



ESCAPING TO IRELAND

From Millers to Blasket Islands, pg 9



A SLICE OF MT. SUGARLOAF

Road Cut Fever, pg 16

LAKE PLEASANT MILLERS FALLS MONTAGUE CENTER MONTAGUE CITY TURNERS FALLS GILL ERVING WENDELL

Year 4
No.16

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The Montague Reporter

REPORTER@MONTAGUEMA.NET

THE VOICE OF THE VILLAGES

JANUARY 26, 2006

Gill Board Supports Ag Commission

BY DAVID DETMOLD
On Monday, January 23rd, with cars off Main Road to the left and right after a day of driving snow, the hardy members of the Gill selectboard held their regular meeting, with Lee Stevens striding in only a few minutes late. Thoughts turned to spring, understandably, as Upinngil's Cliff Hatch came before the board to seek support for forming a town agricultural commission. Appointed agricultural commissions are cropping up in many towns throughout the Commonwealth, as Pete Westover crisscrosses the state like a modern day Jonathan Chapman for the Mass Department of Agricultural Resources, sowing seeds of farmland preservation, tolerance for slow moving tractors and malodorous fields, and right to farm bylaws.

"Most of these agricultural commissions are appointed by selectboards," Hatch explained. He would like to see the Gill annual town meeting formally discuss the proposal and approve the new town board, which would give a voice for agricultural concerns at the level of town government.

Referring to demographic changes in Gill in recent decades, as it has transformed from a farming center to a residential village, selectboard chair Phil Maddern told Hatch, "The worm has turned, and you have to fight back a bit."

Board member Ann Banash said, "I feel it's a great idea. I think it can only help." The board voted unanimously to back the proposal, and bring a warrant article to town meeting seeking town-wide approval for a Gill agricultural commission. Hatch said the group

of a half dozen growers who attended a meeting with Westover earlier this month would send out a mailing to three dozen more Gill residents involved in agriculture, to invite them to a public meeting about the proposed commission in February.

In other agricultural

G-M Schools Propose Preliminary '07 Budget

OPERATING COSTS MAY INCREASE \$1 MILLION INSURANCE, ENERGY BILLS UP SHARPLY

BY DAVID DETMOLD

Facing the annual regional school district deadline for producing a preliminary budget by February 1st, Gill - Montague Superintendent of Schools Sue

Gee proposed a draft operating budget for fiscal '07 at Tuesday's (1/24) school committee meeting, with an approximately one million dollar hike in expenditures. That would amount to a 7.76% increase

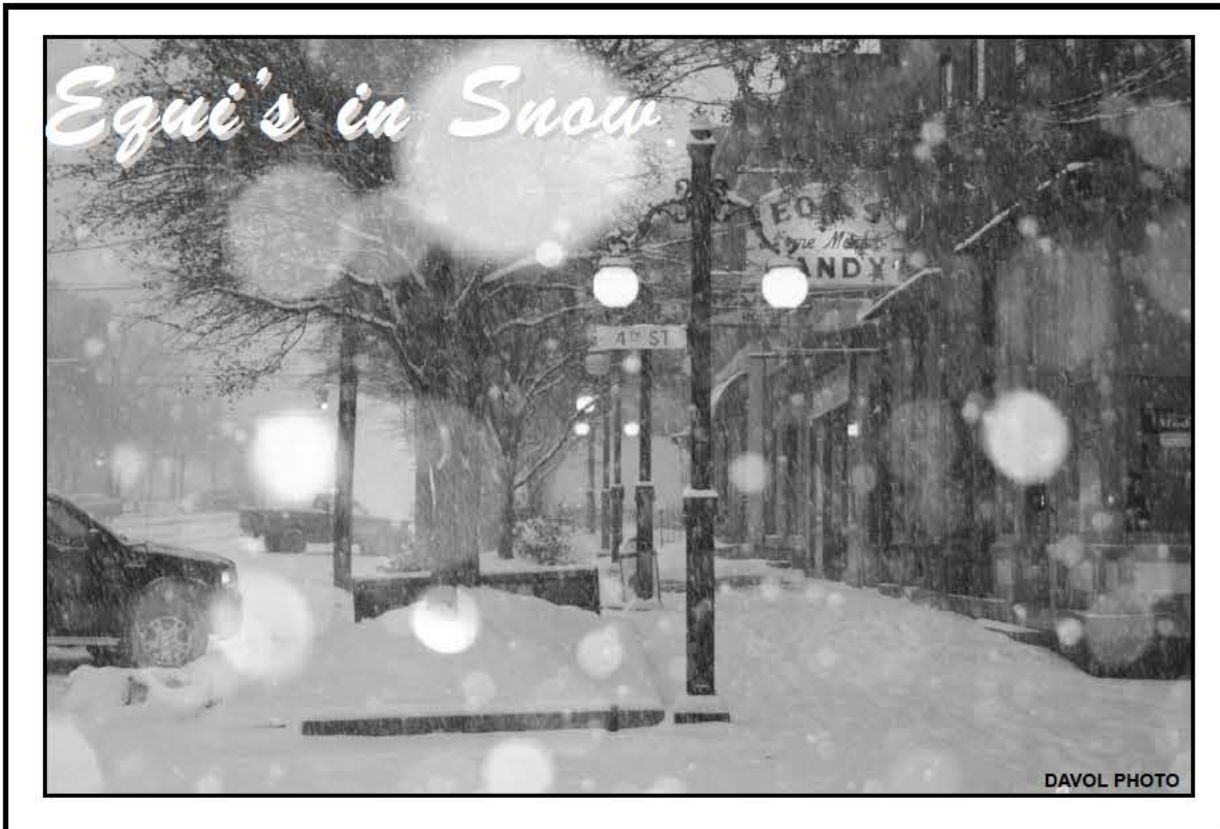
over the \$15,177,204 it is costing to keep district schools running this year. Earlier Tuesday, the budget subcommittee reviewed the draft budget and asked Gee to revise the draft budget upwards,

by adding a fulltime art teacher in the elementary schools and increasing the hours for the part time art position at the high school and middle school to full time. These additions would bump the total increase for the preliminary budget to "between 8 and 9%" above the current year, Gee said.

"Out of concern for equity throughout our core curriculum, we have asked management to go back and add 1.6 to 2.0 full time equivalent art teachers," said budget subcommittee chair Valeria Smith.

The bulk of the increase in operating expenses would come from stiff increases in health insurance costs for employees, which are likely to rise 20% this year, after being held to 15% increases for the last two years, Gee said.

see **BUDGET** pg 6



news, the board waived the 120-day notification requirement for the state of Massachusetts, which is interested in purchasing development rights to 30 acres of farmland owned by Dick French and Emily Samuels on River Road.

New Rescue Boat
Squeaking into the meeting in Sorrels, fire chief Gene Beaubien told the board a new emergency rescue boat had been ordered for his department, and would be delivered next month. The boat, which will cost \$18,000, will be largely paid for by a \$14,500 insurance settlement the town received after the loss of the last rescue boat, which went over the

New Rescue Boat

see **GILL** pg 6

Whitcomb-Skelton's Star Rising in *Annie*

TURNERS FALLS - Daisy Whitcomb-Skelton said that "Annie" is a "very optimistic person and she changes lives that way." The same might be said about the charismatic 11-year-old, a sixth grade student at Sheffield School, who will debut as the red-headed orphan in Ja'Duke's production of "Annie" on February 17th, 18th, 24th, 25th and 26th at the Shea Theater on Avenue A.

Whitcomb-Skelton is a "natural" in this role, according to director Nick Waynelovich.

His young star had kind words for her director, too. "It's really great working with Nick," Whitcomb-Skelton said. "He has so much practice

getting the show together and working well. I'm lucky to be working with him. He makes people listen."

And getting a show with a cast of nearly 70 principals and chorus members working together is no mean feat. Aiding in the effort is Waynelovich's daughter, Kimberly. "I was already familiar with her because I take dance with Ja'Duke," said Whitcomb-Skelton. "She's an amaz-



HUGH CORR PHOTO

Daisy Whitcomb-Skelton will play the lead in her debut with Ja'Duke Production's *Annie* at the Shea Theater in February

ing dancer and choreographer. She's always happy." Still in rehearsals, Whitcomb-Skelton said, "Everyone's doing a great job. The cast is meshing

really well."

The starring role in *Annie* will be the sixth grader's theatrical debut. Whitcomb-Skelton spent eight years developing her skills as a gymnast, during which she competed in many regional meets and took home numerous prizes. But she decided to quit gymnastics recently, and was ready for a new challenge.

"I was ready to move on. I knew gymnastics wasn't going to be my main thing. It was going to build up to my next step in life."

That next step has her singing as well as dancing in the role of *Annie*, but singing is something that

see **ANNIE** pg 13

PET OF THE WEEK**Elegant Friend****Allie**

Allie is a six-year-old Blue Cream Himalayan/tortie in need of a good home. She has a luxurious and unusual coat, and she's as friendly as she is elegant.

She especially loves having her head and chin scratched.

For more information on adopting Allie contact the Dakin Animal Shelter in Leverett at 548-9898 or via email at info@dakinshelter.org.

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Carnegie Library News

Book Discussion:

The Botany of Desire

BY LINDA HICKMAN

TURNERS FALLS - The next book to be discussed by the "Munch and Muse" book discussion group is *The Botany of Desire* by Michael Pollan. The discussion will be held on Tuesday, February 21st at 7 p.m. at the Carnegie Library.

The Botany of Desire is a fascinating look at how plants have taken advantage of people's basic desires to spread throughout the world. I loved reading this book and learned many interesting things about human history and the four types of plants examined: apples, tulips, marijuana, and potatoes.

The interesting trivia and different perspective helped me rethink many things I have taken for granted. For example, did you know that Johnny Appleseed

planted apples to make hard cider and was a land speculator? He would sometimes plant apple trees on land, come back later, and claim the land.

The book is written in a very easy to read style that makes the information very accessible. In addition to a lively discourse, the "Munch and Muse" book discussion group always enjoys delicious refreshments provided by the facilitator, Bev Whitbeck. The group always welcomes new members. You do not need to sign up to join; just show up for a discussion session. Copies of *The Botany of Desire* are available at the Carnegie Library circulation desk for borrowing. In March, *Our Mother's War* will be the book selection. For more information, please call 863-214.

FACES & PLACES



Heinie's Band was a German band that played the area frequently, including concerts at the Montague bandshell. Members pictured above include Harold Maddern (standing 3rd from left) Billy Reum (5th) Don Girard (6th) and Stanley Struthers (kneeling, right).
Who else can you spot?

PHOTO COURTESY OF SUSIE MADDERN.

Students and Staff Organize Recycling at TFHS

At Tuesday night's Gill-Montague school committee meeting, Lauren Tela, a junior at Turners Falls High and a member of the student council, walked in breathless from her rehearsal of *Grease* to announce a breakthrough in efforts to create a comprehensive recycling program at the 'green' high school / middle school complex. Through the auspices of the Green Team, a Massachusetts Department of Environmental Protection program that provides resources to help students and teachers reduce waste, the

middle school and high school has received 50 recycling bins and 5 rolling carts to collect paper waste and other recyclable materials.

"Thanks to Lynn Bassett and principals Rob Morrill and Jeff Kenney, the program will begin soon, hopefully by the end of the week," Tela said.

She said students and staff will organize volunteers to truck the carts and bins to the town's recycling station behind Judd Wire, on a regular basis. The school committee thanked the student council for taking a lead

role in initiating the recycling.

In other news, Tela said the students were planning to initiate a Safe Homes program in the district, to establish a network of safe homes where parents sign a pledge "not to serve alcohol or drugs to children, to supervise parties, and not to allow children to attend unsupervised parties." Tela said, "Usually the Safe Homes program is initiated by parents. We thought it would be neat to have students initiate it to help our peers stay safe." She said one parent, Nancy Underwood,

brought the idea to the student council's attention. It has been tried successfully in the Mohawk School district.

Oh, and the performance dates for the high school production of *Grease*, sometime in March, will be announced soon, Tela said.

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Montague Reporter: 863-8666

Call for Local Color Authors

BY ANNA VIADERO

MONTAGUE - Local Color, an annual collection of stories by Western Massachusetts seniors age 65 and older, is soliciting stories for its eighth volume, due out in June 2006.

Stories should recall some memorable time in your life and be no longer than 1500 words.

Stories may be typed, handwritten or sent in the body of an email.

Deadline is March 15th.

All authors receive two free copies of the volume, and retain all copyrights.

Send stories to: Local Color, PO Box 116, Montague, MA 01351 or via email to writefromlife@yahoo.com.

SENIOR CENTER ACTIVITIES Jan. 30th - Feb. 3rd

MONTAGUE Senior Center, 62 Fifth St., Turners Falls, is open Monday through Friday from 9 a.m. to 2 p.m. for activities and congregate meals. Meal reservations need to be made 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. Trip coordinator is Jean Chase. Make trip reservations by calling 772-6356. Payment and menu choice is due three weeks prior to trip.

Monday, 30th

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

Tuesday, 31th

9:30 a.m. Tai Chi
Wednesday, 1st
10:15 a.m. Senior Aerobics
12:45 p.m. Bingo
Thursday, 2nd
1:00 p.m. Pitch
Friday, 3rd
10:15 a.m. Senior Aerobics
11:00 a.m. PACE Aerobics

ERVING Senior Center, 18 Pleasant St., Erving (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 medical necessity by calling Dana Moore at (978) 544-3898.

Monday, 30th

9:30 a.m. Exercise
9:45 a.m. Library
12:30 p.m. Pitch
Tuesday, 31st
9:00 a.m. Aerobics
12:30 p.m. Oil Painting
12:30 p.m. Haircuts
Wednesday, 1st
9:30 a.m. Line Dancing
12:00 Noon Bingo
Thursday, 2nd
9:00 a.m. Aerobics

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.

The
Gill Store
Grand Opening
Saturday, January 28th
9 a.m. til closing
Free Food Samples

Morning: Free Cocoa and Coloring Books for Kids
3 - 5 p.m.: Wine, Cheese and Beer tasting
4 p.m.: Norman Schell

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From the Files of Gottlieb Koch

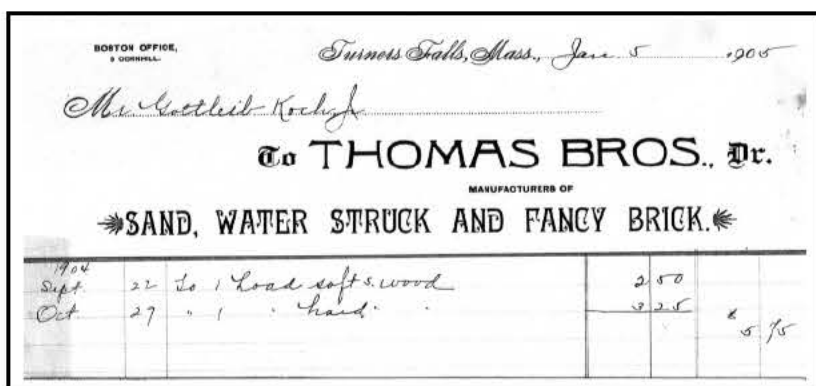
BY EDWIN POTTER

TURNERS FALLS - From my files of century-old billheads from the Gottlieb Koch grocery store that operated in Turners Falls in the early 1900s were several from-merchants catering to the building trade.

One of these was the George Starbuck & Sons, who handled Steam & Water Plumbing and Heating Supplies of all description, as well as serving as agents for Household Crowford and Glenwood Ranges and for the Rife Hydraulic Ram. One of their invoices shows gasoline being sold to Koch's store at 14 cents a gallon, in 1911. Oh, for the good old days.

Another well-stocked merchant was the E. M. Gulow Co. at 174 Avenue A, handling Birds asphalt shingles and roofing, Devoe lead and zinc paints, Budkeye incubators and brooders, Whirlwind vacuum cleaners and even radio receiving equipment and supplies.

The F.L. Webster Hardware Merchant handled Coal, Lime, Cement, Contractors and Mill supplies along with smaller hardware items. According to



an invoice in 1909, a large clothes basket sold for 84 cents and rat traps sold for \$1.25 a dozen.

A familiar name now as in 1921 was Couture Bros., offering the work of painting, paper hanging, kalsomining and hard wood finishing. Their telephone number was 170.

Among their competitors of the time, businessman Charles A. Dascomb provided painting and paper hanging in 1919. In the same time period, Raoul Bourdeau provided electrical contracting.

The billhead of Wm. Gartrel in 1907, in bold letters, details his business as "House, Carriage and Sign Painting," as well as advertising his work as a "Grainer." According to *Webster's Dictionary*: a grainer is a person who does stamping

or painting with a design imitating the grain of wood.

A billhead from 1906 shows that F. Martineau & Son were Contractors and Builders. The Ryan Bros., who were Slate and Gravel Roofers, performed work for G. Koch in 1906 as follows:

Roof Repair - 4 hours @ 35 cents = \$1.40; 13 slates @ 5 cents = 65 cents; 1# Nails, 5 cents; 1# Hooks, 10 cents; Total: \$2.20.

The Thomas Bros. billhead indicates manufacturers of sand, water, struck and fancy bricks in 1905 (see above). Then there was Geo. H. Reed of Montague City doing a shingling job for Koch, with 11½ hours of labor at \$4.68, for grand total of \$13.77.

A note on the bill indicates Mr. Reed wanted this amount credited to his grocery bill.

Animal Habitats at the Discovery Center

Saturday, January 28th, 1 p.m. - Connecting Creatures: Join Susan Russo of the Silvio O. Conte Refuge for a trek through the Discovery Center and learn about the different habitats different animals need for their survival. Program geared towards 5 - 8 year olds; all are welcome.

Register now for "On the Trail with the Fisher Cat," February 2nd and "Tracking Fishers and Other Woodland Predators" on February 4th, led by tracker-naturalist David Brown. Call Northfield Mountain: 413-659-4461 or visit: www.great-fallsma.org.

Rep. Donelan Holds Erving Office Hours Monday, Jan. 30th

Due to snow and icy conditions, the Town of Erving sensibly canceled their selectboard meeting on Monday, Jan. 23rd. At the next regularly scheduled meeting of the board, Monday, Jan. 30th, Rep. Christopher Donelan will hold office hours at the Town Hall in Erving Center from 7 to 8:30 p.m. where he will also meet with the board.

POSTCARDS FROM THE PAST

Sheldon's Cascade



BY LILLIAN FISKE
These falls, located off South Taylor Hill Road in Montague Center, were a very popular place for picnicking. Actually I have been in Montague for 80 years and I have never seen them, as they are located on private property.

From the Montague Historical Society Collection.

Gill Store Tea Tasting Brings Memories

BY JOSEPH A. PARZYCH

GILL - On January 21st, Lissa Greenough and Vicki Van Zee set out a fine table of assorted foods to sample, as well as an unusual tea. The tea tasting crowd at the Gill Store was a restrained group. While enthusiastic, they were the epitome of decorum at the tasting.

The featured tea was Chai - a blend of black tea, ginger, cardamom, cloves, and nutmeg. To prepare the tea, the store owners boiled it in a mixture of half milk and half water. The result is a smooth yet mildly spicy tea - stimulating and yet soothing, which may have created the tranquil atmosphere.

The food samples were on the zesty side - lamb kebab, which was only mildly spicy; yogurt with apple, lightly spiced with cinnamon and nutmeg; samosas - triangular egg roll wrapping stuffed with a potato and pea filling spiced with a fair amount of pepper; paratha - triangular pieces of egg roll wrapping filled with bread and potato flavored with generous amounts of

zing to warm the heart and soul, and even the gizzard. The food was attractively arranged with samples of the store's teapots and tea strainers.

The tea strainers reminded me of the time I appropriated my mother's tea strainer in building a crystal radio set. When I was growing up, we lived far from electric lines. To keep a battery tube radio supplied with batteries proved to be prohibitively expensive. A relative gave me a simple crystal radio, but it did not work. From plans I found in the school library, I assembled a fairly sophisticated crystal set,



At the Gill Store last Saturday, owner Lissa Greenough discussed the unusual properties of Chai tea with Dorothy Storrow and Sandy Brown (l - r). Greenough discovered the Adivasi Chai, concocted in Brattleboro, VT, during a recent visit there.

using variable condensers and rewinding coils with taps, from an old junked radio. I first tried using the crystal from the crystal radio gift. But it didn't work. I melted a piece of sulfur with lead, to make a crystal. That didn't work. Finally, my father gave me a little reality talk. "Listen, Joe, you can't get something for nothing. If the radio doesn't need

electricity or batteries, how is anyone going to make any money off of people who listen to it? Stop wasting your time with this foolishness."

I kept trying different things. I then learned that the crystal acted as a diode to rectify the AC broadcast signal to DC, when the current passed through a cat's whisker (a fine wire) resting on a sensitive part of the crystal.

One day, my mother asked me to make her a cup of tea. When I used the strainer, a light bulb came on in my head. Eureka! The wire that came with the useless crystal radio was relatively thick. Maybe I needed a thinner wire! I popped the wire

mesh out of the strainer, and pulled a wire loose. The fine brass wire did the trick. It seemed truly miraculous to hear music coming from the ear-phones. I got all excited, and called everyone to listen. My father listened, but would not admit to hearing a thing. I stayed up late to tune-in stations from across the country, stations not available with a regular radio, never ceasing to marvel that I finally got the radio working.

One day, when I came home from school, I found an ashtray full of cigarette butts next to the radio. I moved the cat whisker to a dead spot. When I got home the next day, my father asked me to leave the radio on for him when I left. He said he liked to listen to the news.

Meanwhile, my poor mother was looking high and low for her lost tea strainer. I bought her a new one, but did not confess to running off with her old one until years later. If she were still alive today, I would have bought her another tea strainer at the Gill Store tea tasting.

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Town Projects Need Citizen Input

A number of major municipal projects are in the planning stages in Montague. The trouble is, the citizens who will eventually make use of - or be impacted by - the buildings and facilities being planned have yet to be included in the planning.

After an ambitious attempt to design a \$4.6 million extension to the Carnegie library, the trustees quietly shelved the plan when the size of the local match began expanding with the rising price of steel. Adding onto an historic building is expensive, especially one built on a hill of ledge. But the allegiance to that architectural treasure is strong among library patrons - of all ages - who have searched the Carnegie's narrow stacks for books since 1905. It is perhaps the only public building in town still being put to the use for which it was originally intended.

So it may come as a surprise to library users to learn that meetings are ongoing to possibly relocate the library, and combine it with the senior center and the parks and recreation department in a joint community center - which might be located in the narrow space between the back of town hall and the park entrance to the fish ladder. This is not necessarily a bad

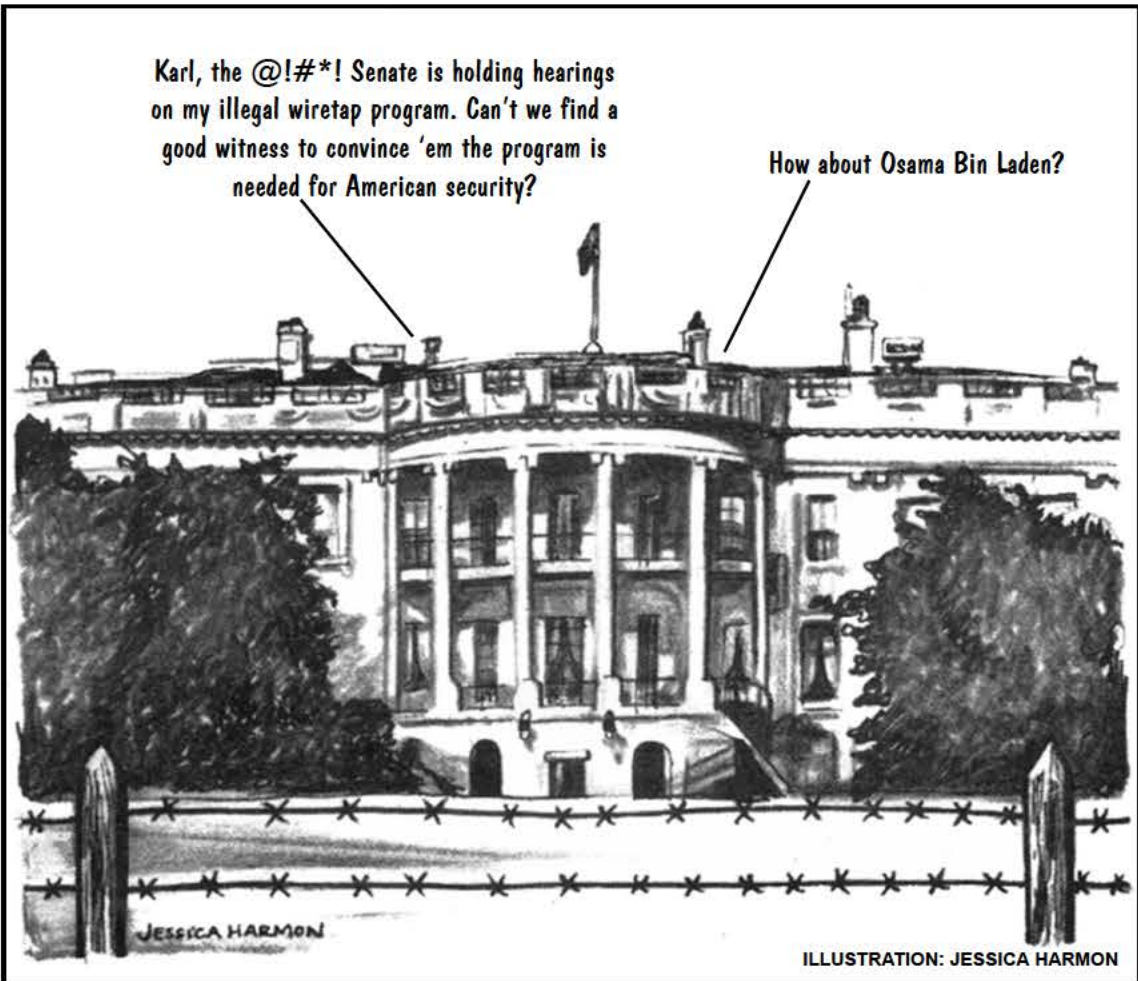
idea, and it is important for the department heads to work out the concept before presenting it to the public, but they should not lose sight of the people they are serving. The residents and taxpayers of town need to be brought into the planning of such a project as soon as possible: their ideas and concerns are critical to building the consensus needed to move forward.

Similarly, any move to build a new police station, possibly as part of a joint safety complex up on the Hill alongside the Turners fire station, will require full public participation. Likewise, the anticipated report of the elementary school configuration study committee should not be released without some form of public hearing, whether it calls for closing any district schools or keeping them all open.

The debate on that issue has raged nearly as long as the debate on whether or not to expand the runway at the airport: another project badly in need of town-wide consensus. The way to achieve consensus is not to present a finished, take it or leave it plan, but to bring citizens into the planning process early and often.

Another concept advancing in committee meetings is the Turnpike Road landfill project. After initial question and answer sessions on the proposal, the town has left residents of various precincts to hold information sessions on their own, while reports of likely truck routes to the landfill filter out of town hall.

Montague would be wise to take a tip from neighbors like Gill and Wendell, who have successfully employed community brainstorming sessions - called charrettes - to build consensus on issues like locating a new library or planning for development of commercial land. It's not that town planners and department heads don't have the expertise to come up with the plans. But it is the citizens who have to live with the results, and pay for them.



LETTERS TO THE EDITOR

Calling all Franklin County Poets

The Friends of the Greenfield Public Library is pleased to announce the 15th Annual Poet's Seat Poetry Contest. The contest is 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. Entries should be typed or clearly printed in black ink, with the name, address, phone number and email on the reverse side of the poems. Young poets should write their age in the lower right hand corner, circled. The deadline for entries is March 16th. An awards ceremony and poet-

ry reading will take place on April 27th in honor of National Poetry Month.

Poems should be mailed to: Poet's Seat Poetry Contest, Greenfield Public Library, 402 Main St., Greenfield, MA 01301. The adult first prize winner will receive stewardship of the Poet's Seat chair, with their name on a plaque listing all the previous winners, as well as a handcrafted Poet's Platter and a gift certificate to a local bookstore. All other winners will receive a handcrafted Poet's mug along with a gift certificate to a local bookstore. The Poet's Seat Poetry Contest has been sponsored by the Friends of the Greenfield Public Library annually since 1990.

-Hope Schneider
Greenfield

Kudos on New Parish Story

Kudos to the staff of the *Montague Reporter* for the well written, informational articles they produce each week. David Detmold's research for his article about the establishment of a new parish in town was impressive. Many national papers could learn journalistic integrity from the example of this little paper run by volunteers. Just another reason to make living in this community such a privilege.

- Constance Sicard
Turners Falls

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WORD ON THE AVENUE

Do you support the proposal to increase power production by 20% at the Vermont Yankee nuclear plant?

COMPILED BY LISA DAVOL

No, not if it means more radiation for us.

-Orlando Munoz
Turners Falls



No, I think it is dangerous. We don't need the danger.

-Edie Williams
Turners Falls



My initial reaction is no, but I haven't read all the information to make an informed judgement.

-Teresa McClelland
Greenfield

No, there are issues with safety and quality control. I am concerned living in Northfield.

-Nancy Andreas (no photo)
Northfield

If there is a big demand for the energy, then yes, I support it. But if it is just to make someone richer, then no.

Bill (no last name given)
- Northfield

GUEST EDITORIAL

M&M's Beat Medicare D

BY JOSEPH PARZYCH GILL - I asked the druggist at Stop & Shop if 'Medicare D' is a dirty word.

"It certainly is, and we are going crazy trying to get medications for our customers," he told me. "They come in with temporary numbers on insurance company letters, and they don't work; neither do a lot of the plastic cards they've issued. Or else the prescriptions have to be verified by the doctors as being necessary."

We went to a meeting to explain the new Medicaid D system, advertised in *the Recorder* as being held at the Unitarian Church next to *the Recorder*. A large crowd showed up. The church was dark and locked. People lined up at the door in the cold, or sat waiting in their cars. Some shook the church doors and muttered what I hope weren't dirty words.

A small group went into *the Recorder* office wanting to know what was going on. The first couple of *Recorder* people did not help us other than read-

ing us the incorrect information in the paper. A third person said the meeting was being held at the Country Club Road condos, in the rec room.

We joined a crowd there. The information person gave us the lowdown on 40 plans in about 40 minutes. When she talked about the "donut hole," folks' heads turned looking for refreshments. If they had served donut holes, the time would not have been a total waste. People came away more confused about the new program than when they arrived.

There were other informational meetings. One notice arrived on the 20th of the month announcing a meeting on Tuesday the 20th. Unfortunately, Tuesday was the 18th, and the meeting had long since come and gone.

A nice lady at "SHINE" of Franklin County Home Care was the most helpful. We got a computer read-out with three options that most fit our needs. I called in to order a plan with Humana for myself, and a plan with Blue Cross for my wife. I

spent hours on hold with recordings telling me to please be patient, that they valued my business, the response was overwhelming and they would get to me soon. "Soon" ended up in hours on hold, or I would get cut off.

I finally got through to live people, and ordered our plans. I was happy to be done with the frustrating process. The woman at SHINE then called to say that companies were changing plans and Humana covered more of my wife's long list of medications with a slightly lower premium. I had two chances to change by January 1st.

I got back on the phone and tried to get a real person to talk to. All I got was a recording telling me to push buttons again, and again. When a real live human being answered, she gave me another number to call. I went back to pushing buttons. (What does a person do if they have a dial telephone?)

More music and happy voices told me how much they appreciated my business. At long last, I got a real person

who gave me another number - the same number I started my odyssey with!

The next day, I went back to pushing buttons and got my wife enrolled in Humana.

They sent a letter with temporary numbers so we could get medications.

The numbers did not work. I was back to pushing buttons and hearing happy voices telling me how much they appreciated me. I gave up and sent a blistering letter to Humana. My wife got a plastic card a few days later.

The druggist said it would not work until the doctor verified that the prescriptions were necessary. Do they think he is prescribing M & M's?

Meanwhile my wife is without medication for serious health problems. The druggist gave us enough pills for a couple of days.

Soon, a second Humana plastic card came in the mail for my wife - none for me. Maybe the letter made them mad. Soon, another plastic card arrived for my wife from Blue

Cross. Now she has three cards and I have none. Back to punching numbers to listen to happy voices. I tried to reach Blue Cross to cancel my wife's plan with them, but got put on hold. My hair began turning whiter, and falling out in clumps.

Today, we got three large booklets in the mail from Humana. I still have no plastic card. I bought a bag of M&M's. They made me feel better.

Maybe I don't need any medication. And there is no warning on the M&M package of all sorts of side effects worse than the malady, as there is on prescription medicine.

GMEF Logo Created

On January 4th, the Gill-Montague Education Association received the presentation made by Derrick Zellman, a 2003 graduate of Turners Falls High School, with great enthusiasm. The 21-year-old junior at Bridgewater State College, majoring in graphic design, had been asked by the committee to create an original logo to be used for their letterhead and promotional material. Using the symbolism from a logo created by Joyce Phillips, Zellman incorporated academics, arts, and athletics with the symbolism of a pencil, bat and ball, paintbrush and the music staff to form the connecting lines of a star. The star represents the celebration of the total enrichment of students. The board voted unanimously to accept Zellman's design.

Zellman was honored when his third grade teacher Sherry Wood, a member of the GMEF, asked him to work on the design. He was happy to give back to the school district he attended from kindergarten through graduation. Zellman is proud of the education he received in Gill-Montague. Athletics and arts were very important to him throughout his



years there. He was a three-season athlete all his years at TFHS. He loved his art experiences in elementary school with Mary Forrest, and knew through course work with Bill Hazlett in middle school and Jeff Jobst in high school that he needed to incorporate art into his career. Zellman presented the logo with all his original artwork to the committee just in time to help with the 2006 Gala, "A Concert with Elisabeth von Trapp" on Saturday, April 29th, at the Turners Falls High School Theater.



Turners Falls High School (Class of 2003) graduate Derrick Zellman poses with his graphic design presentation

2nd Annual "Hold 'Em for Hospice" Poker Tournament

GREENFIELD - Hospice of Franklin County is holding its second Texas Hold 'Em Poker Tournament on Friday, March 3rd, 2006. The tournament will be held at the St. Kazimierz Hall, 179 Avenue A, Turners Falls, MA 01376. Registration begins at 6:00 p.m. and the tournament begins at 7:00 p.m. sharp.

\$100.00 buy-in for the first 200 players to register. 50% of the registration fee will be awarded in cash prizes and 50% will be donated to Hospice of Franklin County, Inc. All players at the final table will win prizes. There will be snacks and a cash bar available.

Players interested may also Pre-Register by mail. Send your check for \$100, made payable to Hospice of Franklin County to: 329 Conway Street, Suite 2, Greenfield, MA 01301.

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Where: Turners Falls High School Fitness Studio
Fees: Montague Residents = \$30, Non-Residents = \$35
Enrollment Minimum: 8 ppl/class
Enrollment Maximum: 20 ppl/class
Registration Deadline: Friday, February 3

OPEN GYM

Thursday, January 26 - Friday, March 24, 2006

Thursdays: 6:30pm - 7:00pm - Family
7:00pm - 8:00pm - Youth
8:30pm - 9:00pm - Adult

Fridays: 6:30pm - 7:00pm - Family
7:00pm - 8:00pm - Youth
8:30pm - 9:00pm - Adult

Family Session - available for individuals ages 12 & Under (We encourage parental/guardian supervision for children 12 & Under)
Youth Session - available for individuals ages 13 - 17
Adult Session - available for individuals 18 years & up.

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Daily Admission: Youth - \$.50 / Adult (18+) - \$1.00
Season Memberships:
Youth = \$8.00
Adult = \$12.00
Family = \$20.00 (Includes 1 adult, 2 children)

Parks & Recreation personnel reserve the right to require parental presence for those 17 & Under, if necessary.

MONTAGUE'S 6TH ANNUAL WINTER CARNIVAL

Saturday, February 4

MPRD is pleased to announce Montague's 6th Annual Winter Carnival. Come out of hibernation and celebrate a weekend of wintry fun with us. Look for a schedule of events that will be distributed through the MPRD Office, the Gill-Montague School District, Montague Libraries, Montague Town Hall and local media.

Events include:
Hayrides, Bonfire, Broomball Games, Cardboard Sledding, Snowball Slingshot!
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Gill Approves Bylaw Changes

A total of 12 registered voters, plus the moderator, trudged through the snow to a special town meeting in Gill on Monday night, January 23rd, to approve changes to the town's bylaws governing approval of special permits. The two warrant articles were approved by unanimous vote, reducing the size of the planning board from seven to five members, and

increasing the zoning board of appeals will from three to five members. In future, the zoning board will handle special permit reviews, freeing the planning board to devote themselves to long range planning for the town.

The reduction in the size of the planning board will take place by attrition or resignation.

BUDGET

continued from pg 1

Coupled with sharp hikes in utility and heating costs for the six district school buildings, expected 3% to 6% cost of living increases for clerical, maintenance, and custodial workers whose contracts are currently in negotiation, a 3% increase for school supplies, and a 28% increase for school choice and charter school tuition will make up the remainder of the budget hike. The federal government has slashed spending on No Child Left Behind funding for Title I reading support teachers by 15%, which will result in the loss of one full time equivalent position in the district, Gee said.

Offsetting these losses and fixed cost increases, Gee pointed to a few areas of savings. Seven teachers are retiring at the end of this school year, to be replaced by new hires at a lower rate, for a likely savings of \$75,000. Gains in controlling special education costs could save the district an additional \$30,000. A line item saving of \$150,000 for out of district SPED placements, for students now being taught in the district as a result of the newly implemented Old Mill program will be offset by an equivalent rise in occupational therapy and physical therapy costs, Gee said. Total savings from these areas would equal slightly more than \$100,000.

Gee said she hoped the budget picture would brighten with the expected news from the governor and the legisla-

ture about increases in Chapter 70 school aid, regional transportation reimbursement, and a rise in Circuit Breaker special education funds. "But so far we have nothing in writing, no hard figures."

The committee brought their preliminary budget proposal to the Montague finance committee on Wednesday night, January 25th. Prior to the meeting, finance committee chair Jeff Singleton said, "You can't really talk about this preliminary budget for the schools without making some assumption on state aid. But the town of Montague's revenues go up \$400,000 to \$500,000 a year, unless we get some windfall. And the town's fixed costs generally go up about half that amount."

Singleton said, "We actually didn't set out a standard for department heads to aim for (in terms of budget increases this year). I think we wanted to see what department heads thought they needed, and go from there."

Those increases have generally been held to 2 or 3% in recent years. Going into this budget cycle, Singleton said, "There is a sense the budget crisis has eased, but it hasn't passed, because there are structural problems that haven't changed."

As for the school's preliminary budget proposal, with its 7.76% to 9% hike, Singleton said, "If the state comes in with \$700,000 in school aid, then they'll be OK."



HIGHLIGHTS FROM THE ERVING POLICE LOG

Youths Without Helmets

Wednesday 1-18

10:50 a.m. Report of tractor trailer hit by falling tree on Route 2 at Prospect Street. Damage over \$1,000. No personal injuries.

2:45 p.m. Report of car striking a rock that rolled onto roadway on Route 2. Fluid leaking from vehicle. Erving Fire Department assisted. Dick's Towing removed car and owner.

Thursday 1-19

7:51 a.m. Transported juvenile male to Pioneer High School from North Street. He was a passenger in vehicle in violation of

juvenile operating law.

12:40 p.m. Officer on patrol observed gate at Mountain Road open, lock broken. Tail light lenses observed on the ground. Notified Northfield Mountain.

8:21 p.m. Report of a car vs deer accident on Route 2 in Farley. No personal injuries. Front end damage to pickup truck. Officer searched area for deer. Unable to locate.

Friday 1-20

10:15 a.m. Report of youths without helmets on gas scooters on Central Street. Gone on

arrival.

Monday 1-23

1:55 p.m. Assisted EMTs and fire department with a medical emergency on French King Highway.

Tuesday 1-24

10:50 a.m. Report of a disabled tractor trailer on East Main Street. Operator was able to fix and get under way.

10:52 a.m. Observed large tree down into breakdown lane on Route 2 westbound. Damage to tree indicated several vehicles hit it. State DPW notified.

Thanks to Gill PD Sgt. Christopher Redmond

The following is excerpted from a letter written by Lt. Theresa Sepe of the Winchester, N.H. Police Department, thanking Gill Police Sgt. Christopher Redmond for his "outstanding work" on Dec. 27th, 2005.

Dear Chief Hastings: On Dec. 27th, 2005, at approximately 23:57 hours, Winchester Police Department in Winchester, N.H. were called to a hold-up alarm at Mr. Mike's Convenience Store in Winchester, N.H. Subsequently, Winchester Police immediately broadcasted a "be on the lookout for a vehicle that came back as stolen out of Springfield, Massachusetts." This vehicle was directly involved in the hold-up

alarm at the convenience store.

Within 15 minutes of the broadcast, police were monitoring that your officer, Sgt. Christopher Redmond, had the vehicle in sight. Sgt. Redmond followed the vehicle while waiting for back-up police units to arrive. The vehicle got onto Interstate 91 heading northbound toward the State of Vermont. Sgt. Redmond along with a back-up officer from Massachusetts had to make contact with these possible armed suspects. I have viewed the video and audiotapes of the Vermont State Police, who arrived shortly after the stop.

I am aware that Sgt. Redmond was going off duty around the time frame of the broadcast.

Instead of securing, he along with a Bernardston Police Officer went out in search of this vehicle and possibly armed suspects. Sgt. Redmond obviously has dedication and commitment to his job. I commend you and your department for having such a committed officer in your ranks.

If Sgt. Redmond did not take this initiative to search for this vehicle and suspects, we may not have had such a successful outcome to this investigation.

This investigation is a fine example of what several police jurisdictions, working together, can do.

- Lt. Theresa Sepe
Winchester Police Dept.

GILL continued from pg 1

dam during a dramatic rescue on the rain swollen Connecticut on October 9th, 2005. The Friends of Gill donated \$1000 toward the boat's replacement cost, and the rest will be made up by donations from the Firemen's Association, Beaubien said.

Maddern told him, "I saw your old boat bobbin' in the water" below the dam the other day. "The game warden tied it up for us." Beaubien said his department may try to recover the swamped craft when the weather turns.

Baubien said Gill appears to have received a \$3000 Safe Grant, which he will put toward

the purchase of a laptop computer to aid with the department's presentations on fire safety, and for t-shirts.

He said the town of Gill has received a check for \$676 as part of a court settlement from an extreme sports enthusiast who tried base jumping - with parachute - off the French King Bridge last summer. Fire departments from Turners Falls, Erving, and Gill all responded. At sentencing, the base jumper was ordered to reimburse the three departments for the cost of his would-be rescue (he was already out of the river by the time they arrived on the scene). Erving received \$400 in the settlement, and Turners received \$931. Plus,

Turners recovered the parachute, which they kept, Beaubien said.

The board approved the allocation of \$1500 from the Northfield Mount Hermon emergency services fund to supplement a \$6000 grant for purchase of new radios, intercoms and headsets for the department's three large trucks.

Administrative assistant Deb Roussel announced that the new Vermont Yankee calendars had been delivered. A corrected page for emergency evacuation procedures had also been delivered. Apparently Entergy had gotten the emergency procedures for Erving and Northfield wrong in the calendar's first printing.



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Monitoring the Health of the Millers River

BY JOSH HEINEMANN

ATHOL - On Tuesday evening, January 24th at the Millers River Environmental Center, 100 Main Street, Athol, ten people attended a training session on using benthic macro invertebrate (BMI) surveys to evaluate the health of the river environment. Benthic creatures live at least part of their lives underwater, and macro invertebrates are invertebrates large enough to be seen without magnification, or more strictly, that will not fit through a standard 0.5 mm screen. The training was organized by Ivan Ussach,

Watershed Coordinator, and instruction and explanation were given by aquatic ecologist Dr. Michael Cole.

Other ways to evaluate the health of the river environment are visual surveys, and chemical analysis. Both have their value, and weaknesses. Chemical analysis will show the state of the river the one day a sample was taken, but that day may not be typical of the overall river chemistry. BMI surveys show a longer history of the river health, because populations take time to get established, and to diminish

if the water quality degrades. To some extent creatures can hide from short term chemical disturbances. They move into the river substrate, and into the water table on the side of the river.

There are creatures that require a clean river environment, most prominently Mayflies (Order Ephemeroptera), Stone flies (Plecoptera), and some Caddis flies (Trichoptera) (collectively EPT). Black flies also need clean running water, but other true flies like degraded water, as do worms and some filter feeders,

which eat the algae that flourish in nutrient rich water. Cole had pictures and specimens as examples. The ratio of filth intolerant to tolerant species is an indication of the long term river health.

Sampling is done by standing in the river and disturbing the river bottom, and collecting what floats free in a kicknet that sits flat on the bottom just downstream. It is done in the fall when the water is lower, the streams are flowing slower, the water is warmer, and populations and individuals have had a season to grow.

In the fall of 2005 the state DEP conducted four BMI surveys on the Millers River and its tributaries; their recommendation was that 14 to 20 surveys should have been taken in the watershed, but there was not enough money. That is why Ussach and Cole are training volunteers for surveys in the fall of 2006.

For information about further training in stream monitoring, contact Ussach at Ivan@miller-sriver.net, or call the Millers River Environmental Center at 978 248 9491.

GREENFIELD COMMUNITY COLLEGE FALL SEMESTER 2005 DEAN'S LIST from the towns and villages in our coverage area

Sarah E. Mailloux, Erving
Garrett R. Postema, Erving
James B. Rode, Erving
Jennifer D. Shaw, Erving
Allister C. MacLeod, Lake Pleasant
Heather L. Craver, Millers Falls
Connie L. Elliott, Millers Falls
Henry R. Gaida, Millers Falls
Keri L. Viencek, Millers Falls
Jade Burek, Montague
Ryan F. Coyne, Montague
David T. Gladstone, Montague
Heather M. Johnson, Montague
Monica M. Lane, Montague
Carrie Olsen, Montague
Virginia F. Rose, Montague
Maria K. Siano, Montague
James J. Ward, Montague
Cynthia D. Banning, Turners Falls
Felice E. Bartlett, Turners Falls
Christine J. Bartus, Turners Falls
Carol M. Broga, Turners Falls
Kristen M. Brunton, Turners Falls
Maureen S. Connelly, Turners Falls
Sergey G. Derivolkov, Turners Falls

Karen A. Dowd, Turners Falls
Megan E. Greene, Turners Falls
Elizabeth T. Griffin, Turners Falls
Angela N. Hawk, Turners Falls
Nicole E. Kapise, Turners Falls
Sharon G. Kemp, Turners Falls
Karen A. Kennison, Turners Falls
Michelle R. King, Turners Falls
Cori Krzykowski, Turners Falls
James W. Laberge, Turners Falls
Marcie E. Lyons, Turners Falls
Alla B. Pavlushkina, Turners Falls
Kendra L. Peschel, Turners Falls
Vera Placinta, Turners Falls
Elena V. Semykina, Turners Falls
Marissa S. Sicley, Turners Falls
Natalie S. Walker, Turners Falls
Alayna A. Zellmann, Turners Falls
David W. Coy, Wendell
Samuel C. Eide, Wendell
Angela M. Ferris, Wendell
Thomas F. Mangan, Wendell
Cristian D. Marano, Wendell
Amy Simmons, Wendell

HIGHLIGHTS FROM THE GILL POLICE LOG

Car vs. Moose

Wednesday 1-18

6:45 a.m. Assisted with vehicle off of road on Ben Hale Road.
7:02 p.m. Alarm at Main Road business, all secure.

Thursday 1-19

3:10p.m. Report of ATV's operating erratically on West Gill Road.

Friday 1-20

9:05 a.m. 911 mis-dial on Mount Hermon Campus, all checked OK

Saturday 1-21

12:05 a.m. Responded to medical at Mount Hermon Campus.
5:30 p.m. Car vs. moose accident on Route 10, no personal injury, damage to vehicle over \$1,000. Report taken, moose turned over to Environmental Police officer.

Sunday 1-22

3:48 p.m. Court process issued on South Cross Road.
5:05 p.m. Restraining order issued at station, served in station lobby.

Monday 1-23

10:25 a.m. Report taken of damaged mailbox on River Road.
2:26 p.m. 911 mis-dial on Mount Hermon campus, all OK
3:50 p.m. Single vehicle accident on Main Road, no personal injury, damage over \$1,000. Report taken.
4:20 p.m. Assisted with vehicle off of roadway on Main Road, no damage.
4:25 p.m. Assisted with vehicle off of roadway on West Gill Road, no damage.
8:15 p.m. Report of past suspicious activity at Main Road residence.

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Doctors Speak Up for Single Payer Health Care

BY DAVID DETMOLD

GREENFIELD - When was the last time you were able to get a doctor to talk to you about health care problems for more than five minutes? How about two doctors? A crowd of seniors at the panel discussion at the GCC downtown center on Wednesday afternoon, January 25th, got more than an earful from Drs. Sarah Kemble and Richard McGinn, who joined with retired social worker Mary Siano to compare the ailments of America's present health care system with the alternative all other industrialized countries on the planet employ, at the first Senior Symposium of 2006: on the benefits of a Single Payer Health Care System. They talked for a solid hour and forty

presently uninsured, and many more are underinsured, afraid to use their health plans at all due to the high cost of co-payments. Yet, "We spend one billion dollars a week in Massachusetts on health care. We pay more than anywhere else in the entire world for health care, right here in dear old Massachusetts," Siano said.

"Alone in the industrialized world, the U.S. has a system that is employer-based. At one time that system, and I hesitate to call it a system, covered two thirds of the U.S. population. Today more and more employers find it hard to continue providing health care benefits, and this includes municipalities." Siano described the present method of funding for the 'free

She described the advantages of a single payer system, as currently employed throughout Europe, Japan, Australia, and Canada. "Part of the reason it costs less is that it is so simple. The government would collect and dispense health care funds," circumventing, although not necessarily eliminating, private insurers. As for insurance companies, "these folks are raking in billions," Siano declared. She said under single payer, "doctors and hospitals would still be private, and patient choice would be far greater than it is today. It would be Medicare for everyone, without the limits and exclusivity of the current system."

"We have to stop paying 39 cents of every health care dollar on administrative costs. We're paying for drug companies' billboards and marketing, we're paying for billing, we're paying for it but we're not getting care as a result." Siano dismissed as missteps and half measures the reform measures under consideration by the Massachusetts legislature,

which she said were motivated by the threat of a loss of \$385 million in federal matching funds, unless the state reduces its level of uninsured residents.

Of the House plan to require businesses with more than 10 employees to pay a tax to fund expanded health care coverage, or provide insurance for their workers, Siano said, "We should start decoupling employment and health care insurance. We are the only country in the world that has this and it makes no sense."

She cited polls showing a majority of Americans now favor a single payer health system, and are willing to pay more taxes for it. Before closing, she quoted Winston Churchill: "You can count on Americans to do the right thing, but only after they've tried everything else."

McGinn, a Greenfield Ob/Gyn for many years, said he had first begun debating the merits of socialized medicine in 1963-64 as a member of the Brattleboro High School debate

team. In his historical overview of the movement for universal health care, he made it clear the debate has been going on for a lot longer than that.

In the late 1800s, Germany, Austria, Hungary, Norway, Britain, Russia and the Netherlands all passed forms of "sickness insurance" to pay out compensation to workers when they were too ill to work. This movement continued throughout Europe, with Switzerland finally passing a similar measure in 1912. But in America, the progress of related legislation was slow. It was not until the post-Depression 30s that Franklin Roosevelt was able to get a basic Social Security program passed by the huge Democratic majority in Congress, and he decoupled health insurance from the plan in order to assure passage. Although Harry Truman supported national, compulsory health insurance through both of his terms, he could not muscle the concept of "socialized medicine" through a McCarthy-era Congress. Riding another huge Democratic majority in the 60s, Lyndon Johnson finally passed Medicare and Medicaid, partial measures. Hilary and Bill Clinton's health care reform legislation never made it out of committee in the 1990s.

By contrast, Canada, where universal health care was first introduced in 1915, managed to finally adopt the measure nationwide in 1972.

McGinn said the problem in passing universal health care in America is not the fact that 45 million are uninsured, but the fact that 85 percent of the population *does* enjoy some form of insurance, creating a level of inertia against further change. Wedged against the momentum for universal health care are the hugely profitable pharmaceutical and insurance companies, and the AMA. The uninsured, by comparison, "have few resources and no political clout," McGinn said.

But Kemble, the director of the Community Health Center of Franklin County, said dissatisfaction with America's present health care system extends far beyond the uninsured.

"Many problems are structurally built in, besides the access issues for the uninsured. There are access issues for people with insurance, as the current Medicare Part D fiasco has

pointed up." She characterized the entire system as moving away from public payer to individual payer "at the moment when you need the care, when you are least able to pay for it." She advocated for a health care system modeled after the nation's Social Security system. "You pay in when you are young and healthy, so it is there when you need it."

Then she launched into a litany of shortcomings of the present free market American health care model, citing graphs and statistics. For example, between 1976 and 2002, uninsured Americans rose from 22 million to 45 million, a fact she called "a moral outrage in the wealthiest country in the world." She said the lack of health insurance itself causes 18,000 deaths annually in America, due to people failing to get health care when needed.

She documented the accelerating shift of the expense of health care from insurers to individuals signed up with HMO providers, between 1999 and 2002, during which time out of pocket (co-pay) expenses rose for clients from an average of \$976 to \$1786.

"Co-payments shift the cost of coverage to the sick, off those who don't need to use the system," Kemble said.

She said 31% of nursing care costs are now borne by families, rather than Medicaid or private insurance. "It is crazy that nursing care now leads families to personal bankruptcy," said Kemble, but she documented that this is indeed the case. In general, an examination of recent bankruptcies in Massachusetts showed more than 50% involved major illnesses or medical bills. "A majority of these people were working at the outset of their illness, but because of the linkage between health care and employment, after three months, when they lost their jobs, they lost their insurance, but they still had their illness."

She said bankruptcies in the U.S. were up 2000% since the 1980s, as compared to Canada, where they have risen only 10% in the same time period.

She decried administrative waste in the system, and declared for-profit health care systems as rife with fraud and unnecessary procedures. "If you get paid by procedure, you per-

see **HEALTH** pg 9



DAVOL PHOTO

Mary Siano, left, Dr. Sarah Kemble, center and Dr. Richard McGinn. The panelists recommended contacting area legislators, including Rep. Steve Kulik (steve@stevekulik.org) to urge them to support single payer health care. Kulik has lately called single payer "politically unrealistic."

five minutes.

"Of all forms of injustice, inequality in health care is the most shocking and inhumane," began Siano, citing January's favored sage, Martin Luther King, Jr. "In Massachusetts in 2005, we spent \$8213 per capita on health care." But, Siano said, many are receiving a larger portion of that average. By conservative estimate, 600,000 Massachusetts residents are

care pool' to cover ER visits by the uninsured as "crazy," since employers who pay for their workers' health care pay into it, and employers who do not provide health care benefits do not.

"We really have to think about whether the free market system will fix the problem. Health care is not a commodity that can be traded on the free market. We need to adopt a single payer system."

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WEST ALONG THE RIVER

A Day in the Great Blasket (Part I)

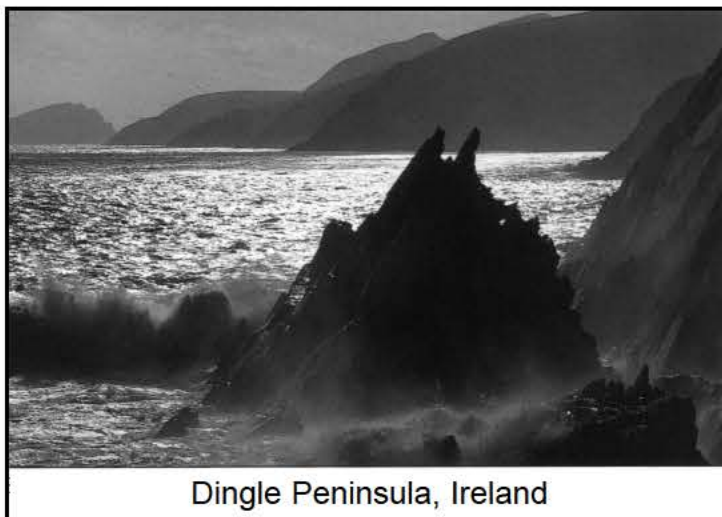
BY DAVID BRULE

MILLERS FALLS - Escaping to Ireland may be a good cure for what ails us in the last days of January, which have put us through three of the four seasons. Winter has stormed back after a peek at spring. The thaw melted away the snow we skied on the day before, and tricked one-year-old pollywogs to the surface of the frog pond. They came up through a hole in the ice and swam coldly in the three inches of rainwater between sky above and ice below. Soon they would've been frozen solid, preserved like insects in amber, and not looking forward to ice-skating over their surprised and betrayed little bodies quick-frozen under our blades, but we netted them all and dropped them back into the hole. They dove straight down into the pond bottom and debris, hopefully to sleep tight and safe until April.

Watching snow falling in the grey woods, dark sparrow shapes drifting in and out of the garden in the daylong dusk light, it came to mind that January and July would make for rather nice symmetry. In the wink of an eye, I was time-traveling back to the 4th of July six months earlier, with the whole summer ahead of me and a trip to the Blasket Islands off the Irish coast just a step away, from the quay to the ferry boat. I jumped onto the first boat crossing of the season. To get this far, you're up early, over to the top of the cliff in Dun Chaoin, where the ticket office is secured by cables strung over the roof and bolted to boulders to keep it from sailing over the cliff and into the sea during the frequent gales. A winding steep

descent down a cement walkway that drops 75 feet rather rapidly to the stone dock to meet the boat *Tir na nOg* (the Land of Youth, named for the fabled mystical land of Irish legend). Soft Kerry Gaelic mingles with shouted orders to travelers to mind the step! Graceful fulmars, seafaring whimsical birds, glide above us with nary a wing stroke; they come in here to the sea cliffs to nest. We catch a wave just right and the young captain picks his way out of the cove, avoiding jagged rocks just below the surface, and we're off across the Blasket Sound to the islands five miles away.

The Blasket Islands stretch out from the tip of the Dingle Peninsula of County Kerry: An Blascaod Mor - the Great Blasket - and several smaller islands, devoid now of permanent residents. They were home to the Blasket people for the last 500 years, but the Irish government evacuated the last villagers in 1953. The population had dwindled, the turf gave out, the fishing went "underfoot" as they say here, medical emergencies became tragedies too many times, and the treacherous Blasket Sound, which had kept the islanders safe from famine and greedy English landlords finally brought to a close the chapter on the Blaskets. However, before the last village turf fire went out, an extraordinary thing



Dingle Peninsula, Ireland

happened. By the early 1900's, anthropologists from Stockholm and Dublin discovered that the people of the Blaskets were living a language and a culture unchanged since the late Middle Ages. It has been likened by linguists to the equivalent of finding a lost people still speaking classic Greek in versification by Homer!

So a number of scholars made their way to the islands to explore, research, and document this unique time capsule of a society. Many came to learn the language, unchanged by English or modern Irish language reforms.

And even more importantly, they got the islanders to set down their stories.

Some dictated them, some wrote them in Irish, with later English translations. Tomas O'Crohan was the first, and his "The Islandman" became an international bestseller in the 1920s and 30s. There were also Peig Sayers ("An Old Woman's Reflections") and Maurice O'Sullivan ("Twenty Years Growing"), and many others. A

tremendous output of literature and poetry from a small village just before it disappeared forever. It seems that at one point, so many villagers were trying their hand at writing down their stories and memoirs that

among the 20 or so cottages in the village as to who should be the one to first write the story for the outsiders!

This brilliant flowering of Blasket Island literature lasted well into the 50s (and more new books about them have appeared in the past two years), but the harshness of the gale, the rip current of the Sound, and the lure of America caused the population to dwindle, and eventually leave for good. Interestingly enough, almost the entire population of the Blaskets that chose to migrate settled in Springfield and Holyoke, Massachusetts, where the memories and legends still thrive around Hungry Hill and the John Boyle O'Reilly Club.

Churning through the waves, the *Tir na nOg* is tossed around like a cork, being a small boat, but slowly we draw closer to the strand of beach and the landing in among the rocks. The beach is full of seals and their pups sunning in the early summer morning, a dolphin and a curious seal circle and swim under the boat. They would

soon get used to the comings and goings of the ferry, but this being the first of the season, it's something new to investigate. We are in all less than 20 passengers, and we wait our turn to be shuttled from the boat to the slip of a quay in a zodiac, the waves and the rocks being too risky for even the small *Tir na nOg*. Setting foot firmly yet carefully on the slippery cement, I trudge up the rocky path, keeping a low center of gravity on the steep incline.

Once up to the village site, I wander among the ruins of the village, most stone houses still standing, minus the roofs whose timbers were scavenged long ago and brought out to the mainland. It is always moving to stand in Tomas' doorway, or to visit the hearth of Maurice O'Sullivan, now exposed to the elements, or to stand in the one room of the old schoolhouse. So many sites written about in the Blasket books, now just parts of a ghost town. Every path, every little portion of the island had its place-name, recorded in the memoirs of the islanders and scholars. The village is set on a steep slope, tucked under the shoulder of the island. You would think islanders would have evolved one leg shorter than the other just to keep their balance on such a slope!

After a wander through the village, the pleasure of a hike around the island is next in store, and off we go, striding up the open path, with all of the Kingdom of Kerry laid out on the horizon of a perfect Kerry blue sky.

(to be continued)

HEALTH

from previous page

form more of them," necessary or not, she reasoned. She showed a chart of the multi-million salaries of CEOs of top "non-profit" HMOs.

Kemble took aim at the pharmaceutical companies, which she said were "virtually unregulated," by a government that lacks the will to oversee them. "They sell bad product, bad information, I feel bad as a physician administering them. They charge highway robbery for defective products." She showed a chart of how much pharmaceutical companies pay in average corporate taxes (16%) as compared to all other

industries (27%, on average). She said pharmaceutical companies spend \$13,000 per physician per year to market their drugs, "and since I don't accept any of [their marketing], some other physicians must be getting a double dose." Kemble pointed to a pie chart showing 30% of corporate revenues go to drug companies' manufacturing their product, while 31% go toward marketing and administration, and 20% to after tax profit. Another chart showed the outsized return on revenues of drug companies (e.g. 17% in 2002) as compared to the Fortune 500 median for the same year (4.1%). Total drug company profits for that year totalled \$37.4 billion.

Denying that the U.S. has the "best health care system in the world," as the common catch phrase has it, Kemble showed graphs of infant mortality, a statistic she called "the most sensitive indicator of the overall health of an entire population." The U.S. rate, in 2000, was 6.9 per 1000 live births, compared to 5.3 for Canada, and lower rates for a number of European countries. She showed comparable graphs for maternal mortality (U.S. 9.8 per 100,000 births: Canada 3.4 per 100,000 births: 2001), life expectancy (U.S. 76.8 years: Canada 79.4 years: 2000), and hospital inpatient days per patient, a chart in which the U.S. beat the other industrialized nations handily.

She decried the lack of continuity of care forced on doctors and patients by the employer-based insurance system. "The only healing power I really have is with my long term relationship with my patients. Change of employment, change of providers, fragments the patient - physician relationship." More, "the basic trust between doctor and patient, which is so critical to any kind of healing process, has been damaged by the system with which we finance health care. We need to get it back. We need a single payer system."

Kemble said there were only 10 dues paying members of Physicians for a National Health Program in Franklin County.

She urged her audience to quiz their own physicians as to whether they had joined this national advocacy group yet.

Despite the fact that many in the crowd of thirty seniors were prepared with questions, the doctors were so enthusiastic on the topic of a single payer health system they could not be kept to a reasonable time limit in their speeches, despite the moderator's best efforts. They talked for an hour and forty-five minutes straight. The next time you want to secure a five-minute consultation with your HMO doctor, try asking them if they favor universal health care. You may get an earful.

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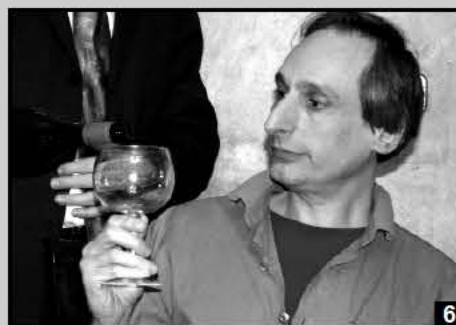
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Wine Primer from Ristorante DiPaolo



1. Iggi's Rotollini
2. Jon Wood, Hilton Dottin and Denise DiPaolo
3. Mike Hoobin and Craig Letourneau
4. Darrell Romanko
5. Eggplant Parmigiana
6. Jeff Honig
7. Edite Cunha (front), Ned Kennan, Mary Drew and Janet Chagnon



BY LISA DAVOL
TURNERS FALLS - Last Thursday, January 19th, Denise DiPaolo and Hilton Dottin hosted a wine tasting at DiPaolo's home, to continue wine selection for the soon to open *Ristorante DiPaolo*. Wine expert Mike Hooben from Ludlow based Horizon Beverage Company was on hand with 30 wines for rating by a group of 15 invited guests. Hooben chose food worthy wines according to DiPaolo's menu selections, while taking world wine trends and the American market into account. We each had a sheet in front of us with wines broken down into five categories: sparkling, Italian white, international white, Italian red, and interna-

tional red. Wines were evaluated using the 5 S's of wine tasting from a sheet prepared by Merryvale Vinyards: 1. *See*, color tells a lot about the wine including age. Oak aging, grape varietal and climate will also affect color. 2. *Swirling* wine in the glass opens up aromas and flavors. 3. *Sniffing* the wine identifies the types of aromas, their intensity and harmony. Unpleasant smells may indicate flawed wine. 4. *Sipping* while inhaling like a backward whistle and moving the wine around the mouth helps get the whole flavor as the tongue can only taste sweetness, saltiness, bitterness and acidity. Everything else comes from smelling, which facilitates in mouth smell. 5. *Savor* and think about

what was tasted. Common aromas found in wine include herbs and spices, woods, fruit, vegetable, floral, earth, and others including chocolate, leather, baked bread, butterscotch, almond, honey, chalk and many more. If an off aroma appears such as garlic, onions, nail polish, vinegar, matches or mold, something is wrong with the wine. Most common off aroma is wine spoiled by cork taint. Hooben gave a history of the grape variety and growing region for each sampling, and one by one poured us each enough for two mouthfuls at a time for each selection. M. Chiarlo Barbera D'Asti *Le Orme*, an Italian red from the Peidmont region in northwest Italy was one of the

samples. *Le Orme* means the wine is the vinyard's biggest production. The variety of grape is Barbera and the wine had a soft earthy spicy, orange zesty taste. Very versatile, it can be served to the pinot noir fan and matches well with seafood dishes with red tomatoes. The international red R. Stuart *Big Fire* Pinot Noir from Oregon had bright color and young fruit approach. It was earthy and spicy with bright acidity and pairs well with many dishes. It sits on the tongue and is the epitome of balance, as all components hang together. As one of the guests said, "it makes my tongue feel good." After opening it will hold up well for two days before turning acidic, so

drink up. Hilton, who will be *Ristorante DiPaolo's* head chef, prepared some delicious appetizers to pair with the wines. *Iggi's Rotollini* will appear on the restaurant's menu: chicken breast stuffed with prosciutto, spinach asparagus, smoked gouda, and sundried tomatoes, topped with pine nuts and a mustard sauce. He also prepared an eggplant parmigiana which will be available as an appetizer along with a substantial antipasto plate and fresh warm home baked bread. Hilton and DiPaolo hope to open the restaurant on Avenue A by the third week of February, if building renovations and restaurant preparations go as planned.

Those Damn Beavers are Busy!

BY JOE PARZYCH - GILL - If the beavers keep it up, we may have to change Gill's name to Beavertown. Virtually every brook in town has been invaded by beavers. Beaver brook, as it is now called, running through the Richard French property on Main Road, has recently fallen victim to those dear little animals. (French may have more graphic words to describe them, if you will pardon his French.) Beavers are rodents - essen-

tially, huge rats with flat tails. They have cut down or killed the trees and brush in French's cow pasture and have now moved on to the property of the late Clesson Blake and his sister Ruth Cook. The brook originally was about two feet wide, and known as a nice trout stream. No more. The dammed brook is now a series of ponds, some more than



Beavers have taken over the property of the late Clesson Blake and his sister Ruth Cook.

a hundred feet wide, inundating land that was once farmed and

grazed by cattle and deer. The new beaver lodge is about six feet high, the part visible above water, anyway. City folks in the eastern part of the state pushed through a ban on the use of leg hold traps in 1996. With trappers no longer keeping the population in check, and few natural enemies, the beavers have run wild in the western part of

the state. The folks in the east love the cute little fellows, and do not consider them a problem at all. There has not been a single bit of trouble with beavers washing out roads or ruining land in downtown Boston, and they can't understand what the fuss is all about. Hereabouts, the beavers seem to have adopted the Bush administration's line on family planning and they are multiplying like . . . well, like huge rats with flat tails.

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THE HEALTHY GEEZER

Caffeine and Vitamins

BY FRED CICETTI
LEONIA, NJ - Q. Does coffee kill the benefits of vitamins?

Any beverage or food containing caffeine such as coffee, tea, chocolate and some sodas can inhibit the absorption of vitamins and minerals and increase their excretion from the body.

This raises a more important question. What are the benefits of vitamins?

It's very important to talk with your doctor before you take any vitamin and mineral pills, especially if you take prescription medicines, have any health problems or are elderly. Taking too much of a vitamin or mineral can cause problems with some medical tests or interfere with drugs you may be taking.

Vitamins and minerals are "micronutrients" your body needs in small but steady amounts. Your body can't make

most micronutrients, so you must get them elsewhere.

Vitamins are natural substances found in plants and animals. There are two types of vitamins: water-soluble and fat-soluble.

Water-soluble vitamins are easily absorbed by your body. Unlike fat-soluble vitamins, they don't have to be absorbed using bile acids (fluids used to digest fats). Your body doesn't store large amounts of water-soluble vitamins. The water-soluble vitamins you don't need are removed by your kidneys and come out in your urine.

Your body has to use bile acids to absorb fat-soluble vitamins. Once these vitamins are absorbed, your body stores them in body fat. When you need them, your body takes them out of storage to be used.

Here are some water-soluble vitamins: Vitamin C, biotin and the seven B vitamins - thiamin (B-1), riboflavin (B-2), niacin



ILLUSTRATION JESSICA HARMON

(B-3), pantothenic acid (B-5), pyridoxine (B-6), folic acid (B-9) and cobalamin (B-12).

Here are some fat-soluble vitamins: A, D, E or K.

Minerals come from the earth or from water. Plants and animals absorb them to get nutrients. The "major minerals" are calcium, phosphorus, magnesium, sodium, potassium, sulfur and chloride. They are considered major minerals because adults need them in

large amounts.

The "trace minerals" are chromium, copper, fluoride, iodine, iron, manganese, molybdenum, selenium and zinc. Your body needs them in smaller amounts.

It would be hard to "overdose" on vitamins or minerals that you get from the foods you eat. But if you take supplements, you can easily take too much. This is even more of a risk if you take fat-soluble vitamins.

Whole foods are your best sources of vitamins and minerals. They offer three main benefits over supplements:

They contain a variety of the micronutrients your body needs. An orange, for example, provides vitamin C but also beta carotene, calcium and other nutrients. A vitamin C supplement lacks these other micronutrients.

They provide dietary fiber, which is important for diges-

tion and can help prevent certain diseases such as cancer, diabetes and heart disease. Adequate fiber intake can also help prevent constipation.

They contain other substances such as antioxidants that slow down the natural process that leads to cell and tissue damage.

If you depend on supplements rather than eating a variety of whole foods, you miss the potential benefits of these substances.

For some people, including those on restrictive diets, multi-vitamin-mineral supplements can provide vitamins and minerals that their diets often don't. Older people and pregnant women have altered nutrient needs and may also benefit from a supplement.

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

Madge, Put on Your Teakettle

BY FRAN HEMOND
MONTAGUE CENTER

The old thermometer says zero. Rain, wind and finally snow and cold have battered our world and snug indoors we may wonder where and how the little creatures survive. The seedy meadows are covered with ice, and the regulars at the feeder have brought a continuing stream of friends and family. Breakfast Club does not stop all day. The tree sparrows, spending winter here in Montague from the north country, who have been less active in the earlier thaw, have returned in force. A flock of maybe twenty are very lively in the cold, and actively compete with the chickadees, to whom they have often deferred.

The chickadees are all aquiver this morning. They zoom in, swap places at the feeder without losing a bite, and somehow do not collide with the waiting bird who apparently has signaled, "My turn" and slips neatly into the just vacated place. The birds this morning are not scattering seed but they are a little selective. A new, small feeder with

sunflower seed has been hung among the rhododendron, and it is a chickadee who occasionally tries it out. Perhaps he is not willing to spend the time to crack sunflower seed, because he goes back to the old feeder when he gets a chance.

The lone song sparrow sits on a branch, his feathers fluffed out as if against the cold, but perhaps not happy at the horde who have arrived this wickedly cold day near the thicket where he may nest. Compared with the sleeker tree sparrows, he looks like a fatso. His very distinctive song, "Madge, Madge, Madge, put on your teakettle, teakettle, teakettle," his good identifying spot in a well-streaked breast, and the fact that he is fairly common, make him a satisfactory and treasured sparrow to know.

The juncos are busy finding seed on the ground, their dark and white bodies, their little red feet and pink bills a striking

contrast against the snow. They keep a different pace. While the chickadees zoom around and make impossible turns in the air, and hang off the feeder



with ease, and the tree sparrows barely keep in the game, the juncos methodically scratch up the seed in the icy snow, steer clear of the cardinals who have stopped by imperiously, and avoid the mourning doves and blue jays. Along with the snow bunting, whose brown and white flocks are sometimes seen in Montague's open fields, juncos are sometimes called snowbirds. Both birds have 'come south' for the winter, to remind us it is even colder up North.

Leek Soup a Perfect Winter Pleasure

BY FLORE - Having almost had springtime at our doorsteps lately, it is hard to conceive what our eyes now behold. Bam! Snowflories have blossomed upon trees just like magic, over the whole landscape in fact, during the night. Time for another round of shoveling, stacking mountains of soft powder, the garden looking more like an igloo. Feeding double portions of wood into the hungry stove, while awaiting the assault of the snow plowing truck. My close neighbors have the wisdom to declare, "Stay put inside, winter ain't over yet!"

Did you know there are many remedies to do away with bluesy days? One of them is making soup from scratch. Soup is the most efficient way to restore energy. It is the simplest source of sharing warmth. Plus, the simplest thing to make!

Most French people swear by the benefits of watching the odorous concoction steaming out of the bowl. The vessels of floating croutons ready to be swallowed through the tornado of a spoon, "Quel plaisir!"

This easy recipe for four peo-

ple takes 20 minutes to make. Ideal for people who drop by on snowy days, too.

You will need: two medium-sized fresh leeks, two large potatoes, one quart of water, salt and pepper to taste, one cup of fresh heavy cream.

Boil the quart of water while peeling the potatoes, chopping (and rinsing well!) the leeks.

Throw the diced potatoes and leeks in the boiling water. Cook for 10 minutes.

Put through the food blender to mash, return to the cooking stove, on medium low heat.

Remove from stove when it bubbles, pour in the cream, add just then, a dash of salt and pepper (never cook anything with salt the French say: it kills the taste.)

Serve promptly with croutons. Enjoy the finest natural taste.

The secret to French cooking: don't mix too many ingredients. Keep it simple.

Portions served, as a rule, are much smaller and cooked just for that one meal. For dessert, bring apples and cheese.

"Bon appetit!"

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selectboard, airport manager Michael Sweeney outlined the work required to modernize the facility, including a new runway and taxiway, removal of aviation obstructions and the updating of runway lighting and navigation aids. In addition, Sweeney called for the runway to be extended from the current 3000 feet to 4200 feet to meet Federal Aviation Administration standards for an airport in this class.

The cost of the new, expanded runway is estimated at seven million dollars, which would be spent over two years. Of that, the FAA, through the Massachusetts Aeronautics Commission would provide \$6,825,000 and \$175,000 would be paid for by the town of Montague.

The subject of expanding the runway has not met with widespread approval at public hearings in the past. And for years the airport commission has requested funding from town meeting for studies to examine the presence of endangered species and Native American archaeological sites on airport land. At those meetings, town meeting members say, assurances have been given that the purpose of such studies was not to pave the way for extending the runway.

But two months ago, while preparing a study outlining improvements to the facility, the airport commission discovered that the length of the present runway did not meet federal standards. Now, the sudden imperative to extend the runway has angered some community members who feel deceived and has led others to question whether they can trust the commission members' word.

"We just stumbled on the regulation. Words like 'deceived' and 'lied' are prominent. We didn't know, and we're not lying or deceiving," said commission member Mark Fairbrother.

According to Sweeney, the federal standard was in at least two previous airport master plan documents. But, "we didn't appreciate the significance of it. Our understanding of it is new," Sweeney said.

"We need an independent assessment," said Mike Naughton, of the capital improvements committee. "This expansion just dumped in our lap at the last minute leads us to question the assumptions tonight's presentation is based on. We just can't accept what we're hearing anymore," he added.

Although the airport commission has not received an official letter from the FAA on the matter, Sweeney and the commissioners are concerned that funding for the project could be delayed or lost if not applied for within the next few months. The deadline for the current cycle of funding is October 1st.

According to Sweeney, Turners Falls airport traffic is estimated to increase by 17% by the year 2010. Although the new runway could attract small jets, he anticipates these would account for no more than 1% of local air traffic. The facility, limited to planes 12,500 lbs. or less at present, would not see a visi-

ble change in the types of aircraft using the runway. In addition, said Sweeney, the extension would result in a slight decrease in noise over Turners Falls and would have no impact on noise levels over Millers Falls. "It would remove a significant capital improvements need for many years," he added.

It is estimated that 175,000 cubic yards of soil will have to be moved if the runway extension is built. Scrub oak and pine will have to be cut down and replaced with grasses. This will provide grassland habitat for endangered species such as moths, butterflies and birds. There are also three or four Native American archaeological sites in the area, which Sweeney said the commission has been working with the Narragansett Indian tribe on. "We will do all we can to not impact the sites," he said.

Another goal of airport modernization and expansion is to construct new hangars in which to store aircraft. There are currently eight hangars at the site, which provide the bulk of the airport's annual revenue. Although these hangars are privately owned, they are located on municipal land and the owners must sign a lease for their use. These are usually long-term leases, lasting anywhere from ten to twenty years with a built-in clause for automatic renewal. Sweeney hopes to attract developers who would be willing to build a number of new hangars, each of which would provide the airport up to \$12,500 per year in additional annual revenue. While the airport operated at a \$22,000 loss in 2004, Sweeney forecasts a profit of \$35,000 by 2010 through such leases.

According to Bob Bacon, owner of Northampton Airport, where the runway was resurfaced in 2000, a hangar has an expected life span of forty years. Northampton currently has fifty such units, all of which are rented. However, he warns that few developers would want to spend money building a structure without a long-term lease, particularly on public land. As a result, he said, attracting such developers may not be an easy task.

On the other hand, Sweeney alluded to a developer who recently contacted him about building a hanger at the Turners Falls Airport. Whatever the case, Bacon explained the reason for Northampton's success is that the runway was resurfaced. At the Tuesday night meeting, Sweeney's profit projections were criticized because they did not seem to account for the added expenses of plowing and mowing a larger area, nor of maintaining a greater infrastructure. However, Brain Carroll, chair of the airport commission, said he did not see anything that would justify an increase in operating costs. "We would have to have the revenues to justify these, but I don't see it," he said. Sweeney added he saw no reason to add hours to his own position or to hire anyone else, because of the amount of work that is subcontracted.

Divisiveness was evident between the Airport Commission

and a number of those who use the facility, particularly over hangar leases. According to Fairbrother, leases dating back to the 1980s and 1990s had been recently updated after being undervalued. The increased rates did not please many of the long-time owners. This resulted in lawsuits by some of them against the commissioners.

One of the dissatisfied pilots who spoke at the meeting was Josh Simpson, who with his wife has owned two hangers at the airport for many years. Simpson, who said he is committed to aviation, explained that at one time the pilots, the commissioners and the airport manager were "on the same team." "But in the last two years things have been different. There is a sudden cry for the airport to make money, but it is not being addressed in a friendly or cooperative way," he said.

According to Simpson, the Airport Commission has tried to squeeze the owners of the hangars by claiming minute violations such as having a bicycle stored inside. When his own lease was not renewed, he asked why but did not receive an answer. He attended meetings, but received the silent treatment, he said. As a consequence he sued the commission and has spent thousands of dollars on litigation. "A phone call could have fixed it, instead of \$5,000," he added.

In the meantime he does support the runway expansion as being a good thing for the town. "The town would be shortsighted not to take advantage of the reimbursement for the project," he said, adding that the airport supports the region's economy. And he added, the balance paid by the town is a good investment in existing infrastructure.

Simpson, however, is dubious of Sweeney's financial projection for revenues from the hangars. He says that under the current approach to management and client relations, it is difficult to imagine a developer willing to risk his or her own investment. In addition, leases are now expensive at the Turners Falls Airport and limit the ability of an owner to pay all the associated costs such as a mortgage and insurance.

"There are options, we've been told," said Fairbrother. One is to not lengthen the runway. In that case, he said, the FAA would abandon the facility and the town would be left paying the price. Another option is to close the airport. But that, he said, is not realistic for monetary reasons due at least in part to the FAA's investment over thirty years. The town might have to compensate the FAA before it could close the airport, Fairbrother said.

The proposal before the town, its various committees and the selectboard is to improve the airport by upgrading safety standards in addition to extending the runway by 1200 feet. In the meantime, selectboard chairman Allen Ross said, "We need more hard information. A lot of questions need to be explored."

Patriots Need to Move On

BY LEE CARIGNAN

TURNERS FALLS - It was a tough championship weekend for disappointed Patriots fans, after their team was ousted from the playoffs two weeks ago. Fans have to be wondering what might have been had the Patriots not turned the ball over five times in their playoff game with Denver. The Pats would have been hosting the AFC championship game this past weekend; but they are starting their preparation for next season instead.

Going into the playoffs the Patriots were playing great football. They had a legitimate shot at making NFL history by taking their third consecutive Super Bowl title. But despite the disappointing loss to Denver in the second round, you have to give the team credit considering everything they went through this year. Before and during the 2005 season, the Pats faced

nearly every challenge a team could face. They had to replace both their coordinators. Bill Belichick's father died during the middle of the season. Corey Dillon, who ran for a Patriot rushing record last season, ran more like ex-Patriot Marion Butts this season. Linebacker Ted Johnson retired at

the beginning of training camp. Rodney Harrison blew out his knee in the fifth game leaving the secondary in disarray for most of the season. Richard Seymour, Teddy Bruschi, Dan Koppen, Corey Dillon, Kevin Faulk, and Matt Light all missed significant time to injuries. There were games when the Patriots played worse defense than the Houston Texans. But in the end, the Patriots came up short by just one uncharacteristically sloppy game against the Denver Broncos, or they would have been hosting the AFC Championship Game at Gillette

Stadium last weekend, an astonishing feat given the obstacles along the way.

Now the organization needs to put the Denver game behind them and focus on another important off-season. The team has many important decisions to make regarding free agents and the upcoming draft. The Patriots' early exit from the playoffs has earned them the 21st pick in the draft, their highest in three years. They also have some big-name free agents to worry about with Richard Seymour, Adam Vinatieri, David Givins, and offensive linemen Stephen Neal and Tom Ashworth.

Seymour is under contract for next season, but if the Patriots can't get a long-term deal done this off-season, they will probably lose the future Hall of Fame defensive lineman for sure after 2006. The Patriots usually avoid breaking the bank on one player, with the exception of Tom Brady. But Seymour is a special player and his five-game absence this season may have showed what life could be without him. The

Patriots run defense plummeted to 27th in the league while Seymour was out with an injury. When he returned, the run defense improved to as high as fourth in the league.

Adam Vinatieri was given the franchise tag last season, which kept the kicker in New England in 2005 at \$2.5 million. Vinatieri is once again a free agent. He would like a long-term deal, but if he can't reach one, the Patriots may place the franchise tag on him again in 2006.

Free agent David Givins will be getting a lot of attention on the free agent market. At 25 years old, the 6'0" wide receiver is just hitting his prime. The Patriots will have to decide if they can afford to keep him. Givins would like to stay in New England, but if the bidding gets too high the Patriots may have to go in another direction for a starting wide receiver. The team already lost David Patton last year and Troy Brown isn't getting any younger, leaving the Pats thin at the position.

The secondary will also need attention this off-season.

Injuries and bad off-season acquisitions last year have left the Patriots weak in their secondary. It is unknown whether safety Rodney Harrison will be able to return to form next season. The Patriots also desperately need cornerbacks. Expect New England to be aggressively seeking veteran cornerbacks and a safety in free agency. The 21st pick in the draft may also be a way the Pats can acquire a young talented cornerback. Rookie cornerback Ellis Hobbs proved to be a valuable addition this past season, and should be even better next year.

After the Denver game, a dejected Teddy Bruschi walked off the field. A Denver reporter asked him if this was the end of the Patriots dynasty. Angered, Bruschi told the reporter "No way it's the end." Time will tell where the Patriots organization goes from here. But as long as they have Tom Brady at quarterback, their core veterans, an infusion of young talent added to the roster every year, and Bill Belichick at command, the Patriots should compete at a high level for years to come.

Adventures in Scuba Diving

BY TRANAE GALLAGHER

TURNERS FALLS - I am like most 14-year-old Turners Falls High School students. I like swimming, playing all kinds of sports, reading and watching TV. And scuba diving. That's right. When I was 13 I got certified to scuba dive, and I've been on 17 fresh water and salt water dives since then.

My dad and I first got interested in scuba diving when we went to Grand Cayman Island in the Caribbean. We went snorkeling every day and really enjoyed it. We started talking about how cool it would be to scuba dive. When we got home we kept talking about it, and my dad got some information on how and where we could get certified. We took what is called the 'fast track' course. We did all the bookwork and used the pool to become familiar with our equipment, all in one weekend. Then on another weekend we did our open water dives.

We got the book that told us everything we would learn during the course, and read about a chapter a night until we finished it. By the weekend we got certified we were ready for the five quizzes and the big test we had to take. We really had to work hard. When we were in the pool, we learned how to use all the equipment and what to do in different situations.

As part of the certification, we had to complete four open water dives: two fresh water and two salt water dives. During the fresh water dives, we worked on equipment skills like regulator retrieval and clearing the water out of our masks while under water. During the salt water dives, we worked on underwater orienteering. In the two summers since we were certified my dad has gone on 21 dives and I have gone on 17. Most of the time we dive in Gloucester, but we have gone diving in Ludlow a few times.

Up in Gloucester there are about 18 recommended shore dive sites. We have gone on about five of them: Back Beach, Front Beach, Old Garden, Pebble Beach and Plum Cove. On our dives we have seen a lot of different aquatic life, such as lobsters, crabs, stripers, starfish, shrimp, and sand dollars. However, occasionally we see really amazing creatures like pipefish, lumpfish, and Northern Moon Snails.

All of our dives are fun, but my all time favorite was the boat dive we went on. It was so much easier than the shore dives because we didn't have to swim out to deep water; we just dove in. We have only gone on one boat dive though, because my dad got seasick and it is really expensive.

The sport of diving is generally pretty expensive. For all of your equipment it's going to cost \$2500 per person. Then it costs anywhere from \$5 to \$8 to get one air tank filled. In addition,

the certification course cost about \$350. Never mind the travel expense to go somewhere exotic.

If money weren't a consideration, the first place I would go would be the Great Barrier Reef. Then I would like to also go to Hawaii, Tahiti, and more places in the Caribbean, and Mexico. In the future, I will continue to dive recreationally because I enjoy it. However, I am considering being an aquatic biologist when I am older, in which case diving would be an asset to my job.

Scuba diving has given me a chance to bond with my father and explore the wonders of the ocean. I would definitely recommend this to someone who loves being in and around the water. It would not be as much fun for someone who didn't like water. I would also recommend diving to someone who is physically fit, because scuba diving is a pretty strenuous sport.

Annual Youth Legislative Forum

GREENFIELD - The fourth annual Legislative Forum for Youth will be held from 3 - 5 p.m. on Friday, January 27th at the Greenfield Youth Center, 20 Sanderson Street. The event will give area youth the opportunity to present state and local representatives with questions on political issues that affect their daily lives. The panel of elected officials will include Senator Stan Rosenberg, Representatives Chris Donelan, Dennis Guyer, and Steve Kulik, Mayor Christine Forgey of Greenfield, members of the selectboards in Ashfield, Montague, and Orange, and representatives of the Greenfield town council.

The Legislative Forum is sponsored by the Youth Services Roundtable, a coalition of youth-serving agencies located throughout Franklin County. Last year's event attracted an audience of over 100 people, and youth presented legislators with questions surrounding issues such as health care, youth homelessness, education, and community services. Area youth are encourage to attend this year's forum. For more information on the event please contact Shira Wolf or Carly Reiser at FCAC Youth Programs: (413) 774-7028.

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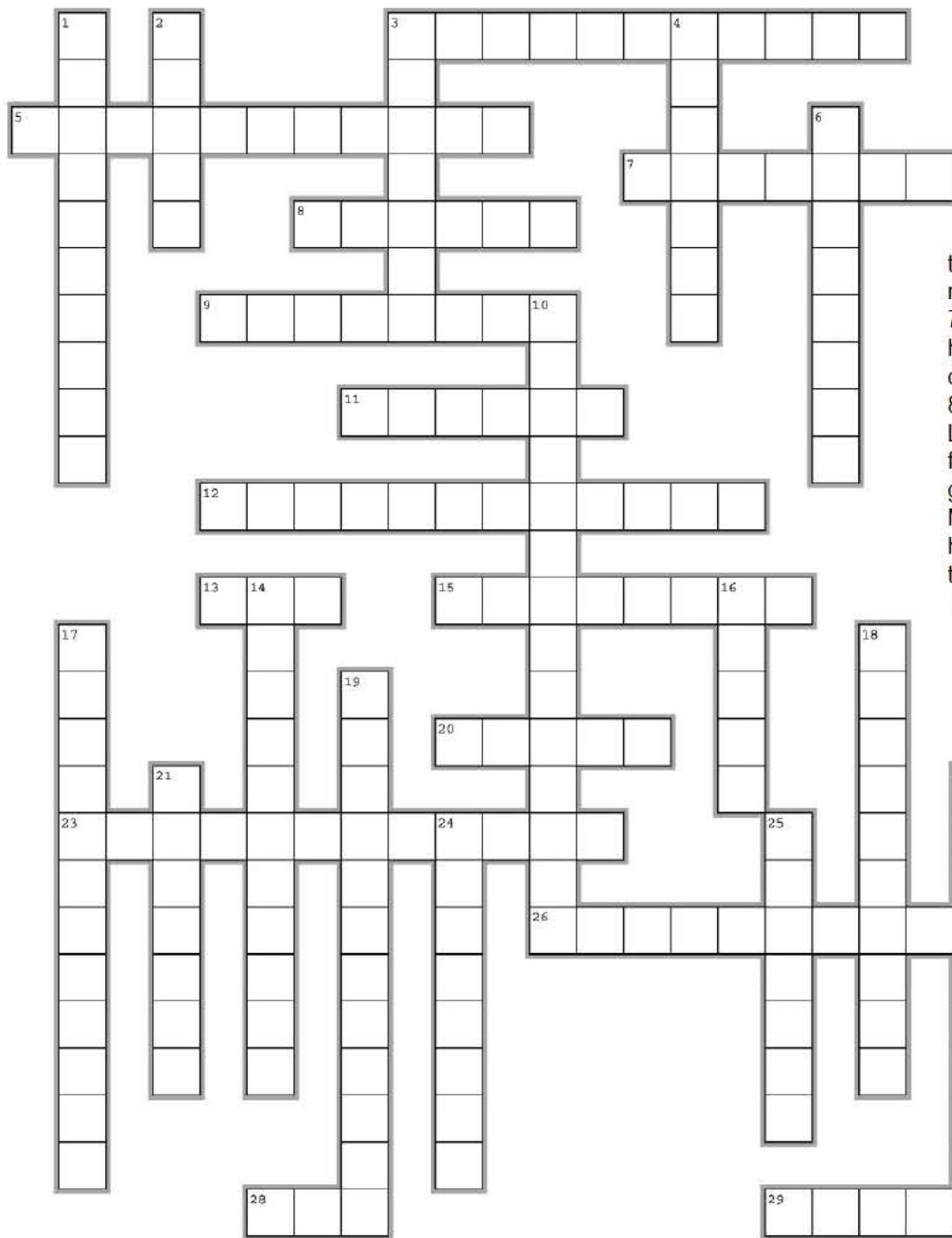
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Franklin & The King

by Bette Black

Across

- 3. The policy and practice of isolation and restricting access to resources and opportunities based on racial discrimination that Martin Luther King, Jr. grew up chafing under.
- 5. Martin Luther, 1483-1546, German theologian and leader of this spiritual movement.
- 7. Martin Luther King, Jr. was co-paster with his father of a church in Atlanta of this denomination.
- 8. As president of the Southern Christian Leadership Conference, an organization formed to provide leadership for the burgeoning civil rights movement in 1957, Martin Luther King, Jr. combined the ideals he took from Christianity and operational techniques he learned from this world renowned spiritual leader.
- 9. In response to his need to measure distances for scheduling postal routes throughout greater Philadelphia, Ben Franklin invented this simple carriage-mounted device.
- 11. According to Time Magazine, during Martin Luther King, Jr.'s lifetime, as well as now, this is the strongest and most independent of black institutions.
- 12. Ben Franklin's experiments using a kite with an attached metal key led to this invention valuable to the survival of tall buildings and ships in storms.
- 13. Organization residing under a cloud of shame evidenced outrageously under the leadership of J.

Atlanta-based King Center, declares that this is the moral issue of our time.

Down

- 1. Ben Franklin joined this organization, started a new chapter in his own neighborhood and eventually served as grandmaster.
- 2. Household appliance evolved by Ben Franklin and widely popular on both sides of the Atlantic.
- 3. Ben Franklin officially retired from the business of making money in 1748 in order to pursue this interest.
- 4. Popular form of annual publication, *Poor Richard's* version authored and printed by Ben Franklin, based on the calendar year including lunations, tides, holidays and moveable feasts, suggested planting schedule and many pleasant and witty sayings.
- 6. Innovation in eyeglasses developed by Ben Franklin.
- 10. The non-profit King Center in Atlanta, GA, promotes strategies for social change, including information-gathering, commitment, negotiation, direct action and this.
- 14. In Martin Luther King, Jr.'s world-famous "I Have A Dream" speech he declares, "When the architects of our Republic wrote the magnificent words of the Constitution and the Declaration of Independence, they were signing a promissory note to which every American was to fall heir," referring indirectly to this "architect" King shares a birthday month with who has long deserved his own national holiday including fireworks over Boston Harbor!
- 16. MLK, Jr. was a member of the executive committee for this leading organization of its kind.
- 17. Ben Franklin was one of the contributing editors and 56 signers of the official document declaring this.
- 18. Martin Luther King, Jr. was acknowledged with this prize in 1964.
- 19. Inspired by his visit to London and innovations there and in Boston following the great fire of 1666, Ben Franklin initiated this organization in his own home town.
- 21. Ben Franklin initiated the first secular circulating one of these in the American colonies.
- 22. Ben Franklin served in this capacity for Pennsylvania from 1737 to 1753 which greatly improved the circulation of his newspaper at the same time.
- 24. Martin Luther King, Jr.'s father, grandfather, great-grandfather, uncle and brother all served their communities in this capacity.
- 25. This Massachusetts author, philosopher and Harvard graduate published *On the Duty of Civil Disobedience* in 1849, a book that widely impacted dissenters and reformers world-wide, including Martin Luther King, Jr.
- 27. In 1785, Ben Franklin became president of the Pennsylvania Society for the Abolition of this particular abomination.

ANNIE
from page 1

comes naturally for her. "I walk around the house singing." Whitcomb-Skelton said Stevie Wonder and Joni Mitchell were her favorite singers.

But what about stage fright, when she has to combine all these skills in one performance? "I'll probably get an adrenaline rush on opening night. But during gymnastic meets, I learned to control my fright by breathing and thinking about what I'm going to be doing."

As Annie, she will be portraying the story of a young orphan on a journey

from rags to riches, as she finds the greatest wealth no money can buy -- love.

The cast includes familiar favorites for local theatergoers as well as new faces. Appearing as Daddy Warbucks is Ja'Duke veteran David Neil who has headlined in many leading roles. Judith Dean Kulp lends her luscious soprano to the role of Grace Farrell. She is joined by her son, B.J. Kulp, as Rooster. Also featured is Lisa McCarthy as Miss Hannigan, matron of the orphanage. McCarthy is best remembered for her stylized, brassy performance as Velma Kelley in *Chicago*.

Kimberly Waynelovich stars as Lilly St. Regis (named after the famous hotel). The *Annie* cast includes more than 70 actors and actresses filling the stage with their fast paced humor and exuberant voices, in familiar Ja'Duke style.

Some favorite songs from *Annie* include: Maybe, It's A Hard Knock Life, You're Never Fully Dressed Without A Smile, Easy Street, I Don't Need Anything But You and, of course Annie's signature song, Tomorrow.

Tickets can be reserved by calling the Shea Theatre at (413) 863-2281, ext. 2.

Edgar Hoover known to have bugged and wiretapped locations visited by Martin Luther King, Jr. and not finding truth to discredit him and his causes, disseminated misinformation, which is still quoted by hate-mongers to this day.

- 15. Ben Franklin's first apprenticeship was in this field.
- 20. Act of British Parliament proposed by Grenville that touched off the first round of rioting in the colonies and was effectively squelched thanks to Ben Franklin.
- 23. City known as a haven for free thinkers where Ben Franklin settled.
- 26. Martin Luther King, Jr. was committed to this form of tactics which he made the foundation of the civil rights movement of the 1950s and 60s.
- 28. Martin Luther King, Jr. was instrumental in a community-wide boycott that lasted over a year leading to the Supreme Court declaring unconstitutional the laws requiring segregation on this form of public transportation.
- 29. Martin Luther King, III, president of the

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HIGHLIGHTS OF THE MONTAGUE POLICE LOG

Kids Fighting & Dogs Barking

Thursday 1-19

5:17 p.m. Report of an assault at Exxon on 3rd Street. Juveniles were fighting. Officer spoke with all involved.

9:25 p.m. Report of a neighbor causing a disturbance at a 3rd Street address. Neighbor summonsed for disturbing the peace.

Friday 1-20

4:45 p.m. Report of an assault at the basketball court at Unity Park. Kids were fighting. Found to be verbal only. Kids moved along.

Saturday 1-21

5:07 p.m. Walk in to station reported an assault at a 3rd Street address. Reporting party didn't know who did it and didn't need medical attention. Wanted it on record.

Sunday 1-22

11:53 a.m. Caller requesting officer at a Federal Street, Montague Center address.

taken.

Monday 1-23

4:45 a.m. [redacted] was arrested on an administrative warrant from Immigration and Customs enforcement.

7:05 p.m. Report of an assault at Unity Park. Found to be kids fooling around.

Tuesday 1-24

7:07 p.m. Report of a larceny at Food City. Male subject stole food.

Officer unable to locate.

7:27 p.m. Report of an assault at Exxon on 3rd Street. Found to be kids. Spoke to all involved.

Wednesday 1-25

1:10 a.m. Caller requesting officer at an Ave A address. Roommates were arguing. Peace restored.

5:49 a.m. Report of an animal complaint at a Turners Falls Road address. A dog was barking. Officer spoke to owner. Dog brought inside.

HOT SPOT TEEN CENTER

- MONDAYS - Math Tutoring, 3 - 5; Computer Center Drop-in, 3-5,
• TUES & WEDS - Ongoing Music Project, 3 - 5 • THURS & FRIS- drop-in, 3 - 5 • THURS - Movie Night, 6 - 8 • FRI, JAN. 27th - Open Mic, 6 - 9. Coming in February: SAT, FEB. 4th - Winter Carnival snowball slingshot at Unity Park, 11:30 - 2:30
These programs are free (except some trips) and open to local teens. Some require permission slips. For more info: Jared at 863-9559.
Hot Spot Teen Center is in The Brick House Community Resource Center, 24 Third Street, Turners Falls.

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Table with 4 columns and 8 rows for classified ads. Includes a note: .10 for each additional word

Check enclosed for _____ for _____ weeks. Name _____ Phone _____

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

1:45 p.m. Report of a larceny at a 4th Street residence. A radio was stolen from a residence. Report

JAKE'S TAVERN FRIDAY NIGHT STEAMERS ARE BACK! 66 Avenue A, Turners Falls

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Contra Dance with *David Kaynor & Greenfield Dance Band* at Guiding Star Grange Hall, 401 Chapman St., Greenfield. 8:00 p.m. - midnight. (413) 367-9380.

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SATURDAY, JANUARY 28TH
Double bill of Griffin House and Mark Geary at Memorial Hall in Shelburne Falls at 7:30 p.m. Tickets are \$15 in advance, \$18 at the door. Student tickets are \$10. You can buy tickets at The Hempest, Boswell's Books in Shelburne Falls, World Eye Bookshop in Greenfield and online at www.hilltownfolk. For more information, call (413) 625-6878.

The National Spiritual Alliance will sponsor a **Psychic Fair** from 11 a.m. to 4 p.m. at Thompson Temple across from the Post Office in Lake Pleasant. Divination methods include astrology, I-Ching, hand reading, spiritual counseling, and tarot cards. Consultation is with a medium of choice. TNSA's basic

principles include belief in an infinite and eternal creating and evolving force, the interconnectedness of everything, the sibling-hood of humanity, personal responsibility for thoughts, words, and deeds, non-judgmentalism, continuity of life of the soul, communication between the worlds of form and formlessness, and reincarnation as the method of progression toward perfection.

Annual Bowl-athon - NELCWIT (New England Learning Center for Women in Transition) Benefit to assist abused women and their families. Pizza, bowling and bowling shoes provided - bowlers asked to raise money to help support services through pledges. French King Entertainment Center, Rte. 2 in Millers Falls. Pizza at 12:30 p.m. and bowling at 1:00 p.m. (413) 772-0871.

Introduction to Snowshoeing Workshop - Indoor introduction followed by outdoors practice of new snowshoeing skills. Visit wildlife hotspots. Northfield Mountain Recreation Area, Route 63, Northfield. 1:00 to 4:00 p.m. (800) 859-2960.

Contra Dance with *Tophill Productions* at the Guiding Star Grange Hall, 401 Chapman St., Greenfield. 8:00 to 11:30 p.m. (413) 773-1671.

SATURDAY AND SUNDAY JANUARY 28TH & 29TH
Hallmark Museum of Contemporary Photography presents its inaugural exhibition featuring the work of Barbara Bordnick. Grand opening celebration 1 to 6 p.m. each day, exhibit runs through April 2nd. Regular museum hours Thursday - Sunday from 1 to 5 p.m. 85 Avenue A, Turners Falls. For more info call (413) 863-0009 or visit www.hmcp.org.

SUNDAY, JANUARY 29TH
Montague Family Dance, 4:00-5:30 p.m. with caller Cindy Green. Family-style contra dancing for all ages. Simple dances with easy instruction geared for little feet. Great for 3-10 yr olds and their parents. Always on the last Sunday of each month. \$5-10 per family, includes a snack. And then... 6:00 p.m. - Potluck supper downstairs at the Grange Hall precedes the evening contra dance. Come for either or both.

7:00 p.m. - Contra Dance at the Montague Grange Hall. Co-host callers Lisa Sieverts, Tim VanEgmond and David Kaynor with all-acoustic music by the *All-Comers Band*. No previous dance experience necessary. All are welcome, with or without a partner. Come and experience this traditional New England form of entertainment in our nice old hall. Admission by self-determined donation. Proceeds help maintain the building.

THURSDAY, FEBRUARY 2ND
On the Trail of the "Fisher Cat" They don't fish and aren't cats, so what's the story? Program includes a slide presentation at the Great Falls Discovery Center in Turners Falls (Avenue A) and "eco-tracking" to identify the tracks and trails of fishers. Pre-registration required. 1:00 to 4:00 p.m. 800-859-2960. See companion program below on Feb. 4th.

FRIDAY, FEBRUARY 3RD
Contra Dance with *Moving Violations* at the Guiding Star Grange Hall, 401 Chapman St., Greenfield. 8:00 to 11:30 p.m. 413-549-1913.

New Members Show at Vermont Center for Photography, 49 Flat St., Brattleboro, VT. adjacent to the lower level of the new municipal parking garage. (802) 251-6051. Opening reception during Brattleboro Gallery Walk, Friday February 3rd, from 5:30 to 7:30 p.m. Exhibit runs through February 26th. Gallery Hours: Friday 1:00 to 7:00 p.m., Saturday and Sunday 12:00 to 6:00 p.m. Show director is Phil Stake. This is an eclectic show of what VCP's newest members are currently exploring in their personal projects. The members include, Matthew Baily, Nancy

Belluscio, Christopher Curtis, Iphi Hatt, Erik Hoffner, Lodiza Lepore, Michael Miller, Daniela Nachazelova, Victor Salvo, Jim Schlessinger, Tony Schwartz, and Phil Stake. This diverse group of photographers have one thing in common, their passion for photography as art. www.vcpphoto.org.

SATURDAY, FEBRUARY 4TH
Tracking Fishers and Other Woodland Predators, a companion program to the slide presentation above (2/2). Snowshoe in the woods of Northfield Mountain in search of the trails of fishers in order to learn about their lives in the wild. Northfield Mountain Recreation Area is located on Route 63 in Northfield. Pre-registration is required. 9:00 a.m. to Noon. 800-859-2960.

Annual Winter Carnival sponsored by the Montague Parks & Recreation Department. Schedule includes: cardboard sled jamboree (10:00 to 11:30 a.m.); Brickhouse Snowball Slingshot Challenge (11:30 a.m.); Multi-cultural Crafts (2:00 p.m.); Broomball Games (2:00 p.m.); horse-drawn hayrides; carnival bonfire, ice skating and more. 413-863-3216.

Contra Dance with *Wild*

Asparagus at the Guiding Star Grange Hall, 401 Chapman St., Greenfield. 8:00 to 11:30 p.m. 413-772-6840.

SUNDAY, FEBRUARY 5TH
Cross Country Skiing for Women - Start skiing the right way in a full-day instructional program - tips on equipment, clothing as well as outdoor sessions on skis for both beginning and intermediate skiers. Northfield Mountain Recreation Area, Route 63, Northfield. 9:30 a.m. to 4:00 p.m. Pre-registration required. (800) 859-2960.

COMING SOON to the Shea Theater: February 10th, 11th & 12th Stoneleigh-Burnham School presents *Alice in Wonderland* and on February 17th, 18th, 24th, 25th & 26th, Ja'Duke Productions presents *Amie*.

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- MEMOIRS OF A GEISHA**
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MAT SAT, SUN, WED 12:30 3:30
- THE CHRONICLES OF NARNIA**
DAILY 6:30 9:30 PG
MAT SAT, SUN, WED 12:30 3:30
- SYRIANA** R
DAILY 6:45 9:15
MAT SAT, SUN, WED 12:15 3:15
- MUNICH** R in DTS sound
DAILY 7:30
MAT SAT, SUN, WED 12:00 3:45
- BIG MAMAS HOUSE 2** PG13 in DTS sound
DAILY 7:00 9:10
MAT SAT, SUN, WED 12:00 3:00
- UNDERWORLD: EVOLUTION** R in DTS sound
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Have a Slice of Mt. Sugarloaf

BY STEVE WINTERS

SOUTH DEERFIELD - One of the occupational hazards of being a geologist is an ailment I call Roadcut Fever. The disease is most dangerous when I am behind the wheel of my Suzuki. It always seems to happen when I drive past an interesting and beautiful slice into bedrock made naked by blasting crews clearing rock for a roadway. The Mass Pike is especially hazardous. When I see a wonderfully exposed section of rock structure or mineralogy, my gaze sometimes leaves the thoroughfare a bit too long and the tires weave until my attention snaps me back to safety. While affected by Roadcut Fever, one could say I was driving under the influence of geology, that is.

I also fall victim to Roadcut Fever on Mass Highway 116. One of my first really fever-inducing experiences after moving to Massachusetts was the sight in South Deerfield of the north roadcut at Mt. Sugarloaf State Park. Given what I knew at the time of our valley's geology, I expected to see an outcropping igneous rock but was surprised to spot - quickly, as we zipped by at 35 mph - a fascinating assemblage of angular-looking sedimentary reddish rock! Fortunately, I wasn't driving. A little study while parked in my living room indicated the rock I had seen was a pebbly coarse sandstone called the Sugarloaf arkose. Arkosic sandstone is a relatively uncommon sedimentary rock that can record interesting geological stories. Let me tell you this one.

Geologists use the term arkose to describe coarse sand-

stone composed of small amounts of quartz but abundant feldspar - a mineral softer than quartz that makes up granite. Quartz-containing rocks usually weather slowly from the action of water and air to form hard sands. But feldspar-containing rocks weather relatively quickly to form soft clays.

Because feldspar breaks down easily, geologists reason that if a rock contains a lot of feldspar fragments, the fragments likely did not travel very far downstream from their granite source rock. To a geologist's eye, arkosic sandstone indicates the ancient environment where the fragments were deposited likely had lots of relief, short steam beds, and floods that were frequently catastrophic - not unlike the environments we see today in the arid American west and southwest. Rainstorms in these semi-arid landscapes may be rare, but when they occur, they can bring lots of water and cause lots of erosion, even landslides.

The sediments for the rock we call Sugarloaf arkose were deposited over 200 million years ago in the ancient volcanic rift

basin that predates to the Connecticut River valley. As the Earth's crust began to spread apart during the late Triassic to early Jurassic periods, huge blocks of crust sank on either

River valley and were buried in deposits geologists call alluvial fans. One of these very thick alluvial fans remains today as our Mt. Sugarloaf.

Try looking closely at

Sugarloaf arkose - but not while driving by in your car! Instead, hold a sample in your hand or look at an outcrop at the Sugarloaf State Park in South Deerfield. The rock fragments are large, and you can easily pick out granite and metamorphic rock pebbles surrounded by smaller reddish grains of

er. One of the interesting aspects of Sugarloaf arkose is that the grains were cemented together with a feldspar mineral called albite - not by the usual calcite that cements most sedimentary rocks together.

The groundwaters circulating in the late Triassic to early Jurassic had the right alkaline chemistry to keep the sodium-rich albite cement in solution. Today we see alkaline groundwater like this in semi-arid lakes and streams of the American west and southwest. That contemporary evidence gives us further indication of the semi-arid, terrestrial origin of the 200-million-year-old Sugarloaf arkose.

In our area, the best exposures of the Sugarloaf arkose - the kind you can get up close to so you can see the many ancient fragments - is at Mt. Sugarloaf State Park in South Deerfield. Go and take look at one of our valley's most striking geologic features - but first, park your car!

Steve Winters is a hydrogeologist and environmental science educator. Through Boston University's Prisoner Education Project, he teaches geology to prisoners at the Massachusetts Correctional Institute at South Middlesex in Framingham. Steve lives in Turners Falls. Reach him at science_matters@yahoo.com.



PHOTO BY FLORE

Mount Sugarloaf with Icicle Frosting

side of the crack or rift. High rock ridges of granite and metamorphic rocks to the east of Montague that did not sink began to vigorously erode during storm events, and sediments moved downstream to the west. The resulting rock fragments and debris eventually made their way to the ancestral Connecticut

quartz and feldspar -fragments of mountains over 200 million years old. Because sedimentary rocks start out as loose grains of buried sand or gravel, the grains must be cemented together to make them rock. Groundwaters circulating through the ancient sediments contained the cement needed to hold the grains togeth-

OFF THE BEATEN TRACK

More Writers Walks in the Works

BY FLORE - The writers walk Tammis Coffin organized two weeks ago with her group of writers and poets was an unconditional success! In spite of the nippy weather, they all climbed up Mt. Sugarloaf. It could have easily been renamed Crystal Loaf!

Stopping here and there, taking down notes on crispy, nearly frozen paper... the sight was truly unbelievable! Down below the fields stretched geometrically. Houses looked dormant, wrapped under a blanket of soft snow.

Up top the mountain

sparkled, as if she had put on her party attire - crystal beads - shining like diamonds under the afternoon sun.

Trained as a ranger, Tammis has the mountaineer footing and knowledge of the surrounding environment.

Now, she is at it again!

Button up your down jacket, put on your mukluks, shoulder a light backpack with water and snacks. Notebook.

These are the basic elements to bring along. The enjoyment of glorious nature is within our reach, even during these eastern winters!

By the way, these ventures are free.

Three possibilities are in the making, certainly depending on the weather: the base of Mount Toby, Sugarloaf or a hike along the Connecticut River, or eventually, a 'promenade surprise'. Beware, you might find yourself in another land, perhaps on the top of Sainte Victoire? Next walk Saturday, January 28th at 2 p.m. Contact Tammis Coffin for more information on these writerly nature walks, for time and place of rendezvous at: 413-259-1254.

Hallmark Museum of Contemporary Photography
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 featuring **Barbara Bordnick**
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