



THE PERSISTENT GARDENER
Perusing seed catalogues
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MOVIES AT THE BOOKMILL
Sunday nights
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LAKE PLEASANT MILLERS FALLS MONTAGUE CENTER MONTAGUE CITY TURNERS FALLS GILL ERVING WENDELL

Year 3
No. 15

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The Montague Reporter

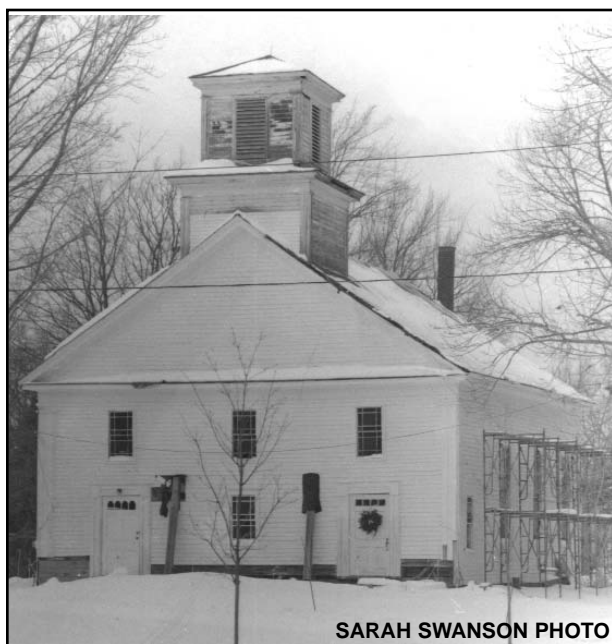
REPORTER@MONTAGUEMA.NET

THE VOICE OF THE VILLAGES

JANUARY 27, 2005

Renovation Work Continues at Historic Meetinghouse

BY JOSH HEINEMANN WENDELL - Molly Kaynor and Jerry Eide like old buildings. Eide likes them because of their craftsmanship. As he puts it, "They wouldn't become old if they weren't well built." Old buildings hold many stories. Take the Wendell Meetinghouse. The Meetinghouse was built as a Congregational church in 1846 to replace the church that was built on the same site around 1790 and burned down sometime in the early 1840s. The Meetinghouse served Wendell as both church and town hall until the Massachusetts legislature moved to separate church and state in 1831. In 1845, construction of Wendell's first town hall (now the town office building) proceeded across Depot Road from the common, as the new church rose across the street. Eyeing the prominence of the new



SARAH SWANSON PHOTO

The Wendell Meetinghouse

Montague Economic Development Forum

The Montague selectboard will hold a public forum on economic development on

February 1st, 7 p.m. • Great Falls Discovery Center
Celebrating Our Success • Planning for the Future

The forum will include presentations on the status of current economic development projects, public comment and discussion, and opportunities for public involvement. Town meeting members and Montague business owners are especially encouraged to attend.

Light refreshments will be served. In the event of inclement weather, the event will be postponed; please call 863-3208 for more information.

see **WENDELL** pg. 6

Montague EDIC Backs Strathmore Purchase

BY DAVID DETMOLD

TURNERS FALLS - On Monday, January 24th, the Montague Economic Development Industrial Corporation (EDIC) unanimously endorsed a motion to sign the purchase and sale agreement the town has negotiated with the owner of the Strathmore Mill, Western Properties, LLC. The proposal to purchase the 134-year-old, 250,000-square-foot mill complex for \$300,000 will be on the warrant of a special town meeting on Thursday, February 3rd, at 7 p.m., at the Turners Falls High School. In October, town meeting turned down the measure by a vote of 52 to 30, with 6 abstentions, three votes shy of the 2/3rds majority it needed to pass.

At that meeting, the chair of the Montague EDIC, Jay DiPucchio, offered only qualified support for the Strathmore

purchase. But on the 24th, DiPucchio said his questions regarding the EDIC's role in the proposed purchase had been largely answered.

"Do we have the statutory authority to work in the area of the Strathmore Mill? Yes." Town meeting granted the EDIC that authority in 1999, attorney Debra Eliason of the law firm Koppleman and Paige confirmed. "What limitations may be applied to the EDIC as opposed to the town?" Eliason said the EDIC's ability to procure improvements to "horizontal infrastructure" such as roads, pipes, and utilities was not subject to the public bidding requirements of Chapter 30-B, a significant advantage in moving those aspects of a development project forward quickly. In recent communications with town administrator Frank

see **EDIC** pg.9



PETER CLARK PHOTO

An interior view of the Strathmore Mill.

Regional EPA Head Inspects Dubois Cleanup



DETMOLD PHOTO

New England Regional EPA Chief Robert Varney visits the site of the old Sweeney Ford Garage in Turners Falls. FRCOG's Linda Dunlevy in background.

BY DAVID DETMOLD
TURNERS FALLS - US Environmental Protection Agency regional administrator Robert Varney arrived at the site of the former Sweeney Ford garage on the corner of

Canal and 3rd Street on Tuesday, January 25th, driving a Toyota Prius. He said New England EPA officials, before his tenure, used to drive Jeep Cherokees, but his first order when he assumed

the post in 2001 was to get rid of the gas guzzlers in favor of fuel efficient electric hybrids. "We've got to walk the walk, not just talk the talk," said Varney. Or even drive the drive.

Varney came out from Boston, in part, to inspect cleanup at the half-acre canalside site of the former Ford dealership, and also to look over progress at the renovation of the old National Bank building on Bank Row in Greenfield, cleanups funded through the EPA's Brownfields program. In Turners, a small coterie of local and state officials huddled around Varney at the snow covered lot, where a giant Deere excavator loomed above a tarped-over mound of soil. The lot had been con-

taminated with lead and PCBs. Other toxics found included low concentrations of arsenic, barium, cadmium, and petroleum products. If only they'd been selling hybrid vehicles back in the day.

Montague town planner Robin Sherman welcomed Varney to the vacant lot, and painted a hopeful picture of how the town would benefit from the investment represented by the clean up of the property, the barrels of toxics removed, and the removal of contaminated soil. She called the intersection of 3rd and Canal a gateway to Turners from the west, described the former garage (which had all but collapsed onto itself in recent years) as an eyesore and an unsecured public health hazard,

talked of an uptick in interest in the historic downtown - particularly from artists, a number of whom have taken up residence and renovated buildings within shouting distance of the old garage - and spoke of the likely multiplier effect on local property values, tax revenues, and job creation from the demolition of the most visible aspect of downtown blight, now that the debris has been largely removed. Sherman said the town hoped to reuse the site for a parking lot for 30 to 60 cars, to facilitate the redevelopment of the Strathmore Mill. She pointed across the canal to the 1870s mill, which provided jobs for downtown workers for more than a century under a variety of owners until it

was shuttered in 1994. She pointed out the pine clad ridgeline of the Greenfield side of the river, now permanently protected by a local Native American group, and told Varney that by next summer, construction of a three-mile bike path would be proceeding along the near shore of the canal, just below where they were standing.

Varney, looking across the canal at Strathmore, mentioned he came from New Hampshire and was familiar with the difficulty of reusing old mill sites. "As you know, parking is frequently a problem with mill development. You are smart to address it early." He looked over the placid bend in the river, with winter sunlight slanting

see **VARNEY** pg. 11

PET OF THE WEEK**Grand Dame****Diva**

Diva is a 10-month-old black and white English Pointer in need of a good home. She's a fast-paced ball of energy and if you're looking for a jogging companion, maybe she's your girl! She especially loves a rousing game of fetch. She is good with other dogs and seems OK with cats here at the Shelter. She will do well in a home with kids over 12. To learn more about adopting Diva, please contact the Dakin Animal Shelter in Leverett at 548-9898 or via email at info@dakinshelter.org.

Turners Falls Library News Library Programs and Bad Weather

BY LINDA HICKMAN

The recent snowstorms have been playing havoc with Montague Public Libraries' programs and creating some confusion. If the Gill - Montague Schools close because of bad weather, we cancel that morning's children's programs. If there is a school delay, we play it by ear. We list our program cancellations on WHAI and on Montaguema.net. If you are in doubt, call the Carnegie Library at 863-3214. During the week, there is usually someone here by 9 a.m. who will answer the phone. On Saturdays, no one is usually available to answer the phone until we open at 1 p.m.

The weekly Preschool Story Hour with Bev meets on Wednesday mornings at 10:15 a.m. at the Carnegie Library in Turners Falls. Music and Movement with Tom and Laurie currently happens on Thursdays at 10 a.m. at the Carnegie through February. Both programs are free, for young children of any age, and do not require registrations. For more information, please call 863-3214.

Blood Pressure and Foot Care

Each month Wendell COA sponsors a Blood Pressure and Foot Care Clinic on the first Wednesday of the month from 10 to 11 a.m. A nurse is available to take blood pressures and assist participants in keeping a record of their numbers. Nancy Edwards, a foot technician, comes over from Greenfield to

bathe participants' feet, cut toe nails, and generally review foot health.

This month's Blood Pressure and Foot Care Clinic will be held on Wednesday, February 2nd, from 10 to 11 a.m. in the Wendell Senior Center. Call 544-2020 if you need a ride.

FACES & PLACES



DETMOLD PHOTO

Winter Scarecrows in Montague City

Psychic Fair in Lake Pleasant

Saturday, January 29th, 11 a.m. to 4 p.m. The National Spiritual Alliance will sponsor a Psychic Fair at Thompson Temple across from the Post Office. Divination methods include astrology, I-Ching, hand reading, and more.

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Senior Symposia Program

Tues. and Thurs., February 1st & 3rd, 2 - 4 p.m.

Jack Ramey will offer a workshop entitled *Solo Voice to Symphony* on the development of music in the Western World, from the unison chant in religious services in the medieval era up to the complexities of the modern symphony orchestra. The evolution of the orchestra as a mirror of historical, social and economic change will be the main theme.

Mr. Ramey is the music director of the United Church in Conway as well as a pianist, composer and retired educator. He is a former President of the Pioneer Valley Symphony Orchestra. (\$20/\$30)

Fri., February 11th, 10 a.m. - noon

Brian Adams will present a one-session symposia entitled *Current Environmental Issues*. The focus will include such hot topics as global warming, biodiversity, transportation and energy issues including oil drilling in the Arctic National Wildlife Refuge, as well as the current administration's legacy of environmental policy. Mr. Adams is an associate professor of Environmental Studies and chair of GCC's science department. (\$10/\$15)

Offered at GCC's Downtown Center location at 270 Main St., Greenfield. The cost for all symposia is \$10 per 2-hour workshop for members, \$15 for non-members. Annual membership is \$25 and is good for two full semesters of programming.

SENIOR CENTER ACTIVITIES Jan. 31 - Feb. 4

MONTAGUE Senior Center, 62 Fifth St., Turners Falls, is open Monday through Friday from 9:00 a.m. to 2:00 p.m. for activities and congregate meals. Advanced registration at many of our activities is necessary. We need to know how many people will be joining so we can be prepared. A suggested donation of \$1 per exercise class is appreciated. Lunch reservations need to be called in by 11:30 a.m. the day before. Call Bunny Caldwell at 863-9357 weekdays between 9:00 a.m. and 2:00 p.m. (Leave message on machine at other times.) 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. All Hawthorne trips leave from the parking lot on First Street across from the Police Station.

Monday, 31st
9:45 a.m. Aerobics
11:00 a.m. PACE Aerobics
1:00 p.m. Craft Club

Tuesday, 1st
10:00 a.m. Tai Chi
Wednesday, 2nd
10:15 a.m. Aerobics
12:45 p.m. Bingo
Thursday, 3rd
1:00 p.m. Pitch
Friday, 4th
9:45 a.m. Aerobics
11:00 a.m. PACE Aerobics

Make appointments now for
FREE TAX ASSISTANCE! Feb.
8, 15, 24 and March 8, 15, 22. Call
center for an appointment.

ERVING Senior Center, 18 Pleasant St., Ervingside (Old Center School, 1st Floor), is open Monday through Thursday from 9 a.m. to 3 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, 31st

9:30 a.m. Exercise
9:45 a.m. Library
Tuesday, 1st
9:00 a.m. Aerobics
12:30 p.m. Oil Painting
Wednesday, 2nd
12:00 p.m. Bingo
Thursday, 3rd
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.

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Family Dance the Perfect Cure for Cabin Fever

BY MICHAEL MULLER
MONTAGUE CENTER - Got cabin fever? Come join us this Sunday for a family dance and make it part of your monthly routine. Your kids will love it.

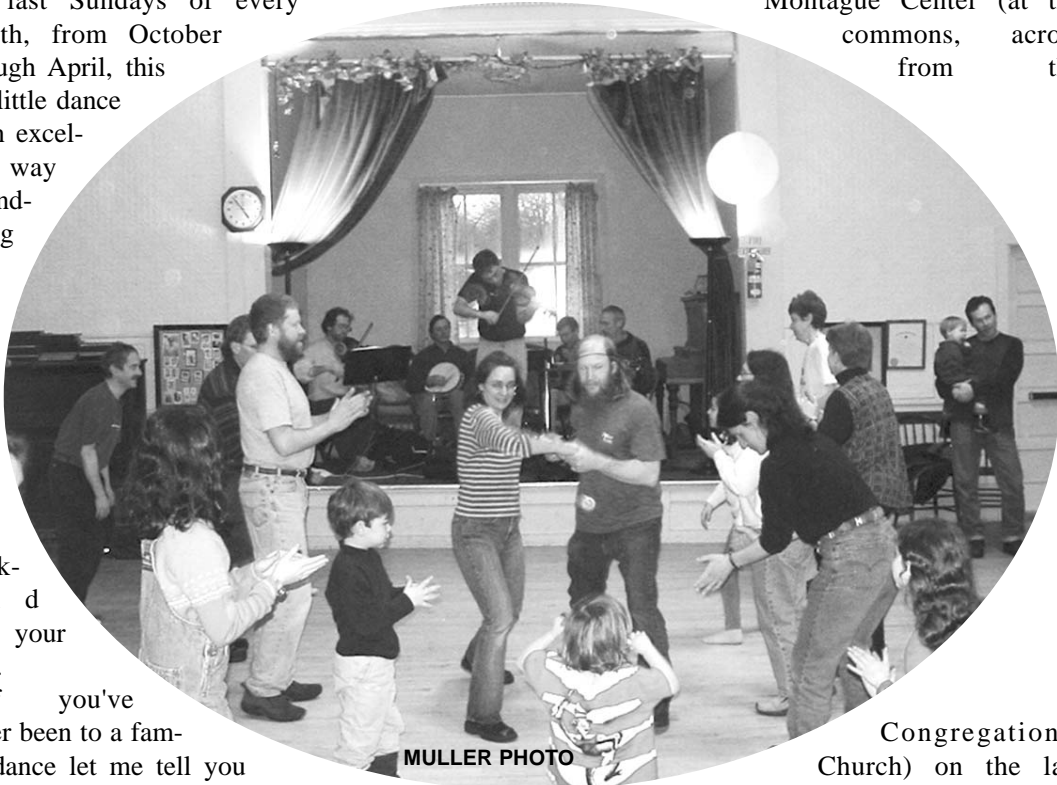
The Montague Grange is entering its fifth calendar year of holding Family Dances. On the last Sundays of every month, from October through April, this fun little dance is an excellent way of ending the

tra-style lines, with forwards and back, peel-offs, do-si-does and swing your partner!

Watching two young ones doing the moves together is a precious sight, and dancing with your own children and seeing them laugh with the repetition and easy

or so banjoists and other stringed instruments) and then things really start rocking. Her trademark dance is the circle that breaks into a twisting snake that folds into itself with hilarious results.

The Montague Family Dance is held at the Grange hall in Montague Center (at the commons, across from the



MULLER PHOTO

week-end with your kids.

If you've never been to a family dance let me tell you what's in store. With live musicians playing up on stage, the caller guides you through simple dance routines fit for ages four to ten, and ten to eighty. Songs are both familiar and new, and are paced to the audience's mood and the caller's enthusiasm. The dances vary from large circle dances to con-

moves is worth the low price of admission.

January brings us Diane Sanabria, of Banjo Queen fame. She's sassy and quick and you can hear her cowboy boots stomping all over the hall. Diane sometimes brings her "Banjo Mucho" band (a dozen

Congregational Church) on the last Sunday of every month, from 4:00 to 5:30 p.m. Entry is a sliding scale \$5 to \$10 per family, and a light snack is included. For an hour and a half of live music and dancing, you can't find a better deal anywhere.

Visit <http://www.MontagueMA.net/Grange> for more info.

CORRECTION CLARIFICATION

Due to a typographical error, the population of US citizens incarcerated in federal, state, and county jails was misstated in last week's theater review of the Performance Project's *Walk With Me*. The total number of US citizens behind bars has recently topped 2 million, or 1 out of every 142 citizens.

GILL - After we received calls that last week's recap of the Gill tax rate was in error, assessor's clerk Harriet Tidd stuck by her stated figures, as printed in the Montague Reporter. Tidd said last year's tax rate was \$19.27 per thousand. This year's rate is set at \$14.31 per thousand, for a difference of \$4.96 per thousand. A local daily had erroneously printed the figure of \$15.27 per thousand for '05, Tidd said, giving rise to some confusion.

Roast Pork Dinner

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Cost of Early Retirement Incentive Program Calculated

BY DAVID DETMOLD
MONTAGUE - Following a preliminary '06 budget outline to the selectboard on December 13th, in which town administrator Frank Abbondanzio mentioned a 17.5% increase in retirement costs over last year's figures, town planner Robin Sherman questioned the impact of the town's recent early retirement incentive program on rising costs. "We were told this would be a cost saving measure," Sherman recalled. Abbondanzio defended the program, and board chair Pat Allen called for a report on the actual costs of the ERI program to the town.

On Wednesday, January 26th, town accountant Carolyn Olsen said the actual costs for employees who took advantage of the town's most recent ERI program had not been assessed yet, since there is a time lag for the retirement board to process the town's commitments to retired employees. But, given that eight employees opted for

early retirement in December of '03, and given that some of those openings had been replaced by temporary employees, and then refilled permanently (one highway department position still remains open),

Olsen calculated the total cost to the town of the '05 ERI program will approach \$12,000 "this year." The costs will continue over time, but estimates for future years are more difficult to calculate, Olsen said.

African World artist Habib Koite & 5-piece Malian band



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The Montague Reporter

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Assistant Editor

Kathleen Litchfield

Circulation

Jean Hebden
Julie Bowden

Layout & Design

James Damon
Boysen Hodgson
Katren Hoyden
Karen Wilkinson

Photographers

Sarah Swanson
Joseph A. Parzych
Anne Vadeboncoeur
et al.

Technical Administrator

Michael Muller

"The Voice of the Villages"

Founded by
Arthur Evans Harry Brandt David Detmold
August, 2002

They Don't Build 'Em Like They Used To

Last October, when town meeting first discussed Montague's \$300,000 bid to purchase the Strathmore Mill, moderator Ray Godin structured debate by asking town officials to present their case and respond to members' concerns and criticisms. He asked members to hold individual comments until all the available information had been brought forward. After an hour or so of back and forth, someone called the question. No one on the floor had spoken in support of the proposal, yet it still came within three votes of the two thirds majority needed for passage. That was surprising.

On February 3rd, we hope members who support the proposal to save the old mill building have an opportunity to speak their piece. If we had the chance, we'd stand up and say, "They don't build 'em like that anymore." The 250,000-square-foot brick mill complex, with its pillared galleries, arched windows overlooking the canal, river, and hillsides, its broad interior courtyard, stairways and bridges speak a language architects have since forgotten: the studied grandeur of a castle of industry, built to last the centuries.

After more than 120 years of continuous use in the moils of papermaking, the Strathmore Mill, *nee* Keith Paper Company, closed in 1994, turning the last 130 workers out. Shortly, neighboring Indek Energy Systems leased the mill and filled it with more than two dozen tenants: artists, craftspeople, and small industries. That number swelled to more than 35 artists and small industries before Indek announced it would shut down its coal-fired generator at the end of 1996, and deprive the Strathmore of its cheap source of heat. But during that brief

heyday, one could glimpse the future not just of the mill, but of the downtown business district of Turners Falls.

Since the 1970s, the town, the state, and the federal government have poured millions of dollars into restoring the buildings, walks, and alleyways of the historic downtown of our old mill village. The one thing missing to make this investment pay off - for the town, for the business owners who still line the Avenue, and for the new shopkeepers and artisans who have moved here lately to fill their ranks - is a steady stream of workers in the downtown area with the wherewithal to make the business district thrive. Look no further than Easthampton, Florence, and North Adams to see what will happen to the Main Street shops and eateries and service businesses in old mill towns that have found the resources to redevelop their old mill buildings and fill them with artists and industries.

Some say the town should not be in the real estate business. Those people would have seen the Colle Opera House go the way of the Grand Trunk Hotel, to be replaced by a parking lot or another quick-stop in a drab concrete box. Look across the river at what can happen when an old mill building falls into the hands of an unscrupulous developer, who strips it of its salvage and leaves it for the town to knock down at its own expense. There are times when a town is wise to act to protect the investment its citizens have made in their downtown. Preserving the Strathmore, removing the obstacles to its reuse - as only the municipality can - and finding a competent private developer to fulfill the grand old mill's potential, is the right thing for Montague to do.



ILLUSTRATION: KAREN WILKINSON

If you believe *that*, I've got a bridge I can sell you!

Congratulations to our 450th subscribers

BY LAENA SANTOS
MONTAGUE CENTER - Growing thousands of perennials and annuals - including many hard-to-find varieties - is how Brian and Alice McGowan spend their winter days and summer months, inside greenhouses and on three acres of fertile Meadow Road farmland.

The McGowans, owners of Blue Meadow Farm, moved to Montague Center in 1981. Brian is originally from Ireland, and grew up in Ohio. Alice is originally from Japan, and moved to the U.S. during the 1960s.

The McGowans became the 450th subscribers of the *Montague Reporter* last week, and have chosen to receive a \$45 gift certificate to Rau's Sunoco as their prize.

"Rau's is a great example of why you would want to live in a small town like Montague. You can have a relationship with a business like that; they get to know you. They just go beyond the normal call to help you out. You're definitely a person and a neighbor to them," said Brian.

Brian studied plant and soil science at the UMass Amherst. He started Blue Meadow Farm by selling plants beneath a roadside tent. "Each year we added on in the way of greenhouses and other buildings, and the business just grew, little by little," he said.

Today, 50 percent of the McGowans' customers are local while the other half hail from 50 miles away or more, including some from Boston, New York, New Jersey and Pennsylvania.

"Germinating seeds is one of the most rewarding things, especially seeds of woody plants," he said. "Growing a tree from seed is very exciting. It's something that will grow to be hundreds of years old, that will definitely outlive me."

McGowan, who served on the town's conservation commission for a number of years and also on the town's economic advisory committee, enjoys the small town life here for its beauty and its pace.

"I like the landscape. It's one of the most beautiful parts of

the country. You'd be hard pressed to find a more beautiful place to live," he said. "And it's a place where you can be a little bit more in control of your pace of life."

McGowan rises early in the morning to work in the greenhouses this time of year. Each of his plants requires different timing and weather conditions, so growing keeps him busy year-round.

The *Montague Reporter* awards a prize to every 25th subscriber as a way of recognizing and thanking both our loyal readers and our advertisers. The prize is the winner's choice of two free gift subscriptions to the *Montague Reporter* or a gift certificate to the advertiser of their choice.

The 425th subscriber has still not contacted us to claim her prize.

Who will our 475th subscriber be?



Brian McGowan plows his driveway at Blue Meadow Farm after another snowfall in Montague Center.

American
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Iraq*
as of 1/26/05



*Does not include the 37 servicemen killed in action on 1/26/05

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AN EYE ON TOWN FINANCES

Buying a Look at the Pig

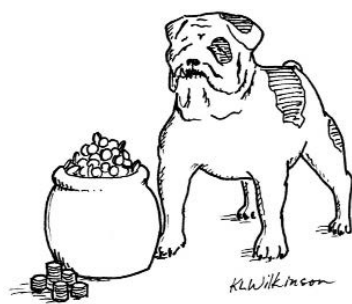
BY MIKE NAUGHTON

MILLERS FALLS - A lot of people are talking about the proposal for Montague to purchase the Strathmore mill, which will be debated at a special town meeting on February 3rd. Most of the discussions I've heard have been negative, and they have largely focussed on two basic concerns: the town has many other more pressing priorities, and we'd be buying a "pig in a poke", and the town would run the risk of being stuck with an expensive building that nothing can be done with.

I'm not going to argue the first point: Montague certainly does have a lot of other priorities, and as a member of the Capital Improvements Committee (CIC) I know that only too well. But the Town Planner, Robin Sherman, showed up at our last CIC meeting on January 20th and argued forcefully that the second concern is overblown. Since then, she has posted supporting information on the Montague Corkboard ([ma.net\).](http://www.montague-</p>
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First, it's important to understand that town meeting won't actually be asked to approve buying the building right away. Instead, we'll be asked to approve the "purchase and sale" agreement (P&S) that the selectmen signed back on December 20th. This document says that the town will buy the building, but only if certain conditions are met first. Essentially, these boil down to saying that the town will "conduct studies" over the next few months to determine if the building is really worth buying, and if the town doesn't like the results it can stop right there. The money for these studies will mostly come from state grants, although there is a town match (also on the special meeting warrant).

The P&S states that, "[i]f during the Review Period Buyers are not satisfied for any reason whatsoever with the Property, Buyers may terminate this Agreement . . ." without any penalty. Basically, the bottom line is that the town can walk



away from the deal if it doesn't look like a good idea after the studies are done. Rather than buying a pig in a poke, we're agreeing to buy the pig, but only if we can take a look at it first. The CIC didn't get a copy of the P&S, but we were pleased to hear that the entire document will be mailed to town meeting members before next week's meeting (this may already have been done), and I hope that everyone has a chance to study it.

In subsequent discussions, the CIC seemed to agree that simply letting this building fall down would benefit no one and indeed would likely be bad for the town in the long run. Consequently, we supported

moving ahead with trying to figure out if it can somehow be developed. We also felt that if this article passes Montague citizens should have an opportunity to weigh in again after the studies have been done. We discussed the option of having another article on the annual town meeting warrant, but we were told that this would dilute the authority of the upcoming vote.

In the end, if the town goes ahead, the selectboard will make the final decision one way or another. The CIC strongly supported the idea that the selectboard should seek further public input before making that decision, and we passed the following motion unanimously:

"The Capital Improvements Committee feels the town should move forward with the feasibility study; therefore the CIC recommends the article provided that it is clear that:

The town can back out if the study indicates that development is not feasible, and The Board of Selectmen will solicit

public feedback from a public forum after the feasibility study and before a final decision is made."

I think it's now up to the proponents of this project and the selectboard to convince town meeting members that they intend to do "due diligence", that they intend to seek further public input, and that they are prepared to walk away from the deal if that's the best option.

I look forward to a lively discussion at a well-attended town meeting!

Mike Naughton has been a Montague resident since 1974, a Capital Improvements Committee member since fiscal 2002, and a Precinct 2 Town Meeting member before that. He can be reached at mjnaught@crocker.com or by looking in the telephone book. The views expressed here are his own and are not necessarily shared by anyone else in town government, or even in Precinct 2 for that matter.

GUEST EDITORIAL

This week's Page 1 story on renovating the Wendell Meetinghouse referred to the historic 19th century separation of church and state in Massachusetts. We thought it might be interesting for readers to learn how that fundamental change came about in Massachusetts.

Revolutionary-Era Pastor John Leland Fought for the Separation of Church and State

BY JOSEPH L. CONN

The Rev. John Leland has some advice for American voters: When you go to the polls, avoid candidates who wear their personal piety on their sleeves.

"Guard against those men who make a great noise about religion in choosing representatives," observed Leland. "It is electioneering intrigue. If they knew the nature and worth of religion, they would not debase it to such shameful purposes. If pure religion is the criterion to [decide upon] candidates, those who make a noise about it must be rejected; for their wrangle about it proves that they are void of it. Let honesty, talents and quick dispatch characterize the men of your choice."

Leland's wise counsel could have been delivered for our most recent national election. In fact, it was part of an Independence Day oration he gave July 5th, 1802, in Cheshire, MA. Leland, a minister and staunch religious liberty advocate, held forth that day on the importance of defending the Constitution.

"Be always jealous of your liberty, your rights," he thundered. "Nip the first bud of intrusion on your

Constitution.... Never promote men who seek after a state-established religion; it is spiritual tyranny the worst of despotism."

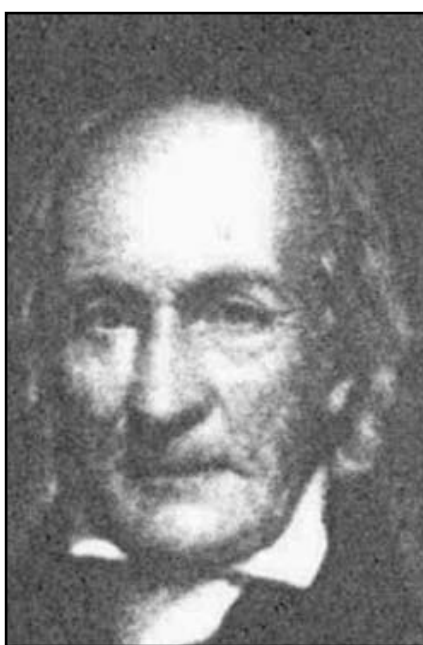
In the pantheon of American heroes of religious liberty, Leland is often unjustly overlooked. He shouldn't be. And since we have just marked the 250th anniversary of his birth, it's an appropriate time to recall his contribution to freedom of conscience.

Born in Grafton, MA on May 14th, 1754, Leland left the Congregationalism of his youth to become an itinerant Baptist preacher. After visiting Virginia in 1775, he and his wife Sally moved to that state, and he soon became a prominent figure in both religious and political life.

Leland served as a member of the Baptists' "General Committee," a group formed in 1784 to agitate for religious liberty. He and other dissenting clergy fought alongside James Madison and Thomas Jefferson in the battle to overturn Virginia's established Anglican Church and ensure equal rights for all.

Leland believed that government interference with matters

of faith corrupted religion and violated individual freedom. According to scholar Edwin Gaustad, Leland declared that persecution, inquisition and



Pastor John Leland helped ensure the separation of church and state in Massachusetts.

martyrdom all derived from one single "rotten nest-egg, which is always hatching vipers: I mean the principle of intruding the laws of men into the Kingdom of Christ."

The Baptist preacher insisted that religion is hurt more by

government favor than it is by government oppression. Experience has informed us, he wrote, that "the fondness of magistrates to foster Christianity has done it more harm than persecutions ever did."

Observed Leland, "Persecution, like a lion, tears the saints to death, but leaves Christianity pure; state establishment of religion, like a bear, hugs the saints but corrupts Christianity."

Leland took these deeply held views into the political arena and helped win civil liberties we still enjoy today.

"The Baptists played a large part in securing religious freedom and the abolition of the State-Church in Virginia," writes historian Anson Phelps Stokes in his Church and State in the United States, "and Leland was their most effective advocate."

Thanks to the leadership of Enlightenment thinkers such as Madison and Jefferson and the grassroots organizing of devout believers such as Leland, Virginia in 1786 adopted Jefferson's Statute for Religious Freedom. That monumental measure served as the guidestar

for other states as they too adopted religious liberty, and it paved the way for the religious liberty guarantees in the U.S. Constitution.

Leland played an important role in securing the Bill of Rights. When the Constitution was first submitted to the states in 1787, many in Virginia and other states criticized the absence of a Bill of Rights. Leland and other Baptists were particularly angry that this draft of the Constitution included no guarantee of religious freedom, and they joined the rising chorus of opposition.

In an Aug. 8, 1789, letter to President George Washington written by Leland, the Baptists' General Committee said its members feared that "liberty of conscience, dearer to us than property or life, was not sufficiently secured."

Recognizing that the states might not ratify the proposed national charter unless these concerns were met, Madison assured Leland and his co-religionists that he would work to add a Bill of Rights if they would support ratification. The deal was accepted. Virginia ratified the Constitution, and

see **LELAND** pg. 6

WENDELL

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Congregational Meetinghouse, local Baptists endeavored to secure pride of place for their house of worship at the other end of the common. According to Joe Hartjens, a direct descendant of one of the earliest European settlers of Wendell, the Baptists hired a team of 16 oxen to haul their church on rollers up the steep hill from Morse Corners one fall in the late 1800s. They relocated it on the south end of the common, where it remains to this day. The town purchased the building for a new town hall in 1919 after the Baptists had dwindled to the point where they could no longer maintain it. Eighty years passed before the Congregationalists reached a similar point with respect to their Meetinghouse.

The Friends of the Wendell Meetinghouse was formed in the fall of 2001, when the last few members of the Congregational Church were unable to keep up the Meetinghouse. They wanted to pass the building on to a group that might be able to deal with its liabilities. The roof was developing leaks, the front sill was rotting because an ill advised concrete step had been directing water onto it for years, and the bell tower housed pigeons, whose byproducts so weakened the structure ringing the bell became dangerous and was forbidden. Liability insurance was cost prohibitive.

The Friends took over the building May 3rd, 2002. Charles Smith is president, Melinda Godfrey secretary, and Molly Kaynor is acting treasurer and project coordinator, the liaison between Mass Historic and the restoration project. Jerry Eide, whose business is historic restoration under the name Hill Town Restoration, is project

foreman for the roof. No one is salaried, but Eide sometimes gets reimbursed for materials. The Friends meet on the fourth Tuesday of every month at the senior center. In 2001 and 2002 they distributed surveys to see how townspeople wanted to use the building; the result is their mission statement: to preserve, maintain, and protect the Wendell Meetinghouse, a cornerstone to the Wendell town common. Once restored, it will be made available for historical exhibits, cultural and spiritual programs, and as a meeting place for special events.

The Friends of the Wendell Meetinghouse raised over \$7,500 from mailings, the benefit Full Moon Coffeehouse, a booth at Wendell Old Home Day, the recent craft fair, and sales of note cards and t-shirts. Coupled with grants from the Massachusetts Preservation Project Fund (MPPF) and Mass

Historic there is now enough money to have the building roofed with wood shingles.

For that work, Ed Tolzdorf of Wendell gave the most appropriate bid and is scheduled to begin replacing the roof in spring, when weather allows. In the summer and fall of 2004 Tolzdorf put a similar roof on the old parsonage, now a private residence just down the hill to the west of the common. To minimize damage until then, Eide has spread a blue tarp over the worst leaks.

The Friends of the Wendell Meetinghouse have organized volunteers into crews that have scraped, sanded, primed and painted three of the four sides of the building. Painting the old Meetinghouse has become something of a fall ritual. In

addition, volunteers dismantled the concrete slab in front of the building, and pulled stones out from underneath the sill, allowing Eide to repair it. He had to support the building with trusses bolted to the timber frame while he fitted a new white oak beam to join with what was left of the old sill. The ends of the

for painting at \$10,000, and the value of the sill repair labor at \$10,000.

Neighbor Ed Hines has a picture from the 1940s showing townspeople shingling the roof, with people on the ground providing picnic lunches. A man driving by saw the scene and asked if the people working on

they need to be treated before they can be repainted. Friends president Charles Smith has spent three days working just on the glazing. Eide says there are people willing to pay for a workshop in window restoration. "It isn't exactly volunteer, but you don't have to pay for the work."

Eide is friendly with teachers at the North Bennet Street School, an educational center for traditional hand-crafts, including preservation carpentry, in Boston. They are interested in helping to build a replacement for the Wendell Meetinghouse spire, which once featured a "tall, stately steeple," according to Kaynor, destroyed by lightning long ago. The cost would be materials, putting up a few students, and hiring a crane to lift the spire into place. "But that would be frosting," Eide says. Once the

main structure is stabilized, the Friends would like to start holding meetings in the Meetinghouse itself. A chimney, an adequate wood stove, repairs to the interior plaster, which would include paint analysis; all that can follow.

Kaynor called the part she plays in Friends of the Wendell Meetinghouse a rewarding hobby that sometimes takes over. Eide, ignoring what he himself has done, is impressed with how much volunteer help has come to aide the restoration project. Donations may be directed to Friends of the Wendell Meetinghouse, P.O. Box 171, Wendell, MA 01379; inquiries and offers of help may go to 978-544-7864.

Donations of ice cream are also welcome.



Molly Kaynor and Jerry Eide help coordinate renovations of the historic Wendell Meetinghouse.

old sill were still sound, but parts had to be reinforced with epoxy, and the new beam spans the center of the sill. The foundation stones under the sill still have to be well seated before the trusses can be taken down.

Before Eide worked on the sill, the front wall had pivoted out as the old sill rotted, so the floor joists were out of their pockets and were being held up by the floor. The entryway was spongy to walk on. The floor joists are back in place now and the entryway is sound.

The beam was donated, much of the paint was donated or bought at cost and food for the painting, scraping crews was provided by Kaynor and other volunteers who could not stay to scrape and paint. Eide estimates the value of the donated labor

the roof were getting paid. The answer was, "No." The motorist went into the nearby store, now the home of Jonathan and Susan von Ranson, and bought ice cream for everyone, saying, "If people are willing to work for free, they really care about their town."

Goals for the Meetinghouse Restoration Project for 2005 include - as always - fundraising: they need to raise \$5,000 locally to match a grant for the roof repair. While scaffolding is in place for the roof, Eide would like to see the bell tower get repaired. After the roof is replaced, the plan is to repair the foundation, replace the front steps, and repair the windows. The sash has been unpainted for years, and some of the wood is rotten, other parts so weathered

LELAND

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Madison kept his promise. The First Amendment he helped craft forbids the government to make any law "respecting an establishment of religion or prohibiting the free exercise thereof."

In 1791, Leland moved back to Massachusetts, where he continued his religious and political work. In a pamphlet called *The Rights of Conscience Inalienable*, he railed against government interference in religion.

"Government," he said, "has no more to do with the religious opinions of men than it has with the principles of mathematics. Let every man speak freely without fear, maintain the principles that he believes, worship according to his own faith, either one God, three Gods, no God or twenty Gods; and let

government protect him in so doing, i.e., see that he meets with no personal abuse, or loss of property, for his religious opinions.... [I]f his doctrine is false, it will be confuted, and if it is true, (though ever so novel,) let others credit it."

A firm Democratic-Republican in Federalist Massachusetts, Leland supported Jefferson's candidacy for president in 1800. After his old ally was elected, the Baptist minister came up with a unique way to celebrate the occasion. On New Year's Day, 1802, Leland showed up at the White House with a 1,325-pound wheel of cheese, the product of 900 cows. A placard that accompanied the tribute on its way down from Cheshire proclaimed it, "The Greatest Cheese in America for the Greatest Man in America!"

Jefferson was delighted with the Baptists' gift, and fragments

of the cheese were reportedly still being served at his table in 1804 (although one guest declared them "very far from good.")

The U.S. Constitution and the presidential policies of Jefferson and Madison protected religious freedom at the national level, but at that time, states remained free to impose restrictions. Leland continued to lobby for full religious freedom everywhere, attacking religious establishments in his own state as well as neighboring Connecticut.

In 1820 in his *Short Essays on Government*, Leland demanded church-state separation and equal rights for all.

"Government should protect every man in thinking and speaking freely, and see that one does not abuse another," he wrote. "The liberty I contend for is more than toleration. The very idea of toleration is despi-

cable; it supposes that some have a pre-eminence above the rest to grant indulgence; whereas all should be equally free, Jews, Turks, Pagans and Christians."

Leland's views finally prevailed. In 1831, the Massachusetts legislature approved the separation of church and state, and two years later it was overwhelmingly ratified by popular vote.

Leland died on Jan. 14, 1841. The epitaph on his tombstone, which he composed, reflects the passions of his life: "Here lies the body of John Leland, who labored 67 years to promote piety, and vindicate the civil and religious rights of all men."

Leland was a relentless friend of liberty and a church-state separation purist. He opposed Sunday laws, all special privileges for the clergy and any government aid to religion. He said Baptists did not want

the "mischievous dagger" of government help. In 1788, he introduced a resolution at the Baptists' General Committee meeting in Virginia denouncing slavery as "a violent deprivation of the rights of nature and inconsistent with a republican government" and urging the use of "every legal measure to extirpate this horrid evil from the land."

Thus it is a shame that Leland's inspirational life and noble work are nearly unknown to the general public today. The Virginia Baptist Historical Society (which provided assistance with this article) still celebrates Leland, but few people outside progressive Baptist circles know about him. At a time when television preachers and misguided politicians rail against church-state separation and individual freedom, a bracing sermon from Leland is very much in order.



NOTES FROM THE GILL-MONTAGUE SCHOOL COMMITTEE

GMRSD Preliminary Budget includes \$600,000 in Reimbursement to Towns; Plans for \$983,000 (6.8%) Increase in '06

BY KATE ARSENAULT

As previously reported (*Montague Reporter*; October 14th, 2004), the towns of Gill and Montague can expect to receive a substantial reimbursement in funds from the Gill-Montague Regional School District this year. Superintendent Sue Gee presented her FY '06 Preliminary Tentative Budget at the January 26th meeting of the Gill-Montague school committee, and detailed that Montague should expect a rebate of district funds of approximately \$515,000, while Gill will receive approximately \$85,000, noting the figures are estimates.

According to Gee, the towns will receive this reimbursement because the Mass General Law requires regional districts to return any funds in excess of 5% of the preceding year's budget to the towns in the district.

Gee said the school district received revenues late in FY '04 - including a substantial increase in reimbursement for regional transportation costs and an increase in the apportionment for Charter School reimbursements - exceeding what the district had anticipated. This windfall, Gee said, made decision making for using the additional funding difficult, because a final budget had already been approved by both towns. Gee also noted that an account known as Circuit Breaker, intended to reimburse the district for extraordinary expenses, had been unexpectedly enhanced.

Gee said while some may criticize the district for not spending the unanticipated revenues, the district had to think about the impact decisions in

spending would have on the future. "Teachers and support personnel are the heart of the enterprise. One must consider that expenditures in personnel increase the budget for years into the future," she said. Because of this, said Gee, it was "necessary to be prudent in making decisions about enhancing the FY '04 budget."

However, the superintendent's narrative for the FY '06 Preliminary Tentative Budget did state that additions were made to the FY '05 budget based on the unanticipated increased revenues. Gee said this funding will be used to restore teaching positions cut in previous years, including elementary Reading/Language Arts, high school art, elementary music and elementary classroom teaching. She said that 7.34 teaching positions have been restored, compared to over 30 positions reduced in 2002-2004. Gee claimed this increase is not great enough, saying "If we were to increase positions to the degree they are needed to provide truly quality education in the district, we would have to triple what we have already added." Gee reported that the district has generated a "needs" list for the next three years that totals \$1,111,000, or approximately \$370,000 a year.

In addition to the increase in teaching positions, Gee reported that expenses expected for FY2006 include an additional custodial position (needed to help maintain the new TFHS/Middle School complex, with its 30,000 additional square feet) along with increases in fixed costs, such as general insurance, utilities and contracted salaries and benefits.

These expenses, according to Gee, result in a total bottom line increase in the FY 2006 Tentative Budget estimated at 6.8%.

This is an increase of about \$983,000 from last year's school budget.

Gee reported one source of expense, the \$32 million building project for the Great Falls Middle School and Turners Falls High School, is "all but completed." She said the decision by the state to begin reimbursing the towns for the school construction project in 2007, rather than 2012 as previously anticipated, will save Gill and Montague thousands of dollars in debt expenses, and will save residents money on their tax bills.

Another benefit from the building project, said Gee, is the Bond Anticipation Notes (BAN) premium reimbursement for the building project the towns have earned over the past two years. The narrative for the FY 06 budget states that Montague will receive approximately \$385,000 and Gill will receive approximately \$59,000 in BAN premiums.

Gee reported the district's total operating and maintenance budget for FY 06 is estimated at \$15,361,472. She emphasized, however, that the budget and this figure are in the very preliminary stages of estimation. She said the state legislature will work on the governor's budget over the next several months, before a final state budget is arrived at, creating changes to the tentative budget presented in her report.

Food Service Budget Deficit; Healthy Menu Changes in the

Works

Increased insurance and trucking costs, reduced student enrollments, a new computer tracking system and the "growing pains of a new facility" were causes of a \$4900 deficit in the food service budget last year, according to food service manager Jim Loynd. Loynd told the school committee some expenses have led to positive changes for the food service program, with the new TFHS/Middle School facility noted as a particular boon. "Now that staff is more used to the new facility, we can phase in healthier changes," said Loynd. He said staff will be able to focus more on "from-scratch cooking," and will be able to offer more choic-

es to students, such as a greater number of vegetarian dishes. One particular advantage of the new facility, said Loynd, is that the facility can now be used to host and cater outside events. He said this will generate revenue that can be used to subsidize the program's expanded menu. Loynd also reported that the new computerized tracking system has given staff a better handle on students' accounts, and has increased participation in the lunch program, particularly in the Middle School.

Loynd did note negative factors impacting the program's costs. He said food prices are going up, and while he had expected a 7-10% increase in

see **SCHOOL** pg 8

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Open Space Update in Gill

BY DAVID DETMOLD

Folks in urban Turners Falls may think of Gill as a picturesque rural farming town, with rolling hillsides dotted with dairy cows. But ask Tim Storrow how the dairy farms of Gill have fared in recent years and he doesn't mince words. "We got clobbered." Storrow chairs Gill's open space committee. "As recently as ten years ago," he says, "we had seven milking herds in town. Now, the Zak Farm on Lyons Hill may be the last operating dairy." He ticked off a list of Gill dairy farms that have sold their herds in recent years, or switched to raising field crops or beef cattle,

"Urgiel, Flagg, Lilly, Hastings..." But even with the economics of the dairy industry aligned against New England dairies, Storrow insists agriculture is alive and well in Gill, and he wants to keep it that way.

"When we took a survey of residents a few years ago, preserving the rural character and farmland of Gill topped the list," of concerns, he said. The results of that open space survey, conducted in 2000, are now being updated by Storrow and other Gill residents, with the help of Bill Labich of the Franklin Regional Council of Governments. Their goal is to complete an open space plan to

enable Gill to remain competitive for state grants for open space conservation and recreation facilities, Storrow explained. The plan will also be useful for local decision makers to identify the areas of town that have conservation issues.

Storrow said three Gill farms are currently in the application process for conservation in the state agricultural preservation restriction (APR) program: the Worthington Farm on Bascom Hollow Road, the French land and Storrow's own acreage on River Road. The latter two landowners are willing to offer their property at discounted prices to meet the state's 20%

local match for inclusion in the APR program, "but many landowners aren't in a position to do that," Storrow said, and the town's conservation fund balance - \$15,000 - has not been added to for many years.

"We talked about getting that fund going again," at the meeting with Labich on January 25th, Storrow said. Labich presented a draft open space and recreation plan update at that meeting, reviewed maps, and went over objectives with the committee. The intent of the open space plan will be to safeguard "the integrity of streams and wetlands, wildlife habitat, farms and forest land, the diver-

sity of native flora and fauna, drinking water, clean air, scenic views and historical landscapes through the conservation of locally important natural and open space resources," according to Gill administrative assistant Deb Roussel, who attended the meeting. The open space committee will seek broader participation at two follow-up meetings, on February 24th and March 17th, before making a public presentation of the open space and recreation plan to the public at a forum on April 21st at 6:30 p.m. at town hall. For more information, call 863-9347.

NOTES FROM THE GILL SELECTBOARD

Waiting on those Turtles

BY DAVID DETMOLD

On January 24th, the selectboard was updated on progress of the Main Road reconstruction project. The three-mile, \$3.7

million project slated to begin this spring, still seems to be waiting on the lowly wood turtle.

The wood turtles, protected

under the Endangered Species Act, have two known points of crossing on Main Road. The local conservation commission has been cooperating with MassHighway and the town's engineering firm for the project, Greenman Pederson, in attempting to redesign culverts at these points to make them more turtle friendly. The Massachusetts Natural Heritage and Endangered Species Program, a division of Mass Fisheries and Wildlife, (an agency that seems to also be moving at a turtle's pace), is reviewing the final environmental design drawings. Lou Bruno, of Greenman Pederson, said he is hopeful the final designs will be approved by the end of February, so the road project can come out of hibernation and begin construction in the spring.

The board approved the

appointment of Barbara Watson, of River Road to the Zoning Board of Appeals. The board took under advisement a copy of legislation filed by Senator Stan Rosenberg regarding the disposition of old county roads in the Commonwealth. Administrative assistant Deb Roussel said the legislation, if adopted, would transfer title of former county roads in Franklin County to the Franklin Regional Council of Governments. If FRCOG were then to vote to abandon a former county road, it would become a private way.

The matter is of interest locally due to a question that has arisen about a lot situated on the western extension of South Cross Road, owned by Helene Czuj. The FRCOG regional engineer and building inspector recently ruled this lot, with 750 feet of frontage on the old coun-

ty road to Factory Hollow is a buildable lot, due to uncertainty about the road's present status. The County Commissioners voted in 1959 to abandon the road. The board is considering whether to support Rosenberg's legislation, and wanted time to review the copy provided.

The board was apprised of the schedule of finance committee meetings to review departmental '06 budget requests. The committee will meet on February 1st with the fire department, library, cemetery commission, historical commission, and the administrative assistant; on February 15th with the highway department, assessors, board of health, and conservation commission; and on February 22nd with the police department, the tax collector, the town clerk, treasurer and accountant.

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SCHOOL

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costs, 10% is more realistic. He also noted that with student enrollment down, labor costs are out of proportion to the revenue generated. Loynd said he cannot rule out the possible need for a reduction in food service staff in some areas, but said he is seeking recommendations for getting student participation in the program to match the cost of retaining the current staff. He said it might also be necessary

to raise the price of school meals in the future, though he would like them to remain as affordable as possible.

Loynd said his goal for FY '05 is to gain a modest profit with which to pay down the deficit at the end of the year, and that he is on track to settle the debt with the district next year.

Committee Welcomes Laura Willis as New District Treasurer

The school committee wel-

comed Laura Willis to her new position as district treasurer. Willis, who currently resides in the town of Shelburne, graduated from Turners Falls High School before receiving her Bachelors Degree from North Adams State College. According to the school committee, Willis has over 10 years of experience relevant to this position. "It's great to be back in my hometown," said Willis, who said she hopes to begin her new position this Thursday.

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EDIC

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Abbondanzio, DiPucchio said he had received assurance the EDIC would likely be covered for property insurance by the town's policy for work at the Strathmore. Abbondanzio placed a question on the special town meeting warrant authorizing \$7,500 to provide board liability coverage for EDIC members and officers, should the Strathmore project be approved, answering another concern.

With these assurances in hand, DiPucchio called for a positive motion to sign the purchase and sale agreement. While debating that motion, town planner Robin Sherman brought the EDIC board members up to date on revisions to the purchase and sale agreement.

"This is a different document than you saw before," she said. "It is designed to address the many valid concerns posed by the town meeting members before and after the last town meeting."

Among the changes to the document, Sherman noted the seller had agreed to turn over the property "free from all personal property and waste," and to pay all "back real estate taxes due," which tax collector Patti Dion recently estimated at \$68,000. "We wouldn't close without back taxes," said Sherman. The purchase and sale agreement includes a hazardous waste clause, providing the seller with the option of remediating

any hazardous material that should be found or allowing the town to back out of the deal. (The Strathmore recently came up clean in a site survey for hazardous materials.)

"The most important change to the purchase and sale is a clause allowing the town to conduct feasibility studies" for four

months at the mill, Sherman said, during which time the seller has agreed not to sell the property to anyone else. Those studies will assess the mill's structural stability, costs to demolish any or all of the mill buildings, parking and access issues to the site, and market feasibility for the mill's potential redevelopment. While these studies are being conducted, and once their results are known, Sherman said the town has the option to walk away from the deal for any reason, without penalty. She offered the prospect of a public forum to review the results of the feasibility studies, and suggested the

received numerous inquiries about the mill from potential developers. She has also received a \$30,000 Smart Growth technical assistance grant to help pay for the feasibility studies. Authorization for the town's \$10,000 matching share of that grant will be the third question on the town meet-

She acknowledged there is "a legal dispute with Esleek Manufacturing Company in terms of access" to the Strathmore Mill along the canal-side driveway.

"How does that get resolved?" asked EDIC member Linda Ackerman.

Sherman said she had heard informally that the owners of Esleek were concerned about the potential liability of mixing more traffic along the canal-side drive with the pedestrian traffic to their plant. "The town is in a better position than a private individual to ultimately resolve that issue," said Sherman, pointing to the power of eminent domain.

"What do you say to the concern so often expressed that the town should not be in the real estate business?" asked EDIC member Lynn Reynolds.

"When there's an important piece of property and the conditions aren't right for private development, it's important for the town to look into it. We don't know whether it's possible or feasible..." Sherman began.

DiPucchio finished her sentence, "The purchase and sale gives us sufficient means for now to gather the information to see, and includes provisos to give us a way out should we not be satisfied."

DiPucchio called for a vote on the motion. The vote was unanimously in favor of signing the purchase and sale agreement.



SARAH SWANSON PHOTO

Northest Generation, which owns the power canal, has a legal responsibility to maintain the pedestrian footbridge to the Strathmore (pictured left). Town planner Robin Sherman said the town is talking with Northeast Generation about the possibility of upgrading and enclosing the footbridge.

months at the mill, Sherman said, during which time the seller has agreed not to sell the property to anyone else. Those studies will assess the mill's structural stability, costs to demolish any or all of the mill buildings, parking and access issues to the site, and market feasibility for the mill's poten-

selectboard would decide whether to go ahead with the purchase after hearing from the public, once those results were known. During this period, the town also has the right to assign the right to purchase the mill to a third party without consent of the owner.

Sherman said the town has

ing warrant.

"The feasibility studies can show us the true costs. If it is not feasible to develop that mill, it would be good to know that before we have another Railroad Salvage or GTD sitting in the midst of our downtown historic district, depressing real estate values," Sherman said.

Meanwhile, Back at the Great Falls Discovery Center

BY DAVID DETMOLD

TURNERS FALLS - As the Montague Economic Development Industrial Corporation turns its attention to the possible redevelopment of the Strathmore Mill, it is still managing the responsibilities of ownership for the Great Falls Discovery Center, the EDIC's signature project in Turners

Falls. The interpretive natural history museum located in the handsomely renovated machine shop of the former Montague Paper Company across from town hall was developed in partnership with the US Fish and Wildlife Department and the State Department of Conservation and Recreation (DCR) over a period of 20

years. This \$4 million effort culminated in a grand opening ceremony at the Discovery Center in October of 2003, and a gala spring celebration in May of '04 coinciding with the town's 250th anniversary. But when Discovery Center director David Ziomek left for a job in Amherst in November, and the DCR seemed to lack funds to

hire a replacement for him, the immediate future of the museum appeared to be in doubt. Compounding the difficulty, the Montague EDIC - in effect the Discovery Center's landlord - was running short of the operating funds the state had allocated to bring the project through the design and construction phase, and had difficulty pinning down

DCR officials on a firm date to honor their agreement to take ownership - and financial responsibility - for the museum.

After a meeting with DCR staff on October 28th, 2004 at which the terms of the transition at the Discovery Center were discussed, EDIC chair Jay Dipucchio said two months

see GFDC pg 10

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GFDC

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went by with little communication from DCR. "They're spending so much time trying to restructure their own department and do things with no money, they don't know how to answer our questions," DiPucchio said.

In December, DiPucchio sent a letter to Priscilla Geigis, director of State Parks and Recreation, saying the EDIC remained "deeply concerned about the timing and quality of DCR's transition commitment," to the Discovery Center. "We have explicitly pressed DCR to plan for this transfer since January of 2004." Having difficulty getting DCR to return his phone calls, DiPucchio turned to local legislators for help. After a conference call last week with Senator Stan Rosenberg, Representative Steve Kulik and DCR's Geigis, DiPucchio began to get a clearer response.

At the January 24th EDIC meeting, DiPucchio said he had drafted a formal letter specifying

ing the EDIC's need to "get out from under the ownership of the Great Falls Discovery Center," outlining a "timely transition to DCR, before we run out of money" for operating costs. The meeting took place in a corner of the echoing Great Hall, after DiPucchio found his key to the Discovery Center's office no longer worked, evidence the DCR maintenance team had been on the job, changing locks.

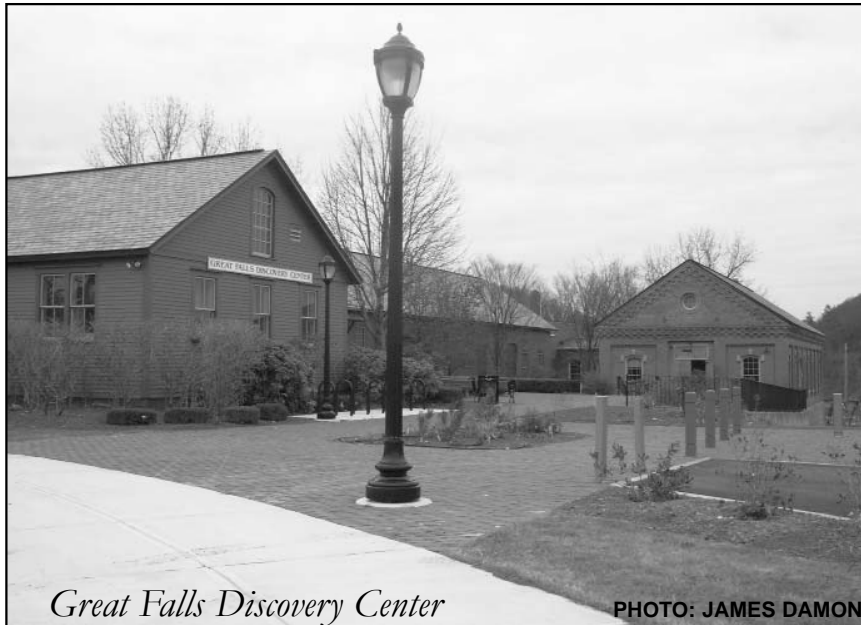
On Tuesday, DiPucchio said he had spoken with Geigis and an attorney for DCR, and had made substantial progress in clarifying the terms of the transition. A memo of understanding is being negotiated to grant Montague priority access to the Great Hall for municipal functions "in recognition of our 20-year commitment to the project," he said. And a waiver of a costly audit of the EDIC's books is under consideration. If the audit, for which the EDIC has set aside \$15,000, is

waived, DiPucchio said that money could be committed to meeting operating costs for the Discovery Center for the remaining months of Fiscal '05. After July 1st, DCR hopes to

not return a phone call in time for this article) and appears to be sharing programming duties again with the US Fish and Wildlife staff. Susan Russo, a US Fish and Wildlife staff mem-

15). Among other indications of recent attention, the Center now sports a much-needed permanent sign on Avenue A.

DiPucchio said the EDIC would remain in control of the former Cumberland Farms building, where plans for a cultural center are taking shape, and the Discovery Center parking lot on 2nd Street. That lot, constructed with a mix of state and local funds, not only will provide parking for the Discovery Center and the possible arts-based cultural center, but also continue to see heavy use for the Shea Theater on weekends, and is a major factor in discussions over the possible reuse of the Strathmore Mill. Town administrator Frank Abbondanzio said the town has the right to share the use of the upper parking lot of the Great Falls Discovery Center for the Strathmore, but neither he nor DiPucchio would put a number on the spaces that could be dedicated to that use. DiPucchio said, "It is a parking lot that will contend with a number of competing needs," should the Strathmore be redeveloped.



Great Falls Discovery Center

PHOTO: JAMES DAMON

have sufficient funding in their '06 budget to operate and fully staff the Discovery Center.

For now, the Discovery Center is open on Fridays and Saturdays from 10 a.m to 4 p.m. DCR has hired a temporary site manager, Dom Sacco, (who did

ber contacted on her first day on the job at the Discovery Center yesterday, said she is helping to coordinate "outreach events, special events, and environmental education programs" at the Center, on Saturdays throughout the winter (see schedule on page

Town Meeting Approves Purchase of Possible New Town Office Site

BY DOUG TURNER AND DAVID DETMOLD

WENDELL - Prior to a special town meeting, the selectboard met to sign the purchase and sale agreement with Chickadees, Inc., owners of the 125-acre Fiske Pond property, for \$400,000 on January 26th. The board took this action after hearing positively from the state Division of Conservation Services on the town's application for a 70% matching Self Help grant, which will reduce the town's share of the purchase to \$120,000. The town accepted the sellers' terms for a conservation restriction on the property, precluding the option to log, hunt, or fish on the land. Closing for the sale is April 1st.

At the town meeting, voters approved a warrant article allo-

cating \$150,000 to purchase a 3.4-acre lot to the east of the town common, at 9 Morse Village Road, owned by Anne Marie Meltzer. The town is considering using the parcel for a variety of options, including the siting of a new town office building or a septic system to serve various town buildings. The lot may also be used as a possible fallback site for a new public library, but, on a different warrant article, voters approved a motion to designate the lot on which the current town offices are located, on Wendell Depot Road, as the preferred site for a



The Wendell selectboard, (l-r) Daniel Keller, Christine Heard and Ted Lewis, signed the \$400,000 purchase and sale agreement for the 125-acre Fiske Pond property on January 26th.

new library.

Librarian Rosie Heidkamp spoke favorably of that article, saying the site is convenient to the common, and would provide

Voters approved an article to set aside \$250 toward the extra expense associated with switching the electricity accounts of a number of town departments to

easy access to the adjacent playground and basketball courts, as well as providing a possible reuse of an existing historic structure. Town meeting also agreed to add \$15,000 to the library building fund.

the Greener Watts New England renewable energy program. Participation in this program, which residents are also encouraged to join, involves accepting a voluntary 2.2 cents per kilowatt hour surcharge on monthly electric bills, to contribute to a fund for renewable energy projects in town. Wendell has already met the necessary 3% minimum participation level to qualify for the program, with 15 residents signing up. For each participant, the fund contributes \$50 toward a town renewable energy project, and if Wendell ranks among the top for towns in Western Mass in participation, it stands to gain an extra \$5,000 for such a project. Solar panels for the new library are being considered as a possible end use for the funds.

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VARNEY

continued from pg 1

down, at the old Keith Paper Company stack, and the pedestrian walking bridge across the canal to the looming brick buildings where hundreds of mill hands once turned rags into paper, and seemed lost in thought for a moment.

Selectboard member Allen Ross, looking out from under the fur of his Eskimo hat, said Montague, situated in the Connecticut River valley, with

responding with investments of their own in downtown property.

Frank Gardner, the EPA's onsite coordinator for the Sweeney Garage cleanup, said when his crew first arrived at the site in October of 2004, people driving by would beep and wave to cheer the demolition on. Gardner said the operator, Shaw E&I of Hopkinton, handled the demolition expertly, picking apart the debris and removing barrels of waste, sheet metal, airplane landing gear,

them," Gardner said. "Otherwise we would have had a giant headache."

Brownfields coordinator Jim Byrne, standing nearby, said the abandoned garage was just the sort of place he would have loved to play in when he was a ten- or eleven-year-old, developing a precocious interest in hazardous waste. Given the fact the town could not adequately secure the site, downtown families are probably heaving a sigh of relief not to have their children playing there now.

Turning away from the view of the mills on the river, Varney congratulated the assembled officials "for your vision and your commitment. You are doing a great job. It is wonderful to see the site - visually and symbolically - in context of the community." He lauded the Brownfields cleanup program for its ability to "enhance the local tax base, eliminate eyesores, threats to local health and safety, and create jobs. What better way to promote smart growth than to invest in downtowns and the redevelopment of existing buildings?" he asked rhetorically.

As Varney said goodbye, Ross invited him to come back to Montague to go canoeing in the Connecticut River. Varney said he would like to do that, when the weather warmed. Then he got back in his Toyota Prius and drove efficiently back to Boston.

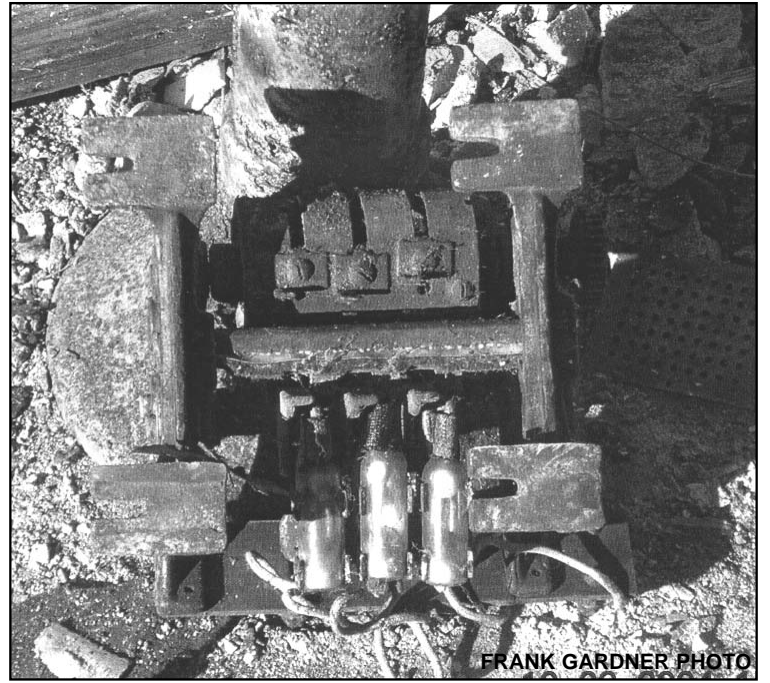


DETMOLD PHOTO

Shaw E&I's excavator rests atop a pile of rubble, all that's left of a lifetime of hoarding sheet metal, kitchen appliances, airplane landing gear, x-ray equipment, and other collectibles at the old Dubois garage on the corner of 3rd and Canal

unspoiled views and historic buildings, is on the cusp of being discovered as the beautiful community that it is. Sherman talked of the benefit of 25 years of investment to infrastructure improvements by the state and federal governments, and how the private sector was

kitchen appliances, and various unidentifiable objects the former owner, Richard Dubois, stored there after acquiring the garage when Sweeney Ford moved out. "We found three vials of mercury on a switch, and the operator was able to remove them without breaking



FRANK GARDNER PHOTO

Good thing the EPA's contractor, Shaw E&I of Hopkinton, handled this baby gingerly. The three mercury vials on this old switch could have caused quite a headache for the clean-up crew if they had broken open.



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Ladies and Syntax

BY JOSEPH A. PARZYCH
TURNERS FALLS - Charlotte Robinson asked me to speak to the Friends and Council, a group of local women who have been meeting on Mondays at a member's home, twice a month, since 1899. Robinson is president of the organization. The meeting I spoke at was held at Joan Churchill's house. Gertrude Woodard gave me the run-down on the organization, and how members are admitted. Proceedings are governed by "Roberts Rules of Order, Revised. That alone was intimidating. Then, when I learned "The object of this society shall be to awaken and develop inter-

est in all that pertains to intellectual and social culture," I immediately knew they had asked the wrong guy to speak.

To stall for time and try to think of something intellectual, I asked what subject other speakers had chosen and what the group usually discussed. "Oh, everything," was the reply.

"Does that include religion and politics?"

"Oh, yes, religion, politics--even sex."

There wasn't a whole lot in the line of sex that I wanted to talk about, so I backtracked my brain to "intellectual and social culture," and decided to take a chance on speaking about my

early education, or lack thereof, in the little red brick school house in West Gill, which had neither running water nor indoor plumbing. I figured they would take pity on me if I displayed ignorance of the rules of syntax and how to operate a flush toilet. I decided not to tell them my sex education was obtained from diligently studying

the corset pages of the Sears & Roebuck catalog.

The ladies seemed to enjoy hearing about our teenaged schoolteacher, Blanche Pogoda, who had labored to teach us as an intern, in lieu of college studies. That sort of thing was allowed during the Great Depression as a cost cutting measure for both student and school board.

The one room school would never have been accredited by today's standards, and the school board would probably be charged with child abuse, as well. In winter, the school was often so cold Blanche held classes in the basement by the coal furnace. To improve ventilation, the town had a large duct installed to bring in fresh air to the furnace. We were already getting more fresh air than we needed in that drafty schoolhouse. Blanche had sense enough to keep the duct damper closed.

Our books were ancient and

tattered, and our beloved school marm often had to depend on school supplies donated by her own teachers at Fitchburg State College. She may have been short on academic training, but she made up for it by fostering inspiration and motivation.

Turners Falls High School teacher Charles Galvin, who ran a home room that included grammar school graduates from Gill, once told me he kept records demonstrating that despite the inadequacies of the Gill one room school houses, Gill students surpassed those educated in larger, better equipped classrooms, with teachers who had a full four or five years of college. Gill students also had a better attendance record, having apparently developed strong immune systems from drinking contaminated water dipped out of a bucket, all using the same dipper, at the Gill schoolhouse.

The ladies asked questions, and answered mine. I learned

that the 106-year-old society had once grown to a membership of 35, but it became unwieldy and was allowed to dwindle to a manageable 18 active members, plus honorary members; those contributing in outstanding ways to the work of the club. Lately, the meetings have been reduced to once a month, with a guest speaker at about half of the meetings. At the end of the year, the group has a banquet. New members are chosen from a waiting list. An applicant must attend at least one meeting, as a guest. Members are limited to inviting one guest a year. The group then votes on whether or not to admit a hopeful candidate. Two negative votes exclude the nominee. Fortunately, as a male, I was relieved to know I was not in danger from the threat of two negatives votes. (Only two?)

My talk seemed to go off well. I done Blanche Pogoda proud.



Friends & Council meeting at Joan Churchill's home in Turners Falls.

Left to right, rear row: Joan Churchill, Helen Stotz, Virginia Garrand, Gertrude Woodard, Martha Morrison. Front row: Anne Bailey, Valda Stove, Ruth Austin, Priscilla Pierce.

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Northfield Mount Hermon President Announces Retirement

NORTHFIELD - On January 24th, President Richard W. Mueller announced that he had decided to step down as President of Northfield Mount Hermon School in June 2005. He was head of the school from 1998 to 2004 and became president last year.

President Mueller, a 1962 graduate of NMH, said, "After seven years leading Northfield Mount Hermon School, this is a good time to make a change. There is a clear vision for the future based on the bold decision of the board of trustees last year to become a smaller school on one campus and to find good alternative uses for the Northfield campus. We will be an even better school with a unique educational program of

the head, hand, and heart that serves students well. I have confidence in the school's senior team led by Head of School Thomas K. Sturtevant."

Mueller said, "My wife Claire and I will be forever grateful for the opportunity to lead such a wonderful institution through a historic period to a bright future. We will cherish the memories of working with such a talented and dedicated faculty and staff. They and our students are the heart and soul of this very special place." Mueller said he and his wife have not yet decided on any specific plans after they leave Northfield Mount Hermon.

Chairman of the NMH Board of Trustees William R. Rhodes said he accepts Mueller's deci-



Robert W. Mueller

sion with regret. "Richard has led Northfield Mount Hermon through an extraordinary period of change, both through the economic downturn and the strategic planning for the future. His leadership of the school was a

key factor in the board's unanimous, strategic decision on January 17, 2004. There is good momentum and a clear set of plans that will serve the best interests of our students over the long run."

Rhodes expressed his confidence in Sturtevant, who was hired as associate head of school in 2003 and became head of school in 2004, as well as in the senior leadership team. "Each is an experienced leader

who knows the school well and is excited about our plans for the future. I have equal confidence in the leadership and strength of the faculty, staff, and administrators during this time of transition. They deserve special appreciation and thanks for their support of our students and school." Rhodes said he looks forward to Mueller's continued support of NMH both as an alumnus and former head of school.

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BY WOODY BROWN

MONTAGUE CITY - Although a lot of people think that late January or February is too late to order seeds from catalogs, it's not true. The only seeds that I know of that are time-sensitive are onions and leeks. Today, most seed houses send out catalogs promptly, so within ten days of ordering one, you should have a copy.

I like to order from seed catalogs, rather than go to a nursery or seed store, because I get a greater range of seed varieties to choose from. Tomatoes are a good example. Other than time to maturity and perhaps color, there is very little distinguishing one variety from another, except for slight differences in taste. That difference to me is significant, because while I like a tomato that is sweet, I like a certain amount of acidity too.

Most of my tomatoes I order from a company in Florida that specializes in tomatoes and peppers, but even this company doesn't have everything. I



bought one or two different varieties from other catalogs. So, if you order now or in the next week or two, you'll get seeds in plenty of time to be useful.

If you start your seed inside, you'll want to start onions and leeks right away at the end of January or the beginning of February. Other seed can be planted any time from late March to the end of April. I plan to start my melons and peppers in March, but I won't start my tomatoes until the first of April. The reason for this is because if

tomatoes are left in their starter pots, they tend to get leggy. What you want are stems that are strong and hearty.

A few of the companies from which I've ordered seeds are:

Burpee, Warminster, PA 1-800-888-1447

Veseys Seeds, Calais, ME 1-800-363-7333

Pine Tree Garden Seed, New Gloucester, ME 1-207-926-3400

Tomato Growers Supply, Fort Myers, FL 1-888-478-7333

Totally Tomatoes, Randolph, WI 1-800-345-5977

Johnny's Seeds, Winslow, ME 1-207-861-3901

Vermont Bean Seed, Randolph, WI 1-800-349-1071

Territorial Seed Company, Cottage Grove, OR 1-541-942-9547

Of course, there are others. These are just some of the ones I personally use. So, for a fast start to this year's gardening, order a seed catalog today. Happy gardening!



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The Montague Parks & Recreation Department is accepting applications for certified Lifeguards for the public Open Swim sessions held at the Turners Falls High School indoor pool. These positions involve morning, afternoon, evening and weekend hours for winter/spring season. Positions require appropriate certifications, which must be current and valid throughout the employment period. Applications are available at the Montague Parks and Recreation Department, 56 First Street, Turners Falls, MA. For more information, you may call us at 863-3216. The Town of Montague is an EOE and does not discriminate against disabilities. **Deadline: Closed when filled.**

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'Finding Treasures at the Gill Store Skeleton 33" tall on Metal base (Smithsonian) \$175.00, Newspaper Bundling Box (Plowhearth) \$45.00, Pair of Porcelain Dolls 10.5" (American Family 1986) \$50.00, Matchbox cars made in England, B.O. 863-9006 after 12:00 noon

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Deep Freeze Film Series at Bookmill

BY MICHAEL MULLER
MONTAGUE CENTER - There's something fresh and exciting and even a little unsettling about the movie series at the Montague Bookmill. This free (donations accepted) series on Sunday nights provides an unguided tour through familiar and strange landscapes of movie

eras and idioms. Placed back-to-back, the viewer's psyche is wrenched back and forth from week to week as cinematic periods and perspectives ricochet across the spectrum. This is what movie making was invented for. Fasten your seatbelts.

The first thing you should know before you even get to the Bookmill -- and this is very important -- there are two methods of actually getting into the movie room.

Method One is to cross the overhead bridge from Greenfield Road straight into the second floor space where the movies are shown. This is by far the easier and the more direct route (it's even wheelchair accessible), and it will satisfy most customers.

Method Two, my preferred method, is to go through the Lady Killebrew Café where you can buy wine, beer and real food on a real plate to consume while you watch the movie.

Once upstairs you'll notice the upstairs is no longer just the upstairs. During movie night it becomes the Movie Room. Overstuffed couches and chairs are lovingly arranged and beg you to get there early. The hanging six-foot screen is projected on by a professionally installed overhead video projector,

through a \$7.50 eBay-purchased DVD player. But there's more.

Though the image may be good, the sound is excellent. CD quality sound pulsing through four speakers scientifically arranged around the seating

area and driven by a 50-watt receiver provides experience-immersion rivaled only by real movie theaters with sense-around. You can almost feel Neil Young's fingers resting on the fret board while waiting for his cue from Jim Jarmusch (in Dead Man).

And then, again, there is the movie selection. Like the Bookmill's inventory, the movie selection is tall, wide and eclectic. Titles such as Chaplan's classic "Modern Times", "Dr.



Come to the Green Fair!
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 at the Greenfield High School

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 Sunday 10-5
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 773-9567

Strangelove", "The Russians are Coming, the Russians are Coming", "Candy Mountain", "City of Lost Children" and "Scratch" are scattered throughout this bizarre list in a fashion not unlike darts thrown by unseen forces. Every decade since the 1930's are represented here in purposeful, playful diversity.

It is likely you may have never heard of most of these films, but since each title was chosen and is introduced by a

patron of the mill complex, I guarantee you will not be disappointed at the end of the night. And even if you are, the beer is excellent.

The Bookmill is located at the junction of Turners Falls and Greenfield roads in Montague Center, just south of Rau's, with plenty of parking.

Check out the ever-changing schedule at <http://www.MontagueBookmill.com>.

Traditional Mummers Play and Sword Dance Performance

BY STEVE HOWE

AMHERST - There will be a free performance of a Mummers Play and traditional mid-winter dances from the north of England, including both rapper and longsword dances and the haunting antler dance at the Meeting House of the Unitarian Society of Amherst at 121 N Pleasant St, Amherst, on Saturday January 29th at 4 p.m. All are welcome.



A Mummers Play is a folk play of villain and hero, of death and rebirth, of the closing of the old year and the beginning of the new year. Set in English mythology, Saint George is our hero who fights the villainous Turkish Knight. After proving his valor, Saint George

must be sacrificed in order to, like the year, come back renewed. The play is a mix of spoof and ritual, played for the enjoyment of all and for whatever coins (and bills) people are willing to drop into the upturned hat. In the sword dance a ring of dancers, linked by their swords, weave patterns eventually tying their swords in a star shaped lock. The antler dance can be seen in the town of Abbots Bromley on an early Monday in September each year, danced with centuries old antlers that are stored in the church. It can also be seen on the same Monday in the streets of Amherst as danced by That Long Tall Sword, a local group of dancers that has been performing in the area for over 15 years in their rag disguises. They will be joined by the Greenwich Morris Men, of New York City and Midnight Rapper of southern New Hampshire.

The teams will perform in several locations on Saturday ending with a free public performance at the Meeting House of the Unitarian Society.

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CALENDAR

FRIDAY, JAN. 28TH

A Bouquet of Music Concert Series - Espresso Jazz Concerts take place in Franklin Medical Center's main lobby. FMC is located at 164 High St. in Greenfield. Noon to 1:00 p.m. (413) 773-2573.

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

SATURDAY, JAN. 29TH

It's the Annual Bowl-athon! NEL-CWIT (New England Learning Center for Women in Transition) Benefit for abused women and their families. Pizza, bowling and bowling shoes provided - bowlers asked to raise money to help support services through pledges. Held at the French King Entertainment Center in Erving. Pizza at 12:30 p.m. and bowling at 1:00 p.m. 413-772-0871 x 15.

The Gathering Place at First Parish of Northfield, Unitarian offers card and board games, mah-jong lessons, open mike for musicians and writers, coffee & light fare on the last Saturday of every month from 7 to 10 p.m. 72 Main Street, for more info call 498-5957

Fifth Saturday Contra Dance with Tophill Music at the Guiding Star Grange Hall, 401 Chapman St., Greenfield. 8:00 p.m. to midnight. 413-367-9380.

SUNDAY, JAN. 30TH

Got Kids? Family Dance at the Montague Grange: child-friendly contradancing at 4:00 p.m. - dance caller Diane Sanabria. The Montague Grange continues this wonderful family series, now in its fourth year. The series goes through April and features family-style contra dancing, paced for little feet (no age restriction) or adult beginners, in a beautiful, restored historic building, across from the Town Commons in picturesque Montague Center. Each dance is on the last Sunday of the month, from 4:00 to 5:30 p.m., priced a sliding \$5-\$10, and includes a light snack.

TUESDAY, FEB. 1ST

Habib Koité & Bamada to perform live, 7:30 p.m. at Memorial Hall in Shelburne Falls. During the period from 1995 to 2002, Malian legend Habib Koité, backed by the superstar musicians of Bamada, performed more than 560 concerts in 29 countries. Hailed as the "African Eric Clapton," Koité's music combines centuries of Malian tradition with subtle Western influences to create songs that appeal to people from all walks of life. Habib's music proves that one does not have to forsake the past in order to develop, and that the modern world, for all of its benefits, needs to keep its links to the folklore, mythology

and history of the people in order for it to retain its soul. \$20 advance / \$23 door / under 18 half price.

THURSDAY, FEB. 3RD

Toastmasters Meeting - A public speaking educational club, Toastmasters can help anyone become a better speaker, listener, and develop leadership skills. Poet's Seat Speakers Toastmasters Club meets in the Social Room at the YMCA, 451 Main St., Greenfield. 7:00 p.m. 413-774-2208 or 773-1978.

FRIDAY, FEB. 4TH

First Friday 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

SATURDAY, FEB. 5TH

2nd Annual Growing A Green Community Fair featuring displays and samples of environmentally-friendly products, food, music and services. Greenfield High School, Lenox Avenue. 10:00 a.m. to 4:00 p.m. 413-774-2791.

First Saturday 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

The Pioneer Valley Symphony will perform the fourth program of its 66th season on Saturday, February 5th, at 7:30 pm. The concert will be held at John M. Greene Hall, on the Smith College campus in Northampton, under Music Director Paul Phillips. This concert is sponsored by Health New England and by The Valley Advocate.

ONGOING EVENTS

Now through February 13th

The Green Trees Gallery is currently showing work by artists Alice Proujansky, Cynthia Guild, Eleanor Miller, Pacifico Palumbo, Joe McCarthy, Robert Steinem, Margo Fleck, Rebecca Bleecher, Dan Brown, Nancy Fitz-Rapalje, Laura Garrison, Nicholas Raptelis, Jeanne Sisson, Janice Starmer, Jean Tandy, Frank Tencza, Nancy Tips, James Whitbeck, Tom Wyatt, Stephan Zeigfinger, Gene Cauthen, Michael Humphries, and Alan Morgan. The artwork at the spacious light filled Gallery ranges from traditional to cutting edge, there is fine selection of crafts and gifts for everyone. Please stop on by. Gallery hours are: Thursday - Sunday 11 a.m.-5 p.m. Located at 105 Main St, Northfield, 413-498-028. Or visit www.greentreesgallery.com.

Now through February 19th

Talent Brewing: Annual Teen Exhibit. Students from local public and independent high schools will exhibit 2D and 3D work in a variety of media. Artspace Community Arts Center, 15 Mill St., Greenfield. 413-772-6811.



Warwick resident and world traveler Alan Morgan's color photography taken in Cambodia is on display along with the works of many other fine artists at Green Trees Gallery through February 13th. See below.

Now through February 26th

The Fiber Art Center in Amherst is delighted to announce its first exhibit of works created by its students. Selected Fiber Art Center Student Works runs through February 26th. It includes works from both adults (juried) and children (unjuried) based on ideas and techniques learned in classes taught at the FAC. For more information contact the FAC at (413) 256-1818 or go to www.fiberart-center.com.

Saturday, February 5th

Art and Design of GFDC 11 am

Murals create the setting! Learn from artist Frank Gregory about the development of the habitats at the Great Falls Discovery Center. See the design model and walk through the exhibits to learn about the details of these beautiful murals.

Saturday, February 12th

Nature's Beauty: The Order Odonota

Exhibit Opening 11 am Nature photographer Glenn Corbiere will introduce visitors to the damselflies and dragonflies of the valley. Come learn the stories behind the camera and see these bright beauties on display through April 16th.

Saturday, February 19th

Valley Rocks 10:30 - 11:30 am

Our valley was shaped by volcanoes, earthquakes, and glaciers! Schoolchildren with adults are invited to examine rock samples and act out how rocks arrived here with Gini Traub, Regional EE Coordinator for the Mass Department of Conservation and Recreation.

Great Falls Discovery Center Calendar of Events

NOTE: All Programs listed below are free and open to the public. Facilities are accessible. Great Falls Discovery Center, 2 Avenue A, Turners Falls.

Saturday, January 29th

Stories of Survival 11 am & 2 pm

The changing landscape brings in new wild neighbors! Visitors are invited to join Sue Cloutier, of the U. S. Fish and Wildlife Service, on either of these guided tours of our habitat displays to learn how the animals large and small have dealt with change.

MABEL ZOBLE BY SANDRA FACTO

I WOULD GIVE ANYTHING TO LOOK LIKE HER!

Hot Spot Teen Center
 Fri, Jan. 28th
 Field Trip to Shelburne Falls Library for Open Mic, 5:30 - 8:30 p.m.
 Mondays - Ongoing Digital Arts Project
 Tuesdays & Wednesdays - Ongoing Avenue A Music Project

All of these programs are free (except some skate trips) and open to local teens. Some require permission slips. For more info about any of these events or programs please call Jared at 863-9559. Teen Center located in The Brick House Community Center 24 Third St, Turners Falls

Sundays at 7 All films free donations accepted

BOOK MILL MONTAGUE-MA

DEEP FREEZE FILMS
 Sunday, Jan 30th
DAYS OF HEAVEN
 Terrence Malik's masterpiece; Visually stunning, poetic & necessary. Projected upstairs with refreshments by the Lady Killigrew Café
www.montaguebookmill.com, (413) 367-9206

Showtime 7:30 p.m.

Media Cafe

Fri. Jan. 28th and Sat. Jan. 29th

Real Women Have Curves
 Sassy, stirring and surprisingly subtle winner of the Sundance Audience Award
at 105 Main St., Northfield in the Green Trees Gallery.
 Reservations call (413) 498-2100

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SHOWTIMES FOR
 FRI. JAN. 28TH - THURS. FEB. 3RD

- THE AVIATOR** PG13
 DAILY 8:00
 MATINEE SAT, SUN, & WED 12:00 4:00
- PHANTOM OF THE OPERA** PG13 in DTS sound
 DAILY 6:00 9:00
 MATINEE SAT, SUN, & WED 12:00 3:00
- RACING STRIPES** PG
 DAILY 6:00
 MATINEE SAT, SUN, & WED 12:00
- WHITE NOISE** PG13
 DAILY 9:00
 MATINEE SAT, SUN, & WED 3:00
- COACH CARTER** PG13
 DAILY 6:15 9:15
 MATINEE SAT, SUN, & WED 12:15 3:15
- MEET THE FOCKERS** PG13
 DAILY 6:15 9:15
 MATINEE SAT, SUN, & WED 12:15 3:15
- ARE WE THERE YET** PG in DTS sound
 DAILY 6:30 9:30
 MATINEE SAT, SUN, & WED 12:30 3:30
- HIDE AND SEEK** PG13 in DTS sound
 DAILY 6:30 9:30
 MATINEE SAT, SUN, & WED 12:30 3:30

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Friday, Jan. 28th
Skeletones

Saturday, Jan. 29th
Drunk Stuntmen

Tuesday, February 1st
Art Steele and Friends

Sundays and Thursdays
 Karaoke
Wednesdays
 Open Mic with Mark Herschler
 32 Federal St., Millers Falls

THE GILL GOURMET

The Saga of the Cherry Chocolate Pie Continues

BY JOSEPH A. PARZYCH

Though Linda Carey has not yet baked the cherry chocolate pie she promised, the creators of Jello pie filling are making it easier. Alert reader Joann Olsen of Dover, Pennsylvania, spotted a new Jello product, cherry chocolate pudding and pie filling, not long after reading my chocolate cherry pie recipe in the *Montague Reporter*. (Yes, folks, there are *Montague Reporter* readers all across the country.)

I regret I did not write to the Jello folks at Kraft Foods about my cherry chocolate pie recipe, as I intended. Had I done so, I could have taken credit for prompting them to offer this new product. (It is not yet available, locally.) I may write them, anyway, on the chance that a company executive read about the lack of that flavor in their repertoire, and acted on my tip.

However, I will submit this new recipe for another version of cherry chocolate pie to the *Montague Reporter*, and to the

Jello Company.

My new recipe is shorter than the last one: you simply pour cherry pie filling into a baked pie shell, and spread chocolate pie filling over it. If you want to get really fancy, and pile on the calories, a topping of cool whip, or whipped cream, will make a

pie that will send your taste buds off on a cloud as fluffy as the topping.

Since Cosby mentioned Jello pudding at his recent Turners Falls parenting session, I am tempted to send the new recipe to Bill Cosby, but I'm

afraid that one of his PR folks would intercept it again. A couple of years ago, when I wrote an article about the renovation of the Reed's Ferry Bridge, I sent a copy of the article to the Cosby home in Shelburne at the request of a PR man who gave me permission to photograph the house. Cosby's Shelburne house, by the Reed's Ferry Bridge, is the former dwelling of the Reed family. They ran

the ferry, and were responsible for pushing for the construction of the bridge, having become sick of hearing some fool blowing the signal trumpet on the other side of the river, summoning them for a ferry ride across the river, sometimes in the wee hours of the morning.

A Cosby public relations person called me from California to thank me for sending the article. He said the Cosby family found

the history of their home and the ferry interesting, and asked him to call to thank me. He also marveled at the beauty of my photo of the bridge in living color, gracing the front cover of *Hardhat News*. That was it.

He could have at least sent me a package of Jello pie filling, as Joann Olsen of Pennsylvania did.



ABOVE Cosby home in Shelburne, formerly the Reed family homestead and general store. Sign on the gate reads, "If you are not invited, do not pass through these gates." Not the hospitality offered by the Reed family, I'm afraid.

RIGHT Reed's Ferry Bridge viewed from below on the Conway side of the river. The signaling trumpet was hung from a tree, on this side, to summon the Reed family to come get them, often at the most inopportune times. The family members may have had a desire to bang the trumpet, from the same tree, by his appendages.



HIGHLIGHTS OF THE MONTAGUE POLICE LOG

It's Snowing; Slow Down You Fool

Thursday 1-20

Eight weather-related minor motor vehicle accidents were reported. No injuries. Reports were taken.

12:44 p.m. Report of tree branches on wires on Turners Falls Road. WMECO notified.

Friday 1-21

5:12 a.m. Report of a car alarm sounding on G Street. Was not sounding on arrival of officer. Two subsequent calls reported alarm was sounding again but stopped.

2:00 p.m. Caller requested officer at Tech School. Two juveniles summonsed.

3:46 p.m. Domestic disturbance reported at a G Street address. Found to be verbal only. Parties advised of their options.

10:08 p.m. Report of a breaking and entering at a Cemetery Road address. Report taken.

Saturday 1-22

8:19 p.m. Report of a car off the road on Old Sunderland Road. Driver got car out.

Sunday 1-23

11:05 p.m. Report of a fight at an L Street address. Investigated.

Monday 1-24

Seven weather-related accidents reported. No injuries. Reports taken.

11:30 a.m. Report of someone plowing snow into Lake Pleasant Road. Officer spoke to subject.

11:45 a.m. Report of someone plowing snow into Swamp Road. Officer spoke to subject.

Tuesday 1-25

Six weather-related motor vehicle accidents were reported. No injuries. Reports taken.

1:50 p.m. Report of a breaking and entering at a 2nd Street address. Under investigation.

9:18 p.m. Report a motor vehicle broken down on 3rd Street. Officer assisted.

Wednesday 1-26

12:41 a.m. Officer assisted someone who had fallen at a Crocker Avenue address.

OFF THE BEATEN TRACK

Bodies of Snow

BY FLORE

Are we aware of the important effect the natural world has on us? Perhaps, at times, we discard blindly what it has to offer.

Could it be due to our fast-moving world, with so many distracting paths to choose from?

Or is it due, perhaps, to no longer being linked to nature's intimate, silent language? Then, all of a sudden, at the least expected moments, when Earth sleeps her deepest wintery days, the dialogue bangs violently on our doors.

To our searching eyes, this is as being plunged into Genesis, fully awakened. It regains voices, bringing alive the startling beauty of unbroken forms. Marvel how the hill's contours become

shapes of a sculptured hidden Colossus. There they stand, in the mute empire of morning walks, dodging shadows and fleeting light, as if we played a game of 'catch me if you can.'

Discover how the camera becomes a recording eye, catching them, and captioning them, familiarly, "bodies of snow."

Isn't this one way to tame the winter months and make them, perhaps, more bearable? Protected by layers of clothing, think, passerby,

what the nudity of the white landscape offers, as an ephemeral token of beauty. Realize how the Inuit in the vastness of the Arctic use more than 40 different words to describe the fine shining powder we sum up with the single word: snow.



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