



NEW SAINT
At the Peace Pagoda/ Page 11



GREGORY CAPUTO BIG BAND
Coming to TFHS/ Page 14

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YEAR 5 - NO. 13

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THE VOICE OF THE VILLAGES

JANUARY 4, 2007

Ministering to Montague's Health

BY DAVID DETMOLD

TURNERS FALLS -

Joan Pajak has been the Montague town nurse since the summer of 1998, when, recently returned to Massachusetts, she answered a small ad in the local paper seeking an RN to conduct blood pressure clinics, administer flu shots, and generally look after the health needs of local residents. Quietly and effectively, she has been keeping her finger on the pulse of Montague's health ever since.

Pajak grew up in Paxton, Massachusetts, married her husband Paul after he got out of the Coast Guard, and went on a cross-country odyssey with her husband pursuing graduate school and job opportunities in Virginia, Florida, and Montana, before they settled in the Twin Cities of Minnesota. Pajak worked in Wisconsin and Minnesota for the next twelve years, primarily providing outpatient care at the cardiology unit of the St. Paul



DETOLD PHOTO
Montague Town Nurse
Joan Pajak

Heart Clinic.

The Pajaks live in South Deerfield with their three children, aged 14 -20; Paul works as Program Manager at U.S. Fish and Wildlife in Hadley, and Joan works four days a week, Monday through Thursday, generally 8 a.m. to 1 p.m. caring for the health needs of Montague residents.

She keeps open office hours in her first floor town hall office on Tuesday and Thursday mornings. These are good times for locals to drop by with questions about their medications, to ask for periodic blood pressure checks, or to find out their 'body composition' by using a special scale Pajak has purchased for her office

see NURSE pg 11

Tight Squeeze in Fire Station

JOSH HEINEMANN WENDELL - At the December 28th selectboard meeting, Dan Keller told fire chief Everett Ricketts he thought the equipment room at the fire station seemed a mite crowded when he went in to fetch a ladder for repairing the roof of that building recently. The town's six fire trucks share close quarters beside the highway garage. The vehicles include the new Smeal pumper/tanker, the old

pumper, the brush truck, the tank truck, a trailer holding an inflatable boat for ice and cold water rescue, and a pumper from Lake Pleasant that still has the Lake Pleasant decals on its doors.

Ricketts said all the vehicles are working, and the department has a use for all of them. The old pumper truck is useful for back up, for times when the town has more than one fire going on, as hap-

see WENDELL pg 9

G-M School Budget Outlook Improves

\$1.2 MILLION '08 OVERESTIMATE CORRECTED BUT '07 BUDGET DEFICIT RUNS TO \$400,000

BY DAVID DETMOLD - On Tuesday, January 2nd, the Gill-Montague Regional School Committee's budget subcommittee received new

numbers for the preliminary '08 operating budget for district schools. A revised estimate was offered for the amount the schools will spend on debt

service for the renovation to the Turners Falls High School and Great Falls Middle School. During public hearings last fall, the GMRSD used a figure

of \$1,509,451 for debt service, (which is the amount the district spent on debt in '07) in calculating the projected \$800 - \$900,000 'budget gap' for Fiscal '08 announced at last fall's public hearings on the need to close an elementary school in Montague. On Tuesday, GMRSD business manager Lynn Bassett noted a \$1.2 million discrepancy in the estimate for debt service. The new, lower figure for '08 debt service is \$267,654. The error was noted after the school closure process wrapped up in late December.

"This is what happens when you announce a budget gap without a budget passed by the school committee," said Jeff

see BUDGET pg 10



Candlelight Vigil Held

Residents of Montague and Wendell gather in front of the sign marking the 3,000th American fatality in Iraq on Tuesday evening, Jan. 2nd. A similar vigil was held at the same location on Oct. 26th, 2005, when the 2000th American soldier was killed in the war. The vigilers sang "We Shall Live in Peace" and expressed hope the war would end soon. (From left: Bob Ellis, Suzanne Webber, Ellie Kastanopolous, Genevieve White, and John Hanold.)

Erving Seeks to Hire Wastewater Plant Supervisor

BY DAVID DETMOLD

The Erving selectboard held a working session on Tuesday, January 2nd, to develop a draft job description for a new town position: wastewater treatment plant supervisor. According to selectboard chair Andy Tessier, the new position would have to be approved by town meeting, and would allow the town to hire someone to oversee pre-treatment operations, and maintenance at the town's three wastewater treatment facilities, and to conduct environmental monitoring as needed at the town's two closed landfills. Mike Pierce, the present wastewater treatment chief of operations for Erving, remains in his post, and would be free to

apply for the new supervisory position. Whoever is hired would supervise the chief of operations at the Millers plant, and also oversee the operation of the treatment plant in Erving Center, leased for \$1 a year and operated for the town by ERSECO (Erving Paper Mill).

"They're operating that plant under our permit," Tessier noted.

"There will be a multi-year phase-in for this job," he continued. "We're going to be going through an upgrade (at the Millers Falls plant). We need to let them know in the interview process they are going to be overseeing a \$5 to \$6 million construction project down there (at the Millers Falls plant)."

That proposed upgrade

is still in the planning stages. The town has contracted with engineering firm Tighe and Bond to develop cost analyses for the aging facility, which Tessier said needs electrical upgrades, a new roof, updated headworks, and attention to the environmental and ergonomic effects of the current treatment process, which employs chlorine gas. Attendant to the chlorine treatment process is the use of sodium bisulphate, which in sufficient quantity can reduce the oxygen level in the Millers River. Hydrogen sulphate, in the current process contributes to the corrosive effect on the electrical system in the plant's interior, Tessier said, as well as creating unhealthy and

malodorous working conditions for plant employees.

"We want to take a proactive approach to that plant," said Tessier. The proposed upgrade is not being driven by any regulatory agency, but Tessier said the board wanted to present town meeting with a clear picture of the plant's overall needs for updating, and for improving the working environment and the effect of the pre-treatment process on the Millers River. He said a switch to a UV treatment process would be beneficial in both these respects.

He also said the plant in Millers Falls had been designed to handle much larger flows, from the see ERVING pg 13

PET OF THE WEEK**Snuggle Up With Me****Twiggie**

Twiggie is a 6 year old female short hair cat in need of a good home. Twiggie is looking to find a family who understands that sometimes she can be shy, and sometimes she likes to talk to herself at night. She's very snuggly and loves nothing more than to curl up and fall asleep in your lap. Come visit Twiggie and see how this little acorn has blossomed into an oak! For more information on adopting Twiggie, please contact the Dakin Pioneer Valley Humane Society at 413-548-9898 or via email at levertt@dpvhs.org.

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CARNEGIE LIBRARY NEWS**Music and Movement**

BY LINDA HICKMAN

TURNERS FALLS - The weekly Music and Movement series with Tom Carroll and Laurie Davidson will be held at the Carnegie Library in Turners Falls on Thursday mornings at 10 a.m. during January and February. From March - June, the program will be held at the Millers Falls Library. Young children of all ages and their families or caregivers are invited

to the free programs. Registration is not required. The program is cosponsored by the Gill-Montague Council of the Family Network. In the case of snow, the program will not be held if school is cancelled or delayed for the Gill-Montague Schools. Weather cancellations will also be posted on montaguema.net and WHAI. For more information, please call 863-3214.

Skate Park Readied for Reopening - At Last

BY DAVID DETMOLD

TURNERS FALLS - On April 5th, 2006, a new day seemed to be dawning for the padlocked skate park in Turners Falls, which had been shut down in May of 2003 due to deteriorating ramp conditions. The decision to close the park at that time was meant to be a temporary measure, and was made by a joint agreement between the parks and recreation department and a committee of local teens. The park had been constructed only five years earlier, through the volunteer labor of local teens and their supporters - in

particular town building inspector David Jensen - who led the drive to gather business and private donations of building materials and money for its construction. Chick's Garage leased the land to the town for ten years, and the teens held fundraisers at the Shea Theater to pay the taxes on the land, and agreed to be responsible for the park's upkeep.

After the plywood ramps had been chewed up by repeated use during its popular heyday, the temporary closure in 2003 gave way to sporadic attempts - often frustrated by adverse weather -

by teens to organize work parties to repair the park and its curving structures. The land was purchased along with Chick's Garage by local sculptor and landlord Tim De Christopher. A clause in the lease that would have voided the town's right to continue using the park if it were not maintained would have given De Christopher the right to terminate the lease during the three years the park remained closed.

But De Christopher came to

see **PARK** pg 10

Friday Night at the Movies: Barnyard

The Montague police department, in partnership with the Montague parks and recreation department presents the movie *Barnyard* (1 hour 28 minutes) on Friday evening, January 5th, at the Sheffield School auditorium. The feature picture starts at 6:30 p.m. The family movies are funded by the Montague Elks Lodge # 2521, and are designed to provide a family night out at no cost. Parents are encouraged to attend with their children. The movies should end at approximately 8:00 p.m. Attendees bringing refreshments are asked to please limit them to bottled



A feature photo from 'Barnyard.' water and dry snacks only, to prevent messy clean-ups.

Movies are made available through the co-operation of "the Movie Gallery" on Federal Street in Greenfield.

In *Barnyard*, absolute animated mayhem breaks out down on the farm, where the farmer thinks he's in charge, but the animals have a different

idea. Look for barnyard animals to spring up on two legs, walk, talk, watch TV, and orchestrate practical jokes as soon as the farmer's back is turned. As soon as the farmer's lights go out, the barn is transformed into Party Central. On one particular night, there's even a pretty new cow present named Daisy, and when the bull, Otis, hams it up for her, she can't help but be attracted to his fun-loving personality. Well, we can't let on what happens next. You'll have to come see for yourself. *Barnyard* is rated PG for mild peril and rude humor.

SENIOR CENTER ACTIVITIES January 8-12, 2007

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

Monday, 8th
10:15 a.m. Aerobics
11:00 a.m. PACE Aerobics
1:00 p.m. Canasta
Tuesday, 9th

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

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

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

Monday, 8th
9:30 a.m. Exercise
9:45 a.m. Library
12 Noon Pitch
Tuesday, 9th
9 a.m. Aerobics
12:30 p.m. Painting
Wednesday, 10th
9:30 a.m. Line Dancing
12 Noon Bingo
Thursday, 11th
9 a.m. Aerobics
12:30 p.m. Shopping

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

FACES & PLACES

Estia Ryan, granddaughter of Montague Center resident Flore, is visiting from Tokyo this week. Look for her observations in next week's Montague Reporter

FLORE PHOTO

**Great Falls Middle School Students of the Week:****Grade 7**

Angel Renaud
Matthew Gibson

Grade 8

Elysia Ollari

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Say 'Cheese' at the Gill Store

JOSEPH A. PARZYCH

GILL - What do you do at a wine and cheese tasting if those two items are specifically banned from your diet? No, I have not joined a new religion, but close.

I got into trouble developing a wonderfully delicious cheesecake.

Over the course of several days I made grilled cheese and tomato sandwiches, cheeseburgers, a macaroni and cheese casserole, and, finally, cheesecake - a lot of it.

The cheesecake fiasco began when I dreamed up a new cheesecake recipe. I thought adding strawberry Jello might be different. It was. I did not add enough liquid to meet the required two cups of water. The cheesecake came out of the oven ready to vulcanize tires. It was as rubbery as an inner tube. With two packages of cream cheese and four eggs in the recipe, I was not going to waste my investment by feeding it to the crows.

Yes, we feed crows. Crows are birds, too. What of it?

To try to salvage the cheesecake fiasco, I scraped out the inner tube and put it in the blender with some water, added half a packet of pudding mix and a half cup of



PHOTO BY JOSEPH A. PARZYCH

Merrilee (left) and Aja Kane shopping at the Gill Store.

yogurt.

After blending the mixture, I poured it back into the piecrust and baked it for about 30 minutes. I sampled the result.

The cheesecake was just wonderful. I sampled some more, served some to my wife and tried some more. Soon it was all gone.

I had planned to bring the cheesecake to a meeting of a dozen people. I decided to make a no-bake cheesecake instead.

That turned out fine, but only four people showed up. No problem. I ate the leftover cheesecake. It was healthy. No-fat, no-sugar. And all that

my shoe. That afternoon, the sand turned into broken glass and a bee sting. That night, I could not stand the bed sheet touching my toe. Time to see the doctor.

Question: have you been eating a lot of cheese?

Answer: and how.

The verdict? Gout. No cheese, no wine. Take pills - lots of them.

So what do you do at a cheese and wine tasting when you can't have either? I signed books for some nice folks who came to sample wine and ask about *Jep's*

Place.

So what do you do at a cheese and wine tasting when you can't have either? I signed books for some nice folks who came into the Gill Store for the party and asked about *Jep's Place*. The books soon sold out. A few days later, they sold out again. Store manager, Vicki Van Zee, now has a new supply, but they don't seem to last long. These books are signed, but can be further personalized upon request, by the author, with or without a glass of wine as incentive.

calcium is good for your bones. Well, maybe.

The following day, my big toe felt like there was sand in

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JOE GRAVELINE

Public Hearing Scheduled for Proposed Community Center

The committee looking into the feasibility of building a new multi-use community center in Turners Falls met on Tuesday, January 2nd at the Carnegie Library. The informal committee is made up of members of the Montague Public Libraries board of trustees, along with department heads from the senior center, parks and recreation and the library, who have been meeting occasionally over the last year or so with town

administrator Frank Abbondanzio, and selectboard members Pat Allen and Patricia Pruitt. The committee has set the date for a public hearing on the proposed community center - which may be built by the river, behind town hall, to house the library, the senior center, and the parks and recreation office - on Tuesday, March 6th, at 6:30 p.m. at the senior center. Mark your calendars.

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New Year's Grief

It is with grief we greet the news on New Years Day that 3000 US soldiers have died in the Iraq War. With grief and growing horror we watch the daily slaughter, too, of innocent civilians rounded up and shot in Baghdad and throughout that tortured land, a land in agony, under the occupation of a foreign power, and the nominal rule of a Potemkin village government created to serve the illusion of its foreign master.

Iraq today is riven by civil war and the most brutal mayhem; blood soaks its oil-rich sand. The government's ministries and police force operate as Shiite death squads in the capital, are ineffectual in the Sunni tribal lands. The only thing uniting these disparate sects is the desire to kill the American invaders and drive the occupiers from their land.

Really, this war has gone on now for 16 years, since the first American-led invasion in 1991, and the twelve year siege that followed. Those sanctions resulted in the death of more than a million Iraqis through malnourishment and lack of medical care. Those sanctioned dead were predominately Iraqi children, infants.

During the last four years of US-led war and occupation, an estimated 600,000 Iraqi civilians have died violently.

Dress it up as you like, war is but butchery refined to a science. It is disheartening to be about our national rites of peace and the brotherhood of man at the turning of the year, while our country continues to conduct the slaughter of 'insurgents' and wayward passersby in a land far older than our own, where Wise Men once journeyed to the birthplace of the Prince of Peace. There, daily, people in despair now throw themselves upon the detonators of death, taking whomever happens to be at hand with them to oblivion.

How can there be a more utter abnegation of humanity than to order our young people to arm themselves and aim their weapons at other human beings and kill them? With diplomacy like this, we have sown the whirlwind, and war is spreading now through the Middle East from Lebanon to Afghanistan to the Horn of Africa, and many a pocket of oppression in between.

In this darkness, a lamp is needed, a hope born of common suffering, nourished with conversation and understanding, the true art of statesmanship. This is what every person must strive and speak for today, at whatever part of the globe they may find themselves, even here. Prayers are not enough when our brothers and sisters, our sons and daughters, are dying.

End the war in Iraq, bring our troops home now, and give them the care and support they need.

We welcome your letters.
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KAREN WILKINSON ILLUSTRATION

LETTERS TO THE EDITOR

Town Hall Comes Through in the Clinch

On Thursday, December 21st, I was notified by the architect assigned to the town of Montague's Soldiers Memorial renovation project that his company needed important information regarding the renovation, in order to comply with the Trustees' request for final sign-off on the plans for the project by January 11th, 2007. The deadline required intensive research, and required the assistance of the town highway department and from many town hall personnel.

Daily, through Friday,

December 29th, I sought the assistance of Montague town hall staff, and if it were not for their help I would never have been able to complete the deadline in time.

My heartfelt thanks go out to the selectboard secretary, Wendy Bogusz, the town clerk's office, town accountant Carolyn Olsen, the town treasurer's office, to my fellow trustees for holding a lengthy meeting during the holiday week, and especially to Doug McIntosh in the town assessors office, who took his lunch period to assist me in

lowering the flags to half mast in all of the five villages of the town of Montague to honor the death of President Ford.

I sincerely hope that when budget time arrives, that those concerned keep in mind the wonderful services the town highway and town hall offices provide for us with a minimum amount of personnel.

Again, thanks, and Happy New Year to all.

- Art Gilmore
Chair, Soldiers Memorial Trustees

Montague Center Artifacts on Display

This past weekend I enjoyed the exhibit "The Canton Connection: Art & Commerce of the China Trade" at the Flynt Center in Historic Deerfield. Imagine my surprise to find two items donated by the late Alma Duckworth, formerly of Montague. One was a lovely

Chinese punch bowl and the other a set of jackstraws - a child's pick up sticks game - that were noted on the exhibit label to be linked to the Field Farm (Cold Brook Farm) in Montague.

The exhibit also detailed ginseng exports from the US to China. *Local Color* #8 has a

great story in it by Peg Folgmann of Shelburne Falls about digging ginseng in the hills of Conway in the early 1900s, when ginseng sold for \$35 an ounce.

- Anna Viadero
Montague Center

Postman to the Rescue

Not quite the daily routine. As a local postman pursued his route two weeks ago on 2nd Street, he paused at a door, then knocked and asked if everything was all right. "Do I smell gas?"

The resident answered his knock, then assured him it was just the odor of Christmas cooking, plus the incense of balsam. Later, she called the post office saying there was indeed gas leaking in her home. And she thanked him for his perhaps life saving alert.

The hero of this little saga was postman Barry Troie.

Meg Bowman
Turners Falls



Postman Barry Troie

DAVOL PHOTO

American Dead in Iraq as of 1/3/07



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GUEST EDITORIAL

A Capital Improvement Committeeman Replies

BY MICHAEL NAUGHTON
MILLERS FALLS - Regarding the last sentence of Jeff Singleton's recent editorial ("Where is the Capital Improvement Committee Coming From?" MR: 12/2106), with all due respect, yes, Jeff, you are wrong. I am speaking for myself, and not for the Capital Improvements Committee (CIC), but I think I have a pretty good sense of how we came to the vote we took on December 14th and what we meant by it.

Let's start by looking at the motion itself, which was passed unanimously with all members present:

"In the opinion of the CIC, none of Montague's capital projects on the horizon seem suitable for any of the school buildings. Given the estimated \$10-20 million in necessary capital projects facing the town, as listed in our

report to town meeting in 2006, we strongly urge the Gill-Montague school district to minimize any need for capital spending on school buildings."

This said two things. First, the CIC does not currently see a use for the town-owned school buildings, based on our understanding of the projects facing the town right now. This was our answer to a direct question from the school committee, and note we did not say that we "had no interest in building space vacated by the schools", nor that we would resist "even considering the use of the Hillcrest building to satisfy town needs."

All we said was at the time we didn't see any proposed town use fitting easily into any of the hypothetical spaces. I think it's fair to say that if someone brings forward a proposal for town use of whatever portion of the

Hillcrest building should become available, we'll gladly consider it, although if the plan is to use it for parks and recreation and the senior center then I think they should start with the community center feasibility study committee. To my knowledge, so far no one has done more than suggest that such a thing might be possible, and I agree - it might be possible - but there are a lot of questions that need to be answered before I'd be ready to officially endorse it.

The second thing we said was the town is already facing a number of necessary capital projects that will be difficult to finance (this should surprise no one), and therefore we asked the school committee not to add to the list unless absolutely necessary. Again, please note: we did not say we "would not support renovations to school buildings,"

nor that we "would approve no more renovations". You're right, that would have been absurd, and while we're not perfect I hope you don't really think we're that stupid and shortsighted.

However, I think it has to be emphasized that the town is facing some necessary projects and there's a limit to how much the town can afford to spend at any given time. One way or another, the CIC has said the same thing to everyone, and I think town departments have gotten the message. (Just ask the library trustees what happened to their original renovation plan for the Carnegie Library.) I don't think anyone should be either surprised or offended that we said much the same thing to the school district.

That doesn't mean we won't consider any projects, nor does it

mean we won't recommend funding them. However, I think it's fair to say that school projects won't automatically jump to the head of the line, and some projects may not be recommended. Therefore, the CIC has urged every project proponent to try to keep costs to a minimum, and our motion was simply one more reiteration of that.

So, in closing, yes, happily, I think you were wrong in your interpretation of our motion. I believe the CIC is open to any ideas on how to meet town needs at the least possible cost, and that includes the needs of the town-owned school buildings.

Mike Naughton has been a member of the CIC since FY 2000. The views expressed here are his own, and are not necessarily shared by other CIC members.

Congratulations, Beth Bazler, our 600th Subscriber!

KATHLEEN LITCHFIELD
ERVING - Connecting people with the natural world is what drew Beth Bazler to Western Massachusetts from Columbus, Ohio 16 years ago. It is still what Northfield Mountain's Public Environmental Program Coordinator loves most about the region and particularly about her hometown of Erving.



DETMOLD PHOTO
 Beth Bazler

"I love the open space, the hiking trails, and I work at the Erving Public Library. We have a great elementary school. It's a nice little community," said Bazler, who was delighted to discover she is the *Montague Reporter's* 600th subscriber.

As an award for every 25th subscriber, the *Montague Reporter* offers a gift certificate to the winner's choice of any current advertiser. As the 600th subscriber, Bazler would have been entitled to a \$60 gift certificate - but she chose instead to split her prize, to give one gift subscrip-

tion to the *Montague Reporter* to her mom, Pat Bazler of Columbus, Ohio, and to receive the other half as a \$30 gift certificate to the Ristorante DiPaolo in Turners Falls (a popular choice)!

"I read the paper because it feels like the community of interesting local people. It's almost like a conversation that goes on every week. I really want to support that feel. It feels like you're reading about your friends, or people who you really want to meet," she said. "Plus they're always really great about publishing stuff for the library and

for Northfield Mountain, which I appreciate from a customer's standpoint."

A trustee and librarian at the Erving Public Library, Bazler said she loves interacting with local townspeople and helping them find what they're looking for, either at the Erving library or from throughout the Western Massachusetts regional library system, with the user-friendly CWMARS system for ordering library materials.

At Northfield Mountain, she leads public programs including hikes, lectures, snowshoe adventures and canoeing trips on the Connecticut River.

"I love connecting people with the natural world. It's been such a source of joy and passion and strength in my life, and I hope I can bring some of that into other people's lives," said Bazler, whose hobbies include hiking, singing in the Western Massachusetts Sacred Harp

Singers in Northampton and contra dancing at the Guiding Star Grange in Greenfield. Bazler lives in Erving with her 10½-

year-old daughter May. Congratulations, Beth Bazler! Readers, stay tuned to find out who our 625th subscriber will be.

Dems to Caucus February 3rd

MONTAGUE - Registered Democrats in Montague will hold a caucus in the first floor meeting room of Town Hall, 1 Avenue A, Turners Falls at 8:30 a.m., on Saturday, February 3rd, to elect five delegates and two alternates to the Massachusetts Democratic convention to be held Saturday, May 19th, at the Mullins Center at UMass, Amherst. The convention's focus will be on grass roots organizing and party building in preparation for the 2008 presidential election.

"Bringing the convention to Amherst has everything to do with the efforts of our regional delegation and the demonstrat-

ed success the Franklin County Democratic League has had with organizing local turnout at the polls and at candidate events, said Jay DiPucchio, chair of the Montague Democratic town committee.

The caucus is open to all Democrats registered in Montague by December 31st. Delegates will be divided equally among men and women. Candidates must consent to nomination in writing. Candidates may make a one-minute statement and may distribute materials. For information, contact DiPucchio at 863-8656 or visit the party website at www.mass-dems.org.

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The Winters Were Colder Then

BY LILLIAN FISKE

MONTAGUE CENTER - There are probably a few people around besides me who remember the school pond when they attended the old Montague grammar school. I started school in 1929 and the pond was there, although it was not as large as it is now. As I remember it was not dammed except for skating, and was just a brook the rest of the year. Actually, the brook ran under the road and crossed to the other side of School Street and ran along the road where the teachers park their cars until it reached what is now Newton

Lane. Then it was diverted to the other side of the road on its way to the Sawmill River. When the new school was built, the fire department enlarged the pond.

We are fortunate the pond was not filled in, because the new school required a larger foundation and truckloads of soil were trucked up past our house. My husband asked the driver if he would dump a few loads on our lawn, and he was happy to do so. There is a lot of clay in that soil, and our lawn has never dried out.

I can remember when there was snow on the iced over pond, the boys would shovel a path so

they could run down the hill and slide across the pond. The girls, not to be left out, would trip the boys, and my brother was one of the casualties. He lost his permanent front teeth, as did several others. And this was during school hours.

I loved to skate, but as I lived near the fish hatchery there was a pond nearer our home. It was called the clay pond, and it was north of the former overpass on Greenfield Road, between the end of the fish hatchery and the railroad.

There used to be a tall chimney in that vicinity, part of a brickyard. Bricks were manufactured there the size of concrete blocks, and according to the Recorder some of these were shipped to Worcester where they were used to build an insane asylum.

John Cahill, one of the brickyard owners, used to travel to New York and pay the fares of



The high school in Montague circa 1908. Postcard courtesy Lillian Fiske.

Polish immigrants to come to Montague to work at the brickyard. They were housed in a very old building which was located where the home of the Lucas family now stands.

My brother remembers a team of oxen pulling the old chimney down.

The pond was a lot of fun, as there was so much clay in the area the ice was like a spring dance

floor, until it got very thick. Because the area was a large excavation, where clay was removed for the brickyard, it was down under a hill, protected from sharp winds.

The winters were colder then. It was a yearly treat when my father, Thomas Eddy, put on his skates every Thanksgiving and went skating with us.

MCTV Schedule

Channel 17: January 5 through January 11

Friday, January 5

8:00 am Montague Update: Laura Eden-Patnode
9:00 am Farmers Market Concert: Stephanie Marshall
10:00 am Discovery Center: Waterfowl Identification
11:30 am Classic Arts Showcase
12:30 pm The Family & Friends Program
6:00 pm NASA Destination Tomorrow #25
6:30 pm TFHS Weekly Review
7:00 pm Montague Selectboard 12/18
9:00 pm Michael Nix at the Discovery Center
10:30 pm Montague Community Band

9:30 am Tom Carroll at the Farmer's Market
10:30 am The Importance of Pollinators in Plants
11:30 am Villages of Montague
12:30 pm The Cost of Freedom
6:00 pm Montague Update: Lisa Davol
7:00 pm Montague Selectboard LIVE
10:00 pm Classic Arts Showcase
11:00 pm Surviving the Vernon Reactor

Tuesday, January 9

8:00 am Montague Update: Lisa Davol
9:00 am Classic Arts Showcase
10:00 am Surviving the Vernon Reactor
6:00 pm Iraq War Vigil
6:30 pm TFHS Weekly Review
7:00 pm GMRSD School Committee Meeting LIVE
10:00 pm GED Connection #24
10:30 pm Villages of Montague

Wednesday, January 10

8:00 am Iraq War Vigil
8:30 am TFHS Weekly Review
9:00 am GED Connection #24
9:30 am Villages of Montague
6:30 pm NASA Destination Tomorrow #25
7:00 pm GED Connection #24
7:30 pm The Well Being: Helping Children Communicate
8:30 pm Windchanger 10/17 #1
9:30 pm Thanksgiving Day Football Game

Thursday, January 11

8:30 am NASA Destination Tomorrow #25
9:00 am GED Connection #24
9:30 am The Well Being: Helping Children Communicate
10:30 am Windchanger 10/17 #1
11:30 am Thanksgiving Day Football Game
6:00 pm Montague Update: Clark & Martha Edwards
7:00 pm Montague Selectboard 1/8
10:00 pm Iraq War Vigil
10:30 pm Villages of Montague
11:30 pm Family Friends

Saturday, January 6

8:00 am NASA Destination Tomorrow #25
8:30 am TFHS Weekly Review
9:00 am Montague Selectboard 12/18
11:00 am Michael Nix at the Discovery Center
12:30 pm Montague Community Band
6:00 pm The Well Being: Helping Children Communicate
7:00 pm Montague Update: Mik Muller
8:00 pm People's Harvest: Wolf Cry Singers & Joe Firecrow
9:30 pm Reconciliation Ceremony
10:00 pm Mass Wilderness: Winter

Sunday, January 7

8:00 am The Well Being: Helping Children Communicate
9:00 am Montague Update: Mik Muller
10:00 am People's Harvest: Wolf Cry Singers & Joe Firecrow
11:30 am Reconciliation Ceremony
12:00 pm Mass Wilderness: Winter
6:00 pm Montague Community Band
7:30 pm Tom Carroll at the Farmer's Market
8:30 pm The Importance of Pollinators in Plants
9:30 pm Villages of Montague
10:30 pm The Cost of Freedom

Monday, January 8

8:00 am Montague Community Band

HIGHLIGHTS OF THE GILL POLICE LOG

Threatening Phone Calls

Wednesday 12-27

6:45 p.m. Suspicious motor vehicle reported in the Riverview area. Officer sent to the area. Found to be a salesperson without the proper permit. Officer advised the party to see town hall for a solicitor's permit.

9:00 p.m. Assisted Easthampton police with a suicidal individual who requested to speak with a Gill resident.

Thursday 12-28

1:20 p.m. A Gill business owner called to advise of threatening phone calls being made to the business.

4:15 p.m. Officer assisted Northfield police in finding a missing youth.

Friday 12-29

5:40 p.m. Officer assisted Erving

police with a motor vehicle stop. One male arrested for operating under the influence and an outstanding warrant.

10:46 p.m. Motor vehicle stop resulted in a summons for [redacted] for driving without a license.

11:18 p.m. Motor vehicle stop resulted in an arrest of [redacted] for a default warrant.

Saturday 12-30

8:30 a.m. An individual at Northfield Mount Herman called to advise they were a victim of possible identity fraud. Matter is under investigation.

1:50 p.m. Motor vehicle crash on Main Road. Accident also resulted in a summons of a Leyden juvenile operator, for a revoked license.

3:05 p.m. Assisted environmental

police with a possible hunter under the influence on Boyle Road.

7:45 p.m. Assisted Erving police with an out of control youth at a Mountain Road residence.

Monday 1-01

2:20 a.m. Officer conducted a motor vehicle stop of a Gill resident with a juvenile operator's license. Same was issued a summons for driving without a license.

Tuesday 1-02

7:50 a.m. Motor vehicle crash on Main Road. Officer assisted. No injuries reported.

7:05 p.m. Report of suspicious vehicle in driveway on West Gill Road, all OK.

8:15 p.m. Medical assist at West Gill Road residence, assisted fire department.

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dramatic. Of the increase from one year to the next, she said, "We're talking about one or two kids."

In 2004-05, 41 students dropped out, from a Turners high population of 394, she said.

The numbers do not come as a surprise, principal Jeffrey Kenney said, but they are still a call to action.

"When we looked at the number of kids that had dropped out, it was alarming," he said.

"We're in the process of analyzing (the causes) in depth," Gee said, "and we're layering on various interventions."

For example, she said, a new math program started last week, aimed at the addressing the problem.

On a larger scale, in January, the district will begin a new project called "Reconnecting Youth." The program was developed in the Seattle area and has been tested in places like California and Colorado, in suburban and urban settings with minority and non-minority communities, according to the official website. Due to the program's apparent success, it has received extensive funding from various federal agencies including the U.S. Department of Education, the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services and the National Institute of Drug Abuse.

"'Reconnecting Youth' is a model curriculum, pioneered locally by former Brick House director Nancy Emond, as part of the Brick House's larger 'Transitioning to Success' program. This program also includes (a component of) specific job skills training, career exploration, employability training and a community service project," said Jeff Aho, the Brick House's new executive director, who said his agency has received community development grant funding to work with TFHS to address the drop-out problem.

"The idea really is to tie kids to their communities so they have a desire to stay, and the skills to productively enter and become a fully-fledged member of the community," said Aho. "Certainly you can't argue that Turners Falls' dropout rates are among the highest in the state, but we should keep in mind that some of these kids are dropping out to go to college or to further their education in other ways.

Many factors play a part in youths dropping out of school, Aho said, including grade retention (being held back), poor academic performance, moves during high school, high absenteeism, misbehavior and students' feeling neglected.

One of the major goals of the project is to reduce drug abuse among students at risk of dropping out, an area where the program nationally has been most effective, according to website statistics.

One local school dropout, Luke Eaton, 17, said drugs are not a big issue with Turners' typical dropout.

Other official indicators, such as low self-esteem and poor academic performance, may be part of the problem in Turners, however.

National statistics for the Reconnecting Youth program suggest the program's success in decreasing drug abuse is stronger (with a 54 percent decrease reported compared to youth not in the program). Academic achievement measured by grades increased only by 18 percent, however.

The program operates with a partnership among parents, school staff and student peers. Students identified as at-risk enroll in a one-semester for-credit class in which they work together on confidence building projects, communication skills, community service projects and other tasks aimed at improving their connection to the school and the community.

Program goals, according to the psychology-dominated website, aim to decrease compulsiveness and poor decision-making, uncontrolled emotions, learned helplessness, low self-worth and deviant self-images.

Asked if students will feel branded as 'losers' by being placed in the class, Kenney said he does not think so, because many of the students are already so separated from the school community.

Eaton disagrees, however, saying the dropped-out former students he knows hated being in special remedial classes for improving their Massachusetts Comprehensive Assessment System (MCAS) scores.

"They resent being in those courses, because it makes them feel inferior," he said.

Speaking for himself, Eaton said he excelled academically until his junior year, when he stopped making any effort out of what he called "boredom". A guitarist of aspiring professional quality, Eaton said he wanted to study music at a level not offered at the school. While he chose to drop out, Eaton said his brother chose instead to transfer to Four Rivers Charter School in Greenfield, where he was able to participate in the hiring of a new music teacher.

Kenney thinks students at risk for dropping out start having trouble in their freshman year, or ninth grade. Gee thinks the trouble begins as early as sixth grade. The school administration in general believes some students are having difficulty making the transition from middle school to high school, which begins in ninth grade in Gill-Montague.

To that end, Gee said, ninth grade teachers next year will be forming teams, as they do in the middle school. Teams of four teachers in math, science, social studies and language arts will meet regularly to discuss their students' academic and social progress. The students will also be grouped in teams, called the Freshman Academy, Gee said.

Asked about the Reconnecting Youth project,

Eaton was skeptical, but said he thought it was worth a try. Its approach would not have convinced him to stay in school, he believes, but it might help others.

Eaton is impressed by one aspect of the Reconnecting Youth program, that it will be run by the Brick House, which runs the local Teen Center at 24 Third Street.

"These guys are great," he said while sitting in the Brick House office one afternoon. "I come here all the time."

My Stay with the Japanese Exchange Students

BY MICAH SNOW

TURNERS FALLS - One day my mom told me we were going to be hosting a 17-year-old student named Ai Yamagishi, from Japan, through an exchange program called "PeopleLink". PeopleLink is a program that brings foreign students to America to live with host families and visit American schools.

The day before our guest was supposed to arrive, I was a little nervous. What was I supposed to do? To add a little more pressure, my dad told me that for the first three days of Ai's stay, we would also host another Japanese woman named Emi. Emi is the English teacher at the Nijima Gakuen Junior and Senior High School (the students' school) in Gunma, Japan. Then I learned Emi would be using my room, so I would have to sleep in my brother's room, on his extra futon. The pressure was increasing!

Finally, the day came. Ai and Emi got to our house at about 9:30 at night. My dad had soup ready, because they had been flying all night in their Japanese jet lag. Japanese time is 12 hours ahead of ours. They were very hungry.

We sat around our table and talked until around midnight, and then we went to bed. Ai and Emi (Ai is pronounced "I" and

Emi is pronounced "Amy") had taught me two words, "Konichiwa" which serves as a standard greeting for Japanese people, and "Alegato gozimas" which means "thank you very much". (If you just want to say, "Thank you," then say, "Alegato".

Two of my friends were also hosting students from this Japanese school. Oona was hosting a really cool 15-year-old girl named Mei (pronounced "May"), and my other friend Taran was hosting a 17-year-old girl named Eri. My cousin's family also hosted a 15-year-old girl named Yukari.

The next day was the welcoming party. All the hosts and students got together to eat and play games and hang out. The first day, Ai was a really shy person who didn't try to talk much. But at the party, she was talking wicked fast and loud in Japanese with her friends and giggling and behaving totally opposite.

It seemed obvious that the Japanese girls loved taking pho-



Avery Snow, Ai Yamagishi, Micah Snow, Wylie Earp and Yukari Shibasaki at a family gathering on Christmas Eve. On the right-Ai's signature.

PHOTO: SUZETTE SNOW-COBB

山岸 亜衣

SIGNATURE OF STUDENT

tos. Every other second they were saying, "Picture?"

After the party, I didn't think I was going to hang out with the Japanese girls as much, but I was definitely wrong there. A couple of days later, I got a call asking if I wanted to hang out with them during the school day for three hours and make origami. I said, "Yes," and I went to Shelburne Falls and joined the foreign students there. I only really knew Ai and Emi, but I also met a girl named Mayu and another girl named Sayaka, who are good friends of Ai's. They were both seventeen. Mayu is really funny and Sayaka is

always laughing. I kept on trying to remember everyone's names and forgetting them and then asking their names.

At the end of the school day we took a group picture, but it wasn't just one picture, it was every single student's camera. "Picture? Picture? Picture?"

A few days later, my family threw a party for the students at our house. Ai was there, with her friends Yukari and Mei. We played "Apples to Apples," a word game. It was really funny, because when a word came up the Japanese girls didn't understand they would just pull out

their digital dictionary and type it in English and then get it in Japanese, and when they saw the definition they would say, "Ahhhhhhhhhh!"

Two more times I went to their day school and hung out with them, and after a while I started to get to know them really well. I met Reika, Ririko, Eri, and Mieuka. By the end of the week I was good friends with all of them. We went to a New Year's party and had a lot of fun with the girls. My cousin Wylie and I put on a little show for them on drums and guitar and they loved it.

It is really sad these two weeks have gone by so fast. At the going away party on Tuesday there were lots of tears. It was really hard to say goodbye.

When Ai first came to our house, it felt like two weeks would last a really long time. However, it has gone by way too fast. I wish somehow I could have them stay longer.

My brother and I were joking about us going to Japan and visiting their school without telling them, kind of funny but thinking about it, it wouldn't be that bad an idea.

Two families from Montague hosted Japanese students over the past two weeks. The Snow-Cobb family in Turners Falls and the Sweitzer-Gibbon family in Montague Center.

HIGHLIGHTS OF THE MONTAGUE POLICE LOG

Teens Busted for Drugs in Hillcrest Parking Lot

Thursday 12-21

10:49 p.m. Montague police, while assisting another agency at the Farren Emergency Shelter on Farren Avenue, arrested [redacted] on a straight warrant.

Friday 12-22

1:28 a.m. After a motor vehicle stop on Millers Falls Road, [redacted], was arrested and charged with possession of a class D drug and a motor vehicle lights violation.

Sunday 12-24

2:09 a.m. Report of a domestic disturbance at a 2nd Street address. [redacted] was arrested on a default warrant.

Wednesday 12-27

6:58 p.m. After a motor vehicle stop on 4th Street by the Survival Center, [redacted] was arrested and charged with failure to signal, operating with a revoked license, and operator refusing to identify himself.

8:44 p.m. Report of a suspicious motor vehicle at Hillcrest School. [redacted] was arrested and charged with possession of a class D drug, possession of a class E drug, trespassing, minor transporting or carrying an alcoholic beverage, possession of a class D drug with intent to distribute, and possession with intent to distribute within 1000 feet of a school zone. Also arrested was [redacted] and charged with trespassing, possession of a class D drug, minor transport-

ing or carrying alcohol, possession with intent to distribute within 1000 feet of a school zone, and possession of a class D drug with intent to distribute.

Monday 1-1

1:11 a.m. Report of a suspicious motor vehicle by the back side of the airport on West Mineral Road and Millers Falls Road. [redacted] was arrested and charged with domestic assault and battery and malicious destruction of property over \$250.

Tuesday 1-2

7:38 a.m. Report of a domestic disturbance at an X Street address. [redacted] was arrested and charged with domestic assault and battery.

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The Clock is Ticking on Low Power Radio in Montague

KATHLEEN LITCHFIELD MONTAGUE - The board of MCCI has one month left to install a radio antenna and transmitter onto the Dry Hill Road tower in order to operate a low-power FM radio station.

In August of 2005, MCCI received a building permit from the Federal Communications Commission (FCC) which gave them 18 months to get the antenna and transmitter into place.

The station is planned to cover about a five-mile radius.

The antenna was originally approved to be constructed on Chestnut Hill Road, on the

Leverett border, but would not have served the community intended, according to Michael Muller, MCCI board president and radio station project coordinator.

In addition, WVEI, a Pittsfield commercial station, has moved a 10,000 watt repeater to the top of Mount Tom on the same frequency, making the Chestnut Hill Road location unsuitable.

The new proposed location, atop Dry Hill Road, also proved problematic because the FCC said that there was local interference from radio station WGAJ, said Muller.

"We were denied in July of 06. However, there is presently legislation before Congress, the intention of which is to somewhat relax the local interference restrictions."

Muller said MCCI is hoping to fast track the process of getting the antenna and transmitter up in order to meet the deadline and show project progress.

"Now that Congress is controlled by the Democrats, we're hoping this legislation will pass quickly. In the past it had no chance of passing because the Republican-controlled congress was being lobbied by 'big radio,' despite the fact that the

FCC themselves suggested relaxing those restrictions on local interference," Muller said.

The long and short of it is -- "if this legislation passes we are hoping our request will be retroactively approved," said Muller.

"Thus we are going to continue to go forward with this, putting up a small MP3 player as the 'station' on a random playlist, just until we find out the final ruling on the legislation and our attempt to be retroactively approved. We have written both the FCC and Congressman Olver a letter saying such. If we are finally

approved, we'll be able to create a real station that local residents can participate in programming with their own shows."

A meeting held in November garnered a lot of community support and this dedicated bunch have taken steps to move forward to make the project happen.

Anyone interested in helping to build the local community FM radio station, or with a line on available broadcasting equipment (for lending or for free), should call Michael Muller at 863-0030.

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HIGHLIGHTS OF THE ERVING POLICE LOG

Not So Wily Coyote

Wednesday 12-20

1:00 p.m. After a motor vehicle stop on Route 2, Tina [redacted] was issued a criminal citation for operating with a revoked registration, and no insurance.

Friday 12-22

9:45 p.m. Report of a suspicious vehicle in the Box Car parking lot. Operator was having an asthma attack. Erving Center EMTs responded.

Saturday 12-23

10:30 p.m. Report of a car vs. deer accident on Route 2. Found to be a coyote instead. The coyote was killed; no damage to vehicle.

Tuesday 12-27

8:52 a.m. Arrested [redacted] at

the French King Motel on a warrant.

10:58 a.m. Report of a three-car motor vehicle accident with entrapment on Route 2. Assisted Massachusetts state police with investigation. Two subjects transported to FMC with moderate injuries.

Friday 12-29

5:45 p.m. After a motor vehicle stop, [redacted] was arrested on a straight warrant and also charged with operating under the influence of liquor (2nd offense). Transported subject to House of Correction, where inspection by a doctor was requested. Transported subject to FMC.

11:30 p.m. Assisted with traffic stop on Route 2 at long rest area. One

female arrested on a straight warrant. Subject consumed a high dose of prescription pills during booking. Transported subject to FMC.

Sunday 12-31

10:21 a.m. Resident reported the windshield of his wife's car was shattered overnight. Report taken.

6:30 p.m. Caller reports that someone shot at him with a paint ball gun at the corner of Forest and Moore Streets. Subjects located on Forest Street. They were shooting at each other with air soft guns. All was well.

Monday 1-1

10:15 a.m. Officer removed large branch hanging over southbound lane on Gulf Road.

HIGHLIGHTS OF THE WENDELL POLICE LOG

Vandalism to Construction Equipment

Saturday 12-9

Mt Laurel Drive resident reportedly assaulted by another resident. Wanted it on record.

Sunday 12-14

Accident on Farley Road, minor injury to driver.

Monday 12-15

DSS inquiring about a family order on Stone Road.

Tuesday 12-16

Vandalism to construction equipment on Cooleyville Road.

Friday 12-19

Old Stage Road resident arrested for violating a restraining

order.

Wednesday 12-23

911 hang up call at Lake Grove School. All okay.

Tuesday 12-27

Accident on Montague Road, minor injuries to driver, taken to FMC.

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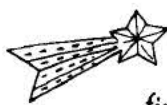
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WENDELL

continued from pg 1

pened last summer, and for water supply. Its 1250-gallon-per-minute pump can refill the tank truck in three minutes, as opposed to the 12 or 13 minutes the 350-gallon-per-minute pump on the tank truck would require for the same job. The brush truck has been overloaded for years, and he plans to transfer some equipment onto the Lake Pleasant truck so the brush truck is easier and safer to drive. (It is a 1972 International one-ton pickup truck with permanently engaged front hubs, and no power steering. It carries a tank of water, two portable pumps, hose, brush tools and back pack sprayers filled with water, a chainsaw, gas for the portable pumps and the chainsaw, 2½-inch supply hose, 1½-inch, and 1-inch fighting line nozzles and fittings.) The Lake Pleasant truck has room for several firefighters to sit in the back, and it can still carry a good part of that equipment without being overloaded.

In answer to Lewis's question about personnel, Ricketts said there are 15 firefighters and officers, although there is a problem during workdays when all but two call firefighters are out of town. Ricketts said the state is not making anything easier with their demands for documentation and meetings. At a meeting of chiefs to discuss possible response to a pandemic, the state representative complained that not all county towns were present. Ricketts told him people have to work in the small towns that cannot afford a full time chief and crew.

Keller said he was satisfied that all the trucks in the bay are necessary, but he said the room is still crowded. Ricketts said he was able to get a good deal of new equipment through grants, a thermal imager, vehicle extrication tools (brand-named "Jaws of Life") and high frequency two way radios for the trucks and individual fire fighters. The whole county is changing to the high band radios, which will allow firefighters on a scene to communicate with each other but not broadcast on the general dispatch channel.

Home Ownership Loans

Town coordinator Nancy Aldrich outlined a letter regarding USDA housing programs available to Wendell residents to encourage home ownership and enable existing homeowners to repair and renovate their homes.



PHOTO BY JOSH HEINEMANN

Clockwise from the lower left: the left rear of the new truck, the back of the brush truck, filled with stuff, the tank truck, the Lake Pleasant truck, and the top of the old pumper, still ready to go with fighting lines supply lines and hard suction lines, fill the bay at the Wendell Fire Department The inflatable raft and its trailer are between the two pumpers, in front of the station (not pictured).

The Direct Homeownership program provides very low-income homebuyers loans with no down payment and 100% financing for building or buying. The Loan Guarantee program provides USDA mortgage guarantees with a 30-year fixed rate interest for low-income people who are unable to qualify for a conventional loan because of down payment requirements. The Home Improvement Repair program provides 1% loans directly from USDA for repairs including repair of a leaking roof, replacing a wood stove with central heat or construction of a wheelchair ramp. Homeowners 62 years old and older are eligible to receive grants for these same repairs.

Selectboard chair Ted Lewis' first thought was that this last program was similar to the Rural Development Community Development Block Grant (CDBG), but board member Dan Keller pointed out that the CDBG does not provide for replacing a wood stove with central heat, and board member Christine Heard added the community development grants do not provide for home ownership.

The selectboard asked Aldrich to include information about this program in the next town newsletter, so interested residents can contact selectboard members or Aldrich in the town office (544-3395, Tuesdays and Thursdays), to arrange a time when USDA staff can meet with interested townspeople seeking access to these federal funds.

No Go on Tornado Refund

The selectboard turned to

another letter, from Peerless Insurance, the company that insures Handford Construction. The news in this letter was not so good. It said flatly that Peerless Insurance would not pay for any damage to town building projects resulting from the tornado that swept through town on July 12th. Keller said he had consulted Kopelman and Paige lawyer David Doneski, who said Wendell has no claim if the town's insurance company's payment brought the library structure back to its pre-tornado condition. But Keller said there are other issues outstanding, including the cellar floor in the new library, which was broken up during the storm. About that, "Handford Construction representatives are hemming and hawing, as usual," Keller said.

The building committee has requested a copy of Handford's insurance policy, and is hoping for a meeting between the town's insurance company and Handford's; building committeeman Mark Sullivan asked for such a meeting in writing over a month ago. Keller said Handford and their Peerless Insurance Company are playing hardball, and the town's effort in pursuit of payment is uphill at every step.

In other municipal building project news, clerk of the works John Flemming noticed Handford had billed for 24 insulation panels the company is not even installing.

On the plus side, the new town office building roof is in place, and workers expect to spray insulation within a week.

Keller reported that Whitney Construction crossed the wetland on Cooleyville Road in less

than three hours, and their work satisfied conservation commissioner Charles Smith. They are working quickly and competently, and although they were supposed to complete the work by December 15th, their late start is not delaying any other part of the town center projects.

Power Line Spraying

National Grid sent the town a notice announcing their intention to spray power lines for vegetation control, along with a map that showed all the public water supplies and surface water within half mile of the power lines they are aware of. Just public water supplies are shown on the map. Spraying will not start until February 5th.

Seal Lamadeleine rented the town hall to continue Friday evening dances. Attendance has been sporadic, and she is reducing the dances to once every two months; the next two will be held February 9th, and April 13th.

Town Attorney Options Debated

Kopelman and Paige sent the selectboard a form for possible use by other town boards if they need legal services; it would start a paper trail if any legal action takes place. Keller said when the lawyers from K&P interviewed with the selectboard, Leonard Kopelman brought his mother to town. She stayed at the library during the interview and offered to help organize shelves while she was waiting. She has been to every small town library in the state. The board began a discussion of their preference for hiring a new town counsel when town attorney John Gates retires.

Lewis said he still favored the local firm of John Gates, represented at the last meeting by Luke Goodridge. Lewis said he thought one firm representing too many towns in the state could lead to a catastrophe. When Wendell began to work with John Gates, he was the only lawyer available for municipal law, Lewis recalled. Lewis has served the town as selectman for 40 years, so his memory in such matters is long.

Keller thought a bigger firm might offer the town a better value. The size and experience of Kopelman and Paige allows them to have experts on staff, so Wendell would not have to pay for the research another firm would have to do; K&P can get the information with just an in house call. The state is continually coming up with new laws, and K&P can keep abreast of them. If signing them becomes a catastrophe, the town can switch counsel.

Aldrich mentioned that Dave Doneski, of Kopelman and Paige, just won a case for New Salem.

Heard said she liked Goodridge, she liked his ideas and his thoughtfulness, but she was afraid the town might have to pay him to learn. She wondered how bad it was if the town changed counsel frequently, and she wanted more time to decide.

Aldrich said historic commissioner Jean Forward is scheduled to come to the next selectboard meeting, January 10th, to discuss moving the veterans memorials from in front of the current library to a plot near the gazebo.

Pierce Salvage Yard

Robin Pierce had come in earlier and retreated to the back of the office where he sat almost unnoticed. He asked for clarification of town bylaws for class II and class III licenses, and said he has been having trouble selling his property with a class III auto salvage license, and was considering allowing it to expire. Town bylaws will not allow a new class III license, so allowing that license to lapse would close the salvage business at Pierce's address permanently, and would leave him with a limit of two unregistered vehicles on his property. To get a class II license he would have to go through a hearing, at which all his abutters would have input, a process he has gone through to continue his class III license. Without a class II license, he is still allowed to sell a limited number of cars from his property.

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BUDGET

continued from pg 1

Singleton, Montague's finance committee chair, reacting to news from the meeting. "Hopefully, the school committee will exercise an oversight function."

Speaking of the revised debt service figure, Bassett said, "The reduction is the result of the state paying us back earlier than we anticipated." She cautioned the \$1.2 million reduction in debt service should be considered a one-time savings, and should not be used for expanding the '08 budget, though she also said the \$267,654 debt service figure the district will face next year "should continue to decline" in succeeding years.

The real drivers in annual budget escalation at the schools are the so-called fixed costs like staff salaries, health benefits and insurance, and utilities and transportation costs. These and other factors are working havoc in the current school budget.

Bassett said the district is grappling with a deficit of \$406,368 in the '07 budget, resulting mainly from unexpected increases in the cost of special education, (\$358,801) and a \$227,027 uptick in school choice costs to the district resulting from 22 additional students choosing out of the district, along with a small increase in workers compensation increase. Food services (\$25,000) and the cost of athletic coaches (\$8,400) are both slightly over budget so far this year.

These unexpected increases in the current operating budget are somewhat mitigated by decreases in salaries budgeted, but not expended, this year, totaling \$209,887.

Superintendent Sue Gee said the district is dealing with the \$406,368 deficit in the '07 operating budget by instituting a freeze on all discretionary spending. Additionally, Cynthia Joyce, the new director of special education at G-M schools, is working to trim individual education plans of any frills, without

depriving those students of educational necessities, Bassett said. Joyce is also paying close attention to SPED transportation costs, which skyrocketed last year during the brief period when the district was operating with an interim SPED director.

Bassett said an expected \$20,000 deficit in the '07 heating line item would not materialize this year, due to mild weather so far this heating season.

But even with these pluses, neither the superintendent nor the business manager felt the district was likely to recover from the \$406,368 deficit this year. Bassett said the schools' excess and deficiency fund is at a very low level (approximately \$82,000) to deal with any emergencies that may yet crop up in '07.

Still, with the discovery that the schools will be spending \$1.2 million less in the coming budget year for debt service, even an ending this year with a \$400,000 deficit would still leave the committee in a considerably better

position entering the next round of budget making than was advertised during the school closing hearings. But Gee was not prepared to say the projected 'budget gap' would close entirely before town meeting time.

"I think this cuts it in half," Gee said. She emphasized the budget process was still in a very preliminary phase.

The budget subcommittee, with most of the other school committee members in attendance, spent much of Tuesday's meeting going over the preliminary '08 operating budget, line by line. The committee is looking at an estimated 7.2% increase in '08 assessments. In December, Montague selectboard chair Patricia Pruitt told the committee the town could not afford an increase in the '08 school assessment above 2.5 percent, and Gill town officials have said they may have difficulty even meeting last year's school assessment figures in '08.

The GMRSD is required to vote a preliminary budget by

February 1st.

Gee also said at their next meeting, January 9th, at the 7 p.m. at the high school, the committee will be presented with a plan to implement the results of the reconfiguration of Montague elementary schools approved on December 19th, when a 5-4 majority of the committee voted to expand Montague Center School and largely close Hillcrest Elementary School, except for a pre-K center there.

The partial closure of Hillcrest will save the GMRSD \$93,110 in '08.

Gee said the committee must act soon on the possible move of Montague 6th graders to the Great Falls Middle School, and whether to ask town meetings in Gill and Montague to vote on opening elementary schools in both towns to intra-district choice. Those decisions need to be made before teacher assignments and class sizes can be settled in advance of the next school year.



PARK

continued from pg 1

a meeting with more than three dozen local teens, along with town officials, on April 5th of last year, where broad agreement on reviving the skate park was reached to wide applause. Then Brick House director Nancy Emond announced, "We have raised \$6,650 in just one month," the majority from one anonymous donation, for the skate park's repair and revival.

De Christopher, who said he bought the land specifically to create a sculpture park, said it would be possible to incorporate the skate park into his long-term vision for the land. "The more I think about this, the more I like it," he told the meeting. He said a lease renewal option may allow the town to continue to use the skate park until 2013 at its present location, after the current lease expires at the end of 2007.

Town officials committed to chipping in \$1,185 in program income money to help, and

agreed to meet with teens on an ongoing basis to oversee short term repairs and oversee long term goals for the park.

All systems seemed to be going. But since April, there was no visible progress at the park last year. All the fundraising and good will gestures came to a halt when they ran up against a purported requirement to surround the park with an eight foot fence.

That supposed requirement would have been prohibitively expensive. Yet it took organizers several months, according to Brick House Teen Center Coordinator Jared Libby, to determine the 8' foot height requirement was not a real requirement at all. It was a figure cited from memory by town administrator Frank Abbondanzio, and it subsequently grew

to assume 'cast-in-stone' proportions. But in the fall, when Brick House business manager Michael Bosworth got on the phone with Abbondanzio, and

the funds raised than necessary, Libby tried unsuccessfully to get various fencing contractors to donate labor on the one side of the park fencing that really need-



Dan LaValley and his L & L Fence crew install fencing at the Turners Skate Park on Tuesday

checked it out with the town's insurance agency, the fence height requirement shrank.

"There are no restrictions about the height of the fence," said Libby. But the insurance company representative agreed, "A 6' fence is a reasonable deterrent to unauthorized entry."

Not wanting to spend more of

ed replacing, since the remaining three sides of existing 6' chain link fence was adequate. But those efforts fell short, and as fall turned to winter, Libby accepted a bid from L & L Fence in Whatley for \$3,600 to jackhammer up blacktop and install new posts along the north side of the park, repair the old fencing as needed, and install a new gate.

Now a new year has finally dawned at the skate park. L&L arrived to install the fencing on Tuesday, January 2nd.

"All that's left of the job is hanging the gate, and we'll have that down on Thursday," said foreman Dan LaValley, a scion of the L & L family that has run the Whatley business for more than 25 years.

Libby said De Christopher helped with preparations for the fence work, and remained on good terms with skate park organizers. Libby said local residents have helped out by removing some of the damaged ramps, bringing them home to repair for private use. Libby said only one damaged ramp still needs to be removed, and slight repairs made are still needed to one other ramp, prior to declaring the park ready to reopen. If the weather stays fine, that work could be done by the end of January, he said. But he predicted the park would certainly have a ribbon cutting and reopening party by spring.

"The park needs to be open and active to prove to the town it is needed. We hope this year people can prove they enjoy it and can treat it respectfully."

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New Saint Blesses Peace Pagoda

BY ERIC WASILESKI

LEVERETT - The New England Peace Pagoda received her newest addition for an early Holiday Gift. On November 22, the day before Thanksgiving, a new statue arrived. The statue is of Nichiren Dai Shonin (St. Nichiren). He renewed Japanese Buddhism. He was like a St. Francis of Japanese Buddhism, making Buddhism more accessible to the common person of his age and for ages to come. The Peace Pagoda's practices and theology are of direct lineage to the teachings of St. Nichiren, said Reverend Kato Shonin of the Nipponzan Myohoji order in Leverett. "The statue (St. Nichiren) is the patron saint of the new temple." Sister Clare Carter, a nun at the Pagoda said, "The spirit of St. Nichiren is one of great compassion. This temple is a helpful vehicle for the realization of peace locally, nationally and internationally."

The story of the statue and the new temple goes back to the arson fire that destroyed the original temple on the morning of November 24th, 1987. The

first temple was designed by Leverett architect Llan Starkweather, who worked with a group of community volunteers and special craftsmen from Japan over the course of two years to build it. Now, 20 years later, in a triumph of love over hate, the new temple is finally nearing completion, also entirely built by volunteers in a determined action of courage: overcoming hate to bring peace. Brother Towbee Keyes invited people to participate in the site's completion. "People can come up and help to build his (St. Nichiren's) house."

The burning down of the original temple had far reaching effects. The Buddhist order that built the Leverett Peace Pagoda, Nipponzan Myohoji, is an international community; and many in the order were affected by the arson fire at the adjoining temple. According to Kato Shonin, "The monks in Hiroshima were so moved that they decided to have a new statue commissioned as a gift for the new temple." The new statue was paid



Rev. Kato Shonin and the statue of Nichiren Dai Shonin

for by the monks and nuns of the Hiroshima pagoda, and donated to the Leverett temple. When it arrived, the entire community was uplifted and a call for help went out.

"About a dozen volunteers came to help us move the statue into place," said Brother Towbee, who acted as foreman of the operation. "The statue weighs over 195 kilos (440

pounds) and is over 4'6" tall. The statue is made of camphor wood (renowned for its cedar-like quality of repelling insects), and is carved from one solid piece," he explained.

In the statue's left hand is a copy of the Lotus Sutra (Buddhist holy scripture); in its right hand is an omen of spiritual protection called a Shaku. Tara Barone, a lay practitioner who lives onsite said, "The statue is symbolic of nearing the completion of the new temple."

The community that has developed around the pagoda has done a lot more than just build buildings. They have also been very effective lobbyists. One of their main projects has been Mayors for Peace, an organization founded by Mayor Akiba of Hiroshima, Japan. By the efforts of the Nipponzan Myohoji, every mayor in western Massachusetts and 19 may-

ors statewide have become members of Mayors for Peace, whose stated goal is the abolition of nuclear weapons.

According to Sister Clare, "Both houses of the Massachusetts legislature have passed resolutions supporting Mayors for Peace." Most of the Leverett order's lobbying efforts have taken place during the course of their annual peace walks. Each year since September 11th, 2001, the monks, nuns, lay practitioners, and their supporters have walked west from the Pagoda on a circuit of the entire state, ending up in Boston. Each night the walkers are housed and fed by local supporters. This year's walk will start at 9 a.m. on February 22nd and wind up in Boston on the first day of spring. The community invites spiritual seekers and others to come up to 100 Cave Hill Road in Leverett to participate in the walk. Regular morning worship services at the Pagoda are at 5:30 a.m. and evening worship services are held at 5 p.m. The public is welcome then, or anytime to enjoy the view.

NURSE

continued from pg 1

with the help of a \$1200 federal Council on Aging grant. The scale uses "bioelectrical impedance" to measure the percentage of fat in a person's body. Learning this figure is important for someone who wants to reduce weight in a way that will have a beneficial impact on a variety of key health factors, including blood pressure, cholesterol, and diabetes risk, Pajak said.

"A person who weighs 180 pounds and has a body fat index of 40%, well, that's obese. Nobody needed to tell them that. But if they get on a diet and come back and step on the scale three weeks later and find they have a body fat index of 34%, they can see they've significantly reduced their body fat. Meanwhile the scale may show their weight may have dropped only a pound, or not at all. But reducing body fat by itself can reduce many risk factors."

Pajak, who majored in exercise physiology in college and seems to have no trouble controlling her own body fat index,

as she chatted while eating a clementine for lunch, said a normal percentage of body fat for a woman is 22%, for a man, 16 - 18%. But she said Americans nowadays tend to have body fat indices of over 30%.

Pajak ascribed the huge increase in obesity and weight-related health problems among Americans to "sedentary living and a diet high in fat, with much larger portions than we've ever had before." She talked about the trend toward 'supersizing' burgers and other fast food items, so that portions that are twice as big as they were 20 years ago now seem normal to Americans.

Pajak said another health problem that has reached epidemic proportions in Montague as well as across the country is the increase in cases of hepatitis, particularly hepatitis C, a blood borne disease that is spread by needle exchange, sexual transmission, or, formerly, through contaminated blood supply. Among numerous grants Pajak has written recently to add to her office's equipment and supplies was a mini grant to purchase hepatitis test kits. Unfortunately, the outreach she

conducted to target people who are likely to be susceptible to hepatitis C contagion did not result in any takers for the test kits during the kits' shelf life. Pajak is rethinking how to reach a vulnerable population, many of whom may not read newspapers, and some of whom may feel uncomfortable entering town hall to make an inquiry at her office.

Pajak said town hall is perceived as a place frequented by upstanding citizens of town. "If my office was located somewhere else on the Avenue, I might have more success bringing the target population," for hepatitis C screening in, she said.

Pajak said in an ideal world, she would love to have more hours budgeted for her office, so she could work with groups like the Montague Catholic Social Ministries to conduct a broad pediatric health survey and immunization program in town.

As it is, Pajak runs blood pressure clinics four times a month at locations throughout the village, including the Montague Center School and the Lake Pleasant Post Office,

as well as the Senior Center in Turners Falls. She has conducted health fairs twice annually, usually at the former St. Anne's Church, and also recently at the high school. At the high school, the emphasis of the health fair was on "teenage issues," Pajak said, including relationships, smoking, drugs and alcohol, and the risks associated with sexual behavior. Greenfield Community College nursing students provide key back-up roles for these health fairs, Pajak said.

Flu shot clinics typically draw 300 people a year in Montague. Pajak said she has plenty of flu vaccine left for residents this year, who may still need it before the flu season ends.

Over the years, Pajak has developed a close working relationship with the Franklin Community Health Center at the Farren in Montague City. The community health center shares Pajak's public health commitment towards preventative medicine, empowering people to manage their own health, and keeping people out of the ER, where crisis care is far more costly to the taxpayers.

Pajak said many area physicians refer patients to her for help with managing their medical conditions, or medications.

She has also developed long-term relationships with many people in town whom she has helped with their medical conditions over the years. She spoke of one woman who lives in Turners Falls, who has no family, whom she has been visiting in her home for the last nine years, helping with medications and administering her B-12 injections. "There are so many things the Visiting Nurse Association nurses cannot do, because insurance won't cover it," Pajak commented. The woman she has been helping with her B-12 shots is 100 years old now.

Residents can contact Pajak by phone at 863-3200, extension 107, and are welcome to come see her during her regular office hours, Tuesday and Thursday from 8:30 to 11:00 a.m. Look for Pajak's regular monthly health related column in the Montague Reporter starting next month.



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The 17th Annual Sawmill River Run

BY DAVID DETMOLD
MONTAGUE CENTER - While most of the town was sleeping - or sleeping it off - on New Year's Day, one hundred and twenty-eight brave souls woke early and found their way over treacherous, icy roads to the common in Montague Center for the 17th annual running of the 10 K Sawmill River Run.

As steady rain fell, race organizer (and selectboard member) Allen Ross called it "a great turnout, despite the weather."

First across the finish line was 19-year-old Jesse Regnier, of Hampden, who came in at 34:28, the length of time most town residents lay in bed that morning trying to get their eyes open before placing their first foot on the floor. Not exactly breathing down his neck, but trailing him somewhat wistfully through the fog, was 38-year-old Nick Hopley,



DETMOLD PHOTO

Runners approach the finish line on an icy New Year's day in Montague Center.

crossing the finish line at 37:45.

First among the women runners was Marjorie Shearer, 36, of Greenfield, at 41:28, with

Sidney Letendre, 52, of Florence following at 43:04.

The youngest runner was Nicholas Doherty, 14, of Athol, who came in at 52:07.

Tony Lucia, of Agawam, at 68, was the oldest runner this year.

He crossed the line at 63:16, and received a 50-pound bag of potatoes, courtesy of

Smiarowski Farms.

Ross thanked the town highway department for ignoring the holiday and getting out of bed even earlier than the runners, to sand the roads. "They did a great job," he said.

Over \$3000 was raised from race entry fees this year. Proceeds from the race will be donated to the Mount Grace Land Trust, the Smiarowski college scholarship fund at TFHS, the Montague Grange, and the Montague Volunteer Firefighters.

Ann Fisk, one of the Volunteers Firefighters, on hand to help keep time and insure safety at the race, said her organization normally donates their share of the race proceeds, and this year they were thinking of giving part of the proceeds to the family of Tracy Turn, a former Sawmill River runner who died unexpectedly at her Montague Center home last month.

Habitat for Humanity Seeks Families

BY DORIS MACLEOD
TURNERS FALLS - Pioneer Valley Habitat for Humanity is looking for families interested in purchasing a simple, decent, affordable home. An information session will be held to acquaint people with the Habitat for Humanity program and how to qualify to become a partner family. That meeting will be held on January 21st at 4:00 p.m. at the First Congregational Church, 148 L Street, in Turners Falls.

In addition to the site at 2nd and L Street in Turners Falls, the Habitat group has sites coming up in both Amherst and Northampton. A future information session will be held in

Hampshire County. All interested persons must attend an information session before receiving an application.

Habitat for Humanity selects partner families on the following criteria: Need, which means that present



DAVOL PHOTO

The first of two Habitat for Humanity houses being built by volunteers on the corner of 2nd and L in Turners Falls.

housing is not adequate and the family is unable to obtain adequate housing through conventional means; ability to pay, which means a family will be making affordable payments on a no-interest mortgage to purchase their home. Applicants must meet the guidelines of having income between 30% and 50% of the median income for the area. A third criteria is willingness to partner with Habitat, which means putting in many hours of 'sweat equity' in helping to build the house and working with the organization in other ways.

Those interested in further information can call the Habitat office at 413-586-5430.

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Open Gym at Sheffield

MONTAGUE - The Montague Parks and Recreation Department will hold Open Gym hours, beginning Wednesday, January 3rd at the Sheffield Elementary School in Turners Falls.

The schedule is as follows: Wednesdays; 7:00 p.m. - 8:30 p.m. (Adult - 18 years and up).

Thursdays; 7:00 p.m. - 8:00 p.m. (Family - 12 and under with parent or guardian); 8:00 p.m. - 9:00 p.m. (Youth - ages 13 - 17). Fridays; 5:30 p.m. - 6:30 p.m. (Family); 6:30 p.m. - 7:30 p.m. (Youth); 7:30 p.m. - 9:00 p.m. (Adult).

Admission is \$.50 for Youth, and \$1.00 for Adults 18

and up. Season Membership: Youth rates: \$8, Adult rates: \$12, Family rates: \$20 (includes 1 adult, 2 children).

Schedule is subject to change. Contact the Montague Parks and recreation Department at 863-3216 for more details.

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THE HEALTHY GEEZER

Dealing with Leg Cramps

BY FRED CICETTI

LEONIA, NJ - Q. What exactly is a "charley horse" and why do I get them in my legs at night?

According to the American Heritage Dictionary of Idioms, the term "charley horse" was first used in the 1880s by baseball players to describe a muscle cramp. No one knows the true origin, but the dictionary says: "Among the more likely theories proposed is that it alludes to the name of either a horse or an afflicted ball player who limped like one of the elderly draft horses formerly employed to drag the infield."

Geezers are more likely to get charley horses because of muscle loss that starts in our 40s. And your remaining muscles don't work as efficiently as they used to. Studies show that about 70 percent of adults older

than 50 experience nocturnal leg cramps.

A cramp is an involuntary contracted muscle that does not relax. The common locations for muscle cramps are the calves, thighs, feet, hands, arms, and the rib cage. Cramps can be very painful. Muscles can cramp for just seconds, but they can continue for many minutes.

Almost all of us have had muscle cramps, but no one knows for sure why they happen. However, many healthcare professionals attribute cramping to tired muscles and poor stretching. Other suspected causes are dehydration, exerting yourself when it's hot, flat feet, standing on concrete, prolonged sitting, and some leg positions while sedentary.

Muscle cramps are usually harmless. However, they can also be symptoms of problems



ILLUSTRATION: JESSICA HARMON

with circulation, nerves, metabolism, or hormones. Less common causes of muscle cramps include diabetes, Parkinson's disease, hypoglycemia, anemia, thyroid and endocrine disorders.

If you experience frequent and severe muscle cramps, see your doctor.

The use of some medications can cause muscle cramps. For example, some diuretic medications prescribed for high blood pressure can deplete potassium. Too little potassium, calcium or magnesium in your diet can contribute to cramps.

Here are some pointers for treating a cramp yourself: stop whatever you were doing when you got the cramp, massage the muscle and stretch it slowly, apply a cold pack to relax tense muscles.

To prevent cramps, do stretching exercises especially for those muscles that tend to cramp, and drink water regularly. If you are exerting yourself in heat or sweating for more than an hour, you should drink

fruit juice or a sports beverage. For recurrent cramps that disturb your sleep, your doctor may prescribe a medication to relax your muscles.

If you have nocturnal leg cramping, ride a stationary bicycle for a few minutes before bedtime. The following stretching exercise is good, too. You should do it in the morning, before dinner and before going to bed every night:

Stand about 30 inches from a wall. Keep your heels on the floor, lean forward and put your hands on the wall. Then, move your hands slowly up the wall as far as you can reach comfortably. Hold the stretched position for 30 seconds. Release. Repeat twice.

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

ERVING

continued from pg 1

days when the nearby paper mill was operating, and the

configuration of the tanks was no longer ideal for pre-treating the reduced flow the plant handles now.

Selectboard member Jeff

Dubay has urged the board to take up the question of upgrading and perhaps expanding the town's sewer system, and Tessier echoed his concerns on Tuesday night. "We need to 'TV' the sewers, replace the pipe where needed," and perhaps expand the sewer lines, Tessier said.

Town sewer is available in Erving and fairly restricted in Erving Center. Town

water is available only in Erving.

Besides the wastewater treatment plants at both ends of town, the village of Farley has a small sewer collection system and wastewater treatment facility, constructed in 1984 for a population of 125 people, with a design capacity of 10,000 gallons a day, according to a handout provided by town hall. The Farley

treatment plant, by the side of Route 2, consists of two septic tanks, a dosing chamber with a duplex sewage pumping system to raise the effluent to distribution boxes, from which it flows by gravity to a pair of 72-foot square sand filters.

The effluent in the sand filters was originally disinfected by ultraviolet light. In 1988, the process was changed to the use of tablet-type chlorine disinfection units, due to excessive maintenance problems with the UV disinfection system.

Mabel Zobel
By
Sandra Facto

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

Outhouse

BY JOSEPH A. PARZYCH GILL - I first saw real toilet paper when we went to visit some city folks in Holyoke. We used scraps of newspaper, or the Sears & Roebuck catalog, which was a lot more interesting than looking at a roll of toilet paper. Buying toilet paper seemed foolishly extravagant, as well as boring. The catalogue sent me into a dream state. The visions of paradise that Sears & Roebuck held out to us were far more attractive than the ones the priest droned on about on Sunday. We couldn't wait to read the new catalog when it came in the mail. When a new one arrived, the next stop for the old catalog was the outhouse, where it furnished reading



material as well as toilet paper.

The outhouse was at the end of a long woodshed attached to the house. The woodshed was nothing fancy; just a big sloping box built with log rafters and rough lumber that weathered silver gray on the outside. A door, at the far end, opened onto a room the size of a closet with just enough space for a "two-holer".

The "two-holer" seat, nailed onto a raised platform the size of a blanket chest, had a small hole for children and a big hole for adults. The hole edges were "smooth and rounded for utmost comfort in colonial maple or walnut finish" as described in the Sears & Roebuck catalogue. We were careful to first tear out pages of the catalog that were of least interest. Pages showing jewelry and watches, Winchester rifles, Daisy BB guns, fishing and trapping equipment, Coleman kerosene lamps and lanterns, stew pots, spiders, and ladies undergarments were saved as long as possible. Horse harnesses, wiffle trees, sulky plows, snaths, and pre-cut houses complete with front porches were of interest but not essential. Anything to do with

electricity or plumbing was fair game - since we had neither on our farm.

I sometimes read these entries as a kind of fantasy or science fiction, wondering what life would be like with indoor plumbing, electric lights and a radio. It was something to dream about, but totally out of the reach in our present state of finances. But I was content to look and dream.

Selecting a suitable page grew increasingly troublesome as the catalogue grew thinner. Not only would the person have to make a tough choice, but they had to consider the wrath of someone who wanted to save a particular page of interest. I sometimes flipped to the corset pages to guiltily invade the privacy of the demure models who modestly cast their gaze

downward or to the side.

The outhouse seemed like a world of its own. The enchanting daydreams brought on by the catalogue were accompanied by flies buzzing in the soft light, gliding in circles perilously close to webs cast by spiders lying in wait. A shovel stuck in a pail of wood ashes stood ready to scatter a covering after each toilet use. Motes drifted in a shaft of light angled down from a small open triangle where the top of the privy door sagged away from the doorframe. The atmosphere created a fantasy world that made hope real and the owning of treasures displayed in the "wish book" possible.

- Continued Next Week

The Gregory Caputo Big Band Coming To Turners Falls High School

TURNERS FALLS - The Gill-Montague Education Fund in partnership with "Phil D." of radio station WIZZ 1520 AM will present the third annual Gill-Montague Gala, and this year's featured musicians will be the Gregory Caputo Big Band and his show "Velocity." Caputo, trained in classical, rock, swing, jazz and Latin styles, has produced a big band show that highlights the Big Band Era. He serves as MC, and

is also a drummer with the 18-piece band. He has been described as "a master drummer who speaks volumes in refined sensibilities and superb technique."

His professional credits include drumming for the Count Basie Orchestra, the Les Brown big Band, the Jimmy Dorsey Orchestra, the



Benny Goodman Big Band, the Gene Krupa Big Band, the Sammy Kaye Orchestra and the Harry James Big Band. He has also served as a drummer for the Marvettes, the Ink Spots, the Coasters and the Mills Brothers, as well as for Cab Calloway, Harry Connick Sr., Sammy Davis Jr., Jerry Vale and Benny Waters, among others.

A graduate of the Hartford Conservatory of Music Jazz and Pop Program, Caputo has been a faculty member at Mount Holyoke College in South Hadley, Westfield State College and the University of

Massachusetts. He has been a faculty member of Jazz in Vermont and the University of Massachusetts Jazz in July Summer Workshop.

A New Englander by birth, Caputo hit the music scene at age 14. After graduating from high school, he realized music was his passion. "I keep the highest level of professionalism every time I play," he said. "I can perform Sing, Sing, Sing with the Benny Goodman Big Band a thousand times, but each time I play it, I have to remember that this is the first time this audience has heard me

play, so I give it my all."

Joyce Phillips, producer of the Gill-Montague Gala, said, "Velocity promises to be a rare chance to hear the history of the Big Bands and feel the excitement in the music."

Caputo and his band will perform "Velocity" at the state-of-the-art theater at Turners Falls High School on Saturday, April 28th, at 7:30 p.m. Admission will be \$20, and tickets go on sale in March. Underwriters for the Gala are Hillside Plastics, Inc., and Construction Monitoring Services, Inc.

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FRIDAY, JANUARY 5TH
Rt. 63 Road House, Millers Falls, *Rock 201*, high energy rock and roll, requests gladly taken.. 9:30 p.m. Come to dance!

Free Movie! The Montague Police Department in partnership with the Montague Recreation Department presents "Barnyard" (1 hour 28 Mins) at Sheffield School Auditorium. The feature picture starts at 6:30 p.m. The family movies are funded by the Montague Lodge # 2521 of Elks and are designed to provide a family night out without cost to families. Parents are encouraged to attend with their children. Please-attendees bringing refreshments limit their items to bottled water and dry snacks only to prevent messy clean ups. Movies are made available through the cooperation of "The Movie Gallery" located on Federal St in Greenfield. MPA Rating: PG for some mild peril and rude humor.

SATURDAY, JANUARY 6TH
Full Moon Follies at the Wendell Full Moon Coffee House, Wendell Town Hall. Shows Start at 7:30 p.m. with Open Mic; and the Main Act Around 8 p.m. Performances includes a hilarious skit with Paul Richmond, Suzie Polucci, Court Dorsey, Devia, Patty Smythe and others! Sliding Scale Donation \$6 - \$12 at the door. Decadent delicious dessert-o-rama. Benefit Wendell Old Home Day Committee.

Rt. 63 Road House, Millers Falls, *Catamount* classic & southern rock. 9:30 p.m. Come to dance!

SUNDAY, JANUARY 7TH
The Montague Bookmill presents The Dead of Winter Free Films for the Frozen. First in the series is *The 400 Blows*, director Francois Truffaut. Shown at 7 p.m. Free.

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

THURSDAY, JANUARY 11TH
Hello Iraq, How Are You? Opening reception for an exhibit of art from children in Iraq and in the USA, 5 to 6 p.m., refreshments served. The exhibit will be on display through January 31st at Green Fields Market, Greenfield. This exhibit is created from The Iraqi Children's Art



Paul Richmond, Court Dorsey and Suzie Polucci, along with others, will perform at the Full Moon Follies at the Wendell Coffee House on Saturday, January 6th.

Exchange Project collection. The Green Fields Market display will feature recent art from local children, as well as art from Iraqi children living in exile in Amman, Jordan. Children and youth (under 18 years) are invited to make their own pictures for children in Iraq or Jordan. They can bring their paintings or drawings to Green Fields Market throughout the month of January. For more information you can contact: Claudia Lefko, (413) 584-0068 email: iraqichildrensart@verizon.net

FRIDAY & SATURDAY, JANUARY 12TH & 13TH
Pothole Pictures Winter Film Series presents *Shakespeare in Love*. Memorial Hall, Shelburne Falls. Music before the movie.(7 p.m.) Friday: Ian Curtis & Friends (rock) and Saturday: The Ambiguities (rock). Movie begins at 7:30 p.m. Admission charged.

SATURDAY, JANUARY 13TH
Hallmark Museum of Contemporary Photography, Turners Falls. Celebrate the First Year Anniversary with *Face to Face: Portraits from Fifty Years*, photographs by Douglas Kirkland. 1- 7 p.m. reception, exhibition, live music and hors d'oeuvres. 7:15 - 8:45 p.m. artist's talk & refreshments.

TUESDAY JANUARY 16TH
MCTV Producers Group Meeting. Everyone interested in either producing their own show or participating in someone else's please come by. At the studio: 34 2nd Street, Turners Falls, 7 to 8:30 p.m.

SUNDAY, JANUARY 14TH
Scandinavian Dancing at the Montague Grange. Hambo, polska, schottis, waltz, and the delights of the hardanger fiddle! Dancers with all levels of experience are welcome. No partner necessary. \$8.00. For info contact andrea: fiddlerlarsen@aol.com or Alice at 774-7771. 3 to 6 p.m.

FRIDAY, JANUARY 19TH
Charlie King & Karen Brandow and The Prince Myshkins will perform at All Souls Unitarian-Universalist Church, Greenfield. Doors open at 7pm. These two social justice musical duos are teaming up for a "duopalooza" - an event that's twice as good as a lollapalooza, which, according to Wikipedia, means "something outstanding or unusual." That would characterize either Charlie

King & Karen Brandow or The Prince Myshkins who are Rick Burkhardt & Andy Gricevich. Tickets at the door are \$17 per person and \$30 for two people. Tickets in advance - at Boswell's Books, Broadside Bookshop, Food for Thought Books, Odyssey Bookshop, World Eye Bookstore, and wnmjwj@wnmjwj.org - are \$15 per person and \$25 for two. Proceeds will benefit the Western Mass coalition of Jobs with Justice. 7:30 p.m.

SATURDAY, JANUARY 20TH
Shea Theater Charitable Concert Featuring Final Hour. Proceeds to benefit The Brick House Community Center. Also featuring King Rex and And There Was Change. Doors open 7 p.m. and showtime is 7:30 p.m. 863-2281.

Echo Lake Coffee House presents the award winning Bard Insurgent, Tom Neilson. Local to the valley, Tom has been writing and singing folk songs with social/political import for 40 years. Tom specializes in political satire, parody and social commentary. 7:30 pm, Leverett Town Hall. Opening for Tom are the equally outrageous Raging Grannies of Western Mass. Admission is \$12/\$10 for seniors. For more info, call (413) 548-9394.

Auditions:
The Country Players needs A Few Good Men! Open casting call **January 8 and 10**, 7 to 8 p.m. at The Shea Theater, Turners Falls. Directed by Richard J. Martin, *A Few Good Men* by Aaron Sorkin is a drama about trial of two Marines for complicity in the death of a fellow Marine at Guantanamo Bay. Production Date: April 13, 13, 20 and 21, 2007. Telephone (413) 498-2736.

Shea Young Stage Company will hold auditions for Alice in Wonderland in **January '07** at the Shea. www.theshea.org

Upcoming at the Discovery Center

Open Friday & Saturday 10 a.m. to 4 p.m. Groups by Special Arrangement, Tuesday-Thursday

ON DISPLAY JANUARY 2ND - 31ST Daniel Goettel - Landscape Photographs. Human and natural landscapes in a captivating black and white photography. You can view a sampling of his work at www.danielgoettel.com Reception January 5th , 4 - 7 p.m., Historic Great Hall. Refreshments.	THURSDAY, JANUARY 11TH Conservation Workshop for Landowners. Robert A. Levite, Esq. of Worcester UMASS Extension will give a presentation on the new charitable tax benefits provided by Congress and signed by the President a couple of months ago. The law allows for significantly larger deductions over a much longer period of time and qualified landowners may be eligible for up to 100% deductions on the gift or bargain sale of conservation restrictions on their property. The application is challenging, so along with area land trusts, presenter will be available to assist landowners with questions about possible plans. 7 to 9 p.m.	SATURDAY, JANUARY 13TH Bird ID Walk along Power Canal Although many birds migrate south, there are some resident species that stick it out through the winter in Massachusetts. Geared towards all ages. 9 a.m.
SATURDAY, JANUARY 6TH Curious about Creatures. Join refuge staff for a program about the mysteries of wildlife survival in harsh New England winters. We will cover topics such as the different homes animals build and the adaptations they have developed to survive until spring. Geared towards adults, all are welcome. 1 p.m.	WEDNESDAY, JANUARY 17TH 6:00 - 8:30 p.m. FREE Ice Fishing Class with expert angler, Jim Lagacy. Equipment basics, techniques, fish identification, and angler ethics. Field instruction portion will be held on Saturday the 20th . Participants must complete class in order to partake in field portion of the course. Pre-registration required; space is limited.	

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DAILY 6:45 9:15 PG13
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- THE GOOD SHEPHERD**
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THE GARDENER'S COMPANION

Ordering Seed a Tonic for Winter Blues

BY LESLIE BROWN

MONTAGUE CITY - A sure-fire antidote to the post-holiday blahs is as close as your mailbox. Beginning around mid-December, the glossy color-laden seed catalogues start to edge out the gift buying promotions. To date, I've received seven, all filled with improbably brilliant, healthy specimens of all the vegetables, fruits and flowers one can imagine. Shopping from these photos is as dangerous as food shopping on an empty stomach: you need at least one of everything. So, enjoy. Dog-ear the pages, check mark everything you like or want or wish for to fill a garden at least three times the size available, not to mention the available labor to plant, weed and tend to the finish time. After that, settle down to create your real shopping list.

First, check last year's supplies to see what leftover seed you have. Tomato and pepper seed should last for two years or so; peas, beans, radish, lettuce, squash and melon two or more years. You may throw away leftover onion, leek as well as most flower seeds without guilt, as their germination rate after a year's storage is so poor it's not worth the effort to plant them. However, if your Yankee thrift gene is kicking in, you can pretest old seed by placing it between damp layers of paper towel and waiting a few days to see how well it responds.

Second, order and plan to grow things compatible with our weather zone. We're really at the edge of the zone for successful growing of melons, eggplant and similar tender crops. Depending on the individual season, New England gardeners experience great success or great loss with such crops. Timing of the frosts, drying out of the soil for planting, the amount of sun and heat and rain are all factors out of our control and are also the same variables that create the challenge some gardeners thrive on.

Some maxims to inform your



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garden planning are: grow what you like, grow only what you can eat or share, grow without chemicals as much as you can and finally, grow a new plant or a new variety each year.

Additionally, consider your garden space. You may find crops that demand the full season to reach fruition are cheaper to buy from someone else. For instance, we gave up growing our own corn long ago; it requires considerable room for a lengthy period of time and given how much we gave away to the squirrels, it was clearly cheaper to buy from another grower. On the other hand, even though squash takes up much space and time, I continue to grow winter varieties because I know that squash absorbs huge amounts of pesticides in commercial gardens and I prefer mine as organic as possible.

Gloss and glitter aren't everything. Catalogues that are the most alluring don't sell products that are superior to others; they just have more money to spend on advertising. Your research needs to be founded on different considerations. For example, local New England seed houses will be offering tried and true plants for our growing zone. Pine Tree Seeds of New Gloucester, ME offers seeds appropriate for local gardening. However, I notice that another old favorite, Vermont Bean Seed Company now comes from Wisconsin. Shepherd's Seeds has been bought out by White Flower Farm, but remains a New England enterprise.

For the purists among us, only

heirloom seeds will do. Depending on who is defining the term, 'heirloom' refers to cultivars that have been around since before the advent of hybridization, around the 1930s, or simply refers to seed harvested from last year's crop and saved for next year's growing season.

The heirloom Brandywine tomato is a fine example. The large fruit is sweet and delicious; the fruit is also fragile and prone to splitting. While the plant produces good-sized tomatoes, part of each can be lost to rotting or mold. Hybrid seed, on the other hand, is produced from artificially cross-pollinated plants, bred for improved yield, uniformity, disease-resistance and color. For example, many of the beefsteak tomatoes are hybrids: large, meaty, disease free and uniform in shape. They are also tasty although some feel they have "bred out" the fine, acidic tomato flavor many of us crave.

Ideally, many gardeners grow a mix of heirloom and hybrid varieties, each chosen for the characteristics that make it especially desirable. When ordering tomato seed, try Tomato Growers Supply Company for a great combination of heirloom and hybrid varieties, catalogued by type and time of maturity.

Once your shopping list has been refined, it's time to order. It may be the first week of the new year, but we'll be starting leek and onion seed for the Brown garden anywhere between the last week of January and the middle of February. This timing allows for one transplanting before setting the young plants out in the garden in mid-April to very early May. Likewise, pepper plants need to be started in mid-February and tomatoes late February to early March. Both of these will be treated to one transplanting before moving out to the garden around the Memorial Day weekend.

So go ahead, treat yourself. Ordering seed is nurturing to a gardener's soul, and it's time!

Ray's Horror and Sci-Fi Corner

~ a collection of DVD and occasional theater recommendations ~

BY RAY DIDONATO

WENDELL - *I, Robot* (2004). Directed by Alexa Proyas. In futuristic America, where robots assist humans in a variety of tasks, detective Del Spooner (Will Smith) investigates the apparent suicide of a scientist (James Cromwell), who Spooner believes was actually murdered by one of his own robot creations. As Spooner digs deeper into the case, he discovers something is rotten in Robot Land. Great performance by Will Smith, who has matured as an actor since *Men in Black* and *Bad Boys*.

Also starring **Bridget Moynihan**. Arguably the real stars of the movie are the robots. They totally rock! .Rated PG-13, 115 minutes

Texas Chainsaw Massacre (1974). Directed by Tobe Hooper. A

group of friends on a road trip to Texas to check on their grandfather's grave and an old family estate get more than they bargained for when they come upon an isolated house across the field. Starring Marilyn Burns, Paul A. Partain, and Gunnar Hansen as Leatherface.

This film offers the first glimpse of Leatherface and his disturbed family. Leatherface is quick and brutal in his killing, and sounds more like

an animal in his "vocalizations". The film turns from murderfest to plain sadistic and I will not pretend not to have been a little freaked out watching this film - but isn't that the point? Rated R, 83 minutes.

X-Files Recommendation: "Squeeze," originally aired 9/24/93 (Season 1, Episode 2). On the trail of a serial killer following a string of mysteri-



ous murders, Mulder and Scully turn their attention to Eugene Victor Toombs, a young animal control officer. But when they discover old case files stretching back over the century, the trail takes a new and sinister twist.

Notes on Upcoming Films In theaters: *Children of Men* (limited release), *Pan's Labyrinth* (limited release), *Black Christmas* (remake)

Coming soon: *The Hitcher* (remake)

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