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The Montague Reporter

YEAR 5 - NO. 16

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THE VOICE OF THE VILLAGES

JANUARY 25, 2007

The Feral Cats of Turners Falls

BY JANEL NOCKLEBY
TURNERS FALLS - The feral cats of Turners Falls, who predominantly lurk on 4th Street between Avenues A and L, have many friends and a few detractors. They own the block, so the good opinion of residents seems to affect that not a whit.

One accommodating friend, long-time resident Bonnie Wagner, feeds the outdoor cats once or twice a day on 4th street. Her bowls of Kibbles usually find shelter from the rain beneath a mailbox, or on the stoop of a friendly office building. "Some of the cats are so desperate for affection. It's heartbreaking," said Wagner. "Some of them you can't get near. But, I try very hard not to get too close to them personally. It breaks my heart if all of a sudden they're not there, and you don't know what happened to them," she said.

Wagner reports that there seem to be fewer homeless cats now than before she started feeding them - about four years ago - though she's not sure why. Perhaps some

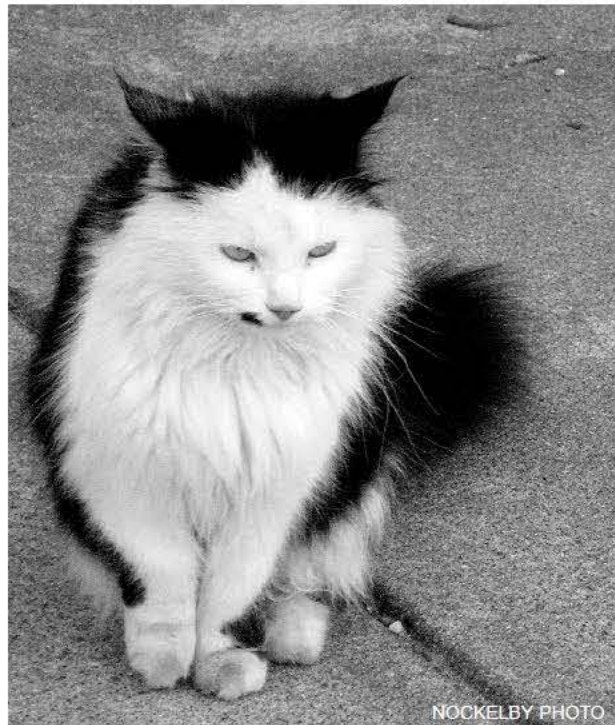
have been taken in, or perhaps there is less dumping of cats, she speculates. She is happy to see that the cats that do remain appear to be healthier, and that cat homelessness downtown may be decreasing.

"I started being a cat lover, you know, years and years ago," Wagner said. She can't explain why she started feeding them, but perhaps it was the same instinct that caused her to adopt Samantha, a cat who was about to become homeless a few years ago.

The 4th Street cats know her voice well. When she calls "Kitty, Kitty, Kitty," sometimes up to six cats show up. Wagner's favorite is an old tomcat who loves to talk and talk. "I've got my talker. He's telling these tall, tall stories," she laughed.

Might Mr. Tom be doing something else in addition to talking? Random inquiries into the state of cat-hood on 4th Street revealed that at least two cats living on the block are currently pregnant. One is a stray

see **FERAL** pg 10



NOCKLEBY PHOTO

4th Street Kitty with a beauty mark.

Montague Sixth Graders will Move to Middle School

G-M Committee Votes for Intra-District Choice

BY LISA MERKEL

The Gill-Montague Regional School Committee voted in favor of two major initiatives at their January 23rd meeting at the Turners Falls High School. By an 8-1 vote, the committee approved a motion by Valeria Smith to allow intra-district choice, to give parents the option to send their children to any of the elementary schools in the Gill-Montague district, regardless of which town they live in. Intra-district choice students would be assigned to available classroom seats according to a policy still being fine-tuned by the committee. Terry Lapichinski cast the sole vote against the motion, which must now be approved by special town meetings in both Gill and Montague in order to come into effect.

Secondly, by a vote of 8-0, with Ted Castro-Santos abstaining, the committee approved a motion by Valeria Smith to move the sixth grades from Sheffield Elementary School and Montague Center School to the Great Falls Middle School. The elementary schools

see **SCHOOLS** pg 11



Superintendent Heading to Quabbin Regional

BY KATHY LITCHFIELD

Gill-Montague Regional School District Superintendent Sue Gee has accepted the position of superintendent of the Quabbin Regional School District, pending final contract negotiations.

ALI URBAN PHOTO

"It's an excellent school district, and it seems to really be moving forward with many wonderful programs for the students," she said, mentioning "a world language department with a five-year study of Chinese,"

see **GEE** pg 7

Outerspace Band Lands at Route 63 Roadhouse

BY SEAN LEVEILLE

MILLERS FALLS - I blasted off to see the Outerspace Band at the Route 63 Roadhouse in Millers Falls last Saturday, January 20th. The band, local heroes from way out in Wendell is revving up for their 40th Anniversary Tour, a distinction not too many rock bands beyond the Stones can claim.

As the second set gathered steam in a club packed with longhaired locals sporting more than just a touch of gray, lead guitarist John Moses remarked, "This is our



DETMOLD PHOTO

Outerspacemen John 'Klondike' Koebler on bass; John Moses, lead guitar; and David Lenson, sax, with Michael Wiskey keeping the beat at the Roadhouse Saturday night.

Falls tour. We are playing every roadhouse from here to Turners Falls. That includes Shelburne Falls, maybe

see **BAND** pg 13

PET OF THE WEEK

She's A Gem!



Jewel

Jewel is a four-year-old female domestic shorthair cat in need of a good home. You couldn't find a more lovely girl! She is all white with an orange splash on her head, part of her tail had to be amputated after she had a little motor vehicle accident – look both ways kids! She loves to snuggle and curl up in your lap. One thing Jewel does not love is dogs. She thinks they are a big problem! She does get along well with other cats. For more information on adopting Jewel, please contact the Dakin Pioneer Valley Humane Society at 413-548-9898 or via email at leverett@dpvhs.org.

CARNEGIE LIBRARY NEWS

Family Fun Day

BY LINDA HICKMAN

TURNERS FALLS- There will be a Family Fun Day at the Carnegie Library on Saturday, January 27th, from 2 – 4 p.m. The event will include action stories read by Children's Librarian Linda Hickman, pirate activities, story stretchers, winter arts and crafts and Books for Bingo. The program is designed for elementary school aged children, but entire families are

encouraged to attend. There will be a special raffle for all family members who are issued library cards that afternoon. There will also be a used book sale in the basement of the Carnegie Library from noon – 4 p.m. the same afternoon to benefit the Friends of the Montague Public Libraries. Thousands of books are available at \$2 a bag! For more information, call 863-3214.



PHOTO BY LINDA HICKMAN

TURNERS FALLS- Dwight Balk of Northfield was very intrigued with Speedy the Box Turtle at the Franklin County Pre-school Expo on Saturday, January 20th at the Great Falls Discovery Center. Speedy was one of the animals brought by Colleen Kelly of the Hitchcock Center in Amherst. Over 100 people attended the event, which featured information concerning pre-school options, childcare, play groups, and story hours and other community resources. The event was cosponsored by area Community Partnerships for Children Councils and the Great Falls Discovery Center.

Faces & Places



PHOTO BY MARY-ANN DEVITA PALMIERI

From left: Marcia Gagliardi of Athol, Massachusetts; Julia Bonafine of Cuttingsville, Vermont; Dorthie (her full name) of Wendell, Claire Chang of Gill; Frances Crowe of Northampton, and Hattie Nestel of Athol, during a Shut-It-Down affinity group demonstration Tuesday morning, January 23rd, at the Vermont Yankee nuclear reactor in Vernon, Vermont. With Paki Wieland of Northampton, who also chained herself to the group in the driveway, they were arrested by Brattleboro police and charged with trespass and disorderly conduct.

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HAPPY BIRTHDAY EDNA

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NEW SALEM & WENDELL LIBRARY NEWS

Book Connect Enters Fourth Season

"On The Same Page" is underway again, with readers in New Salem and Wendell. The New Salem and Wendell libraries are excited to announce they are embarking on their fourth season of 'Book Connect - Two Towns, One Book' and they are letting surrounding communities know:

Everyone's Reading It... Are You? This is the logo for the book discussion event we have been holding each winter after the holidays for New Salem and Wendell communities, as well as neighboring towns. The book title up for discussion this year is *The Earth Knows My Name*, by Patricia Klindienst. Food, culture and sustainability in the gardens of ethnic Americans is the theme

of her book. Klindienst is an eloquent writer and speaker. She is a master gardener and an award-winning scholar and teacher. She lives in Guilford, CT and teaches writing each summer at Yale University.

Klindienst will be visiting New Salem on March 4th to greet readers and talk about her book. In addition, New Salem will be holding a book discussion on Feb. 18th at 3 p.m. in the New Salem Library and Wendell will hold a discussion group on Feb. 11th at 3 p.m. in the Wendell Town Hall.

New Salem Library has also scheduled two complimentary follow-up programs for area residents. On March 18th the program will be "Growing and

Using Herbs" with Kathy Morris, and on March 25th Larry Siegel will present, "Planning and Planting Your Garden."

Funding for these programs has been provided by the Massachusetts Board of Library Commissioners with funds from a LSTA Grant.

Anyone interested in more information on these programs can contact either library. New Salem Public Library (978) 544-6334 hours are Tuesday noon to 8 p.m., Thursday 9 a.m. to 3 p.m. and Saturday 9 a.m. to 1 p.m. Wendell Free Library (978) 544-3559 hours are Tuesday 3 to 6 p.m., Wednesday 1 to 8 p.m. and Saturday 9:30 a.m. to 2:30 p.m.

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SENIOR CENTER ACTIVITIES Jan. 29th - Feb. 2nd

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

Monday, 29th
10:15 a.m. Aerobics
11:00 a.m. PACE Aerobics
1:00 p.m. Canasta
Tuesday, 30th

9:30 a.m. T'ai Chi
Wednesday, 31st
10:15 a.m. Senior Aerobics
12:45 p.m. Bingo
Thursday, 1st
1 p.m. Pitch
Friday, 2nd
10:15 a.m. Senior Aerobics
11 a.m. PACE Aerobics

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

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

Monday, 29th
9:30 a.m. Exercise
9:45 a.m. Library
12 Noon Pitch
Tuesday, 30th
9 a.m. Aerobics
12:30 p.m. Painting
Wednesday, 31st
9:30 a.m. Line Dancing
12 Noon Bingo
Thursday, 1st
9 a.m. Aerobics
12:30 p.m. Shopping

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

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EAGLE WATCH

Another Season of Eagle Watching

BY PAT CARLISLE

GREAT FALLS - Our famous Eagle couple are again preparing the nest on Eagle Island in Barton Cove for eggs to lay and chicks to hatch in the weeks ahead.

The excitement of being able to watch the activity on local access Channel 17, MCTV, or Greenfield Channel 15, is a treat we've been able to enjoy for many years, thanks to a collaboration with the US Fish and Wildlife Department.

Nest viewing in January shows us fresh sticks and white pine branches being arranged in the nest. Leaves and grasses will arrive next, to line the 'egg cup,' in the center of the bottom of the nest, where the eggs will be laid.

We know from past years an egg will appear by March 4th or 5th, if all is well, and a second and possibly a third will appear at three or four day intervals.



The eagle pair is preparing their nest for eggs to come in the weeks ahead.

Incubation takes 35 days or so. With close attention, we may see a small hole or crack being made by an eaglet's egg tooth, when its time for life outside the shell arrives.

The attentive care both parents take with feeding, protecting, rearranging the nest, and providing fresh fish is one of the best educational experiences nature has to offer in our world. We marvel at the rapid growth and agility, as an eagle chick

begins to walk on feet that appear too big, and wonder what they think when they arrive at the upper rim of the nest to view their world.

Too soon, they will fledge. We watch as they exercise huge wings, now equipped with feathers for first flight. They may disappear for a day or two in late July, but with fresh fish still being supplied, they will reappear and be seen in the area until late September or October.

We invite any folks who do not have access to local TV to visit the Great Falls Discovery Center in Turners Falls to see live eagle activity on the monitor there. The Center is open from 10:00 a.m. to 4:00 p.m., every Friday or Saturday. Get acquainted!

Iraqi Children's Art Exchange

BY NICOLE KAPISE

GREENFIELD - The co-op in Greenfield is currently host to a simple yet eloquent collection of art. In the seating areas upstairs and down, the paintings and photographs are a splash of color that catch your eye as you walk through. Some beautifully rendered, others drawn by still shaky hands, the paintings all bear the same messages of good will and hopes for peace and happiness. They are created by young people, in a cultural exchange program between children in America and children in Iraq.

In color, and black and white, the accompanying photos feature Iraqi children in refugee camps and patients in the Al Mansour Pediatric Hospital in Baghdad who are cancer victims of lingering Gulf War Syndrome from the 1991 war with Iraq.

"The photographs in the exhibit are not of the war or of the devastation in Baghdad. They are, to some extent, ordinary images of Iraqi men, women and children who have managed to escape injury and death, who are struggling to live through this war and occupation. They are meant to put a face on people we hear about daily in the news, but about whom we know very little," says Claudia Lefko who has collected the children's art and taken the photographs.

The art presented at Green Fields Market is only a portion of the entire art exchange pro-



PHOTO: CLAUDIA LEFKO

16-year-old Ban Ali from Baghdad, works on her painting which became one of the featured works in the children's art exchange exhibit.

ject. For information concerning the exhibit, or to borrow an exhibit from the collection, or to arrange an art exchange project, contact Claudia Lefko at: iraqichildrenart@verizon.net, or visit the website at: www.iraqichildrenart.org.

The collection, titled *Hello Iraq, How Are You?* will be on display at Green Fields Market until January 31st.

Hidden Landscape: A Film Preview Event At the Great Falls Discovery Center

Breaking new ground in collaborative research, the 'Hidden Landscape' project explores the legend of an ancient 'Lost Race' in Eastern North America and investigates the widely disputed origin of the region's mysterious stone ruins.

Hidden Landscapes begins by offering an introductory history of how scientific, Native, and antiquarian interpretations have developed over time. The later segments follow archeological teams of scientists who work with both Native American tribal representatives and antiquarian

origins of several newly discovered stone ruins in Eastern North America.

After the showing, the audience will meet the filmmaker, Theodore Timreck, and be able to discuss the film with him. Timreck is a research associate with the Arctic Studies Center of the Smithsonian's National Museum of Natural History.

He is the producer of the Smithsonian's Arctic Studies and Paleo Indian Web Sites as well as several television works.

The event takes place Thursday, February 1st from 7:00 - 9:00 p.m. at the Discovery Center.

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JOE GRAVELINE

Valentines Day Greetings

Tell your loved ones that you are thinking of them on Valentines Day, in a special section of the February 8th *Montague Reporter*, and benefit curriculum enrichment programs at the Gill-Montague schools at the same time.

Buy a 2 inch square ad with your personalized message for \$15, or a 3 inch tall by 2 inch wide ad for \$20. Photos are welcome. The *Montague Reporter* will donate half of the proceeds from these ads to the Gill Montague Education Fund, to be used to augment students' classroom education with arts, music and special activities.

Send Valentines Day messages and photos by February 6th to: reporter@montaguema.net, or by regular mail to Montague Reporter, 24 Third Street, Turners Falls, MA 01376.

For more information, call: 413-863-8666. *Tell someone you love them, and enrich our students today.*

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Entergy's 'Green' Strategy

BY RANDY HOLHUT
VERNON, VT - Readers of many Vermont dailies noticed full-page ads that Entergy, owners of the Vermont Yankee nuclear power plant, took out on Tuesday, January 9th.

The ad, which touted nuclear power as being "green," seemed to be timed to coincide with the start of the Vermont State Legislature's consideration of the effects of climate change and what can be done to reduce the production of carbon dioxide and other gases that contribute to global warming.

The nuclear power industry has jumped into the climate change debate and is touting nuclear power as an environmentally friendly energy source. Certainly, in the search for alternatives to the carbon-based fuels such as coal, oil and natural gas that produce much of our nation's electricity, nuclear power appears to be a clean and safe alternative.

Nuclear power is clean, if you overlook the fact that radioactivity is released in every phase of the nuclear production cycle from the mining of the uranium through the spent fuel that no one has figured out what to do with. Factor in the amount of carbon-based fuel used for uranium

mining, fuel fabrication, reactor construction and waste storage, and nuclear power is closer to natural gas in terms of greenhouse gas emissions.

And nuclear power is safe, if you overlook the potential for meltdowns, malfunctions and terrorist attacks, as well as the potential for more nuclear weapons from the increased production of fissile materials from reactors.

Leaving aside those two obvious flaws in the nuclear industry's sales pitch, what nuclear power is not is cheap.

Despite more than \$150 billion in federal subsidies over the past 60 years -- about 30 times more than renewable energy sources such as wind or solar -- electricity generated by nuclear energy is substantially more expensive.

Without government subsidies, building a nuclear reactor is prohibitively expensive. That's why companies like Entergy are trying to squeeze every last bit out of facilities such as Vermont Yankee. Entergy can make a profit off VY only because others have paid the upfront costs of building the reactor years ago.

The other knock against nuclear power is that it addresses a small part of the energy problem. Driving our cars and heating and cooling our homes are the two biggest sources of greenhouse gases. Nuclear reactors produce only electricity, and, electricity production, according to the International Energy Agency, amounts to about 39 percent of the world's total greenhouse gas emissions.

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KAREN WILKINSON ILLUSTRATION

Institute estimates that the cost of building a new nuclear reactor in the United States would be between \$2 billion and \$5 billion. If that same amount of money was devoted to insulating drafty buildings, installing energy-efficient lighting and appliances in homes and offices or buying low-emission cars and trucks, it would reduce carbon fuel consumption seven times more than the single nuclear reactor.

Or, to multiply the cost-benefit ratio further; according to a recent study by the Massachusetts Institute of Technology, it would take 300 new nuclear reactors in the United States and at least 1,500 worldwide (there are only 440 worldwide now) to make any kind of significant impact on greenhouse emissions. That would mean building a new nuclear plant every six months for the next 60 years.

In short, not only is nuclear power not clean and green, it is economically impractical -- even with the massive government subsidies the industry receives. A truly clean and green solution to global warming will mean greater investment in energy conservation and alternative energy sources such as wind, hydro and solar. That is the direction the world should be headed in.

This editorial first appeared in the Brattleboro Reformer on Saturday, January 13th. It is reprinted here with permission from the Brattleboro Reformer; www.reformer.com

LETTERS TO THE EDITOR

Call for Montague Veterans

The Trustees of the Soldiers Memorial in the town of Montague are preparing for a groundbreaking of the memorial renovation project to take place during the May 28th Memorial Day Ceremony at the memorial, following a parade down Avenue A in Turners Falls.

Veterans who lived in Montague at the time of their enlistment whose names do not already appear on either the WWII, Korean, and Vietnam Monuments may submit a copy of their DD Form 214, (discharge form), to Soldiers Memorial, 1 Avenue A, Turners Falls, MA 01376. If your name already appears on the monuments, there is no need to reapply.

DD Form 214 dates should indicate that veterans served during the following periods:

WWII - Sept 16, 1940 - Dec 31, 1946

Korean War - June 25, 1950 - Jan 31, 1955

Vietnam War - Feb 1, 1955 - May 7, 1975

Deadline for submitting forms is February 28th, 2007. Home of Record on DD Form 214 must indicate that the individual lived in one of the five villages that make up the town of Montague upon entry into active military duty.

The trustees will continue the drive for funds until the renovation project is completed, and wish to thank all of those who have so far contributed to the renovation of the Montague Soldiers Memorial.

Donations may be sent to the Soldiers Memorial Renovation, 1 Avenue A, Turners Falls, MA, 01376.

- Art Gilmore
Soldiers Memorial Trustees
Millers Falls

Skate Park Fence Confusion

Thanks for the supportive article on the Turners Falls skate park in your January 4th edition. Though over the summer and fall it seemed not much was happening, there was in fact some work even then by teens and adults on disassembling and carting away the non-salvageable ramps, as well as general weeding and cleanup at the park.

One part of the article, however, left the unfair implication that town administrator Frank Abbondanzio was responsible for delaying the fence work by many months over the issue of how high the new fence had to be. I would like to clear up that confusion.

I was the one who originally talked to Frank about the fence height in a phone conversation. At the time of this first phone call, eight feet was the height specified by the town's former

insurance vendor. This was something Frank checked on and not something, as indicated in the article, he just recalled from memory. Later on in the year, I talked to Frank again, and he was helpful in pointing me to the town's new insurance carrier. It was at that time we received news that a six-foot height was all the new insurance vendor was calling for.

I think many of us feel that the six-foot height is a much more reasonable standard. I don't think the fence height issue alone kept the park from being used all summer, since there was definitely other work that needed to be accomplished (and some still remains) before opening the skate park. Suffice it to say, we're now definitely a lot closer!

- Michael Bosworth
The Brick House
Turners Falls

American Dead in Iraq as of 1/24/07



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GUEST EDITORIALS

Work Together for the Benefit of All Our Schools

BY STACY LANGKNECHT
MONTAGUE CENTER - Now that the GMRSD school committee has made its official and final decision on elementary school configuration, the backlash from a number of people is astounding. I can't help but wonder where these people were when the decision was being made? There were five public forums held in the community last fall, where many of the current questions and issues could have been brought up.

I do believe the decision was made fairly. There was plenty of discussion over each option at the school committee meetings, and actually, when the question was put out there to present an argument that would show how making Hillcrest K-5/6 would be more beneficial to the students' education than to

expand Montague Center, few spoke up.

I'm also surprised that someone who was a member of the school committee for so long is being so disrespectful of the process the committee has gone through. This school committee held their discussions in public, with legal counsel present, and followed all of the rules and regulations. This was clearly a difficult and painful experience for each of them.

I find it extremely disappointing that in the heat of the negative reaction, people are labeling others inaccurately. Judging from the attendance at the Montague Center School forum, I wouldn't refer to MCS supporters as a "minority." Opponents of the decision are distorting the truth to make their arguments sound stronger.

Numbers have been thrown out there that just don't make sense. We all know that numbers can be manipulated to look good either way. This process has taught me not to trust the numbers, because it seems that most of them can't be backed up.

The "campaign" that's being run reminds me of the many nasty political campaigns that take place across our country. As an American citizen, I'm embarrassed at how unprofessional and rude some of our candidates have been, and as a parent, I've discussed them with my children as an example of how not to behave. In the context of the Hillcrest/Montague Center campaign, I appeal to the community to set a good example for our children by expressing your feelings respectfully and showing how

people can work together despite their differences.

The current reaction is causing divisiveness within our community. Is that the goal? Do people want Montague Center to "secede" from the town? Sometimes I wonder about that. I assure you, I don't use this term loosely, but more and more it's been feeling like discrimination against the Montague Center School and its school community.

What is it, really? Why do some people in this town insist on harboring negative feelings? I'm not native to Montague, but in the 15 years I've lived here I've heard enough talk to conclude that it started somewhere way back when. Well, we're all adults here, aren't we? Don't we teach our children to forgive and forget? Is there even some-

thing that one "side" or the other needs to be forgiven for?

I propose that we all act like adults and show our children how it's done. A decision was made by our school committee, and I believe it's our job to move forward with that decision. It is within our power to make the GMRSD stronger and better than ever! I am in the process of planning a district-wide fundraising campaign to benefit all of our schools. We will all experience those dreaded cuts (with or without any school closing), and with that in mind, perhaps we can work together to prevent some of them and minimize the damage. If anyone wants to join me in this collaborative effort, please contact me for meeting information.

GMRSD Makes Decisions for the Good of the Whole

BY MIKE & AMY JOHNSON
MONTAGUE - We applaud the GMRSD school committee for their dedication and steadfast determination to make the right decisions for the betterment of our school district as a whole, and to make our schools the best they can be for the whole community. We live in a great town and are blessed with a district full of diversity and people willing to talk about diversity. It shows. Just talk to a neighbor, attend a meeting, get a cup of coffee in town, go for a walk, you'll run into somebody who'll want to share their opinion. Diversity is what makes our towns so enjoyable. And this diversity is exactly what inspires us to educate our children here.

As such, this diversity makes us a 'melting pot' of values, opinions and hard work in Gill and Montague. We believe these core values motivate the volunteers that make up our school committee and the people who pay taxes in this town. Please remember that our school committee members not only volunteer their time and reputations in Gill and Montague,

they pay taxes in these towns as well. They have spent countless hours, days, weeks and months, and years coming to a very difficult decision to try and move this district forward while keeping the best interests of our kids and the pocketbooks of our taxpayers in mind.

Most importantly, they have tried to keep the best interests, options and choices for our kids, families, and community as a whole in the forefront of any decision they make. Nobody wanted to close or downsize any school in our district. However, they made a very tough decision that could allow for the district to focus on strengths, while keeping a tri-campus model open. Essentially, they wanted to contain the flood of students choicing out to neighboring districts and to try to heighten the number of students willing to actually choice into GMSRD.

No one can tell what the hard numbers are until budgets are actually in place, but it is conceivable that if the school committee had made a different decision, the eventual outflow of choiced kids

could have made the taxpayers of Montague pay much, much more to maintain district schools in the future.

In addition, the school committee has tried hard to be sensitive to the attitudes and sensitivities of each affected school, family and child in our community by reaching out in public forums and paying close attention to our feelings in general. Their decision always kept in mind the tax sensitivities of the district. If you watched just one GMSRD school committee meeting on MCTV or attended just one forum then you know what we are talking about.

We believe we have a great district, on many levels: buildings, curriculum, teachers and staff. Yes, some of the buildings need work, and we are organizing fundraising efforts to address this need, and we are also addressing changing school names to better reflect our whole community. We want to galvanize as much as possible to be a community made up of five villages, or rather five villages and a town, to work on common goals.

Remember, "It takes a vil-

lage to raise a child." Or here in Montague, it takes five villages, a town, a community focused on the needs of the children, parents and taxpayers dedicated to investing in our school district and the growth of our town, plus a group of motivated folks interested in making this happening for the good of the whole community.

Let's come together, fellow citizens, taxpayers, neighbors, and friends. Let's make it happen!

16TH ANNUAL POET'S SEAT POETRY CONTEST
 Sponsored by the Friends of the Greenfield Public Library
 Open to all Franklin County residents. Contestants may submit up to three unpublished poems (previous winners are ineligible). Awards will be given in three categories: first, second and third place in the adult division and the four top poems in each of the youth divisions - ages 12-14 and 15-18. Deadline for entries is March 5th. Enclose a SASE if you would like your poems returned. The Awards Ceremony will be held April 26th in honor of National Poetry Month.
 For more information, contact Hope Schneider, 775-1833 or Cynthia Snow, 625-0135.

HIGHLIGHTS OF THE ERVING POLICE LOG

Note Left on Table

Thursday 1-18 1:22 p.m. Report of a one-car accident on Route 2 west-bound. No injuries.	Saturday 1-20 9:48 a.m. Responded to the International Paper building on Paper Mill Road regarding a broken window. Report taken.
Friday 1-19 8:43 p.m. After a motor vehicle stop, [redacted] was issued a criminal application for unlicensed (expired) operation of a motor vehicle and speeding.	Tuesday 1-23 9:30 a.m. Request for a welfare check at a High Street address. No answer. Gained entry to house. Subject not home. Officer left a note on the table.

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GUEST EDITORIALS

New England is Ready for Large-scale Geothermal Power Production

BY CHRISTOPHER SAWYER-LAUCANNO
TURNERS FALLS - Last June, president Bush made a pitch for building nuclear reactors as an alternative to coal and oil-fired generating facilities. "Nuclear power is one of America's safest sources of energy," said Bush.

As usual, the president is off the mark. Even if Bush and Company want to ignore the potential for radiation leaks,

catastrophic accidents, and the fact there are no viable long-term solutions for storing nuclear waste, his own Homeland Security folks have warned that nuclear plants are deemed serious targets for terrorist action. There is a reason that no new nuclear facilities have been constructed in this country since 1979: they are neither safe, green nor reliable.

There is a true green

alternative, however, to fossil fuel generating plants, and to nukes. In Northern Europe, and on the West Coast of North America, geothermal power production - which uses heat under the earth's surface as a natural fuel source - is proving to be a real and growing solution. California, in fact, is the national leader in the use of geothermal energy for electricity generation. Seven percent of the state's total power production output is geothermally generated. With its 41 working geothermal plants, California accounts for almost 40 percent of the total worldwide geothermal power production. The combined production capacity of approximately 1,900 megawatts of electrical power per hour is enough to supply nearly two million typical households. And new plants are underway.

Up until now, geothermal energy has been thought to be impractical for use in New England. In contrast to the Western United States, where massive amounts of heat lurk near the earth's surface, in New England the heat is further underground. And yet, in New England, at just a depth of three to five miles, the earth's temperature reaches about 300 degrees Fahrenheit, well above the temperature needed to boil water.

As MIT professor Jefferson Tester notes, geothermal production is possible in New England due to advances in drilling technology that allow for heat extraction at depths up to six miles. "All the technology that goes into drilling and completing oil and gas production systems... could in principle be extended to deep heat mining. Hydraulic methods have been the ones that hold the most promise, where you go into the system and you pressurize the rock - just water pressure."

While Tester is interested in the math and theory of geothermal generation, Atlantic Geothermal, in Florence, MA, a small but visionary company founded by Wendell resident J. David Reynolds, is actively working to prove that geothermal power is viable for New England. Reynolds, who studied engineering at Northeastern, has devised a system that uses ocean water to power the turbines for making electricity. Reynolds' plan is ambitious but, given today's drilling technology, quite possible.

His plan, simply put, is to bore a tunnel from the ocean inland at a depth of about three or four miles. Geologic maps of coastal New England show that at this depth the temperature reaches at least 300 degrees F.

Reynolds calculates that a tunnel 50 feet in diameter, and some 80 to 100 miles long, would be needed to produce enough constant heat to generate 1,600 megawatts of electricity per hour, nearly as much as that produced geothermally in all of California, or at the giant Hoover Dam that currently outputs 1,731 megawatts hourly.

Reynolds says the technology is here, the water is here, the heat is here. He also likes to point out that 100 years ago the state built a 25-mile long aqueduct from the Quabbin to Boston using mainly manual labor, (his system proposes robotic drilling equipment). And while he admits it would be expensive to construct, given the return of free power forever for a utility company, the cost could be recovered within as little as ten years.

Geothermal provides absolutely clean, absolutely renewable power, with no waste by-products. In fact, the only by-product is desalinized water, which could also reduce dependence on the Quabbin and other reservoirs.

If industry buys in to Reynolds' idea, New England's dependence on dirty, non-renewable fossil fuels for electricity generation will become a thing of the past.

MCTV Schedule

Channel 17: January 19 through January 25

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

MCTV to Hold Anniversary Gala Open House Saturday Jan. 27th

BY MICHAEL MULLER - TURNERS FALLS - To celebrate a successful first year as the public access cable television station for the town of Montague, MCCI is throwing an Anniversary Gala and Open House party on Saturday, January 27th from 4:00 through 7:00 p.m., at MCTV studios, 34 2nd Street in Turners Falls. The event will be aired live, to include interviews with party attendees, local TV show producers, station staff, board members and cable advisory committee members. The party is open to the public and fine food and beverages will be served buffet style. While there, you can find about our free trainings, try out the cameras, and get to know the board of directors and staff of MCTV. At the same time, we hope you'll consider joining the station and learn to use the equipment through our training series. Membership entitles you to borrow equipment to do your own shoots on the road. If you belong to an organization or group that hosts special events we'd love to get you on the air. Please call the studio for more information at 413-863-9200.

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Gill-Montague Gala Producer Works to Enrich, Entertain

BY ALI URBAN

The producer of this year's Gill-Montague Gala wants to enrich students' learning experiences. According to Joyce Phillips, "Students learn more when their basic curriculum is enhanced with technology, science, art, music and physical education. Enrichment ties education together with our community."

Planning has begun for the Gill-Montague Education Fund's third annual Gill-Montague Gala. The program, "Velocity," scheduled for April 28th, will feature the Gregory Caputo Big Band. Before the curtain rises on the Gala at the High School auditorium, however, the GMEF board of directors must work to plan, coordinate and organize the event. What goes into producing such a big show? What happens before audience members take their seats?

GMEF assistant treasurer and Gala producer Joyce Phillips knows the drill. The Northfield native has worked on Gill-Montague Regional School District projects under the title of coordinator, manager, school committee chair, planner and arranger.

Phillips said that finding "Velocity" with the Gregory Caputo Big Band was the result of listening to radio station WIZZ. "I heard about his band performing in Connecticut for another education foundation. I

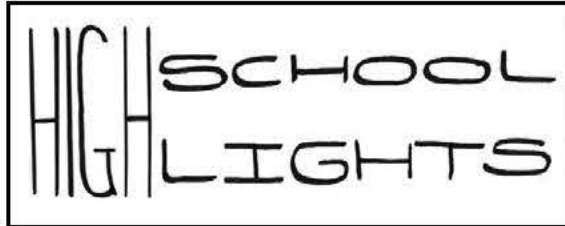
contacted Gregory, negotiated a contract, and on April 28th, the community will experience the fabulous sound of his 17-piece band," she said.

As the date gets closer, GMEF board members are contacting area businesses, organizations and individuals either in person or by mail with a request to support the GMEF through advertising and tier giving. Advertising includes underwriters, sponsors and general advertising.

"Money raised from underwriters and sponsors are to defray costs associated with the concert," Phillips said. All donations received from tier-givers, advertisements and ticket sales go directly to enrichment programs for the students. The second Gala raised \$3,000 more than the first, and Phillips hopes to see a similar increase with this year's Gala.

As producer, it is her responsibility to oversee all aspects of the Gala. She coordinates the production with staff (lighting, sound, stage crew), the program with concert artist(s) and provides support and oversees rehearsals.

Phillips, who studied business administration at Greenfield Community College and received a bachelor's degree from North Adams State College in marketing, works for the Department of Transitional Assistance as an IT site manager.



Joyce Phillips, GMEF Gala

Although she grew up in Northfield, she spent summers and school vacations with her godparents in Turners Falls. "Being a resident for almost 40 years, I am very proud of both my 'hometowns,'" she said.

She noted the importance of the Gala as a community-building event as well as an opportunity to support the schools and students. "The beauty of the Gala is that it makes a full circle," she said.

It begins with a community supporting the efforts of the GMEF with advertising and tier giving and continues as the community is enriched with quality entertainment. Finally, it concludes with the awarding of grants for students throughout the

district, bringing students' education to life. Among the projects funded so far by the GMEF this year are a portable mural project, robotics inventions program and a presentation by a Roman Legionary re-enactor.

Phillips has been involved in the community in her roles as religious education coordinator at the former St. Mary of the Assumption Parish, a member of the Our Lady of Czestochowa Parish Council and a lector at Our Lady of Czestochowa Church for 15 years. She was also a member of the Gill-Montague Regional School Committee and served for six years on the Great Falls Middle School/Turners Falls High School building committee, for which she developed and coordinated the dedication ceremony in October 2004.

Her work as a parent volunteer and eventually a paraprofessional in the school district for ten years made her see the students as challenging and exciting, the "hope" of tomorrow. "Our youth deserve all the

support, encouragement and opportunities we can offer them," she said.

GMEF vice president Sandra Miner appreciates Phillips' enthusiasm and motivation for supporting the students. "Joyce puts a tremendous amount of time, energy and dedication into the GMEF and the Gala. At every meeting she is well prepared with facts and ideas as to how we can make the Gala a huge success in order to continue granting the needs of the students," she said.

Despite the long hours spent ensuring the events' success, Phillips is grateful to have the opportunity to be a part of it. "I love the excitement, energy and enthusiasm that are generated throughout the process," she said. "It truly begins with the GMEF board. They are a fantastic group of people who are committed to its success." She appreciates the hard work of the people behind the concert and the entertainers.

"At the night of the concert when you hear the applause, see the smiles and total the money raised from all our supporters, I am motivated to begin again," she said.

Great Falls Middle School
Students of the Week:
Grade 7
 Casey Banning
Grade 8
 Jeremy White
 Christopher Phillips

HIGHLIGHTS OF THE MONTAGUE POLICELOG

Domestic Assault and Battery

Thursday 1-18

12:46 p.m. Report of a domestic disturbance at an L Street address. Found to be an argument over custody; verbal only. Peace restored.

6:53 p.m. Report of an assault on Avenue A. Caller states an unknown male hit him. Advised of options.

Friday 1-19

1:02 a.m. Walk in to station reported vandalism in Montague Center. Reporting party states his war protest sign on the Montague Town Common was smashed. Report taken.

5:36 p.m. Report of an unwanted person at the Farren Emergency Shelter. Subject put in protective custody.

6:05 p.m. After a motor vehicle stop at the corner of 7th

Street & Avenue A, [redacted] was arrested and charged with operating with a suspended license.

Saturday 1-20

1:15 a.m. After a motor vehicle stop on Federal Street, Millers Falls, [redacted] was arrested and charged with operating under the influence of liquor and marked lanes violation.

Sunday 1-21

11:47 a.m. [redacted] was arrested on a default warrant.

10:01 p.m. Walk-in to station reported a domestic disturbance. Officer spoke with reporting party. Found to be verbal only. Advised of options.

Tuesday 1-23

8:43 a.m. Report of a domestic disturbance at a 4th Street address. [redacted]

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

2:30 p.m. [redacted] was arrested on a straight warrant.

Wednesday 1-24

12:44 p.m. After a motor vehicle stop on Montague City Road by the golf course, [redacted] was arrested and charged with speeding, failure to stop for a police officer, operating to endanger, and marked lanes violations.

GEE

continued from pg 1

and a strings (music) program for students in grades 4-12, which is really well developed."

"I'm looking forward to the opportunity to use my particular experience and talents to continue the development of the educational program in the Quabbin district," Gee said.

While the Gill-Montague district has 1,190 students in the two towns, the Barre-based Quabbin district has 3,200 students from five towns, she said.

"I think my experience in Gill-Montague, with bringing in a new K-6 math program and instituting standards-based teaching and learning will definitely be very useful in my new job," she said.

Gee has been the superintendent of the Gill-

Montague district since 2003.

"I think the Gill-Montague Regional School District is a really wonderful district, and there are a lot of caring teachers and a lot of good things are happening for students. It's a great opportunity for someone new," she said.

"The biggest challenges facing the new superintendent will be moving forward with - and keeping focused on - further development of curriculum and instruction, as all of the other changes are taking place," including the reconfiguration of district elementary schools.

The Gill-Montague school committee has not made any decision as to how to move forward with the hiring of a new superintendent yet, Gee said, as the news of her leaving is so recent. The Quabbin district announced their choice of Gee on Monday.




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NOTES FROM THE ERVING SELECTBOARD

Special Town Meeting Scheduled for February 12th

BY KEVIN FOLEY - The selectboard met with the finance committee to begin discussion on the fiscal year 2008 budget Monday night, January 22nd, and to go over a 12-item warrant for a special town meeting to be held on February 12th at 7:30 p.m. at the Erving town hall.

Andrew Tessier, chair of the selectboard, and Jacquie Boyden, assistant assessor, stressed the need to plan for renovations to the Erving Wastewater Treatment Facility as the highest priority for the town in the fiscal

years ahead. Tessier has pegged the price tag for renovations at the aging facility at between \$5 and \$6 million; Tighe and Bond are preparing preliminary design estimates for the project.

The selectboard recommended that \$11,000 be moved from the town's undesignated fund balance (free cash) to the Wastewater Enterprise Fund to pay for design and engineering plans at the treatment plant. Administrative coordinator Tom Sharp said funding for the plans will be voted on at the special town meeting on February 12th.

The board recommended transferring \$6,000 from free cash to the wastewater enterprise fund to pay for a new position of Environmental Supervisor at the treatment plants. This person will oversee the town's three wastewater treatment facilities, in Erving, Erving Center and Farley, and oversee environmental monitoring of the town's two capped landfills. The \$6,000, if approved, would pay for advertising the Environmental Supervisor's position, along with salary (estimated between \$46,000 - \$52,000) for the final month of fiscal '07, if the new hire could be brought on board by then. In subsequent fiscal years, the money for the Environmental Supervisor's salary would come out of the wastewater enterprise fund, Tessier said, which currently has a balance of well over \$300,000.

"The money won't come from taxation," said Tessier.

Also on February 12th, voters at the special town meeting will be asked to create a \$100,000 stabilization fund dedicated to meeting the town's future insurance liabilities for retirees.

Tessier said the main concern is retirees who are under the age of 65. "A retired person over the age of 65 doesn't cost us that much," he said. "It's the ones who are under 65 and retired that cost a lot."

Also on the agenda for the special town meeting will be the transfer of \$50,000 from free cash to a stabilization fund for the town's future benefit liabilities for active employees. The fund will be used to buy back workers' accumulated sick days and unused vacation time when they retire.

Funds for a \$30,000 feasibility study for a new senior center will also be voted at the February 12th meeting. The study will be conducted with the help of the Franklin Regional Housing and Redevelopment Authority, which is assisting a committee of Erving seniors in developing plans to construct a senior housing complex near the elementary school. A new senior center is envisioned at the same location.

The selectboard approved the appointment of nine new call firefighters. Fire chief Mitchell LaClaire said he is pleased to reach his maximum quota of 30

firefighters, with these newly appointed employees.

Katie Dobias, Mark Longo, Sara Samson, Jeff Rollins, Debra Mathey, Shaina Kosloski, Jason Liimatainen, Matt Winn and Amber Marion are the new firefighters. Samson is an Emergency Medical Technician (EMT) and Marion is in the Junior Firefighters Program, a program to train young firefighters who don't get paid a regular salary.

Residents will also vote on the Erving cable commission receiving \$6,000 to assist with negotiating a new contract with ComCast, the town's cable provider. The money will go to pay a lawyer to assist with contract renegotiation. Mark Burnett, a teacher in Erving, has been appointed to the Cable Commission.

Regarding the proposed \$6.8 million '08 operating budget, Tessier said the town tries to limit departmental increases to two and a half percent, but warned that the school committee's budget could still "blow the town department budgets right out of the water." Boyden stressed that the school committee's budget is driven higher because of students who utilize school choice and students who attend charter schools. In fiscal year 2007, she said, the town of Erving lost \$153,137 to school choice tuition and \$113,085 to charter school tuition for a total of \$266,222. The town received \$58,650 back from charter school tuition reimbursement from the state. Boyden said the Erving school

committee has consistently turned down the option of allowing school choice students to come into the district to attend Erving Elementary School.

Schools Seek 10% Increase

The Erving school committee met on Wednesday night, January 24th, to present their proposed budget for fiscal year 2008. This year, the schools are seeking an operating and maintenance budget of \$2,967,418. The elementary budget will total \$1,935,667, an increase of about 9.4 percent from last year's. The secondary budget proposal is \$1,031,751, a 10.5 percent increase from last year.

The largest increase this year is anticipated in the budget for Special Education (SPED). SPED Contracted Service is estimated to increase \$57,440. The town expects to receive a significant amount of that money back in state reimbursement. SPED tuition is anticipated to increase this year by \$60,000, for a total SPED increase of \$117,440.

"Annually we shoot for a three to five percent increase," said school committee chair Bob Brown. "(This year there are) a few special needs children with transportation needs and other costs that can be up to \$130,000."

The budget proposal includes a plan to cut one teaching position and one part time position. The plan would also reduce the amount of days the school library is open by one every week, and cut one day from an office worker's schedule.

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Vandalized Sign in Free Speech Zone

BY DAVID DETMOLD

MONTAGUE CENTER - After a six month delay while he waited for the town to devise a policy for free speech and the use of public space, Taylor Hill Road resident Eric Chester finally received a permit to place a sign on the Montague town common last week, protesting US foreign policy and calling for an end to the Iraq War. He put the sign up on Wednesday, but by mid-day on Thursday, January 18th, some-

one had folded up the hinged A-frame signboard calling for, "U.S. Out of Iraq Now" and placed it flat on the ground behind a telephone pole.

Chester put it up again, but by Friday morning, the sign had been vandalized, hinges broken, signboard smashed.

"This is a clear attempt to violate my civil liberties," said Chester, who went to the police the same day to report the incident. He said the Montague police told him "they were pret-

ty busy," and did not hold out much hope the vandal would be apprehended.

Chester said he spoke with town administrator Frank Abbondanzio, who said, according to Chester, "We have a lot of vandalism around town."

Chester also spoke with American Civil Liberties Union lawyer William Newman, who he said called the incident a violation of state statute prohibiting the use of violence to dis-

rupt civil liberties, terming it a "hate crime."

Chester repaired the sign and replaced it on the town common on Wednesday, January 24th. "If it gets destroyed again, it will make a mockery of Montague's designating the town common a Free Speech Zone," he said. He asked residents to keep an eye on the common, and asked anyone with information about the recent act of vandalism to call him at 367-9356.

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NOTES FROM THE GILL SELECTBOARD

Stevens Seeks to Give Parcel of Land to Town

BY DAVID DETMOLD - North Cross Road landowner Gary Stevens, who owns acreage on both sides of the so-called "Back Road" to Northfield Mount Hermon, is seeking to give a triangular parcel of land at the intersection of Back Road and North Cross to the town, in order to avoid possible liability should an accident ever occur there. Stevens told the selectboard on Monday, January 22nd, that a recent survey of his land revealed that the historical layout of North Cross had shifted north onto his property, and cars using the triangular approach to Back Road were actually traveling on his private property.

"The road's come onto the property. If an accident took place on private property," the liability would fall to the landowner, Stevens said.

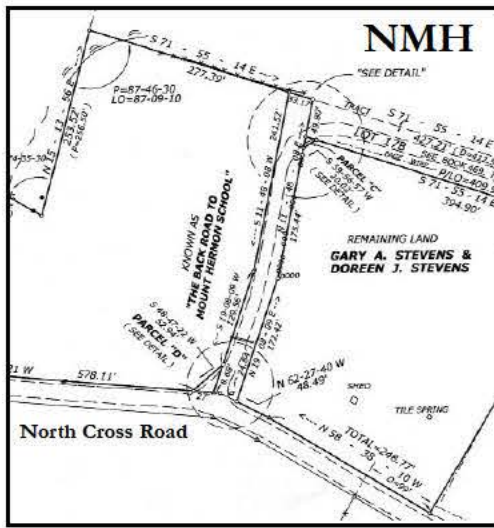
Administrative assistant Deb Roussel said she had consulted Gill town counsel Donna McNichol, who wondered why, if no houses were located on it, the town did not simply discontinue the Back Road, if in fact Back Road is proved to be a

town-owned road. Stevens, the son of selectboard member Leland Stevens, had done his homework. He presented a copy of a record of the Gill town meeting of March 5th, 1860, attesting to the fact that the town had voted on that date to accept the Back Road, which prior to that date had been part of his family's property since at least 1842.

"The road was put in long before Mount Hermon came in," Stevens recalled. He said he hoped to also give a triangular parcel at the northeast end of Back Road to Northfield Mount Hermon, due to similar concerns he had about that intersection. Speaking to McHichol's other point, he also said his son planned to build a house soon on the eastern side of Back Road.

The board told Stevens to prepare a letter outlining the proposed gift of land to present to town meeting.

In other news, the board requested the treasurer and the



North Cross Road landowner Gary Stevens hopes to donate the triangular parcel at the northwest intersection of Back Road and North Cross to the town because the road has shifted onto his private property there.

town clerk to seek assistants who could fill in at their posts in the event of emergencies, since these are both single person departments. "These are crucial positions," said board member Ann Banash, who noted the assistants would not necessarily need to be trained at town expense, and would not be paid unless needed. They could be from other towns, and already

familiar with the responsibilities of the job from their work for other communities, Banash suggested.

The board acted on the recommendation of police chief David Hastings to fill an opening for a full time member of the police department by appointing Adam Sokolosky, at the starting rate of \$16.79 per hour. "This is a wonderful hire," said Banash, who recalled Gill had sponsored Sokolosky at the police academy when he was a part timer some years ago. He went on to work full time for the Bernardston force, but kept on at Gill as a part timer.

"He's gone above and beyond the call on many occasions," said board member Leland Stevens.

The board also appointed two volunteer firefighters, Brian Levesque and Austin McComb.

The board set the mileage reimbursement rate for town employees using personal vehicles for town business at the IRS rate of 48.5 cents a mile,

up from 40.5 cents a mile last year.

The board noted only two more years remain on the repayment of the 20-year loan for the highway garage and safety complex, after this year's payment of \$18,644. The thought of freeing up that amount of money in the levy in two short years had Banash already working the calculator in eager anticipation.

Viewings of the former Mariamante parcel, 10 acres of town-owned land on Main Road that are the topic of a request for proposals (RFP) and development meetings with potential buyers, are scheduled for February 12th at 1 p.m., and February 15th at 10 a.m. Call town hall at 413-863-9347 for more information.

Nancy Griswold, a former Ashfield selectboard member with experience in real estate and title searches has sent a letter to the board expressing her interest in serving on the Gill board of assessors. Griswold, who has recently moved to town, will be invited to run for the post in the May election.

NOTES FROM THE MONTAGUE SELECTBOARD

Bonnett Appointed Acting Sergeant

BY ERIC WASILESKI - The selectboard met January 22nd, with good news for the Montague police department, a discussion about public displays including Eric Chester's protest sign on the Montague town common and some excitement about a liquor license for the soon to reopen Rendezvous.

According to Chief Ray Zukowski, unofficial results are in for the Sergeants' Exam, and officer Chris Bonnett passed. Zukowski suggested the board ask for official results from the state. In the meantime, he asked the board to appoint Bonnett to the position of acting sergeant. The board approved his request, with Bonnett slated to work 37.6 hours per week at a starting rate of \$19.58 per hour. When asked about Bonnett's experience the chief said, "Officer Bonnett graduated first in his police academy class. He has the support of other experienced officers." Board member Pat Allen remarked, "He is a real

asset to the force."

According to Zukowski, more good news for the police force includes two officers who have been singled out for awards. Officer Ryan Doherty is being recognized by M.A.D.D. (mothers against drunk driving) for his high arrest and conviction rate of people drinking and driving. Another member of the force being recognized is detective Douglas Brown; he is being recognized by the Northeast Children Advocacy Program for his work with families in crisis. "These awards are recognition for a job well done," Zukowski said.

In other business, town administrator Frank Abbondanzio noted Lauren Goldberg will be conducting in house training for town employees on conflict of interest issues. "In a small town like ours these issues come up from time to time. We are just keeping people informed on proper procedures," Abbondanzio said.

Trainings will be held on January 30th.

Prospects for the eventual reconstruction of Greenfield Road are advancing. Mass Highway is contemplating holding a 75% design completion briefing. Abbondanzio boldly predicted, "In a worst case scenario, the work will be done in the spring of '09."

Discussion turned to setting a date for annual town meeting: June 9th was tentatively picked, with June 2nd held as a backup date. Articles for the warrant are due by March 30th at 4 p.m. for the June 9th date or a week earlier for the June 2nd date.

Regarding private displays on public property, the board unanimously approved Eric Chester's request to place an anti-Iraq War sign on the Montague town common from January 16th to January 30th. The placement of the sign had brought up some concerns.

According to Abbondanzio, "There were questions raised as

to the appropriateness of putting (Chester's) sign so close to a veterans memorial when the flag is at half-mast." Board member Allen Ross pointed out that soon the town would have a disclaimer sign up to point out, "to any reasonable observer that the town was not responsible for the contents of the message." Board member Pat Allen pointed out that the town's signs would "mark the appropriate display area." The board decided that no sign or display should be put in front of any permanent memorial, or any other sign or display.

The final item on the agenda was a hearing on a liquor license for the soon-to-be reopened Rendezvous bar on Third Street, formerly Yesterdays. A small crowd gathered as the ownership group began its hearing. The new owners of the bar are Mark Wisnewski, Jaime Berger, Emily Brewster, and Chris Janke. Bar manager Wisnewski

and his colleague, Berger, approached the board and officially asked for a continuance, which the board granted, until Monday, February 29th at 7:30 p.m. The continuance resulted from the need to schedule a hearing for the former owner of Yesterday's regarding the transfer of the liquor license.

According to Wisnewski, "We are planning on doing \$130,000 in renovations in a slightly more upscale establishment, that would be a good match for a rejuvenating downtown area." Renovations would include soundproofing. He continued that the venue would also be geared more toward acoustic music than amplified music.

Berger added, "We will be hosting knitting meetings, a place to watch TV, a place to congregate. We will be installing a Wi-Fi computer system as well." (That means wireless internet computer connections, for those who might be wondering.)

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Jean Donovan, CRS, ABR
BROKER



NOCKELBY PHOTOS

Hoping for scraps outside the former bellybowl in October

FERAL from pg 1

who has just been adopted by realtor Jean Donovan, who has her office on 4th Street, and the other is an adorable juvenile

housecat named Muffin who accidentally escaped outside for a little unprotected sex just before she was to be spayed.

The young stray rescued by Donovan is anxious to get out

and play again too. Our interview was cut short when she dashed for the door. I had to summon up all of my cat whispering powers to coax her out from under a parked car and back to her new caring home. (A successful attempt, fortunately.)

While some of the cats are having good unwholesome fun, there are, of course, the occasional detractors in town who are not so receptive to the idea of wild roving cats populating Turners Falls. They each have their own reasons.

One self-described "idiot," who edits a local weekly newspaper and lives on 4th Street, accidentally left his car door slightly open on New Year's Eve. Later that evening a neighbor called police suspecting the car had been burgled, because the car door was now completely ajar. The "cat burglar" took nothing but managed to spray

an unpleasant *eau de chat* over the inside of the car before escaping.

This 4th Street resident also tries unsuccessfully to keep the wild cats from spraying on his front porch by cleaning it regularly and spraying some kind of 'Cat Begone' formula on the porch. However annoyed he may be by the nuisance factor of wild cats spraying, this same householder is also a sucker for kitties, and owns four. One of them was rescued from the woods at the south end of 4th Street some years ago by Wendell resident Mary McBride, who has done an enormous amount of work over the years to spay, provide veterinary care, and find homes for the wayward cats of Turners.

The Montague board of health has another take on the issue. Director Gina McNeely is concerned about the potential risk of rabies spreading in the area, especially when wild feral cats are fed. The food attracts raccoons, skunks, and potentially even coyotes and bears to the neighborhood, populations that might carry rabies. (Of course, if we're worried about rabies, perhaps we homeowners, business owners, landlords, and downtown tenants could try a little harder to keep trash from landing anywhere other than a secured garbage receptacle. Why just the other day, I noticed a full meal of eggs and rice in the alley between 4th and 5th Streets....)

A challenge for many cat lovers is being able to tell the difference between a friendly neighborhood pet and a friendly stray that may be diseased. While we all may be familiar with the images associated with rabies, such as animals frothing at the mouth and erratic behavior, few among us are aware of "dumb" rabies, McNeely said. She says that dumb rabies may manifest itself in animals in its later stages by friendliness or mellowness, so cat admirers need to be wary. McNeely is currently investigating complaints of wild cats biting people simply trying to enter their

homes.

A feral cat or even an indoor and outdoor pet may infect you or your pets with fleas, tapeworms, or skin diseases like ringworm. Erica, owner of little mischievous Muffin on 4th Street, knows all of these challenges quite well. Awhile back her young daughter took in a pregnant cat from the mean Turners streets.

Erica believes that people who love animals need to be responsible for them and make sure they get fixed, get their shots, and have regular veterinary visits. She is grateful for the work that Dr. Lauralyn Brown has done to keep her pets and various strays in the area healthy. Dr. Brown's veterinary practice is on Millers Falls Road.

So what's a cat fan to do besides making sure your own pets do not become diseased or impregnated unnecessarily? Well, when she can, Magner donates a few dollars to the Dakin and Pioneer Valley Humane Societies collection cans around town. Her favorite part of the *Montague Reporter* is the Pet of the Week from Dakin on page two, of course.

The Dakin Humane Society has a program called "Feral Spay Sunday" which helps to get young female cats spayed to prevent the population of feral cats from exploding. For more information, check out the web site (www.dakinshelter.org) or call the shelter. An important aspect of the program is that it is free!

There are so many unwanted cats in shelters across the country already. A little extra effort to prevent feral kittens makes it easier for shelters such as the Dakin and Greenfield Pioneer Valley Humane Society to deal with all the other non-feral kittens in their shelters.

A car parked next to Sokolosky Realty on 4th Street sports a license plate that says "I'm Animal Friendly." Proceeds from friendly license plate sales go to the Massachusetts Animal Coalition, with the objective of

HIGHLIGHTS OF THE GILL POLICE LOG

Erratic Driver on French King Highway

Wednesday 1-17

6:33 p.m. Assisted Northfield Police search for subject who fled on foot from a stolen vehicle in New Hampshire, headed into Massachusetts.

7:23 p.m. Disabled motor vehicle towed from roadway at Gill lights.

Friday 1-19

8:20 p.m. Assisted fire department on Barney Hale Road.

Saturday 1-20

10:05 p.m. Assisted Northfield Police with a hit

and run motor vehicle accident.

Sunday 1-21

6:04 p.m. Assisted fire department with fire alarm on the Mount Hermon Campus.

Monday 1-22

3:09 p.m. Report of erratic operator on French King Highway. Subject stopped near Gill lights, all OK.

7:06 p.m. Assisted state police, standing by with stop sticks for a "be on the lookout for" (BOLO) vehicle headed north on Rt. 91.

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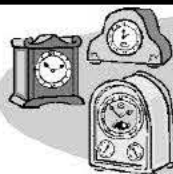
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FERAL
from previous page

“working together to decrease the number of homeless, neglected, displaced, or abused animals in Massachusetts” (www.mas-animalcoalition.org).

McNeely is in the process of working with the Montague selectboard to address issues with feral cats, since there have been recent complaints about aggressive cats. She did stress though that she is not anxious to have cats euthanized since it's so hard to tell which cats are pets. Dogs in town must be licensed (don't forget to renew your license by March 31st!), but cats do not. Other cities in the U.S. have required licensing of cats. Could this be a viable way to have owners prove their pets have had their rabies shots here in Turners? (A side benefit of this would be a pet tag tracking system so that your cat if ever

lost, could be found.) Perhaps landlords in the area could also encourage or require tenants to keep only vaccinated and fixed pets?

McNeely also notes that programs that put populations of feral cats to sleep do not really work well, because more out of town guest cats simply move in permanently to the now empty territory.

Allen Foster, Montague's animal control officer, cat-egORIZED the issue of Turner's feral felines as “a real tough one.” He believes that programs that spay or neuter, vaccinate and then release cats are not helping.

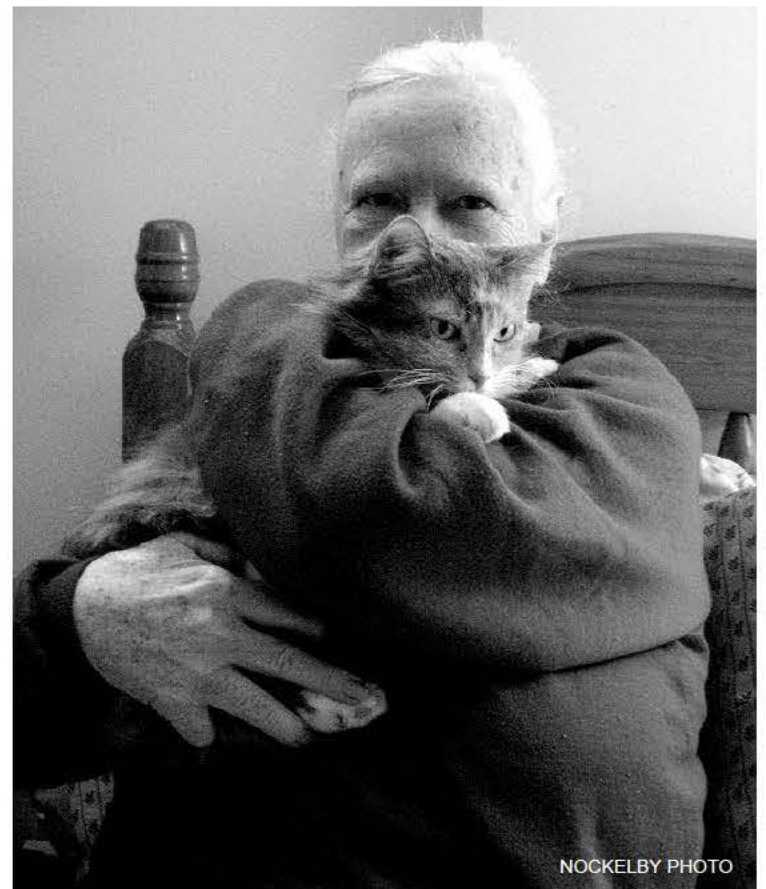
It's still too hard for people to determine if cats are vaccinated or not (since it's very unlikely they have been micro-chipped yet), and so if a newly vaccinated cat gets into a fight and hurts a pet, nobody really knows if that pet will be OK or not. Foster noted that quarantines and vet

expenses add up to a lot of trouble for good Samaritans.

A few people have been injured by wild cats in the area in the last year, Foster said, and they have had to undergo expensive medical treatment to protect against rabies.

But Foster said there isn't enough clarity in the law or enough funding in town to adequately deal with the feral cat problem. Even if a contractor were hired to round up all the cats and put them down, a beloved pet would probably inadvertently be put to death in the process.

The birds of Turners could not be contacted directly since they're so flighty, but I suspect they'd enjoy cats much more if they were all kept inside. A quick survey of my two indoor cats, Lucy and Tio Pepe, revealed they would enjoy birds much more if they were kept inside too. Silly kitties!



NOCKELBY PHOTO

Bonnie Magner and rescued friend Samantha in their home.

SCHOOLS

continued from pg 1

in Montague will now be configured as K-5 schools, with Hillcrest Elementary, according to a December vote of the school committee, to become an early childhood pre-K education center for the district.

At their next meeting, the school committee will work on an amendment to the regional school district agreement to allow the sixth grade from Gill to also attend Great Falls Middle School. That amendment would also have to be approved by town meetings in Gill and Montague in order to take effect.

Smith said that in places where intra-district choice has been implemented, “there is very little migration from one school to another.” Still, she spoke of the possibility of intra-district choice leading to equalized class sizes throughout the district, including at Gill Elementary (where 100 students now attend the K-6 school, with a combined 4th and 5th grade

class).

As the committee outlined a policy for intra-district choice, Richard Colton, policy subcommittee chair, said siblings would have the right to follow their siblings to the school of choice, students would be allowed to complete their schooling in the school of choice, and applications for open seats would be made by a certain date in spring, with assignments for open slots determined shortly thereafter. The committee has spoken of the need for parents to provide their own transportation, as in out of the district school choice.

Ted Castro Santos insisted that parents shall have the right to send their children to the elementary school in their town, and that language was added to the motion as approved.

School committee chair Mary Kociela outlined the development of two teams for task work on the Montague elementary school reconfiguration. One task force is scheduled to meet February 12th -16th at Montague Center School in order to tour the school and

identify immediate and longer term renovations needed to accommodate the expansion of that school, over the next two years, to a K-5 elementary school. The team will present a report to the March 13th meeting of the entire school committee to discuss and prioritize areas identified as needing work. Superintendent Sue Gee noted the presence of a parent led fundraising committee working to raise funds for Montague Center improvements and said the schools hoped to work with them.

The task force will be comprised of district facilities manager Tom Thornton, Montague building inspector Dave Jenson, two teachers from Montague Center School, and two parents. School committee members Richard Colton, Terry Lapichinski, and Mike Langknecht volunteered to join the team as well. The task force will advise the committee about the advisability of seeking state funding for Montague Center renovations from the Massachusetts School Building

Administration.

The purpose of the second transition team is to determine budget needs and priorities for the move of K-2 classes from Hillcrest to Sheffield. Moving costs have already been figured into the budget for '08. The team will also create a timeline for moving classrooms, inform the community of the plan, and work on involving parents and families in the project. Meetings will be scheduled February 26th - March 2nd. Members of that transition team will include Sheffield principal Chip Wood, Hillcrest principal Chris Jutres, two Hillcrest teachers, two Sheffield teachers, and two parents. Kristin Boyle, Valeria Smith and Ted Castro-Santos of the school committee will join this group.

Gee said that most packing up and moving of classrooms will be done in the summer, after the new fiscal years starts on July 1st.

Kociela stated the superintendent will put together details of the transition plan for the press to disseminate, including a

welcome to all community members and families to participate.

Prior to the vote on moving the 6th grades to the middle school, Jeff Kenney, principal of Turners Falls High School and Great Falls Middle School, gave the meeting attendees a tour of the wing where those 6th grade classrooms will be housed. Kenney explained that four classrooms on the first floor of the new building have been underutilized and would be more than spacious enough to house the 6th grades, including Gill's sixth grade if town meeting votes allow that class to join Montague's in the move.

Noticeable throughout the tour were clean, well-lit and spacious hallways and classrooms with state of the art technology and equipment. All of the classrooms are representative of the excellent condition and attractive modern architecture of the entire building. The library is newly renovated and includes a large section dedicated to the middle school chil-

see SCHOOLS pg 12

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THIS WILD PLACE

The Court Hawk

BY KARL MEYER

GREENFIELD - The Cooper's hawk darted past at eye level, giving one stroke of its wings for balance and momentum. Its beeline trajectory was cat quiet. What was unusual was that this was mid-afternoon, near the corner of Hope and Main Street in Greenfield. The library was straight ahead; the courthouse to my right. The long-tailed raptor - crow-sized, but much sleeker - headed for the side steps of the courthouse, passing not ten feet from me.

I am always astonished at the boldness of Cooper's hawks. This raptor displays a fierceness I've seldom witnessed in other species. Maybe fearlessness would be a better term, though both are human traits. Still, this woodland - and now suburban - dweller is known for attacking unsuspecting humans who venture too close to its nest in spring. You might literally (though rarely) end up with a bloody scalp, if you wander too near its young, hidden amidst the branches of a tall evergreen.

In a half second the Cooper's reached its target, a hip-high bush bordering the sidewalk of the west exit to the Franklin County Courthouse. There was split-second panic and an abrupt silence in that shrub - a knot of House sparrows pulling inward and cringing from the claws of the hungry raptor. The hawk flapped and feinted at the thicket, pushing in on one opening, then withdrawing and fluttering toward another. The traffic con-

tinued on Hope Street, the day's docket proceeded inside the courthouse, while a hawk with murder in its heart terrorized House sparrows without.

But those sparrows knew their part too. Introduced into North America in the mid-1800s, these are the small, dusty looking communal birds that can be found chirping in every privet hedge and McDonald's parking lot on the continent. Their best survival skills stem from the fact that they have lots of babies, and they stick together. Purists in the birding community hate them - forgetting that we brought them here, and we're doing a bit of overpopulating ourselves.

And in a very real sense, that Cooper's hawk would not be hunting a suburban street corner this day if humans had not affected its habitat. Mainly a woodland species, Cooper's hawks were decimated by the blanket egg-thinning application of DDT after World War II. The species was very slow to recover. But since the 1980s, with the New England woodlands maturing, and the numbers of people feeding birds in both the country and the city, things have improved for this species: more safe woodland nest sites; more well-fed, small birds coming into the open at feeders. That lightning strike at chickadees feasting on your sunflower seeds likely stems from a Cooper's hawk, or its smaller

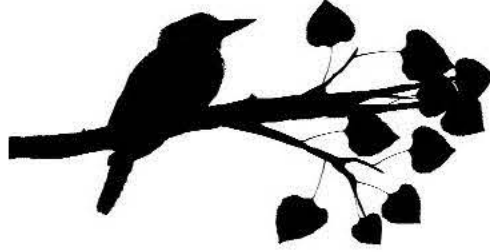


ILLUSTRATION BY ANJA SCHUTZ

cousin, the Sharp-shinned hawk.

I watched for nearly a minute as this little vignette played itself out. The sparrows knew their safety was in shrubs and numbers - stealing from branch-to-branch in the thicket maze to keep just ahead of the razor-sharp talons of the hawk. The Cooper's was now relying on sheer terror rather than surprise to force one of them to make a mistake. When one did, the hawk would snatch it with those hooked claws and quickly dispatch it with puncturing pressure targeted to the bird's soft tissues. The raptor flapped and tipped, jabbed and feinted, flying from one side of the bush to the other, all of this at street level with cars rolling by.

But this courthouse hawk was to go hungry for the time being, a momentary victory for the House sparrows. What saved them was a formally dressed woman who strode down the sidewalk, oblivious to the mortal drama being played out by the courthouse door. That there was a hawk thrashing among those restless branches was not immediately apparent. She finally noticed the flurry of

activity out of the corner of her eye when she was less than ten feet from the bush. But I could see that the hawk had made note of her, and moved to the opposite side of the bush, still hopeful.

Finally, after she passed beyond that bush-bordered set of steps, she hesitated, looking back over her shoulder at that flashy big set of flapping wings. At that glance the rust-breasted Cooper's hawk, one of the most focused and brazen hunters I've ever witnessed, finally took off. There was nothing clutched in the claws trailing beneath its

belly. And, besides the slowly returning chatter of sparrows outside the Franklin County Courthouse, there were only two human witnesses to the incident, a life-and-death struggle outside anyone's province to judge.

Cooling thought: Each of us is capable, with a small effort, of leaving the car in the driveway one day per week. That equals a 15% reduction in your climate-changing car pollutants.

Karl Meyer writes about the environment. His book for young readers, Wild Animals of North America, was published in November.

Fox Fun for Families

NORTHFIELD -- On Saturday, January 27th from 9 a.m. to noon, Northfield Mountain will host "Fox Fun for Families" with Beth Bazler, public environmental program coordinator.

What makes a fox a fox? By looking at mounts, skulls and books indoors, and following tracks outdoors to observe behavior, the group will try to answer this essential question. Families will learn through activities and the use of tracking journals, and will come up with their own important questions about these "ghosts of the woods." Via books, field

research and group wisdom, we will do our best to find answers - or maybe discover even more fascinating questions! Please bring water; wear wind pants or gaiters if you have them; and dress in warm layers that can be shed as we get moving. A light snack will be shared on the trail and the group will return to the building to warm up with hot chocolate at the end of the program.

The program is geared for children ages six and older; the fee is \$6 per person or \$11 with snowshoe rentals. Pre-registration is required. Call Beth Bazler at 413-659-4461.

SCHOOLS

continued from pg 11

dren. A technology specialist is available to assist staff and students in the proper use of the available equipment.

Kenney said 6th grade teachers would have the opportunity to do collaborative work, the sixth grade wing would be self-contained, with a separate entrance from the rest of the building. Art and music are located in the older building.

When someone inquired about the cafeteria, Kenney made it clear that although the middle school shares a lunchroom, there is plenty of space to keep each grade in a separate area, which is what they do with the 7th and 8th grades currently.

In the beginning of each year, lunchroom seats are assigned. If or when the children become comfortable enough, they are allowed to have flexible seating within their grade's section.

Discussion of the benefits of the 6th grade transition to the middle school continued when the meeting resumed. Smith shared her views about the importance of the arts, music, and physical education for the development of a well-rounded child. At the middle school, the 6th graders would have access to superior facilities for all three, including a pool and theater.

Gee argued that research shows that most configurations will work if the parents, community, and curriculum are support-

ive. She went on to say that the K-5, 6-8, 9-12 configuration is educationally, as well as developmentally more advantageous. Sixth grade children are beginning the transition to adolescence; it benefits them to be grouped with other middle school children in the stage between adolescence and early adulthood. Middle school facilities, policies and curriculum support students at this sensitive time. Additionally, community development and a sense of belonging have more time to flourish when children stay for three years, rather than the briefer two-year period.

Committee members felt elementary school children would also be more appropriately

served in a K-5 environment, where they would have more space, and more teacher to student attention.

Ted Castro-Santos, the one committee member who voted to abstain on the motion, said he was not yet comfortable with the move. He was not convinced that moving the sixth grade to the middle school had enough community support. Committee member Kristin Boyle also expressed concern about community support and involvement. While she was impressed with the accommodations at the middle school, she said she would like to see more information given to parents, and to arrange a tour with the principal so that parents will be less intim-

idated when they see the middle school for themselves. She said, "I think we need to get together."

Earlier in the meeting, committee member Deb Bourbeau gave a report from a recent Montague capital improvements committee meeting, where she said the CIC seemed to be in favor of holding off on addressing capital needs at the Montague Center School until the outcome of various petition drives to close the Montague Center School are known.

Committee member Mike Langknecht responded, "You can tell them now it's remaining open, but I'll wait for the lawyers to do that."

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THE HEALTHY GEEZER

A Bruising Topic of Concern

BY FRED CICETTI

LEONIA, NJ - Q. *I've been getting bruises lately and I can't remember hurting myself. Should I see a doctor?*

A tendency to bruise easily is common when you age. It's especially common among women.

A bruise - also known as a contusion - occurs when the tiny blood vessels under your skin break after being struck. When you bruise, the blood leaks under the skin and leaves a black-and-blue mark. The harder the impact, the bigger the bruise. As the blood is reabsorbed by your body, the bruise goes away.

You can enhance healing by elevating the injury and applying a cold pack for a half-hour at a time for a day or so after you are injured. After there is no swelling, a warm compress can accelerate reabsorption.

Blood-thinning medications can contribute to bruising. So you might bruise more easily if you take Plavix or Coumadin. Aspirin will have a similar effect. The thinners allow more blood to pool under your skin. So, if you're taking one of these drugs, what seems like a harmless bump against a coffee table could lead to a nasty bruise.

Some dietary supplements can thin your blood, too. Be careful if you are consuming more than normal amounts of fish oil, ginkgo, ginger and garlic.

It's easier to bruise if your skin is thin. With age, your skin becomes thinner and loses some of the fat that protects your blood vessels. Corticosteroids are known to make your skin thinner, so these drugs can make you more bruise-prone.

Aging capillaries contribute to bruising, too. Over time, the tissues supporting these vessels weaken, and capillary walls become more fragile and prone to rupture.

There is a special type of bruising known as "Bateman's purpura," which usually is seen on the back of the hands and forearms. Unlike everyday bruises, the bruises you get with Bateman's purpura are not tender and last longer. They start out red and



ILLUSTRATION: JESSICA HARMON

become purple. They darken and then, in time, fade. They can last for weeks.

This condition, also known as "actinic purpura," is usually seen in seniors. It is caused by blood-vessel walls that have been weakened by years of exposure to the sun. In addition, the skin is sun-damaged and thin.

Daily application of alpha hydroxy-acid lotions to the skin have been shown to increase skin thickness up to 15 percent in patients with sun-damaged thin skin. This occurs through the stimulation of collagen production, the skin's natural support protein. For women, the hormone progesterone in lotion may also help.

Most bruises are not a cause for concern, but you should have bruising checked by a doctor if you are experiencing the following: unusually large or painful bruises, bruises that seem to have no cause, abnormal bleeding elsewhere, sudden bruising after beginning a medication.

These symptoms may mean that you don't have enough platelets in your blood. Platelets help your blood to clot.

You can take steps to prevent bruising from falls and collisions. Here are some:

- Always hold the handrails on stairways.
- Don't stand on a chair to get to something.
- Clear floors where you walk.
- Mount grab bars near toilets, tubs and showers.
- Place non-skid mats, strips, or carpet on all surfaces that may get wet.
- Put nightlights and light switches close to your bed.
- Tack down all carpets and area rugs.
- Close cabinet doors and drawers so you won't run into them.
- Be especially careful around pets.

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

BAND

continued from pg 1

Niagara Falls, Chicopee Falls...."

This was a show you wanted to show up early for. For example, a friend and I showed up five minutes early and there was no parking left. We had to park at Felton's, across the street. Everyone else was well into celebrating the group's return to the area before they took the stage, veterans of many a barroom, dance hall, and rock show in the decades they have packed into their collective performing experience. We're talking Wailin' Dave Robinson on harp and vocals, John Klondike Koehler on bass nailing down the rhythm with rock solid Michael Wiskey on drums, never mind Eliot Osborn floating each number on the shimmering chords of his keyboards. Add those two indefatigably great guitarists, screamin' Compton Maddux and the unquotable note for note perfect Johnny Moses, masters of all idioms, the Outerspace-men incarnate, and you were missing only the trombone and fiddle playing of Alex Scheeren, unable to make the date. But sideman David Lenson, familiar to many in the Valley from Wailin' Dave's blues bands, filled in what space remained for sax flourishes in fine style.

As we shot pool at one of the bar's seven tables, enjoying the music and the crowd, I couldn't help watching the people up and dancing. Whether they were out on the floor, grooving in their chairs, or just leaning up against the bar shaking their hips or bobbing their heads in time to the music, the joint was rocking. The crowd was a mix of ages from people in their 20s to

some who seemed to be permanently stuck in their 60s. Which does not surprise me because this band has been around since then.

They got together at Trinity College in Hartford, before wending their way to Wendell. According to Klondike, "The whole band moved to Wendell in the summer of 1973, and rented a series of houses in the center of town." He recalled a property management company by the name of Likely Listings that turned over "five or six highly distressed properties" in the center to anyone who wanted to rent them. "At that time, we had over 100 musicians living in the center of town, with tech crew and sound men. The select-board allowed us to rent the town hall for rehearsal space. We had the run of the place."

That era led to "50 or 60 great shows at the legendary Warwick Inn," for the Outerspace Band, which also frequented the stages of such venerable Valley venues as the Rusty Nail and the Blue Wall, in the period from 1973 - 77. At the Warwick Inn, Klondike recalled, "We would easily double the legal capacity of the place, and it was always a great time."

Nowadays, with band members scattered across New England, the band plays roughly 12 -15 shows a year, and pulls together a short summer tour, with Vinalhaven and the Nostalgia Tavern in Kingsfield, ME prominent destination points.

Nostalgia was rife this weekend at the Roadhouse in Millers, when the Outerspace Band brought their "neo-Frisco R&B" sound to the stage once again. Equally adept at Cajun style cookers and Dead-inspired jams, the

four singer songwriters in the band each contribute their own distinct flavor to the soulful stew. A particular crowd pleaser, penned by Osborn, cruised on a Little Feat-inflected melody, and arrived at the familiar refrain:

"It's Friday Night and I Feel Fine, I got a Nickel, and it Feels like a Dime; Boss Man sentenced me to 9 to 5.... It's Party Time and I Feel Fine!"

That worked, even on a Saturday night.

The band's appearance at the Roadhouse gave a new generation (mine), a chance to catch up with a local legend. They've been hard to see locally, outside of the occasional Wendell Old Home Day Reunion. One Outer Space-man said, "Our newest member has been with the band for fifteen years now." If you ask me, that is quite a long time to still be called the "new guy." I can probably bet you he wishes they would hire on another band member soon so he can retire the "new guy in the band" moniker.

At about 10:30 p.m. the band took a break to catch their breath, get a drink, or do anything else you are not able to do while up on stage. I myself did not know they were taking a break, or if maybe they were done for the night, since they had been playing for over an hour already. I saw Roadhouse owner Jamie Snyder walking by and asked him. He said, "Are you kidding? They're not done. They're old timers. We will be rocking till one in the morning." Or longer.

Let me tell you a little story before I let you go,

see **BAND** pg 14

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

Storytelling

BY JOSEPH A. PARZYCH GILL - Feather quilts are warm and light. Goose down is best, but our geese had long since been served up on the table. Arnold Studer let us have all the turkey

feathers we wanted. But we had to strip them.

We'd start with a huge mound of turkey feathers in the center of the kitchen table, and strip the vanes from either side of the quill. That was to keep quills from stabbing through the covering, and to make a softer quilt. We piled the curled vanes on the table in front of us, and put the stripped quill in a cloth on our lap.

Stripping was tedious. As the evening wore on, the mound of turkey feathers in the center of our table grew smaller and the down in front of us grew larger. If anyone sneezed or laughed, stripped feathers flew

everywhere. Saying anything funny was strictly forbidden.

Unfortunately, there was a tendency to get silly as the evening progressed. Though we were forbidden to say anything funny, I never could resist saying something to make everyone explode in laughter. The feathers would fly, and Ma wouldn't be able to keep from laughing. But it didn't keep her from cuffing me.

A safer pastime was storytelling. Though Ma never told funny stories as we stripped feathers, we looked forward to her stories of days gone by. Her storytelling gave me a good

feeling. It was comforting to hear her talk of earlier times, as we all sat around the kitchen table with the hanging kerosene lamp casting a cheerful glow over the gathered family.

"Tell us about the old days, Ma," we'd say, and she'd begin.

The stories of her childhood in Poland reminded me of the book *Heidi*. I could imagine Ma's log home in the mountains, never dreaming that one day I would visit that very same house, still there in the Tatra Mountains, looking very much like Heidi's grandfather's, still vivid in my memory.

One evening while we were stripping feathers, Ma told us of neighbors coming to her family's home to strip goose feathers on long winter nights. They'd always have food and sometimes a drink before they began working. Those were happy times. Neighbors talked and joked as they worked. When one family finished stripping their supply of feathers, the group would move on to another house. The work bee also served as a social gathering to ease the long dreary months of cold and isolation.

- Continued next week

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BAND from pg 13

about the crowd at this show. With the band on break, I stepped outside with my friend so he could have a cigarette, since you are not allowed to smoke in bars around here anymore. As we got back inside, I went to grab my drink off the windowsill by the pool table only to find it gone. Two men standing nearby told me someone had come by and cleaned up the area while I'd been outside. One of the guys was nice enough to buy me another drink, out of the kindness of his heart.

I have to admit I have lived in Turners Falls all my life, and since I have been twenty-one I have never been to the Route 63 Roadhouse. I can say with confidence that I'll be going back. And if you ever get the chance to see the Outerspace Band (go to outerspaceband.com for future gigs) then by all means go see them. It will be worth the twelve dollars in advance or fifteen dollars at the door for tickets, I assure you. They are a righteous band.

On Friday night, I caught another great local act at the Roadhouse, when area favorites the Curly Fingers Dupree Band took the stage. This band put on a great show as well, with a horn inflected sound all their own. Special props to the fine fretwork of Montague's own Kip Dresser on guitar, and the sophisticated horn solos of Tom Archer on sax. Mike Allen on drums, Ed Sulda on bass, Harvey Atkins on harp, and Dan Roberge on percussion round out the band's roster.

I'm not a fan of cover bands, but I'll make an exception for this one. They play a fair share of originals, and they do a phenomenal job on the rock standards. They closed their first set, for example, with a sizzling trio of Ziggy Stardust, Locomotive Breath, and Folsom Prison Blues, bringing the crowd as close to roadhouse heaven as you can get and live to tell the tale.

The long and short of it: if you like to go out and dance, hear live music, or just hang out in a friendly place, then make it a point to go to the Route 63 Roadhouse in Millers Falls. It's right on Route 63. You can't miss it.



Ed Soulda, bass, Kip Dresser, lead, and Tom Archer, wailing on sax with the Curly Fingers Dupree Band at the Roadhouse Friday night.

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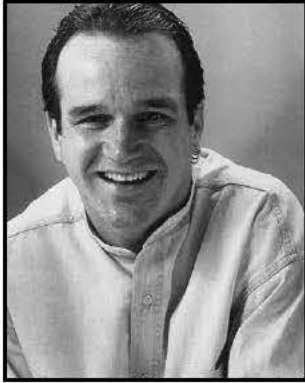
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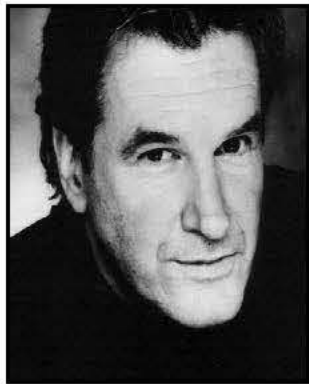
JACK COUGHLIN ILLUSTRATION

FRIDAY, JANUARY 26TH

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



Joe Carroll, left with Mike Cote, below, perform in Comedy at the Shea on Friday, February 3rd, 8 p.m.



Info. (802) 251-6051.

FRIDAY, AND SATURDAY, FEBRUARY 2ND & 3RD

Pothole Pictures presents: *Butch Cassidy and The Sundance Kid*. 7:30 p.m., Memorial Hall, Shelburne Falls.

SATURDAY, FEBRUARY 3RD

Wendell Full Moon Coffee House: Rani Arbo and Daisy Mayhem. Benefit for Franklin Hampshire County Health Coalition. Open Mic at 7:30, main act 8 p.m. \$6 - \$12, Info. www.wendellfullmoon.org or (978) 544-5557.

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

Free Films for the Frozen: *Napoleon Dynamite*. Films are free (with a passed hat). Food & drink available at the Lady Killigrew Pub or The Night Kitchen Restaurant, 7 p.m.

SATURDAY, JANUARY 27TH
Used Book Sale at the Carnegie Library. Proceeds to benefit the Friends of the Montague Public Libraries. 12 to 4 p.m.

MONDAY, JANUARY 29TH
Rt. 63 Road House, Millers Falls, Singer Song-Writer series, hosted by Rob Skelton and Pitchfork, 9 p.m.

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

WEDNESDAY, JANUARY 31ST
Friends Coffeehouse: Falltown Stringband in The Great Hall, Great Falls Discovery Center. Accessible facilities. \$5 - \$10 per person, 7 p.m.

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

Free Lecture Series by Dr. Maiella, Naturopathic Doctor. Held at Green Fields Market, Greenfield. Lyme Disease: the most common tick-borne disease in the U.S. 6:30 p.m. For more information call (413) 230-4462 or www.valley-naturopathicfamilymedicine.com

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

UNTIL JANUARY 31ST
Hello Iraq. How Are You? An Exhibit of Art from children in Iraq and in the USA created especially for this cultural exchange project, and documenting photographs by Claudia Lefko at Green Fields Market, Greenfield. The display features art from local children, as well as art from Iraqi children living in exile in Amman, Jordan. Info: Claudia Lefko, (413) 584-0068 or iraqichildrenart@verizon.net

The National Spiritual Alliance: Psychic Fair at Thompson Temple, across from the Post Office, Lake Pleasant. Readers use a variety of methods to obtain information for those who consult them. \$25 for 20 min. reading. 11 to 4 p.m.

FRIDAY, FEBRUARY 2ND
Gallery Walk in Brattleboro. Vermont Center for Photography, 49 Flat Street, Brattleboro: *People, Buildings and Cars: New Chicago Photography*. Group Show of Six New Chicago based photographers: Mary Farmilant, Jon Gitelson, Jason Lazarus, Matt Siber, Greg Stimac, Brian Ulrich. Opening Night: 5:30 to 8:30 p.m. during Brattleboro Gallery Walk. Show ends on Sunday, February 25th.

SUNDAY, JANUARY 28TH
Montague Family Dance with caller Jim Fownes. Family-style contra dancing for all ages. Montague Grange, Montague Center. 4-5:30 p.m.

The Montague Bookmill Presents: The Dead of Winter

"Comedy at the Shea," with professional standup comedians Bob Gautreau, Joe Carroll, Mike Cote and Jean-Marc Cormier at The Shea Theater, Turners Falls. Some proceeds benefit Turners Falls RiverCulture Project. Showtime 8 p.m., doors open at 7 p.m. Beer and wine served in lobby. Tickets \$15 in advance (\$18 at the box office on the night of the show), available online at www.sheacomedy.com, and at the World Eye Bookshop, Main Street, Greenfield; the Gill Store, Gill. For information or reservations, call the Shea 863-2281.

SUNDAY, FEBRUARY 4TH
The Montague Bookmill Presents: The Dead of Winter

Free Films for the Frozen: *Out of the Past*. A killer film noir starring of course Robert Mitchum, Jane Greer and Kirk Douglas. Films are Free (with a passed hat). Food & drink available at the Lady Killigrew Pub or The Night Kitchen Restaurant. 7 p.m.

SATURDAY, FEBRUARY 10TH
2nd Annual Sweet Art Sale, Montague Grange, Montague Center. Local artists and vendors offer fun, funky, elegant and delicious items for your sweet-heart(s). Silver jewelry, pottery, illustrations, mixed-media works, locally harvested honey, elegant chocolates! Free admission.

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

CALL FOR ARTISTS!
The Brick House Community Resource Center of Turners Falls is sponsoring its third annual Great Falls Art Fest on Saturday and Sunday, May 19th & 20th at the Great Falls Discovery Center outside grounds and inside the Great Hall. This is a juried festival with the jurying process beginning on **January 29th**. Artists who are interested in participating should contact Karen Stinchfield at The Brick House (413) 863-9576 or www.the-brickhouseinc.org, to obtain an application or more information. Proceeds from this event will benefit the community-based programs at The Brick House.

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

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

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

THURSDAY, FEBRUARY 1ST
Hidden Landscape: A Film Preview Event. Breaking new ground in collaborative research, the 'Hidden Landscape' project explores the legend of an ancient "Lost Race" in Eastern North America and investigates the widely disputed origin of the region's mysterious stone ruins. Follow archeological teams of scientists who work with both Native American tribal representatives and antiquarian researchers to investigate the origins of several newly discovered stone ruins in Eastern North America. Meet the film maker after the show: Theodore Timreck, a research associate with the Arctic Studies Center of the Smithsonian's National Museum of Natural History. 7 p.m.

FRIDAY, FEBRUARY 1ST TO MARCH 31ST
Stephen Gingold's Nature Photography. Explore the world of nature, both at a landscape scale and focused at close range for details, through the eyes of Stephen Gingold as you see his photographs in this special exhibit.

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Our Calendar Carries Names from a Varied Past

BY FRAN HEMOND

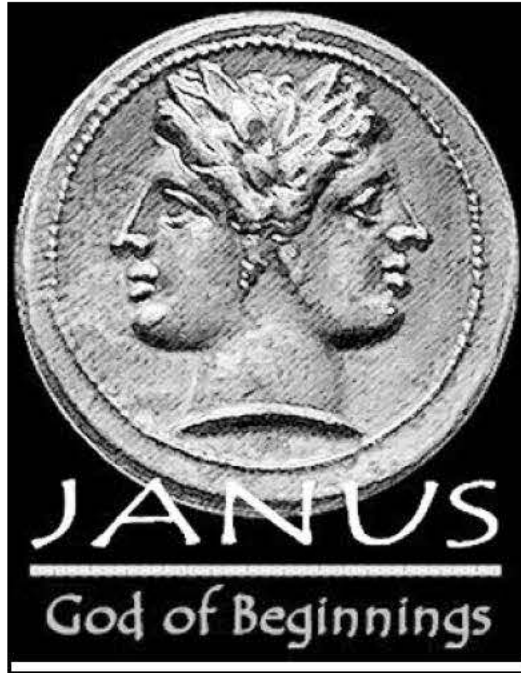
MONTAGUE CENTER - The calendar we use is the Gregorian Calendar. By the 16th century, the Julian Calendar, then in use, needed correction to keep it in line with the seasons. Pope Gregory the XIII supervised the new calendar, which became recognized in most countries. But England and America did not use the new style calendar until the mid-eighteen hundreds, and some dates of early American items are still found old-style.

The modern Gregorian Calendar reflects the many peoples who influenced its development; its value depends on its acceptance and use by everyone. The cycles of the sun and moon are the obvious base. One may wonder about the assignment of days and weeks in uneven patterns to the months, which adds to the mystery of business operation.

Maybe there was lobbying.

The seven day week is a comfortable span of time, and has biblical approval. Sunday and Monday are Anglo Saxon words for everyone's favorites, our sources of heat and light. The next four names tip their hat to the Norse gods, Tyr, Woden, Thor and Freyja. Strangely, the last day of the week, Saturday, recalls the Roman father god, Saturn. Something for everybody.

The natural world does not match up neatly, and cycles of moon will not divide neatly into a year. And so we have twelve months of unequal days, and varying weeks. We have a poorly-metered jingle to help us distin-



guish the 30-day months from the other eight. Use your fingers to contain the four 30s, while you search out the 31s in your mind:

*Thirty days hath September,
April, June and November*

All the rest have thirty-one, excepting February alone

Which has four and twenty-four

Till leap year gives it one day more.

The first month of the year, January, is named after the Roman god of light, Janus. He is often portrayed with two faces looking in opposite directions, back at the old year, forward toward the new, and his real charm is not evident. In early Rome, he was the sky god who opens the gates of the morning and closes the gates in the evening. He became the guardian of doors, and new enterprise. Each January, as indeed on the first day of each month, his blessing was petitioned.

The remaining names are a collection of tributes, religious and political, and plain old numbers to finish up. Roman Caesars, Julius and Augustus, managed to have their names remembered in the summer months, and Roman deities are represented by Juno and Mars. May, the month of Mary, is the loveliest month of them all. It seems strange that, for centuries, September and her successors through December, have carried names from a former time that would designate them as months seven through ten, although in today's calendar they are the ninth through the twelfth. Like many of our words, with time, they have taken on a meaning of their own.

Our calendar carries some basic science along with some luggage from yesterday. It keeps order in life and imposes a plan on the future.

THE GARDENER'S COMPANION

Starting Your Own Plants from Seed

BY LESLIE BROWN

MONTAGUE CITY - Starting your own plants from seed is labor-intensive, not an activity for everyone. However, it can be very satisfying to harvest vegetables or flowers that you've seen progress from a tiny beginning. If you've become attached to a certain variety, starting from seed may be your only option.

We live in an area that offers a wide variety of producers of garden-ready plants. Choosing these pre-prepared, hearty plants is a great way to start off as a beginning gardener. However, if you have a yen for a special onion, pepper, tomato or flower, you may want to consider starting your own. A few minimum requirements apply.

Seeds require an extended period of light and additional heat to get started. You need a space facing south to receive the most sunlight available or else you need to purchase 'grow lights'. Available from most garden supply catalogues, these fluorescent bulbs mimic the color spectrum of sunlight.

Our sunroom is fine for sun and light, but since I keep it at a modest 50 degrees overnight, I also need to use a warming mat to keep the soil at a temperature conducive to germination. Since seeds do not require sunlight to germinate, some gardeners are successful in getting seeds started by using the residual heat on the top of a refrigerator, and then once the seeds have sprouted, moving them to a sunny window. If this is to be your method, you might want to put them back on top of the refrigerator to keep warm at night.

New seeds do best with a special growing medium that allows for roots to start and spread readily. These mixes are generally made of peat moss, some light soil and perlite (little bits of a Styrofoam-like material that lighten the soil and also retain moisture). Straight potting soil is ideal for transplanting your seedlings later, but is too heavy for seed starting.

A recent hoe-out of the gardening supplies in our cellar unearthed a huge bag of a starter mix (once the size of a bale of hay) that had been sit-



MARY AZARIAN WOODBLOCK

ting around long enough to develop a musty, moldy odor. Since I will be starting leeks and onions soon, a portion of this mix was baked in a 350 degree oven to kill the mold spores and fungi and hopefully avoid 'damping off'.

Damping off is the major cause of loss of young seedlings. It is caused by a fungus and often encouraged by over-watering. You may find germinated seeds that initially look healthy develop a narrowed stem and subsequently die.

Best Watering Practices

This leads to best watering practices. When I start

tomatoes and peppers in mid to late February, I'll be using little mini greenhouses that water the seedlings through a wicking system of blotting paper. Because you water the paper and not the baby plants directly, they draw up only the moisture they need. Watering seedlings from the top causes the greatest mortality in young plants.

While you don't want young seeds to dry out too much, they are much more tolerant of a little dryness than they are of over-watering.

Timing is another critical aspect of successfully growing plants from seed. Young plants need to be started on a schedule related to preparation for planting outside. If plants are started too early, they become long and leggy. You want to aim for robust, vigorous plants with lots of roots that will take off when moved outside.

Patience is another major factor in this business. You will need to nurture young seedlings in flats or cells with more than one seed in each. These baby plants will need a transplanting before they are

ready to go outside.


Once you have developed seedlings that have produced true leaves (the recognizable shape of a tomato leaf, for example), you will need to space them out in their own small container, this time using potting soil or starter mix with manure added. You will also want to begin feeding them with a mild, highly diluted mix of fertilizer and water. A liquid seaweed fertilizer is ideal. With one to one and a half inch plants, this is an extremely slow and laborious process. However, you will find that these small plants are very tenacious and will put up with considerable manhandling.

Consult your seed packets for the length of time required for growth and the time appropriate for outdoor planting and see if there aren't a few things you'd like to try to start from scratch. Note also that some crops are much better off waiting for direct planting in your warmed garden soil. Right now, if there's a special onion you'd like to try, it's a great time to get some seeds and give it a try.

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