waitress rolls over to the car and we
count out pennies for a hamburger. Flaring in Technicolor,
she spits and turns. So sad to think about that.

Realize the Beast wears red all over.

The Beast pulls me down with nefarious ardor, steady delight.
There's no light left on for company. Snuffed out. Watered
down smoke rings you can't even see with a flashlight.

No coins for the toll taker. Oh God. No God.

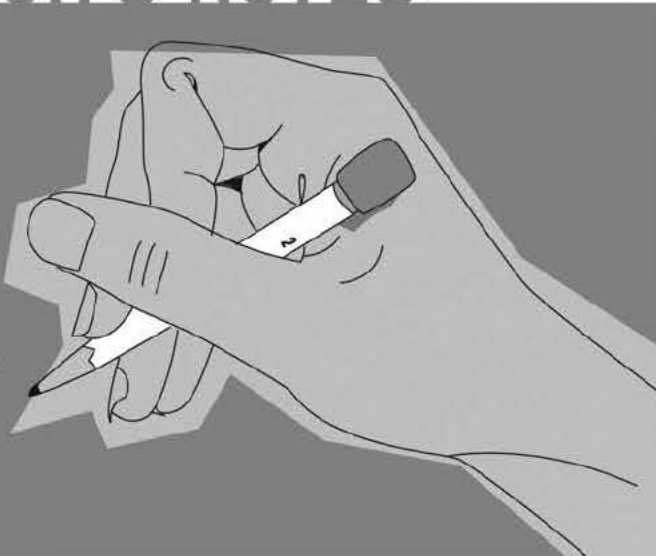
--Lea Banks
Shelburne Falls

CONTRIBUTOR'S NOTES:

Kerry O'Keefe is a poet and freelance writer. She is the author of the chapbook, *From A Burning Building*, March Street Press, and often writes interviews for the Berkshire artzine, *The Artful Mind*. She lives and works in Northampton, MA, where she also, occasionally will sit in and sing a blues.

Lea Banks lives in Western Massachusetts. She is the curator and founder of the highly successful *Collected Poets Series* in Shelburne Falls, MA, editor of *Oscillation: Art and Poetry in Motion*, poetry editor of the *Equinox*, and editorial assistant for the *Marlboro Review*. She attended New England College's MFA program, facilitated stroke survivors' writing workshops, and manages her daughter's modeling career. Banks has been published in several journals including *Poetry Northwest*, *Slipstream*, *Diner*, and *American Poetry Journal*. She can be found at www.leabanks.com.

Rob Couteau is a writer and visual artist from Brooklyn. He is the author of the novel, *Doctor Pluss*, and the epistolary memoir, *Letters from Paris*. In 1985 he won the North American Essay Award, a competition open to writers throughout North America. His work has appeared in publications such as *The Alambic*, *Anima*, *Areté*, *Bloomsbury Review*, *Cadillac Cicatrix*, *Chrysalis*, *Confluent Educational Journal*, *Croton Review*, *The European*, *Footwork*, *The Garden State*, *The Hawaii Pacific Review*, *Heavenbone*, *The Humanist*, *The Journal of Contemporary Psychotherapy*, *Lapis*, *Lift Magazine*, *New Leaves Review*, *The Paris Voice*, *Quantum*, *Rain Taxi*, *Rockhurst Review*, *Spring*, *Venice Magazine*, *Versitude*, *West Hills Review*, *White Pelican Review*, and *Z Miscellaneous*.



The Heart's Fine Bungling

I can only thrash my way back into our story. Trying to resuscitate the details of the love. Pure, shining moments strung like tiny seed pearls between big red flares of defeat. We've managed this thing like emergency workers on ecstasy. Always grabbing the wrong colored flag. Sending the ambulance over to put out the fire. Turning the hose on the woman giving birth. Handing out doughnuts to the shocked and grieving at the roadside wreck. Coming home, flipping on the TV. It would have made too much sense to weep.

--Kerry O'Keefe
Northampton, MA

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MONTAGUE from page 1
28th. We'll probably hear sooner, maybe even by this Friday."

Abbondanzio said if his prediction comes true, Montague will be looking to bridge a \$157,000 gap more than halfway through the current budget year.

How would the town do that, when departmental budgets were pared back so sharply at town meeting last year?

Finance committee chair Hanold offered this blueprint

"The first thing we would do is try to estimate what the benefit is from the spending freeze that was instituted in December. That would be rather a modest offset. Unless you eliminate a position or fail to fill a position of someone who is retiring, there just isn't much leeway left in departmental budgets: they are very tight."

Hanold said, "We have a small finance committee reserve fund (\$25,000) that we generally use during the year to meet unforeseen requirements, like legal fees. We'd probably commit some funds from that. But you need to save some for end of year reconciliations," to make up for instances when individual departments are forced

to overspend their budgets.

"For '09, you really can't rely on a Proposition 2½ override [to fill a gap] of that magnitude. The next thing you'd look at is cutting hours, rather than eliminating positions, spreading the impact across more people, and in a sense preserving jobs."

Finally, Hanold mentioned the \$1.4 million assessors overlay reserve fund, much of which could be made available in a pinch to meet budgetary needs.

"Always, in the back of everyone's mind is the excess overlay, which I am very uncomfortable using for operating expenses, because it simply compounds the problem for later years. I'm more comfortable using the reserves for capital expenses."

Abbondanzio said the state is forecasting cuts in local aid for the next fiscal year — which begins July 1st — of between 5% and 15%. Totaled together with the mid-year cuts the town manager is anticipating, "the combined cuts for two years could equal \$228,000 to \$370,000," Abbondanzio said.

With the concurrent drop in local receipts due to the poor economy — building permit fees,

for example, are down 16% to 17% with no big projects on the horizon — Abbondanzio said the only revenue increase the town can really count on for next year will come from the 2½ percent annual increase in the tax levy limit. That will bring in about \$394,000 in new revenue. But in the worst case scenario for state cuts, practically all of that expected growth would be canceled out, leaving the town to cope with contractual obligations to employees and rising energy and insurance costs for Fiscal 2010 with practically no additional funds to work with.

Abbondanzio said there were a few bright spots amid the budget gloom. The town's retirement assessment will drop by about \$9,000, due to a change in the number of eligible employees. With last year's cut in the percentage the town will pay of employee's health care plans to 80%, Montague will pay \$15,000 less on this line item than it did in '09, even though the Hampshire Group (the town's insurer) predicts a 7.5% increase in premiums this year. (Had there been no cut in the town's share of employee's health care costs, Montague would expect to pay

\$171,000 more through this insurance group in '10.) The legislature has indicated it may pass legislation allowing municipalities to collect and spend taxes on certain utility poles and infrastructure within their boundaries; last year Montague placed \$42,000 from these taxes into an overlay account, anticipating a possible court challenge. And the amount Montague will pay for intergovernmental services is due to drop slightly, because of cost cutting at the Regional Council of Governments.

But these projected savings and revenues don't add up to much, compared to expected cuts in state aid. And, offsetting these are an expected 18% increase in debt service, and the uncalculated additional cost of operating the new police station.

Meanwhile, at last week's Gill-Montague school committee meeting, Abbondanzio said, Department of Elementary and Secondary Education representative Jeff Wulfson, who is overseeing the district's budget for the time being, indicated the GMRSD will use a 3% increase (about \$500,000) as a "placeholder" for purposes of

estimating next year's budget.

"That's a number we cannot afford, even in a normal year," said Abbondanzio.

Hanold concurred. "The school committee is working from an old playbook. It is not recognizing that education goals and fiscal resources have to be coordinated."

Hanold gave an overview of the playbook for the town side of the budget for '10.

"We are certainly starting this year from the lower spending level that town meeting came up with last year. With labor contracts in force, there are a number of costs that are set. We have not yet gotten to the point of recommending a cut in services: parks and recreation, senior center, the branch libraries. We are devoting ourselves to paying attention as closely as possible to what the schools are asking. But service cuts are a real possibility. The quality of town life is at risk. We have a flourishing parks program, we are unusual in having branch libraries, these are important elements of our town. But in the light of declining revenue, there are some things that will need to re-examined."



GILL from page 6

the fall, and a lot of day trips to the beach." She added, "We both like to fish." But she declined to reveal their favorite fishing holes.

As for the Gill-Montague Bridge, Maureen Mullaney, transportation program manager for the Franklin Regional Council of Governments, said bids for the \$47.5 million project are scheduled to be opened on February 24th.

"You could expect an award within 60 days," said Mullaney. "and notice to proceed shortly after that. Construction should get under way by May or June;

that's the expectation."

Mullaney said the FRCOG has helped move the bridge project forward in a number of ways, helping to secure funding through Congressman Olver's office, moving it up the county's transportation improvement list to put the project in line for prioritized state funding, and staying in touch with the towns at either end of the bridge to get them the information they need about the project.

How did a project listed at \$37 million a mere two years ago balloon by more than \$10 million this year?

"When I first got involved in the project it was going to cost \$12 million," said Mullaney. That was back in 1994.

"It is not at all unusual for cost estimates to grow as you get deeper into the design and engineering, as unexpected things crop up. In the last three years," Mullaney said, "we've seen in particular a jump in those costs primarily due to the cost of oil. Construction materials have doubled or tripled in the last three years."

But Mullaney said the cost of the bridge renovation project has dropped slightly — from nearly

\$50 million last year, to the \$47.5 million project firms are bidding on now — perhaps due to the recent decline in the price of oil, and related cost of materials. And the fact that construction jobs have been hit hard in the present economic downturn may be of help in the bidding process.

"Any firm big enough to bid on a project that size will certainly be very interested in it," Mullaney said.

According to the Mass Highway website, the Gill-Montague Bridge improvement project "involves the rehabilitation of the existing steel truss structure carrying Avenue A over the Connecticut River. The bridge will be rehabilitated and restored in the existing location, and will provide wider travel lanes and bicycle accessibility." New traffic signals will be installed on the Gill side of the bridge, and approaches to the bridge will be reconfigured and resurfaced.

Another plus: the Jersey barriers lining the rusted railings on the bridge will be removed.

Mullaney said a detailed traffic management plan has been worked out for the course of the bridge reconstruction. One-way traffic will be maintained southbound to Turners Falls throughout the project, while traffic heading north will be detoured over the

White Bridge to Greenfield and onto the French King Highway.

In other news, the Gill selectboard discussed the Gill-Montague Regional School District's proposal to include town officials more directly in the district's budget making process. Summing up after the meeting, administrative assistant Tracy Rogers said, "We still don't feel like we're being included. It feels like we are invited to sit in on a public meeting, and listen, but not be part of the dialogue."

The board considered a request from a resident of West Gill Road to place a deer crossing sign near a spot where a deer had been killed in a collision last year. The resident said deer tracks are evident in the same location this year. The board was amenable to the idea only if the highway department has a deer crossing sign available, since Gill cannot afford to purchase a new sign. (Or, if the folks who have been stealing road signs in recent years have one that says 'Deer Crossing', maybe they could give it back.)

The Department of Revenue has certified the tax rate for Gill at \$13.02 per thousand, one penny less than what town hall had estimated prior to the override vote on January 6th.



HIGHLIGHTS FROM THE ERVING POLICE LOG
Nuisance Snow Activities

Tuesday, 1/13
9:25 a.m. Report of a barking dog on Warner Street. No one home at residence, left written notice of complaint.
Wednesday, 1/14
8:51 p.m. Report of domestic dispute on Highland Avenue. Arrested [redacted] for assault and battery, domestic.
9:18 p.m. Report of suspicious person at a Ridge Road residence yelling outside of a house. Checked area, subject gone upon arrival.
11:12 p.m. Assisted Bernardston police with domestic dispute.
Friday, 1/16
5:10 p.m. Abandoned property left at Freight House Antiques. Shop owner turned same in to police to be returned to owner.
Saturday, 1/17
9:00 a.m. Medical emergency on River

Road. Assisted Erving fire and Baystate Health Ambulance.
Sunday, 1/18
1:00 a.m. Report of snowmobiles revving engines and causing noise in the Mountain Road area. Spoke with same and advised to keep noise down.
6:31 p.m. Assisted Warwick police department with a domestic disturbance arrest.
Monday, 1/19
10:00 a.m. Report of an East Main Street resident shoveling snow into the roadway. Resident agreed to not throw the snow onto the roadway.
10:05 a.m. Assisted Northfield police with a motor vehicle crash near the town line.
2:00 p.m. Citation issued to [redacted] for operating an unregistered and uninsured motor vehicle.

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JESSICA HARMON ILLUSTRATION
BY FRED CICETTI
LEONIA, NJ - Q. In your column, I've read lots of tips for taking care of your heart. They all sound good, but what do they really do to extend your life?

This may be the best question I've been asked. It led me to a calculator that tells you what your odds are of having a heart attack in the next ten years. The calculator is for adults 20 or over who do not have heart disease or diabetes. You can find this calculator online at: hp2010.nhlbi.nih.net/atpiiii/calculator.asp?user-type=prof

The risk-assessment tool is based upon the Framingham

The Best Way to Avoid a Heart Attack or Stroke

Heart Study, a joint project of the National Heart, Lung and Blood Institute and Boston University, begun in 1948.

The researchers recruited men and women between the ages of 30 and 62 from the town of Framingham, Massachusetts, and began extensive physical examinations and lifestyle interviews they would later analyze.

The calculator asks seven questions: your age, gender, total cholesterol, HDL level, whether you smoke, systolic blood pressure (the first number), and whether you are taking medication for blood pressure. You plug in your numbers and the calculator generates your odds as a percentage.

I experimented with this risk-assessment tool. The results were surprising to me.

I started out with this profile: Age 65 / Gender Male / Total Cholesterol 200 / HDL 40 /

Smoker? No / Systolic Blood Pressure 120 / Blood Pressure Medication? No.

The odds of having a heart attack in the next decade? 13 percent.

Then I changed the age from 65 to 75. All the other answers were the same. The odds increased to 18 percent.

Next, I changed only the gender from male to female. The odds plummeted to 3 percent.

Then I dropped only the total cholesterol from 200 down to 150. The odds were 10 percent.

I raised the HDL number from 40 to 60. This changed the odds to 9 percent.

Next, I became a smoker. Again all other answers were the same. The risk level was 16 percent - only a 3 percent increase over a non-smoker.

I dropped the systolic pressure from 120 to 100, and the odds came out 10 percent.

I then changed only the blood pressure medication response from No to Yes. The odds went up from 13 to 16 percent.

For one last test, I used this profile: Age 65 / Gender Male / Total Cholesterol 300 / HDL 20 / Smoker? Yes / Systolic Blood Pressure 180 / Blood Pressure Medication? Yes.

The odds were greater than 30

percent. Or, looking at it from a different angle, this man has about a 7-out-of-10 chance of not having a heart attack. Gee, throw a ribeye on the grill, please.

This research led me to one conclusion: the best thing you can do for your health is to be a female.

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

Montague Community Television Training Schedule

All classes located at the MCTV studio, 34 2nd Street, Turners Falls, from 6:00 to 8:00 p.m. Classes are free to residents of (and people who work in) Montague, Erving and Gill. For more information, call the station at: 413-863-9200, or email robin@montaguetv.org

Multi-Camera Production Using the Sony Anycast

Monday, February 2nd and Wednesday, February 4th

Directing a Multi-Camera Production

Monday, February 9th and Wednesday, February 11th

Introduction to Editing with Final Cut Pro

Monday, February 23rd and Wednesday, February 25th

Intermediate Editing

Mondays, March 2nd and 9th; Wednesdays, March 4th and 11th

Graphics for Video

Monday, March 23rd and Wednesday, March 25th

"With the patch, I didn't have to quit smoking alone."

If you're ready to quit smoking, here's some great news. Right now you can get 2 weeks of nicotine patches, **FREE**, to get you started. Just call 1-800-Try-To-Stop for the details.

Quitting isn't easy. But people who use medicines like the patch and get support are **twice as likely** to quit as those who go cold turkey. Now you don't have to fight cigarettes alone.

Katrina Bergman quit smoking 2 years ago.



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JEP'S PLACE: Part CVII

Life Changes



BY JOSEPH A. PARZYCH GILL - I was happy to have Irene living at home after her long convalescence. We got along very well and we also both got along well with Emmy, too. Irene and Emmy had an especially close relationship after the two of them had nearly drowned one winter when they had fallen through the ice while skating. But I would soon lose Irene, as she felt compelled to leave home, even as Emmy had. And it was all over chickens.

The September after Irene's year off to take care of the chickens ended, Irene got dressed for school. "Where do you think you're going?" Pa

demanded.

Irene looked scared. "I'm going back to school like you promised."

He did his best to persuade Irene to drop out for good. He tried cajoling and bribing her, though he'd already reneged on his promise to buy her May Lambert's Model A Ford. Irene could not be swayed in her determination to finish high school. She went up to the corner and caught the bus.

Pa was hostile toward Irene after that, and she soon left home. She got a part time job at Liggett's drugstore, and moved in with Mary, Ma's daughter by her first husband, our half sister, who was now married. I was happy to see Irene pursue her dream, but I was sad to see her leave.

One of the last moments we shared together at the farm was disheartening. Ma announced that she had some wonderful news. "This is for Irene, only," she said, unable to conceal her utter delight. "But you might as

well hear it, too. The doctor says I have the change of life and I can't have any more children! Isn't that wonderful?"

"Yeah, I guess it is, Ma," Irene said.

Ma didn't seem to sense our feelings of guilt, dismay - and rejection. She'd always been so happy when Johnny came to visit that we thought her feelings covered us, too. Her being so elated at not having any more of us came as a jolt.

Whenever Ma got word that Johnny was coming to visit, she'd bustle about getting ready. She'd prepare sweet potatoes for him and him alone. She'd put on a clean dress and set the house in order for the big day. It was as if she were expecting the Dalai Lama.

I thought some of that love extended to us. I hadn't expected any of us to bring her that much joy, but it hit me like a punch in the stomach that we were so unwanted - that we had burdened her like a dozen kittens dragging at a mother cat, though I'm sure we had.

Though I knew that she'd been having babies for decades, ever since she was a teenager, and she had to work hard, I wanted to hear her say she loved us just the same - that we brought her happiness like the family in Cheaper by the Dozen. I wanted to hear her say she was sad she couldn't have any more children to love and that she was sad to have that time end. Seeing her so happy at not being able to bear any more children made me

want to run away, to hide somewhere and cry. I envied Irene and wished I could leave home, too.

It was lonely at the farm with both Irene and Emmy gone. I missed the times Irene and I worked together doing farm chores or planned birthday parties when Pa and Ma would be away - the way she'd bake a cake, decorate it and invite kids for a quick birthday party, then clean up before our folks got home, the way Emmy had done before. It was nice to know that someone cared.

— Continued Next Week

For this week's MCTV programming, please go to: www.montaguema.net

REPORTER CLASSIFIEDS CALL 863-8666, FAX 863-3050

BUSINESS FOR SALE - Plow Frau & Bow Wow is a VERY successful "clean-out, hauling, and snow plowing" business. Community oriented, environmentally friendly, FUN, interesting, and unique. Please call Sita for details: (413) 834-7569.

HOBBY SHOP - Inventory for sale: Bird Houses, Whirly Birds, Jelly Cabinets, Towel Holders, Quartz Clocks, Napkin Holders. 7 Meadow Drive, Riverside, Gill. Call: Charles Shebell, 413-863-2465

CARPENTRY - No Job Too Small - General Carpentry and home repairs. Custom shelves a specialty. Call David, (413) 863-9296.

LARGE SUNLIT ARTIST(S) STUDIO - Approximately 600 square feet w/bathroom, utilities included, \$450/month. 24 Third Street, Turners. Images at www.thebrickhouseinc.org. 413-863-9576

WANT TO BUY - Cash paid for older guitars, banjos and mandolins, also tube-type guitar amplifiers, any condition. Call anytime 413-335-1634.

HIGHLIGHTS FROM THE GILL POLICE LOG

Prowler Investigated

Sunday, 1/11
3:20 p.m. Identity theft and larceny report taken from Franklin Road resident.

Monday, 1/12
1:20 p.m. Breaking & Entering and larceny report at an Oak Street residence. Subject identified, under investigation. Charges to follow.
1:55 p.m. Two vehicle accident at Main Road and French King Highway.
8:45 p.m. Report of stranded motorist on Boyle Road, checked same, all set.

Tuesday, 1/13
1:31 p.m. Report of an intruder inside a French King Highway residence. Checked - all o.k., no one present.
7:40 p.m. Report of a prowler at a French King Highway residence. Responded, no one present upon arrival.

Thursday, 1/15
11:45 a.m. Report of a suspicious van on Green Hill Road. Checked area, unable to locate.

Saturday, 1/17
8:39 p.m. Assisted Bernardston police with a group of youths on Keets Brook Road.

Monday, 1/19
8:35 a.m. Report of a deceased deer on Walnut Street. Highway department notified to remove same.
4:25 p.m. Report of a damaged mailbox on Bickford Road.

HOUSING REHABILITATION PROGRAM

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

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

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

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

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

If you are interested in applying for the Housing Rehab program please call Charity Day @ (413) 863-9781 ext. 132 or email at cday@fchra.org

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ARTS & ENTERTAINMENT



SATURDAY, JANUARY 17th
Recycle, Reuse, Reduce: It's Fun! Great Falls Discovery Center, Turners Falls. Join educator Rachel Roberts for a free children's workshop reusing recyclables into fun activities. *Recycled Games & Toys* is geared for school-aged children, fun for all! 10 to 11 a.m. Register at Green Fields Market or contact Rachel Roberts at robertsml@verizon.net or 774-7290. Sponsored by Franklin Community Cooperative.

THURSDAY, JANUARY 22nd
 Deja Brew, Wendell: Larry Kopp. Country and city blues guitar w/vocals, 9 to 11 p.m.

At the Rendezvous, Turners Falls: Southern Hemisphere Wine Tasting, call for Reservations.

Jazz at DiPaolo's, 166 Avenue A, Turners Falls: solo guitarist Karl Rush, 6:30 - 9:30.

FRIDAY, JANUARY 23rd
 Introduction to Snowshoeing for Seniors at Northfield Mountain. 9 to 11:30 a.m. For ages 50 and older. \$5/\$17 w/snowshoe rentals. Pre-registration required, call 800-859-2960.

Family Fun Night at Unity Park Fieldhouse, Turners Falls: Checkers Tournament theme night, table tennis and other board games available too. Music, raffles, and refreshments will be provided. 6:30 to 8 p.m. 2/6 - Yahtzee Tournament, 3/6 - Family Bingo. \$5 donation to support MPRD programs.

Science & Nature Poetry & Prose Open Mic at the Discovery Center, Turners Falls. Featuring Paul Richmond, 7 p.m. Bring along your own work or read something by your

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favorite poet or science writer. We ask only that the topic have something to do with nature or any of the sciences. Dead seriousness is welcome but not required. Light refreshments available. Info. call (413) 863-3221, ext. 3.

Deja Brew, Wendell: *The Relics*. 50's and 60's Rock, 9 to 11 p.m.

At the Rendezvous, Turners Falls: *Rusty Belle & Friends*, \$5 cover.

Lantern Hill House Concerts Presents: *The Steve Crow Acoustic Trio*. Pot luck at 6 p.m. Music at 7 p.m. 21 Plain Rd, Wendell. \$12 donation at the door which goes to the performers. Reservations & info: toddmuller@hotmail.com or (978) 544 7040.

FRIDAY TO SUNDAY, JANUARY 23rd to 25th
 The Peoples Music Network: *Songs of Freedom and Struggle* Winter Gathering, Greenfield High School. Concert on 1/23, 7 pm. Tickets: \$25. Featuring: Tom Paxton; David Rovics; Tom Neilson, accompanied by Kat Allen and Derrick Jordan; Charlie King, with Karen Brandow and Pat & Tex LaMountain, Amandla Chorus; Bess Hepner; Josh Wolfson; the Raging Grannies; Sarah Pirtle's Journey Camp chorus & David Kaynor's Band. www.peoplesmusic.org Whole weekend (\$125-200) includes music workshops, round robin, songs of the spirit, meals and more. Info: (413) 548-9394.

SATURDAY, JANUARY 24th
 Deja Brew, Wendell: *Thaddeus Hands*, Rock Fusion. Enjoy the great sound of Josh Powers, Sam King & Thadryan Sweeney, 9 to 11 p.m.

At the Rendezvous, Turners Falls: *Unfulfilled Desires*, jazz, funk, fusion, \$3 cover.

SUNDAY, JANUARY 25th
Music for a Just & Peaceful World, music & readings at St. James Episcopal Church, Greenfield. Features Lillian Buss Pearson & Curtis

Smith, piano, Heather Strizalkowski, flute, & Mary Brown Bonacci, voice at 3 p.m. The Interfaith Council of Franklin County sponsors this benefit for the Heifer Project International and Traprock Center for Peace & Justice.

Montague Grange, Montague Center: Family-style contra dancing with caller Brendan Taaffe & friends. \$4/person or \$10-15/family. 4 to 6 p.m. Info: (413) 367-9608.

Montague Book Mill, Montague Center: Free Films For The Frozen. 7 p.m., *Strictly Ballroom*. Written and directed by Baz Luhrman, 1992. Will Scott and Fran dance their own steps at the Australian Pan Pacific Ballroom Confederation Championship and prove the authorities

wrong when they say, "There are no new steps!"

Deja Brew, Wendell: *Moonstruck*. Acoustic Duo, 8 to 10 p.m.

At the Rendezvous, Turners Falls: Cabaret de Rendee-voo, Open Mic, 8 p.m., no cover.

MONDAY, JANUARY 26th
 Deja Brew, Wendell: *All Small Caps*, A Night of Spoken Word. Open mic at 7 p.m. Guest Readers from 8 to 10 p.m.

TUESDAY, JANUARY 27th
 Volunteer orientation and training session for anyone interested in donating their time and energy to CISA. Help with general office work, community outreach activities, and committee work. Info: www.buylocalfood.org. Volunteer Orientation at 6:30 p.m. Light refreshments. Community Outreach Volunteer Training, 7:30 p.m. in South Deerfield.

Undergrowth Farm presents, *Harlan County USA*, the 1976 Academy Award winning film documenting a grueling coal miners's strike in a small Kentucky town. Film will be followed by clips and commentary on current day struggles against mountain top removal in Appalachia. At The Brick House, Turners Falls. 7 p.m. Free. Refreshments provided by Green Fields Market. Donations to the Hot Spot teen center gratefully accepted. This event is part of the film series, *Movements for Self-Determination*.

How to Start a Common Good Bank in Your Community a multimedia presentation, a new kind of community savings bank, designed expressly for economic justice, sustainability and strong local economies, independent of the dollar. Info: commongoodbank.com or call (413) 628-3336. At Dickinson Memorial Library, Northfield, 6:45 p.m..

WEDNESDAY, JANUARY 28th
 At the Rendezvous, Turners Falls:

Montague Phantom Brain Exchange, \$5 cover, 9 p.m.

THURSDAY, JANUARY 29th
 How to Start a Common Good Bank in Your Community a multimedia presentation, a new kind of community savings bank, designed expressly for economic justice, sustainability and strong local economies, independent of the dollar. Info: commongoodbank.com or call (413) 628-3336. At Warwick Public Library, 6:45 p.m.

At the Rendezvous, Turners Falls: Montague Reporter Benefit w/ live music, skits and more. Suggested donation to benefit the paper!

Deja Brew, Wendell: *Radio Free Earth*, crossover music performed by Kim & Josh Wachtel, 8 to 10 p.m.

FRIDAY, JANUARY 30th
 Communities That Care Coalition meeting 11 to 1 p.m. (with lunch served). Anyone interested in hearing about the Coalition's work is encouraged to attend. Please RSVP to pprunuske@communityaction.us or (413) 774-7028 x657.

At the Brick House, Turners Falls: Open Mic Night 7 to 9 p.m. First Open Mic in the renovated space!

Deja Brew, Wendell: *Nexus*. Dancing tends to break out when this group gets going. Harmonic, eclectic rock/alternative, 9 to 11 p.m.

At the Rendezvous, Turners Falls: *Eric Hnatow* and guests, \$3 cover.

SATURDAY, JANUARY 31st
 Cabin Fever Music and Storytelling with Tim Van Egmond for all ages at Northfield Mountain Recreation and Environmental Center. Cozy up with family and friends in our heated yurt and be enchanted. Van Egmond will accompany himself on a wide variety of traditional instruments, including mountain dulcimer, hammered dulcimer, guitar, mouthbow, and limberjack. Free, 6:30 - 7:30 p.m.

At the Rendezvous, Turners Falls: *Blame It On Tina*, \$3 cover.

THROUGH JANUARY 31st
 Landscapes and Nature Art Exhibit by Thomas L. Stratford in the Great Hall of the Great Falls Discovery Center, Turners Falls.

SUNDAY, FEBRUARY 1st
 Montague Book Mill, Montague Center: Free Films For The Frozen. 7 p.m., *Ninotchka*. Written by Charles Brackett, Billy Wilder and Walter Reisch; directed by Ernst Lubitsch, 1939. Greta Garbo & Melvyn Douglas. Completely politically incorrect and completely wonderful. A 1939 classic.

THROUGH MARCH 29th
 Hallmark Museum of Contemporary Photography: New Orleans photographer Josephine Sacabo, featured in Gallery 56, displays work from three distinct projects on exhibit; "A Geometry of Echoes," "The Nocturnes" and, "El Mundo Inalcanzable De Susana San Juan." Also on display work by Susan Bozic: *The Dating Portfolio* in Gallery 56. Artists' Receptions and talks will be February 7th. Regular museum hours are Thurs-Sun, 1 to 5 p.m.

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

GREENFIELD GARDEN CINEMAS
 Main St. Greenfield, MA 413-774-4881
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 Showtimes for Friday, January 23rd - Thurs., January 29th

1. PAUL BLART: MALL COP DAILY 6:30 9:00 PG
2. MILK R DTS sound DAILY 6:30 9:00
3. THE CURIOUS CASE OF BENJAMIN BUTTON DAILY 8:30 PG13
3. HOTEL FOR DOGS DAILY 6:30
4. GRAN TORINO DAILY 6:40 9:20
5. MY BLOODY VALENTINE R DAILY 6:40 9:20
6. DOUBT PG13 in DTS sound DAILY 7:00 9:30
7. UNDERWORLD 3: RISE OF THE LYCANS R DTS sound DAILY 7:00 9:30
- FRI, SAT, SUN 12:30 3:30

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Friday, 1/23, 9 - 11 p.m.
 50's & 60's Rock'n Roll: *The Relics*
Saturday, 1/24, 9 - 11 p.m.
 Rock Fusion: *Thaddeus Hands*
Sunday, 1/25, 8 - 10 p.m.
 Acoustic Duo: *Moonstruck*
Monday, 1/26, 7 - 10 p.m.
 Poetry Night: *All Small Caps*
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West Along the River Snow Owl Vision



Snowy Owl Illustration by Louis Agassiz Fuertes

BY DAVID BRULE

MILLERS FALLS - Maybe it all started when, as a 12-year-old, I had taken to haunting the frozen river bank of the Connecticut along the place we call the Narrows. In those years, it seems the winters were cold, long, and darker than they are now. And for me in those days, the Connecticut River was the gateway to the Arctic.

The river always froze solid, a white expanse of snow and ice, jagged chunks of frozen ridge sticking up from time to time, stretching from the Narrows to the French King Bridge, and beyond to the north. I loved being out in the winter already by then, when I felt like a solitary explorer on the edge of an ice sheet glacier of a river that extended up to Hudson Bay. Never mind that the geography was a bit off, as I found out later.

Daily I scrutinized ice, praying for the appearance of a great white bird to come winging out of the north. I needed to see a Snowy Owl, the very spirit of our northern winter. By the end of those winter afternoons spent exploring the Arctic wasteland just off Carlisle Avenue, I had one advantage that Byrd and Peary never had in their quest for the North Pole. I could trudge home through the snow at dark, and settle into a nice comfortable chair in a cozy home, and read until bedtime when my parents tucked me into bed. So much for the intrepid Nordic explorer!

Maybe, too, the quest became all the more acute when on Christmas Eve in '57 my grandparents Abe and Hannah gave me a massive book weighing almost ten pounds, one pound for each of my years at the time! The book was called the *Birds of America* by T. Gilbert Pearson, published in 1917. They had bought the book at Wilson's for the huge

sum of \$9.95, a dollar a pound by simple calculation, but it sealed my fate as a naturalist, and locked the Snowy Owl and me into mutual destiny.

The illustrations were by Louis Agassiz Fuertes, and the 300 page book was filled with narrative and folklore, features that one no longer finds in bird guides, and it linked me with stories of the Snowy Owl going

back to the 1870s. T. Gilbert Pearson had collected the folk names of all the birds, names that would have been lost forever but for his recording of them. He wrote that my owl had other names: Great White Owl, Ermine Owl, Arctic Owl, Harfang, and the name given by Native Americans, *Wapacuthu*.

He wrote of the Snowy Owl: "The long days in summer where this owl breeds make its habits chiefly diurnal. This fact has been discovered too late by many a crow engaged with his brethren in the pleasing diversion of mobbing the big white specter sitting on a limb motionless, and presumably blind, because obviously an owl. For let one of the tormentors come near enough and the ghost suddenly launches out on strong silent wings, the great talons strike and close, and there is a crow who would have been wiser but for the circumstance that he is very dead."

Now that's writing you don't see in bird books anymore! All I knew is that I needed to see a *Wapacuthu* for myself.

I finally got my first chance years later, around 1978, when I discovered the frozen tundra conditions of Salisbury and Plum Island in February. A hardy group of us, a loose-knit band that formed the now-defunct Norman Bird Club, organized a field trip to the coast in search of winter wildlife. The conditions were Arctic-like, with biting penetrat-

ing winds, frozen sea ice, seals, gulls and... Snowy Owls! Finally! We just came

upon them, three of them, out on the frozen chaos of an ice-clogged estuary, at home and busy catching voles, mice (and I'm thinking maybe lemmings)!

The rest of the day went by in a frozen blur, new life birds turned up, but how could we tell? Chilled to the bone, fingers blue and numb, our birds appeared as vague images in shaking binoculars through wind-teared eyes, and they just wouldn't hold still what for the trembling we had from the cold.

Back home that night, after thawing out, I was on the phone rounding up members of the coming Snowy Owl expedition. My immediate family took no convincing, all of us eager to see this fabled bird. Back down to the coast within days we went, and sure enough, the Owls were there, and we watched them to our heart's content, from inside the car.

At one point, there came a knock on our fogged up window and I heard a voice with a slightly British accent, or was it a North Shore patrician accent with British undertones saying, "I say, have you seen the Ross's Gull?"

We allowed as we hadn't and asked what to look for. He stated it was an all-white gull with a slightly rosy hue, a very special bird indeed. We responded, "Well, have you seen the Snowy Owls?" feeling the Owls were every bit as impressive as some gull. He stepped back a bit surprised by the intensity and level of enthusiasm and triumph over our owls find. He shrugged and disappeared into the Salisbury wind and we went back to exalting over owls.

Later that week, *Time Magazine* carried an article about the "Ross's Gull Riot" in Newburyport harbor. It seems that the Ross's Gull was a vagrant from the Bering Straits off Alaska, never before seen in the lower 48, and that every half-mad bird listing life-lister had come from all over the US to see the bird. Even the great Roger Tory Peterson had hauled himself out of retirement to join the

throng in the Newburyport coal yards where by then had formed a true army, bristling with telescopes and cameras, scrutinizing every tawdry mundane sea gull in search of the elegant Ross's.

Even then, we didn't care. We were feeling pretty superior with our Owl.

But I was to have one more Snow Owl adventure, just a few years ago. I got a call one dark mid-December afternoon from Betty Waidlich who told me there was a large white owl sitting on the rocky point that juts out into the river at Cabot Camp, where the Millers meets the Connecticut. My totem bird had finally come to me and was waiting just a few minutes downriver.

And indeed, there he was, sitting upright on the point. He must have winged his way down from the far north, just as I had always imagined, a white specter floating down, passing under the great bridge, and resting now on the promontory. We approached him slowly; he seemed to pay no mind. We stayed at least 50 yards away, got our fill of snowy owl impressions and turned slowly away to leave him in peace, when, just then, he toppled off the rock and lay motionless on a

ridge above the water.

We ran up to him in a flash, he was in a deep swoon, with no strength left. I cradled him in my arms, his fierce yellow eyes opened and looked into mine, his huge black talons tried to clutch my arm briefly, and his white head sagged, giving up the ghost. This wasn't the way it was supposed to happen. This wasn't what I'd been waiting a lifetime for.

We carried his body reverently back to the car. Later, I called Carolyn Boardman to see what she could tell me. She was the local expert on raptors and the Barton Cove eagles, and a friend. More than likely, she said, the owl had come down the river, driven south by the lack of food, had probably made it to the confluence, on the point of death by starvation. Nothing more to be said, other than that it was illegal to have this bird in my possession.

The ground was by then frozen, and having no alternative, it spent the rest of the winter in the freezer in the kitchen. When spring finally arrived, we buried the owl below the house, along the river, standing up, its great white head facing north.

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