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LAKE PLEASANT MILLERS FALLS MONTAGUE CENTER MONTAGUE CITY TURNERS FALLS

# The Montague Reporter

YEAR 5 - NO. 39

also serving Gill, Erving and Wendell

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THE VOICE OF THE VILLAGES

JULY 12, 2007

## G-M BUDGET IMPASSE: Regional Meeting Set for July 31st

**BY DAVID DETMOLD** - The Gill-Montague school committee has set a date for an unusual regional district meeting, where all registered voters of the towns of Gill and Montague will be invited to vote on the district's \$16,426,000 '08 budget. A date has been set: Tuesday, July 31st at 7 p.m. at the Turners Falls High School. So far, so good. But if even a quarter of the 5500 or more registered voters in the two towns show up that evening, where are they all going to sit?

"I don't believe we need to plan for 4000, but we need to plan for 1500 to 2000 [attending] even if we think we'll get 750," said superintendent Ken Rocke. The high school auditorium, where Montague's representative town meetings are usually held, seats 425.

At the committee's

suggestion, Rocke will meet with facilities manager Tom Thornton and see if seating can be arranged in the gymnasium to accommodate most of the voters who attend, with spillover planned for either the auditorium, the cafeteria, or both. Chairs on the gymnasium floor may be reserved for senior citizens or others who may not be able or inclined to sit on the bleachers. Rocke said a live video feed to the other rooms would have to be arranged so all participants in what he called "a two-town town meeting" can hear all the proceedings and ask questions through the moderator.

The moderator will be named at a joint meeting of the selectboards of Gill and Montague. That meeting has not been scheduled yet. Rocke said, "All registered voters in both

see **SCHOOL** pg 12

## Bascom Hollow Farm Preserved



The Peters Farm is now permanently preserved for agricultural use, thanks to quick work by local residents helped by the Mount Grace Land Trust and conservation-minded buyers.

**BY DAVID DETMOLD** Some call it the Magic Valley. With the bridge from Greenfield washed out in an October flood two years ago, the only way in is down a sloping dirt road through a dim green tunnel in the pinewoods. As you travel west, you feel the centuries slip away, and when you come out to the terraced flats in the fertile bowl-like opening that runs along the Fall River for a mile and a quarter to see the old

weathered barns and farmhouses resting in the slope of the land on their stone foundations, you feel you have traveled back in time to the first homestead in Gill. You have.

You've come to Bascom Hollow, and thanks to the concerted effort of a group of residents who are dedicated land preservationists, assisted by the Mt. Grace Land Conversation Trust and the town of Gill, and two families of conservationists from Weston who will soon make their homes and farm here, 170 acres of Bascom Hollow will remain pretty much the way they are now - unspoiled, undeveloped, and expansively beautiful - in perpetuity.

According to the *History of Gill*, the first Bascom to settle here, about the time of the American Revolution, purchased the land from the Indians for a jackknife. Would that have been Moses Bascom, who moderated the first town meeting in Gill in 1793, and went on to serve as one of the newly incorporated town's first selectmen and assessors? If so, he got the better end of the bargain.

Seventy acres of the land is cleared pasture, rented now by a farmer named Dick Parks, from Greenfield, who has been haying the land for a num-

ber years. These days, he travels the long way around.

The wood lots surrounding the fields are filled with cherry, white black and gray birch, red and white oak, hemlock and pine. Along the river, there's a nice line of sugar maples, and in the warmer microclimate along the banks southern hardwoods like basswood and sycamore have taken hold.

Most recently, the farm was owned by Paul and Anne Worthington, who moved up from the Philadelphia area with their seven adopted children after Paul's uncle, Bill Barnes, passed away. Barnes had purchased the property in 1966, and for some years kept a few beef cows, planted silage corn, and hayed the fields. Before Barnes, George, Robert and William Peters, like their father before them, operated a dairy farm in Bascom Hollow, pasteurizing and bottling the milk at the farm and retailing it in Turners Falls and Greenfield. The town *History* says, "Their total animals varied from 75 to 100 head, with about 40 cows in the milking herd."

The new owners, who have agreed to permanently protect 170 acres of the farm by selling the development rights at a bargain price to the MA Department of Food and

Agricultural, say they would like to "have a grass-fed beef and lamb operation," in the Hollow. One of the buyers, Tom Chalmers, after closing on the farm on Tuesday, July 10th said, "We'll do rotations around the fields with sheep and cattle, and sell locally."

Chalmers, with his wife Joan Meyer have purchased the house and barn that sit by the road on two acres that will be excluded from the state's Agricultural Preservation Restriction (APR) protection. They plan to fix up the 'el' for rental, and gradually move out from Weston after renovating the rest of the farmhouse. Chalmers, an architect, and his wife, an environmental resource economist in Cambridge, have two children, one in high school, the other in college in Vermont.

In the two and a half acre lot beside the old farmhouse, also excluded from APR protection, their friends Brian Donahue and his wife Faith Rand will build a new house. Donahue, a well-known author and professor of agricultural history at Brandeis, and Rand also plan to move to Gill with their two children, one a kindergartner, the other in fifth grade.

By coincidence, Tony see **FARM** pg 7

## Great Oz at the Shea

### THEATER REVIEW

Country Players present:  
**The Wizard of Oz at the Shea**

**BY DAVID DETMOLD** TURNERS FALLS - Scholars may debate whether America's favorite fairy tale, the *Wizard of Oz*, was really L. Frank Baum's allegorical tribute to the Populists and their call for the unlimited coinage of silver at the turn of the 20th century. In the original, the magic slippers Dorothy wore as she trod the Yellow Brick Road were made of silver, and the Silverite's slogan for the panacea to the



On June 28th, Dorothy, (Cayle Plasse) left, in ruby slippers, held a preview for the children at the Montague Parks & Recreation Summer Camp in Unity Park. Catch her on stage this weekend at the *Wizard of Oz*. There's no place like the Shea this weekend!

nation's economic woes was "16 to 1," the ratio of minted silver to gold they demanded, in a measure commonly abbreviated as "Oz."

But one thing is beyond debate. The

Country Players' production of *the Wizard of Oz* hits the gold standard for community theater, and is guaranteed to leave audiences 'Over the Rainbow' when it com-

see **OZ** pg 14



**PET OF THE WEEK**

**Cool Older Guy**



**Rufus**

Rufus is an 8 year old male Shepherd mix in need of a good home. What a cool older guy Rufus is! Rufus doesn't have much of a bark so when we go say hello to him, he gives a stout wag and raspy greeting. He is gorgeous with black mask, golden eyebrows and a thick coat. Rufus loves to lie in the sun and is just a big ol' lover of good, old-fashioned R&R (rest and relaxation). As a mature dog, he has his preferences set and we think he'd like to be an only child (so to speak) in his new home, no cats or other dogs. It is possible he might be fine with an older dog companion. We'd like to see a meet-n-greet first before finalizing the adoption. Rufus is fine to live with people 15 years old and older. He is not a high energy dog and will be a great dog to lie at your feet and hang out during the day. For more information on adopting Rufus please contact the Dakin Pioneer Valley Humane Society at 413-548-9898 or via email at leverett@dpvhs.org.

**SLATE LIBRARY NEWS**

**Musical Petting Zoo**

**GILL** - On July 21st at 10:30 a.m., Caravan Puppets of Amherst will perform at the Slate Library in Gill. "Timeless Tales" is a collection of multicultural folktales from around the world. Audiences are treated to a wide diversity of puppets and puppetry styles.

Come listen to stories and songs from China, Haiti and Europe and be swept away to the

land of imagination!

On July 28th at 10:30 a.m., the library will host the Springfield Symphony Musical Petting Zoo.

Have you ever wanted to play the oboe or the clarinet? Try out the saxophone or the tuba! Experiment and improvise with a wealth of different instruments, assisted by Springfield Symphony musicians.

**CARNEGIE LIBRARY NEWS**

**Brass Trio Performs**

At 10:00 in the morning on July 17th at the Carnegie Library in Turners Falls, the Pioneer Valley Low Brass Trio will be presenting a special Musical Adventure for everyone, especially children. In the trio are Horn: Jim Engele; Trombone: Jeri Bannister; and Tuba: Tony Bosco. The Musical Adventure will give everyone a chance to hear how the instru-

ments sound and to hold them. There also will be a chance to hear how reading and music are connected by rhythm and beat. And yes, this program is supported in part by a grant from the Montague Cultural Council, a local agency which is supported by the Massachusetts Cultural Council, a state agency. For more information, call the Carnegie Library, 863-3214.

**ERVING LIBRARY NEWS**

**Roger Tincknell Performs**

**BY MARCIA BERNARD**  
**ERVING** - The Erving Public Library presents award-winning family entertainer Roger Tincknell on Wednesday, July 18 at 6:30 p.m. This festive and participatory program features traditional and original multicultural children's songs and

sing-a-longs and is part of the library's Summer Reading Program. On the lawn: Bring blankets or chairs; inside if rain.

This program is funded by the Erving Cultural Council. For more information, call the library at 413-423-3348.

**Book Mill Reading**

Come meet Vicki Graw of Orange and hear a reading from the Great Thatchwood Mystery. The reading will be held

Sunday, July 15th at 5:00 p.m. at the Montague Book Mill. Cheese and crackers will be served; questions welcomed.

**SENIOR CENTER ACTIVITIES July 16-20 and 23-27**

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

- Monday, 16th**  
10 a.m. Senior Aerobics  
11 a.m. Easy Aerobics  
1 p.m. Canasta
- Tuesday, 17th**  
9:30 a.m. T'ai Chi
- Wednesday, 18th**  
10 a.m. Senior Aerobics  
12:45 p.m. Bingo
- Thursday, 19th**  
1:00 p.m. Pitch
- Friday, 20th**  
10 a.m. Senior Aerobics  
11 a.m. Easy Aerobics

- Monday, 23rd**  
10 a.m. Senior Aerobics  
11 a.m. Easy Aerobics  
1 p.m. Canasta
- Tuesday, 24th**  
9:30 a.m. T'ai Chi
- Wednesday, 25th**  
10 a.m. Senior Aerobics  
12:45 p.m. Bingo
- Thursday, 26th**  
1:00 p.m. Pitch
- Friday, 27th**  
10 a.m. Senior Aerobics  
11 a.m. Easy Aerobics

**ERVING Senior Center,** 18 Pleasant St., Ervingside (Old Center School, 1st Floor), is open Monday through Thursday from 9 a.m. to 2 p.m. for activities and congregate meals. For information and reservations call Polly Kiely, Senior Center director at 413 423-3308. Lunch daily at 11:30 a.m. with reservations a day in advance by 11:00 a.m. Transportation can be provided for meals, Thursday shopping, or medical necessity by calling Dana Moore at 978 544-3898.

- Monday, 16th**  
9:30 a.m. Exercise  
9:45 a.m. Library



*(Left to Right) Pinnie Sears, Willa Beltrandi, and Billye Davis celebrate Independence Day at the Montague Center bonfire, Tuesday, July 3rd. Sears, of Dry Hill Road, was also celebrating her independence from hospital rehab after her unexpected fall while horseback riding on the Montague Plains a few months ago. Sears, an experienced horsewoman, said she still does not know what made her horse buck that day. But she credits her recovery from serious injury to the swift response of the Montague Volunteer firefighters who were there within minutes of her call.*

**Volcano Worlds at Carnegie**

**BY LINDA HICKMAN**  
**TURNERS FALLS-** Children of all ages are invited to make volcano worlds at the Turners Falls Library on Friday, July 13th, at 10 a.m. Clay artist Ruth O'Mara of Wendell will run the program. Each child will create a volcano scene with clay and other materials and make their volcano "erupt." The program is free and all of the materials will be provided. This program is part of the Family Literacy in Montague Project of Montague Catholic Social Ministries, funded by the Community Development Block Grant for the Town of Montague. For more information, call the Carnegie Library, 863-3214.

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# Reporter Raffle a Great Success

BY DAVID DETMOLD

**TURNERS FALLS** - We have a winner. In fact, we have thirteen of them! Thirteen lucky people won great prizes donated by local businesses and supporters of *the Montague Reporter* in the recent raffle, with the prizewinners' names drawn during the intermission of the Country Player's production of *the Wizard of Oz* at the Shea, on Saturday, July 7th.

The final prize, drawn on stage by *Montague Reporter* board member Lyn Clark, was a pair of tickets to see the *Wizard of Oz* this weekend. Karen Leplay was the lucky winner of that prize.

The other twelve winners were drawn by a youngster from Bernardston named Ethan Finnell, who did an unimpeachable job, never peeking once. In rapid succession, Finnell picked the following names from the well-worn shoebox:

Dotty Janke won a cruise for four on the Quinnetuket riverboat, courtesy of FirstLight Power / Northfield Mountain. Margarita Flecha won another cruise for four on the Quinnetuket. Let's hope they get Phil Allard for a tour guide; that guy's a modern day Samuel Clemens.

Patricia Crosby of Gill won a



Noreen LeMieux of Gill poses with her prize, a bowl by Jaye Pope of Good Dirt Pottery in Montague Center

deluxe tool kit, courtesy of the Greenfield Savings Bank. Ed Shamo of Prospect Street and Jerri Higgins of Montague City each take home a \$25 gift certificate from the Diemand Egg Farm, where they will be first time customers. Anne Harding's six-foot long knit scarf will come in handy once this weather breaks, and the *Wizard's* wife, Sue Shedd, will love its purple heather hue and texture.

Jeanushka Fishell of Athol felt fated to win Flore's "gorgeous photo of a painting of eagle" that used to grace the Brick House wall. Fishell said she had come nearly face to face

with a live eagle only weeks before, while driving on Route 2.

Jeffrey Ainsworth of Greenfield and Brava Lang of High Street are each the proud winners of a \$10 gift certificate from the Turners Falls Pizza House. We recommend the spinach and fresh garlic!

Norma Goscenski claimed to be "thrilled for her husband" at the prospect of bringing home a brand new Milwaukee 8 1/4 inch circular saw, courtesy of Rugg Lumber. "He will love it!" she said.

Noreen LeMieux of Gill will be the recipient of a blue glazed

bowl with dragonflies, thrown her way by Jaye Pope of Good Dirt Pottery in Montague Center. It's a beauty.

And Kathy Webber was "thrilled" to win a \$50 gift certificate at Ristorante DiPaolo. Let us know if the patio is open yet, we'll be right over.

Thanks to all the businesses who donated to the raffle, and to all our friends and readers for participating. We had set a goal of raising \$1000 to assist us with our move to new quarters, in the former Charron dental office at 60 4th Street. (The newspaper hopes to move in to its new office on August 12th.) Incredibly, when the last raffle ticket was sold on Saturday, we met and exceeded our goal - by one dollar! A special thanks to Friends of *the Montague Reporter*, especially Kim Whitaker and Lyn Clark, and to all who assisted in sales of tickets. So to each of you who bought a ticket, we can honestly say, "You put us over the top!" With the community's help and support, we will continue to grow in our ability to bring you the 'Voice of the Villages' for many years to come. Thank you.

Please be a local hero and support our advertisers

The Country Players Present RSC's **The Wizard of Oz**  
July 13, and 14 at 7:30 p.m.  
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At the Shea Theater in Turners Falls  
Tickets available at the door, or by calling 863-2281, or at World Eye Bookshop

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**Car & Bike Show 10 a.m. to 5 p.m.**  
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**Bub's BBQ to Host Benefit for Holy Smokes BBQ**  
On Monday, July 16th, from 3 to 8 p.m., Bub's BBQ in Sunderland will host a benefit dinner for the folks at Holy Smokes. The old church that housed the restaurant burned beyond repair on the morning of June 21st. We are gathering to show support, and hopefully raise some money to help these good people, who have helped so many others, get through these difficult times. In addition to food from Bub's, there will be loads of food from other local restaurants. We are asking for a \$10 donation for food and there will be a cash bar with beer and wine.  
Bub's is located on Route 116 in Sunderland. For more information, please contact Maggie, Evelyn or Lin at 413-774-3150 or maggiezacara@hotmail.com.

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"The Voice of the Villages"

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August, 2002

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## Reconsider the Gill-Montague Regional Agreement

BY KEN ROCKE

(From a speech to the G-M school committee on Tuesday, July 10th)

My hope is we can get a start at something new. I'm going to share my thinking with you, although it's a little tricky to approach this issue because of the history and powerful emotions on both sides of the table on elementary school configuration, closing schools, consolidating schools.

Anybody new coming into the district would see the budget problem first of all, along with administrative understaffing. But the other huge issue is: What are we going to do about the elementary schools?

I believe the district, the school committee, the towns, the communities, are stuck. Being stuck on this issue is of no benefit to the schools or the towns. I believe this is one of the underlying things the state is looking at when they're declaring us 'underperforming'. In conversations with the state, I believe there is a realistic danger of being moved from 'underperforming' to 'chronically underperforming', to receivership. I have to tell you, I don't think that's a road we want to go down as a community.

Local control of schools is extremely important. We need to figure out a way to maintain local control of the school district. The best people to make decisions on schools are the people who live in the community where those schools are.

I approach what I'm going to say tonight very carefully, and a little nervously. I'll be frank. I honestly believe the risks of doing nothing at this point are greater than the risks of taking real action.

There's a taxpayer credibility problem that comes back to having four elementary schools open. I think that affects our ability to pass a budget that is adequate to serve the needs of the students.

I think it's a vicious spiral. The inability to come to a decision has resulted in, perhaps, reduced budgets and that results in diminished services, which results in students choosing out of the district, which puts even more pressure on the towns.

When I look at this, I see an extremely hard-working school committee that has struggled with this issue for years. I see towns that are well intentioned, and are trying to balance the educational needs of the students with the fiscal capacity of the taxpayers. These are tough issues.

I have come to the conclusion that the regional agreement that was crafted to serve the needs of the region is not serving the needs of the region at this point. Specifically, the requirement to have eight votes out of nine to close any school at any time is an almost insurmountable obstacle to the district moving ahead as a whole.

I'm not suggesting closing schools. I'm suggesting that that level of a vote creates a situation that prevents decisions from being made.

There are very few votes that are unanimous in government or committees. The usual high standard is a two-thirds majority. An eight out of nine vote is just enormous.



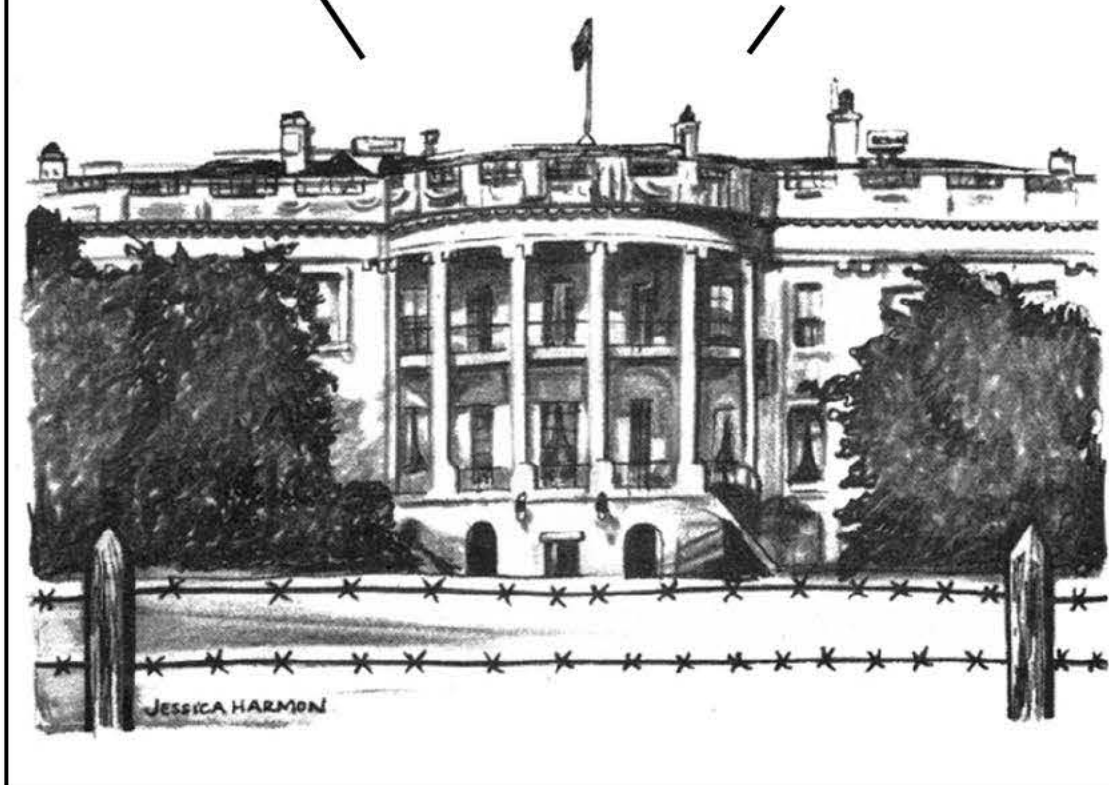
"The best people to make decisions on schools are the people who live in the community where those schools are."

- Ken Roche

see ROCKE page 12

Those \*@%\$! Republicans in the **Senate!**  
They're abandoning **Me!** Don't they know  
we need **Patience** if we want to achieve  
**Victory in Iraq?**

There should be more patients now, sir.  
They're shelling the Green Zone.



JESSICA HARMON ILLUSTRATION

## LETTERS TO THE EDITOR

# Dancing with the Stars

On Saturday, June 23d, at the Schuetzen Verein grounds in Gill, the Turners Falls fire department and the Montague police department held a benefit concert to raise funds for the new Montague veterans memorial. If you missed this concert, you probably missed one of the best musical events of the year.

The music provided by the Lonesome Brothers; Dad, Come Home; Nexus; and topped off by the Commander Cody Band brought all the people in attendance to their feet. It was like watching "Dancing with the Stars" to see our town political figures, town employees, and town committee members all enjoying the music on the dance floor with the many others who came to listen and to dance in support of our veterans memorial.

On behalf of the members of the trustees of the soldiers memorial, and the veterans of the five villages that make up the town of Montague, we

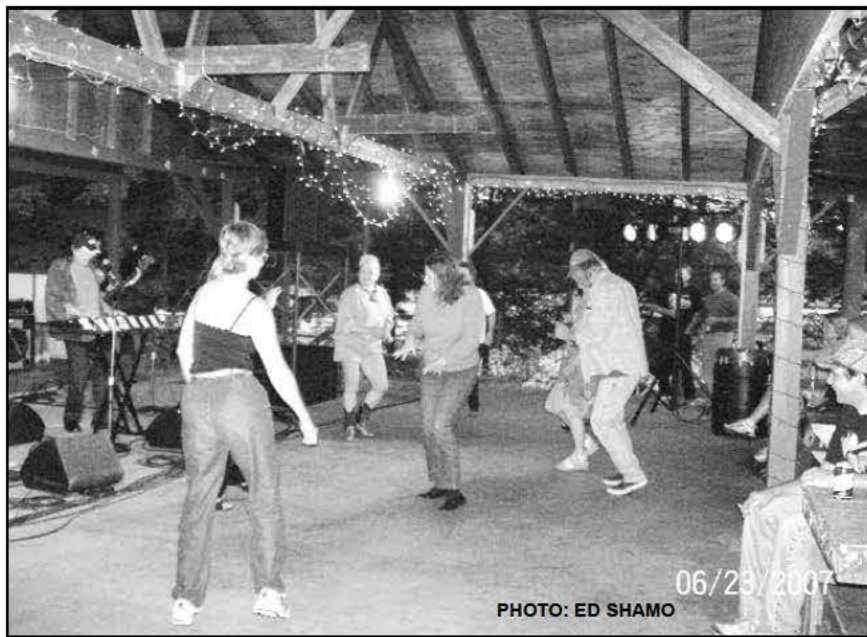


PHOTO: ED SHAMO

Members of the Montague Selectboard dance with other concertgoers at the Schuetzen Verein benefit with the Commander Cody Band on June 23rd.

extend our sincere thanks to the Turners Falls fire department, the Montague police department, and all of the people who worked or attended this event.

Renovations are now underway at the memorial on Avenue A, and contributions are still being accepted due to some unforeseen cost overruns, and may be mailed to Soldiers Memorial, 1 Avenue A, Turners Falls, MA 01376.

Again, we extend our sincere thanks to all for your help.

- Art Gilmore, Chair  
Soldiers Memorial  
Trustees

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### Note to Our Readers

The *Montague Reporter* has begun our usual summer schedule, printing every other week. There will be no paper on July 19th, August 2nd, 16th, and 30th.

### We welcome your letters

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**reporter@montaguema.net**

## American Dead in Iraq as of 7/11/07

**US FORCES**  
Casualties in Iraq  
as of this date

**3,607**

Afghanistan **410**

Wounded in Action **34,032**

MARINE CORPS LEAGUE

(Casualty sign temporarily located next to Wagon Wheel Restaurant on Rte. 2 in Gill)



EYE ON TOWN FINANCES

# The Town Budget at the Crossroads

BY JEFF SINGLETON

The Gill-Montague Regional School District has approved a new budget with significant cuts. But the new budget still leaves a big gap between what the schools need and what the towns of Montague and Gill can reasonably afford. We will be going to an historic district meeting, where all the voters of Gill and Montague will have an equal say in trying to solve this problem.

The basic position of the Montague finance committee is stated clearly in our recent report to town meeting. We feel the schools have presented a compelling argument that their current budget addresses the GMRSD's minimum needs. I personally believe their budget is inadequate in a number of key areas.

On the other hand, we believe the town cannot afford to spend more on education than is already in the budget. Already we are taking money from reserves to balance the budget, a dangerous precedent that only creates a bigger problem next year. Taking more money from town reserves - without a game plan for the future - would be a disaster. A Proposition 2½ override is a much more fiscally responsible way to address the shortfall, but would be a non-starter without a concrete game plan to resolve the district's core budget problems. Otherwise, we

will be back again next year for more tax increases!

The school district's core budget problems are not that complex. Fixed cost increases in wages, benefits, and special education and school choice balances outstrip our revenue increases, which come primarily from property taxes and state aid. This is a problem on both the town and school sides of the budget, but it is more extreme on the school side. These same problems exist all across the state, and they pit local taxpayers and schools against each other, causing community support for public education to unravel.

The solutions are politically difficult, but they are not that complex either. We need to do more to control so-called "fixed cost" increases. This means more modest wage increases for teachers and staff, better control of health care costs, a greater effort to stabilize special education financing and a game plan to reduce school choice losses.

On the revenue side of the equation, two and a half percent annual increases in the property tax levy just do not pay for local budgets, even at a more reasonable level. More importantly, towns and school districts are highly dependent on state aid. There must be increases in aid -



particularly Chapter 70 school aid - corresponding to the increases in local budgets. Unless there is a major change in state policy, our efforts will fail.

We are making significant progress in dealing with all these issues. The town of Montague is developing a long-term plan to control town finances. The school district has made a theoretical commitment to do the same, after it deals with the current crisis. We are looking seriously at joining the state health plan to hold down annual health care increases. We had an excellent and productive meeting with senator Stan Rosenberg and representatives Steve Kulik and Chris Donelan recently. They are very concerned and have organized a study to look at long-term educational financing on a regional basis. State scrutiny of the GMRSD, which has been declared an "underperforming" district primarily for

financial reasons, presents a danger but also a real opportunity to make our case about the inadequacy of state aid for the schools.

We are in the best position for changing the budget dynamic that I have seen since coming on the finance committee seven years ago. But this progress threatens to unravel in the coming weeks. The commitment to long-term budget planning to control fixed costs is weak. On the school side it is still theoretical. On the town side, the fear that we will take hundreds of thousands from reserves without a plan for the future has demoralized town officials. They feel our own efforts at rational multi-year planning are dead on arrival. The state may just come in, assume control of the GMRSD, and take all our money for the schools.

Now, we are in danger of introducing the divisive elementary school debate into the mix at the worst time. Some in the town and school district appear to believe the key to gaining support for their budget is by changing the district agreement on the elementary schools. The theory seems to be that if we make progress on this issue, it will somehow build political support for the budget.

I think we need to resolve the elementary school configuration

problem, and we can. But the notion this will help us solve the budget gap, either in a monetary or political sense, is way off base. The impact of school closings on core budget problems is negligible in the medium or long term. The savings are just not there, and a decision to close a school could easily drive up the school choice losses, further compounding our budget problems. The notion that you can build political support for solving core budget problems by closing schools seems equally problematic. You gain the support of some people, but lose the support of others.

What we really need are clear, programmatic commitments to deal with core budget problems--outlined above--in the coming months, and a concrete proposal to collaborate with the town on a five-year plan. No more vague "we'll do it next year." No foot dragging on investigating the state health plan, as many in the region seem to be doing. Let's welcome state scrutiny and the regional study as opportunities to make our case for more aid. As things stand now we have little to lose.

Time is short. We need a real strategy that builds on the progress we have made if we are to take money from our reserves and put the town at risk.

*Jeff Singleton is the chair of the Montague finance committee.*

## Meeting Fails to Persuade Olver to Pursue Impeachment

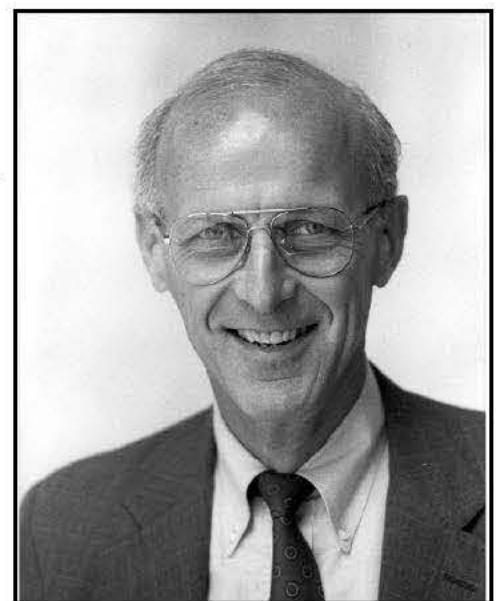
BY JEANNE WEINTRAUB MONTAGUE CENTER

"These are dangerous times that call for each of us to push our-

selves beyond what we are normally comfortable doing." So began Susie Patlove's introduction to a meeting held July 5th between impeachment advocates from fourteen towns in Western Massachusetts and Congressman John Olver (D-Amherst). The meeting was organized by Progressive Democrats of Western Massachusetts, to take the measure of representative Olver's support for initiatives in Congress to impeach Vice President Richard B. Cheney and President George W. Bush. The towns of Montague and Wendell have both passed articles in favor of impeaching these officials, along with many

other towns that Olver represents. As a member of Congress, Olver has the power to introduce and lend support to articles of impeachment. So far, he has opposed such measures.


In a packed conference room in the Jones Library in Amherst, successive speakers, each representing a town that passed a resolution to impeach, praised the congressman for his voting record, and urged him to reconsider his stance on impeachment.



*Congressman John Olver (D-Amherst)*

see OLVER pg 6

**LETTERS TO THE EDITOR**



## A Real Community

"What makes a village a real community?" asks Flore (MR V#38: *Front Porch Music*), and she then answers her own question: "It's having one's own country store."

This is surely true, as all of the customers at the Gill Store will agree. But for us

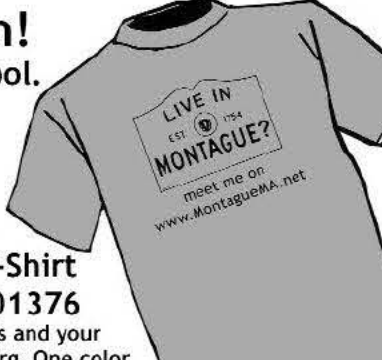
outlanders, who are still mightily interested in encountering a real community, *the Montague Reporter* does the job beautifully, issue after issue.

Sincerely,  
- Jane Fennelly  
Mystic, CT

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# OLVER continued from pg 5

They made impassioned pleas to the representative to honor the wishes of his constituency - specifically to lend his immediate support to House Resolution 333 to impeach Vice President Cheney and to other efforts in Congress to begin the impeachment process.

Susie Patlove of Charlemont

informed representative Olver that 20 towns in Western Massachusetts passed resolutions to impeach, in many cases by overwhelming majorities. Patlove added that the 2,500 delegates to the Massachusetts State Democratic convention passed the resolution by an overwhelming voice vote.

Results of Resolutions introduced in town meetings to impeach

Town	Result of vote
1. Amherst	Passed, 89 to 29
2. Ashfield	Passed
3. Buckland	Passed 50 to 10
4. Charlemont	Passed by overwhelming majority
5. Cheshire	Passed
6. Colrain	Passed by overwhelming majority
7. Great Barrington	Passed by overwhelming majority
8. Greenfield	Defeated 8 to 3 (town council)
9. Heath	Passed 87% in favor
10. Hubbardston	T i e vote, did not pass
11. Lanesboro	Passed by 80%
12. Lee	Defeated
13. Leverett	Passed 339 to 1
14. Leyden	Passed by overwhelming majority
15. Montague	Passed 48 to 25 (town meeting reps)
16. Northampton	Passed
17. Rowe	Passed
18. Shelburne	Passed by 67%
19. Shutesbury	Passed by 80%
20. Stockbridge	Passed 110 to 34
21. Warwick	Passed
22. Wendell	

Passed 23. Whately Passed 76 to 4

Town meeting representatives next presented Olver with a strong array of reasons to move forward with the process of impeachment. Les Patlove, also of Charlemont, reminded Olver of the oath that all members of Congress take to uphold the Constitution, and expressed concern that by not taking action to impeach, members of Congress violate this oath and become complicit in wrongdoing. He cited the impotence that citizens feel in the face of other efforts to halt the war in Iraq and address the abuses of the administration. He explained that working towards impeachment has energized the community.

Patlove summarized his position by stating that "lawmaking becomes a farce if Congress does not use its powers," adding that otherwise there will be nothing to prevent the administration from its efforts to subvert the laws Congress passes.

Susie Patlove urged Olver to consider the viewpoint of citizens in his district who believe that impeachment would have a positive outcome. Patlove argued that "Democrats need to show the American people they have the courage to confront the President and Vice-President on their actions."

Russell Freedman of Lanesborough stated, "This is an historical moment. The

Bush/Cheney administration has marginalized the Constitution and concentrated power in the executive branch of government. The only way to maintain a balance between the executive and legislative branches is if the legislature exercises its power." Freedman added, "Executive power has been growing since the Nixon years. If we don't correct the situation, our grandchildren will turn around and say, 'How come I don't have a democracy anymore?'"

Great Barrington representative John Lippman asserted, "Citizen participation in government has been severely curtailed due to the executive orders that make this administration practically opaque, instead of transparent." Lippman went on to catalog successive steps taken by the administration to block the release of records, reverse open meeting laws and shield numerous government agencies from disclosure of information.

Olver responded: In reference to HR 333, Olver emphatically declared, "We don't have the votes. Even if the House passed an impeachment resolution, the Senate would never pass it. There are too many reactionary Republicans in the Senate. Impeachment is a major distraction - why would we want to pursue this, knowing there is no chance that it would succeed?" The Congressman did hold out the hope, "If Henry Waxman's investigations produce some evidence, impeachment could happen." Waxman is the chairman of the House Oversight and Government Reform Committee, the principal investigative committee of the House.

Tom Plout of Amherst, the first speaker to rebut Olver's reasons not to impeach, spoke of the "imminent danger we face" by not beginning the impeachment process. He reminded those present of the administration's threat to bomb see **OLVER** pg 9

## MCTV Schedule: Channel 17: July 13th-19th

### Barton Cove Eagles:

\*Eagle Broadcast is dependent upon working Equipment at Barton Cove\* 7A-8A (Daily); 12P-530P (Tuesday); 1230P-6P (Thursday); 1P-530P (Saturday); 130P-530P (Monday); 130P-6P (Wednesday, Friday); 230P-530P (Sunday)

### Friday, July 13

8:00 am Independent Voices #31  
8:30 am Montague Selectboard: 7/12/07  
9:30 am Peskeomskut Park Dedication and Concert  
11:30 am Coffee House Series: Fall Town String Band  
6:30 pm NASA Connect: Hidden Treasures  
7:00 pm GMRSD meeting 7/10/07  
9:30 pm Discovery Center: Open Mic. Night  
11:00 pm Independent Voices #32

### Saturday, July 14

8:00 am NASA Connect: Hidden Treasures  
8:30 am GMRSD Meeting 7/10/07  
11:00 am Discovery Center: Open Mic. Night  
12:30 pm Independent Voices #32  
6:00 pm The Well Being: "The Aging Eye"  
7:00 pm Discovery Center: Naturalist Laurie Sanders  
9:00 pm Montague Update: Josh Goldman  
10:00 pm Road to Recovery: "Helping Families Find Recovery"  
11:00 pm Peoples Harvest: Pavillion Music

### Sunday, July 15

8:00 am The Well Being: "The Aging Eye"  
9:00 am Discovery Center: Naturalist Laurie Sanders  
11:00 am Montague Update: Josh Goldman  
12:00 pm Road to Recovery: "Helping Families Find Recovery"  
1:00 pm Peoples Harvest: Pavillion Music  
6:00pm Discovery Center: Songs For Wee People  
7:00 pm Senior Aerobics  
7:30 pm Montague Update: Block Party  
8:00 pm Discovery Center: Tracking The Wily Coyote  
10:00 pm Coffee House Series: Pat & Tex LaMountain, Joe Graveline, Russ Thomas

### Monday, July 16

8:00 am Discovery Center: Songs For

### Wee People

9:00 am Senior Aerobics  
9:30 am Montague Update: Block Party  
10:00 am Discovery Center: Tracking The Wily Coyote  
12:00 pm Coffee House Series: Pat & Tex LaMountain, Joe Graveline, Russ Thomas  
6:00 pm Independent Voices #32  
7:00 pm Montague Select Board (Live)  
9:00 pm Discovery Center: Open Mic. Night  
10:30 pm Carlos W. Anderson: The Cost of Freedom

### Tuesday, July 17

8:00 am Independent Voices #32  
8:30 am Discovery Center: Open Mic. Night  
10:00 am Carlos W. Anderson: The Cost of Freedom  
6:00 pm GED Connection #8: Grammar & Usage  
6:30 pm Thomas Jefferson Speaks  
7:00 pm GMRSD (7/10/07)  
9:30 pm The Changing Face of Turners Falls

### Wednesday, July 18

8:00 am GED Connection #8: Grammar & Usage  
8:30 am Thomas Jefferson Speaks  
9:00 am GMRSD (7/10/07)  
11:30 am The Changing Face of Turners Falls  
6:30 pm NASA Connect: Hidden Treasures  
7:00 pm GED Connection #9: Spelling, Punctuation and Capitalization  
7:30 pm Peskeomskut Park Dedication and Concert  
9:30 pm The Well Being: "The Aging Eye"  
10:30 pm Mass Highway: Share the Road in the Connecticut River Valley

### Thursday, July 19

8:00 am NASA Connect: Hidden Treasures  
8:30 am GED Connection #9: Spelling, Punctuation and Capitalization  
9:00 am Peskeomskut Park Dedication and Concert  
11:00 am The Well Being: "The Aging Eye"  
12:00 pm Mass Highway: Share the Road in the Connecticut River Valley  
6:30 pm Independent Voices #32  
7:00 pm Montague Select Board 7/16/07  
9:00 pm Discovery Center: Naturalist Laurie Saunders  
11:00 pm Peoples Harvest: Pavillion Music

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# Midsummer Bonfire a Community Tradition

BY DAVID DETMOLD

**MONTAGUE CENTER** - They're usually scrambling to extinguish fires, but one day each year the Montague Volunteer Firefighters get to set one. Lieutenant Larry Peters, president of the Montague Firemen's Relief Association, said he couldn't be

Bill Aubry, who joined the fire department in the 50s, said the bonfires have been going on longer than that. "We used to put quite a lot of work into them. We built them with used railroad ties. One of the guys had a connection with the B&M, and he'd find out where the ties were piled up at the

central "jim pole" with a pulley on top, and hoist the heavy ties into place in a circle using Bobby Pierce's tractor, then fill in the middle of the pile with whatever scrap wood could be found. That approach was not quite as muscular as using the crane Herb Foley used to borrow from Mackin Construction in later years, to help hoist the ties into place. In those days, the bonfire would burn "into the wee hours" Aubry recalled. "Boy, it used to draw a crowd! Cars would be lined up double all along the Main Street."

Peg Bridges recalled that the circular bonfire used to be more than a scene of holiday fun. "We used to be able to get rid of all our scrap wood, until EPA passed new regulations about what you could and couldn't burn." She said the bonfires in those days were "real humdingers."

Mark Fisk said the bonfire has been "downsized" in years since. "It used to be a true celebration," he remembered. "Fireworks

weren't as big back then."

But last Tuesday, if the bonfire had dimmed at all from blazes past, none of the hundred or more people who gathered to watch it burn seemed the least bit disappointed. Former selectman Clarkson Edwards, up from North Carolina, exchanged how-do-you-dos with members of the Congregational Church congregation recently returned from sightseeing in Labrador, while Suzanne Kretzenger and other members of the Firemen's Relief Association toasted hot dogs on the grill. Martha Edwards chased her grandchildren around the playground, until dark fell, and the fireflies came out, along with the firemen themselves.

Peters supervised, as other members of the force lit the bonfire using a propane torch. "Even if it's raining, the torch will get it going," said Peters, who explained the department no longer used the creosote soaked railroad ties on the bonfire. "We use slab wood now." Verne Williams, who runs a sawmill up behind Paul Stone's house, donates the slab wood free of charge for the event.

Back in '91 or '92, for the 50th

anniversary of the Montague Center volunteer department, Peters recalled, the bonfire was taller than usual, and was graced at the top with a two-holer outhouse, provided for the occasion by Willie Stone. Peters said a contracting crew repairing the bridge on Greenfield Road near the Book Mill brought their crane over special to place the outhouse atop the pile, one of the tallest ever. "It must have sat 60 feet in the air," said Peters, thinking back to the blazing outhouse.

In the old days, they used to set a "hangman" on the top of the heap, and kids would watch and cheer once the dummy caught fire, Peters recalled.

Nowadays, Peters said, "We build 'em safer than we used to." After the bonfire burns a circle in the surrounding grass, the firefighters hose down the area, and stay close at hand with their brush truck to douse the embers when the fire burns low.

By then, the children who sat wide-eyed on the grass had been led home by their tired parents, and put to bed, dreaming of hot dogs and bonfires, eager for more fireworks to come.



COURTESY OF BILL AUBRY

"It was bigger in those days." Railroad ties being stacked in a circle by crane for the 3rd of July bonfire in the 1960's.

sure when the tradition got started, but the annual 3rd of July bonfire on the edge of the playing field on Station Street, across from the old fire station, has been drawing an appreciative crowd since he was a young boy.

side of the tracks, and we used to go all over Franklin County in an old pickup truck to get them. Boy, that was a job. It takes two men to lift them."

Aubry said in those days, the fire department would set up a

## FARM from page 1

Mathews, chair of the Gill conservation commission, said the town library had purchased one of Donahue's books, called "Reclaiming the Commons," nearly a decade ago. You can borrow it there. According to one review, the book offers "a reassertion of the value of community-owned and managed land." Some twenty years ago, Donahue and Chalmers were instrumental in getting Weston to set up a nonprofit 30-acre farm on the site of the former Arnold Arboretum, where educational programs now combine with a farmstand, hayrides, wholesaled organic crops, and produce bound as donations to local food pantries.

Mathews said the town of Gill had earmarked \$5,000 to assist with the APR purchase, with the

remaining local match waived on account of the new owners' bargain sale of the development rights. He said Bascom Hollow has been a high priority for conservation efforts in the town.

"It's 75 acres of flat, open land. High value farmland is something we like to preserve," Mathews said.

Dick French, along with Tim Storrow, arranged the first meeting of the landowners in Bascom Hollow (there are two other farms nearby, one permanently preserved, the other an applicant to the APR program) to discuss the conservation potential of the valley in 2001. He said local residents have worked hard to support the process ever since. "Rich Hubbard, from the Mass Department of Food and Ag attended that meeting, along with representatives from Mt. Grace," French recalled.

Earlier this year, when the Worthingtons, due to changing family circumstances, were forced to put their farm on the market, French stepped in and signed a purchase and sale agreement for \$840,000 in April, to buy time for Mt. Grace to arrange the complicated preservation purchase. He recalled the entire Mt. Grace board walking the land in snowshoes in March, and falling in love with the property. "By the time they got back to their cars,

everyone had their cell phones out," trying to locate a sympathetic buyer, French said.

Instead of one, they found two: Donahue and Chalmers, who took ownership of the Peters Farm on Tuesday, with multiple lawyers representing the various parties. In the interim, four (anonymous) Gill families had anted up \$305,000 to finance Mt Grace's prepurchase of the APR rights, realizing the state was at least six months away from completing the application for the

Peters Farm. Bascom Hollow was too precious to let slip away.

Going by the frontage on Bascom Road, and nearby Burroughs Road, French said 12 building lots could have been developed there. Now, with the 170 acres of the Hollow added to the 1000 or more acres of farmland and forest already permanently preserved in Gill, all residents in town can breathe a little easier. Parcel by parcel, the commons are being reclaimed.

## The Case of the Hissing Package

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NOTES FROM THE GILL SELECTBOARD

Kulik Aide Hired to Replace Roussel

BY ALEX GOTTSCHALK

Gill town hall will soon be welcoming a new staff member, Tracey Rogers. Rogers will be taking the position of administrative assistant recently vacated by Deb Roussel. Rogers is from Northfield, and is currently a legislative aide for Steve Kulik. Rogers will start working for Gill on July 23rd.

Rogers, who has worked for Kulik for the last year and a half, said, "I know the state budget, I know the state process and I have a lot of legislative contacts. I am friendly and familiar with faces that could help Gill in the budget making process."

"It's going to be very nice having her here," said board

member Nancy Griswold. She added, "She's going to have a lot to do."

Meanwhile, "There is absolutely no fat in our budget," declared Griswold at the Gill selectboard meeting, late on the blisteringly hot afternoon of July 9th.

This statement came amid discussion of the upcoming district meeting for voters in both Gill and Montague to decide on the \$16,426,000 '08 budget proposed for the regional school district. The amount the G-M schools have asked Gill to contribute to that budget is \$1,338,670.

On Tuesday, July 10th, the school committee set the date for the regional district meeting: Tuesday, July 31st, at



Tracey Rogers

7 p.m. at the Turners Falls High School.

"The whole budget is going to depend on the schools. The town side is down to a reasonable amount," said board member Ann Banash,

seconding statement.

Griswold's Banash said, "It's usually things like burnt food. We don't charge for fire drills, or actual fires, obviously." One school outside the purview of the regional school board and its financial concerns was also discussed during the meeting: The Northfield Mount Hermon school currently owes the town of Gill \$1,600 for false fire alarms.

According to Banash, the school gets three "free" false alarms per annum. But in recent months, NMH has been the scene of no fewer than eleven false alarms. For a town whose fire department runs on a tight budget, these alarms quickly add up. Gill will be charging Northfield Mt. Hermon \$200 dollars each, for eight of these incidents.

Commenting on the issue,

On another matter related to the fire department, the bridge on the private road Vassar Way was declared to be too weak to hold fire trucks, some years ago after an engineering assessment, and the board notified the residents of Vassar Way that fire trucks would not be able to respond to their calls as a result. But the citizens of that road have now paid for repairs to the bridge, and the selectboard is expecting the fire department to issue an official statement saying they will once again be able to respond to calls and bring trucks down Vassar Way if need be.

Al Shane, curator of the Museum of Our Industrial Heritage in Greenfield, discussed an artifact found by Brooke, of Leyden. Nina Rossi searched for more artifacts in the background. Twenty-six people participated in the Industrial Archeology Walk at the former John Russell Cutlery site on Saturday, July 7th.

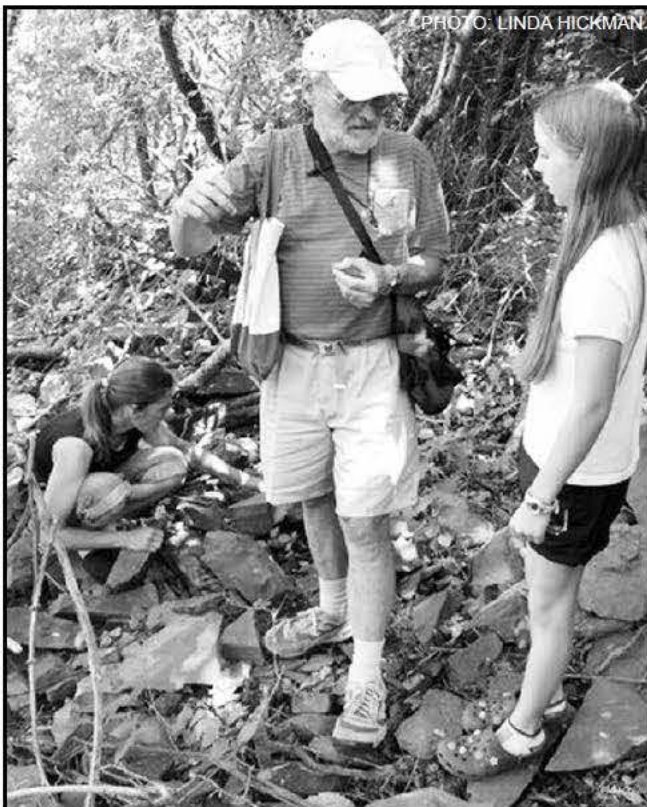


PHOTO: LINDA HICKMAN

Industrial Archeology Walk

BY LINDA HICKMAN

TURNERS FALLS- Al Shane, curator of the Museum of Our Industrial Heritage, led a fascinating walk on Saturday, July 7th, searching for artifacts at the site of the former John Russell Cutlery. Shane began his program inside the Great Falls Discovery Center. He gave an overview of the cutlery, which was built in 1868. It began as the Green River Cutlery in Greenfield before relocating to Turners. In its day, it was the largest manufacturer of cutlery in the world, producers of

tableware and knives. In 1933, the Harrington Company of Southbridge bought the John Russell Cutlery. In 1936, the factory was flooded by ten feet of water. The machinery was moved to Southbridge. The buildings were torn down in 1958. Shane showed examples of the fine knives produced in Turners Falls. He also showed what types of artifacts can be found by the old foundation along the Connecticut River. Apparently, the workers threw defective items out

the windows. After the short talk, Shane led the 26 participants on a tour of the former site, in the shadow of the Gill-Montague Bridge, and slightly to the north. He pointed out examples of broken grindstones, and encouraged everyone to look for metal artifacts. Many items were found. He identified them, and explained their uses. In the future, Shane plans to lead another walk, featuring more of the old factory foundations, in conjunction with the Great Falls Discovery Center.

116th Season of the Montague Community Band July 16th and 30th Concerts at Peskeomskut Park, 7 p.m. Sponsored in part by a grant from the Montague Cultural Council, a local agency that is supported by the Massachusetts Cultural Council



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NOTES FROM THE WENDELL SELECTBOARD

# Town Office Artwork Planned

BY NICHOLE CLAYTON

Carolyn Manley gave the selectboard an update for the newly formed interior design committee for the new Wendell town office building on June 27th. The committee has met twice, and Manley said they are developing a plan for the interior of the new town hall, to include work by local artists. They will be housing some historical art pieces on a permanent basis, and they plan to also use the walls of town hall to display pieces from local artisans on a revolving basis.

Manley asked the board to set funds aside for framing the permanent artwork, and for picture rails for the revolving display. The committee is excited to be housing a quilt they are 99% sure the library will be donating to them. If all goes well, they plan to hang the quilt in the front corridor of the new town office building, behind glass.

Manley said the committee wants to hold a dedication ceremony for the new building in honor of the citizens of Wendell. Selectboard member Christine Heard said, "It is such a good building, I want to show it off."



NICHOLE CLAYTON PHOTO

Wendell's new town office building

As the discussion turned to landscaping at the new building, board chair Ted Lewis said, "The fall is the time to plant trees, but the best time is not at all." Nevertheless, the consensus seemed to be in favor of simple, low upkeep, appealing plantings around the building. The town is also considering the style of sign

for the town offices, as well as the best location for it. Board member Dan Keller said some damaged areas of the floor, where tiles were buckling, have now been fixed, and the outdoor faucets that were not working will soon be fixed. The faucets need to be turned on by a plumber in the ceiling, and then

the location of the valves will be recorded for any future needs residents or users of the grounds may have. The board announced that the dedication of the new Wendell Library will be held on Sunday, July 15th, at 2 p.m. In other news, the board approved the job description for

the custodian position for the town office building, and they scheduled interview dates for the current applicants.

• The board set meeting dates for the next three months, as follows: July 11th, 25th, August 8th, 22nd, September 5th, and 19th.

The meeting came to a close with great enthusiasm as the selectboard headed out to check the grounds for the best location for a new town office sign.

## New Wendell Library Celebration

You are cordially invited to attend Opening Day Celebrations of the new Wendell Free Library on Sunday, July 15th at 2 p.m. Please join us at the new Library to celebrate this historic community event. The event will include music, refreshments, dancing in the street and congratulations to one and all.

"A library is not a luxury but one of the necessities of life."

- Henry Ward Beecher

## OLVER from pg 6

Iran, and warned of the possibility of nuclear retaliation against the US should that come to pass. To counter the argument that there is not enough support among members of Congress to consider impeachment, Bob Feuer of Stockbridge stated, "In 2007, 34% of Republicans are in favor of impeachment. That is twice the level at the time of the initiation of Nixon's impeachment." Rebutting Olver's claim that "the Nixon impeachment deadlocked government - nothing of significance passed of any value," another speaker asserted that during the Nixon impeachment proceedings, Congress managed to raise the minimum wage, pass the Endangered Species Act, and began to draw down troop numbers in Viet Nam. Those present were reminded of Olver's pre-

vious admission that Congress is in effect already deadlocked: "We can't even get the simplest vote through the margins of the Senate."

The group entered into a heated discussion on the importance of making decisions based on principle, as opposed to political expediency. A Montague citizen concluded by pointing out, "We can't defend the Constitution only when it is convenient for us to do so."

Olver responded:

"Nancy Pelosi has done a magnificent job. But we don't have the votes. If we go after the impeachment issue, we eliminate every other strategy." Olver repeated his hope that eventually investigations may uncover wrongdoing on the part of the administration that could turn up grounds for impeachment. He shared his belief that there is a chance that in September, enough

Republicans will change their position that Congress will have the votes to stop the war in Iraq.

While Olver shared the group's concern about the administration's "power grab," it was apparent at the close of the meeting that John Olver had not yet been persuaded to co-sponsor HR 333. Follow-up email conversations among impeachment advocates who attended the meeting shared a sense of frustration, along with a determination to continue to lobby Olver and members of the Massachusetts legislature to support initiating the process of impeaching the President and Vice-President.

Those who support impeachment can contact representative Olver and urge him to sign onto HR 333, and to make a public statement in support of

impeachment. For more information, go to <http://impeachch-eney.org>

## HIGHLIGHTS OF THE WENDELL POLICE LOG

### Debit Card Withdrawals

- Sunday 6-10**  
False fire and burglar alarm at Jennison Road residence. flags ripped off poles in center of town.
- Wednesday 6-13**  
Plain Road resident reports withdrawals on his debit card were made at Full Tilt Poker.com online.
- Saturday 6-16**  
Ted Lewis reported American
- Saturday 6-30**  
Davis Road resident arrested on Orange Court Warrant.
- Wednesday 7-4**  
West Street resident reported gate taken down on Old Egypt Road.



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# Teen Injured at Rock Dam Still in Hospital

BY MATT ROBINSON

**TURNERS FALLS** - Donovan Murphy is getting better. On Tuesday, June 26th, Donovan was badly injured in a diving accident, in sight of his parents, at the Rock Dam in Turners Falls, which has left him in the hospital recovering from multiple fractures to vertebrae in his neck, paralyzed from the chest down, with a tracheotomy and a breathing tube. After an outpouring of support from the community, daily visits from his mother, multiple operations, and tremendous work from Donovan himself, he is showing some signs of improvement.



*Donovan Murphy is getting better, at Boston Children's Hospital.*

He can talk. "He is very good at moving his lips," his mother,

Jennifer Murphy reported on Tuesday, July 10th, although the breathing tube prevents normal

speech. She described his speech as "a raspy whisper," but she can understand him. And he can eat now. "He passed his swallowing test," Jennifer Murphy explained. "He can eat food," she said hopefully. "The swelling is going down every day. He even says he has some feeling in his legs." Jennifer sighed.

Donovan's grandmother, Judy Metcalf, said "It might just be psychological, but he says he has some feeling in his feet. He's getting better every day."

Although his family is hopeful, they are also realistic. "He broke C-6 and C-7, and will have a plate in his neck for the rest of his life," Jennifer said. She spoke about the months in hospital and years of therapy Donovan will have to endure.

And now he's leaving her. Donovan will be two hours away from his family. "He's being transferred from Bay State, to Boston Children's Hospital," she said. "He'll be at that hospital for three months."

Although Bay State Hospital will no longer be providing care for Donovan, Jennifer could say only good things about that institution. He was even allowed to use a laptop there. "He can't

move his fingers yet," Jennifer explained. "But he uses his arms to move around the screen. And he can use the keyboard with a pointer. Next, he's going to learn to play video games," she concluded.

But he'll be two hours away. His mom won't be able to visit her son every day any more. "I'm going to spend a week at a hotel," she said. "Then I'm coming home."

Donovan Murphy is getting better. And even though Jennifer Murphy can't see her son every single day, he'll be in her thoughts and in her prayers, every hour until he's home again.

## OPINION

### Paving and Repaving on Avenue A

BY JOSEPH A. PARZYCH

**TURNERS FALLS** - Ever wonder who is paying C&A Construction Company to tear up sidewalk ramps on Avenue A and reconstruct them?

The answer is, "You, the taxpayer." You are paying them about \$225,000 in all. But not to worry, it costs that much to fly W. to Camp David just to go bicycling, while the Iraq war is costing us a staggering \$200 million each day, to say nothing of our dead and wounded young men and women.

So, why are C & A Construction's employees jackhammering sidewalk ramps (built in the early 1990s), digging up curbstones, hauling away blacktop and dirt, then trucking in gravel and blacktop, and pouring concrete and resetting bricks?

The answer is that the 25 handicapped ramps on Avenue A do not meet new ADA (Americans with Disabilities Act) code, according to Philip Pike, engineer for Weston & Sampson, overseeing the project and coordinating the day-to-day work with superintendent Ralph Farga of C&A.

"The [ramp] changes are designed for safety, to provide a level spot before the ramp, when possible," engineer Pike said, "to allow a wheelchair-bound person to stop and look before descending the ramp. But we need to be reasonable. It isn't always possible to do that, so we do the best we can."

Speaking of being reasonable, James Vias, of Turners Falls, who gets around with an electric wheelchair since he had a stroke, said, "The ramps are a definite improvement."

Vias was once a custodian at Turners Falls High. Now, he depends on his battery powered wheelchair to get him where he wants to go. But, he can't always do that. He would prefer to have handicapped access to the stores before spending money on tweaking the grade of the sidewalk ramps.

"The new sidewalk ramps are nice, but there's only about three or four stores in town that I can go into. Most of the stores have steps that block the way."

Store owners, who are paying taxes to finance the ramp project grant, would still have to dig into their own pockets if they are to provide ramps for their stores. Many of the stores are "grandfathered" so that owners do not have to build ramps - unless they improve their storefronts.

Maybe that is why no one is anxious to upgrade.

"The worst of it is, the ADA code keeps changing," C&A engineer Andy Pompei said. "Tomorrow, they could be different and we'll be back doing the sidewalk ramps over again." Which is fine with Pompei; it's an easy job, no deep cuts, water, ledge or other problems to give a contractor gray hair and the job only requires a minimum of equipment.



PARZYCH PHOTO

*Jim Vias crosses Avenue A on his electric wheelchair as construction continues to remove architectural access barriers in the background*

"This is a boring job," Pompei said, "not dangerously deep, no pipes or cables to break or hold up progress. I can get into more trouble on the weekend telling off my in-laws."

The ramps were originally constructed in the early 1990s, according to Montague DPW superintendent Tom Bergeron. But as Pompei stated, codes keep changing. And speaking of changes and our taxpayer dollars - that brings us to the debacle at Peskeomskut Park.

New England Infrastructure, Inc. of Southborough, the contractor responsible for installing the sidewalks, used a 3/8" pea

stone surface, as the designer specified. The park is supposed to be handicapped accessible, but the rough sidewalks are highly unsatisfactory for anyone with a walker, or even a wheelchair. The lawn area looks a bit like the contractor is also trying to grow grass on pea stone there as well, according to some Turners Falls residents who have inspected progress of the newly seeded lawn.

No one wants to bid on the sidewalk repaving because the job requires a sidewalk paver, and no contractor wants to be held liable for the results not meeting approval again, accord-

ing to Bergeron. "There are a couple of companies who have sidewalk pavers. We're going to clear everything, and put the job out to bid again."

When the ramps are done, Avenue A is slated to get resurfaced. Maybe the paving contractor who gets that contract will pave Peskeomskut Park sidewalks, as well.

"We don't want to bid on the park sidewalk job," Ralph Farga, superintendent for C&A said. "We could do a nice job by hand, but they want it done with a sidewalk paver and we don't have one," Farga said with a shrug.

New England Infrastructure's spokesman said they will reseed the lawns this fall, at the contractor's expense. He said they will wait until fall because it has been too dry this summer. Where has he been?

Repaving of the park walks will cost more money. But, no big deal. Even if you total up all the money spent on tweaking the pitch of ramp grades, building Peskeomskut Park and repaving the sidewalks, it would still only add up to the cost of about seven seconds of the four years and counting Iraq war. And no one has died on Avenue A.



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**HIGHLIGHTS OF THE ERVING POLICE LOG**

**Basement Smoke and a Stolen License Plate**

**Tuesday 7-3**

10:00 p.m. Report of smoke in the basement at a W Main Street address. Fire Department on scene. No fire found.

**Wednesday 7-4**

1:30 p.m. Report of a stolen license plate taken off of a vehicle at Longo's Auto on

Lester Street. Report filed.

**Thursday 7-5**

10:00 p.m. Report from a High Street address stating there was a prowler in the garage. Area searched. All secure. No footprints from rain and no signs of forced entry.

**Friday 7-6**

5:43 p.m. After a motor vehicle stop on Route 2 at Forest Street, Susan Rameau of Fitchburg was arrested on a default warrant.

**Sunday 7-8**

2:00 p.m. Report of a loose dog on Northfield Road. Found German Shorthair

Pointer with no tags. Took dog to kennel.

3:40 p.m. Report from Freighthouse Antiques stating that a suspicious man was making female employees uncomfortable. Subject left heading west bound on Route 2 on a motorcycle. Unable to locate.

**Tuesday 7-10**

6:05 p.m. After a motor vehicle stop on Route 2 [redacted] was issued a criminal application for unlicensed operation and speeding.

10:45 p.m. Report of loud campers at Laurel Lake. Ranger confiscated alcohol. Subjects were advised to keep it down.

**HIGHLIGHTS OF THE GILL POLICE LOG**

**Woman Thrown from Horse**

**Thursday 6-28**

3:30 a.m. Officer called out to a West Gill Road residence – trespassing complaint. Officers sent to the area, no one was found.

7:30 p.m. Officer called to the Barton Cove fishing area for unwanted individuals. No one was found on arrival.

**Friday 6-29**

12:40 p.m. Assist Bernardston Police with a Bald Mountain Road medical assistance. Woman was thrown from a horse.

10:15 p.m. Officer called to a Main Road residence regarding a possible restraining order violation. Gill, Erving, and State Police all respond. Parties

involved had already left upon officers arrival. No complaints issued at this time.

11:53 p.m. Officer called to a Boyle road residence for a possible domestic in progress. Gill, Northfield, and Bernardston assisted. Officers found dispute was verbal and settled on arrival.

**Saturday 6-30**

8:30 a.m. Animal complaint on West Gill Road. Officer responded and nothing was found.

7:00 p.m. Officer requested to take a report of damaged property of a West Gill Road residence.

8:15 p.m. Officers assisted Bernardston Police with domestic dispute.

9:45 p.m. Complaint of fireworks on Main Road – officer found subjects setting off fireworks and spoke to the parties.

**Sunday 7-01**

10:55 p.m. Officer requested to respond to a West Gill Road residence for a verbal dispute.

**Friday 7-6**

2:01 a.m. Alarm sounding at Oak Street residence, checked all secure.

5:06 a.m. Vehicle vs. deer accident on Main Road near Gill lights.

6:05 a.m. Report of a kidnapping from a Mount Hermon Road location. Ransom money paid from family, out of the country,

before police were notified. Subject's location was verified; same was safe. Incident under investigation with FBI involved.

**Saturday 7-7**

2:45 p.m. Report of ATV operating on roadway on West Gill Rd.

3:58 p.m. Report of possible scam with magazine sales person that occurred on Walnut Street. Under investigation.

7:03 p.m. Report from resident of South Cross Road reporting suspicious person selling books in the area.

10:04 p.m. Assisted Montague police with possible breaking and entering in progress / assault.

**Sunday 7-8**

8:10 a.m. Downed wires on Main Road, telephone company advised.

11:15 a.m. Found bicycle in the Riverside area, returned with same to station.

**Monday 7-9**

9:20 a.m. Assisted state police with motor vehicle crash on French King Highway.

4:10 p.m. Report of tractor trailer creating traffic hazard at Gill lights.

10:01 p.m. Report of a disturbance at the state boat ramp on French King Highway. Removed youths from swimming near the dock area after hours.

**HIGHLIGHTS OF THE MONTAGUE POLICE LOG**

**Public Drinking at the Skate Park**

**Thursday 6-28**

10:45 p.m. Caller requested an officer to the woods at the end of North Street. A 15 year old male was arrested and charged with resisting arrest and two counts of assault and battery on a police officer. Another subject was placed in protective custody.

**Friday 6-29**

6:44 p.m. Caller requested an officer to a Bridge Street address.

[redacted] was arrested and charged with domestic assault and battery, threatening to commit a crime, and assault with a dangerous weapon.

7:53 p.m. Report of a fight at an Oakman Street address.

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

**Saturday 6-30**

12:58 a.m. After a motor vehicle stop at Millers Falls Road at Cross Street, [redacted]

was arrested and charged with speeding, not having license in possession, operating under the influence of liquor, operating with a suspended license, and possession of a class D drug.

7:20 p.m. [redacted] was arrested on a straight warrant.

**Thursday 7-5**

3:24 p.m. Walk in to station reported a disturbance at a Worcester Street address. Found to be neighbors having issues over parking. Report taken. Everyone advised of options.

**Friday 7-6**

4:09 p.m. Report of an unwanted person at a 3rd Street address. Subject placed in protective custody.

7:09 p.m. After a motor vehicle check on Turners Falls Road near Hatchery Road, [redacted] was arrested and charged with operating under the influence of liquor, speeding, and operating to endanger. Another subject was placed in protective custody.

9:42 p.m. Walk in to station reported an assault at a Prospect Street address.

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

**Saturday 7-7**

9:26 p.m. Report of a larceny on the road to camp sites by the Tech School. Padlock was missing from gate. Report taken.

**Sunday 7-8**

6:26 p.m. Walk in to station reported public drinking at the skate park. Subject placed in protective custody.

6:36 p.m. Report of a breaking and entering at an E Main Street address. Landlord reports previous tenants entering after eviction. Gone on arrival. Building secured.

**Monday 7-9**

11:28 a.m. Walk in to station reported a larceny at a Federal Street address. Caller states that son stole ATM card and transactions had been made. Under investigation.

**Tuesday 7-10**

7:01 p.m. Report of an assault at a 7th Street address.

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

9:16 p.m. [redacted] was arrested at 2nd Street Sports Bar on 3 default warrants.



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SCHOOL from pg 1

towns are eligible and invited to come," to the district meeting, which will have "an agenda with one item: the fiscal '08 budget. It can be voted up or down or amended, and then voted up or down. If a reduced budget is voted, the school committee could accept that, or vote another amount," at which point the budget would head back to another district meeting for approval.

"We're locked into a process until such time as the Commissioner of Education (David Driscoll) steps in and makes a budget for us," Roche said that by statute, if the towns cannot agree on a budget for the schools by December, the state Commissioner of Education must intercede and enforce a budget, which the towns would then have to meet.

Until such time as the Commissioner or the towns enact a budget, the G-M schools will run on a budget fixed by the Commissioner at approximately the amount the schools ran on during '07, but limited to 1/12th of that amount per month. The figure the Commissioner has set

for Gill-Montague to operate on a 1/12th basis, while a permanent '08 budget is being worked out, is \$16,106,000. Roche said this figure splits the difference between what the schools operated on last year (not including the debt for the completed and reimbursed high school/middle school building project) and the amount the schools are seeking this year. And he said the Commissioner could increase the 1/12th budget if he deems fit.

"If this budget is not adequate, the Commissioner can raise it. The intention is to provide the schools with an adequate budget until such time as we get a budget passed," Roche said.

Under the present 1/12th budget, the G-M schools can spend no more than \$1,342,222 a month, without seeking permission from the DOE. Under this arrangement, the towns of Gill and Montague are billed quarterly, and must meet the school assessment, regardless of town meeting appropriation.

In another hallmark of eroding local control in the budget process, Roche said the upcoming regional meeting on July 31st cannot, statutorily, pass a school

budget that is contingent on the towns subsequently passing Proposition 2 1/2 overrides. "You pass it or you don't, and then the towns have to deal with it," Roche said.

Roche said the final numbers on state aid are in, and have improved the school district's outlook for the coming year somewhat. "It looks as though we're up \$92,000 on a cherry sheet. It gives us some additional breathing room." But not much. The gap between the towns' appropriations and the school committee's most recent budget - from which ten teacher and staff positions have already been reduced - is \$563,421.

In other business, at their Tuesday, July 20th meeting, Roche called on the school committee to examine the possibility of changing the regional district agreement to make it easier to close an elementary school. Presently, eight votes of the nine member committee are required to close an elementary school, a threshold Roche termed "an almost insurmountable obstacle." [Roche's speech to the school committee on the need to change the district agreement is reprinted beginning on page 4.]

School committee member Sandy Brown, of Gill, responded, "Maybe I'm optimistic. If we could stay with 8 to 1 and make the decision, the community would stay with us, rather than change the process to get something passed."

"That's an interesting point," said Roche.

School committee chair Mary Kociela took a middle position. "I don't want people to think, 'Oh, they're just changing the rules so they can get something done.'" She said she felt the committee should "respect the process we have followed so carefully." But she also supported Roche's call for establish a "small group" of committee members to brainstorm ways of breaking the impasse on the school configuration issue.

Yet, when Kociela called for a show of hands of committee members who would like to serve on such a small group, all seven members present raised their hands. Which led to a rare moment of levity on the board.

She said she would take the matter under consideration, and appoint four members in time for a subcommittee meeting on July 17th.

Other committee members split on Roche's recommendation. "I wholeheartedly recommend it," said Kris Boyle, of Turners Falls. "Reaching an 8-1 vote is nearly impossible."

Mike Langknecht, of Montague Center, responded, "The whole reason the elementary study group was set up was to make decisions in a positive mode. We still need to look at how we can move forward in the best way for our district, rather than react in panic to the hypothesis the state will take control." He added five votes was all that was needed to close part of Hillcrest, as the school committee decided to do in December of 2006, before reversing that vote a month later.

Nancy Daniel-Green recalled that when the regional agreement was drawn up in 1977, the 8-1 vote threshold was established "so no town could close another town's school." In light of the new DOE regulations mandated a review of any school closing decision, Daniel-Green said, "Now there are checks and balances," that should ease the community's fears on that score.



ROCKE from pg 4

I know some people are not going to be happy hearing this. But I can't believe that serves the interest of any school, or the school committee, or the communities at this point.

With the budget situation - the state poised to come in - we need to do something. I think the agreement needs to be changed. How it is changed, the exact format, and the process, that's something we need to discuss as a school committee.

When I first looked at it, my feeling was the split on the school committee is not some flaw or fault of the school committee. It's reflecting and mirroring a division of opinion within the community. The closeness of the vote on the non-binding referendum is proof of that. It's not as if the

school committee is out of touch. That's not the case at all. The school committee is in touch with these two constituencies within the community who have an honest difference of opinion about what should happen within the community.

The school committee should be commended for the studies that have been done, exhaustive studies, trying to balance fiscal needs, and educational needs, and political realities. This committee has the authority and the power over whether to close school buildings or not. Furthermore, no buildings can be closed without Department of Education review. Not just approval, but review. They send in a team, and do an extensive analysis. Only when they've reviewed the situation can a school be closed.

I'm persuaded the decision to

close a school should stay at the school committee level. But I do believe that the eight vote out of nine requirement is an obstacle.

The school committee can recommend a change to the regional agreement, which then goes to the towns at either special town meetings or annual town meetings, and by a majority vote of town meeting, if both towns approve, the regional agreement is then modified. There is nothing special about this eight out of nine vote requirement; it is a modifiable part of the regional agreement.

I believe we need to demonstrate our ability as a community to pass a budget and resolve the elementary school issue. We need to do this sooner rather than later. I believe the reality is that if we do not, other people may begin making decisions for this school district.

I know this is a thorny problem. I know that it has been a problem for ten or fifteen years. I know if there were a simple solution, it would have been solved a long time ago. And I know there are honest and strong reasons on both sides for the positions people have.

I do have a sense of urgency. We need to do something different from what we've done in the past. Whatever we do, we need to do it in a way that's respectful of everything that's gone before, and puts in place something the community as a whole can live with. This may seem difficult to achieve - a solution that would actually begin to heal some of the divisions within the community which are deep and painful.

Ken Roche is the interim superintendent of the GMRSD.



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budget?" Rocke replied, "That's a good question. For us to reduce the budget beyond a certain point, we'd be taking the towns below the level of educational capacity they want to go."

"Gill-Montague has the leadership and the fiscal resources to pull our way out of this crisis," the superintendent asserted. But he also cautioned, "Very often you see towns weigh finances on the one side, and education on the other, and you try to find a balance between the two. But school choice throws everything off. At some point, parents make a choice, and it can become very costly to the towns. There's a tipping point you can reach if you cut the budget too much; we have to be conscious of that as we move forward with the budget."

Rocke said there were pluses and minuses contained in the MBOE decision. "If the Department of Education comes out here with financial help, and help with technical issues, and help with curriculum development, I would welcome that." The MBOE will send a fact-finding team to assess the status of education at the GMRSD, and offer assistance in ameliorating problems, including "a lack or capacity on the fiscal side to support the district, and a lack of capacity on the leadership side, in terms of personnel, to improve student achievement. He cited the inability of the district to add a fulltime curriculum development coordinator in this year's budget, as called for by the state's recent educational assessment of the GMRSD.

Now that the number of students at the Great Falls Middle School has expanded, educator Nancy Daniel-Green called on the G-M school committee to consider reinstating a principal at both the high school and the middle school, with their own deans, rather than having one principal, and one assistant principal oversee secondary education at both schools

On the minus side, Rocke said, "We have a concern that the label of underperforming will affect people's perceptions of the district, further stigmatize the district, and give parents the impression that our education is inadequate."

To the contrary, Rocke said, "We are performing very well with the resources we have to work with," and there have been significant improvements since the '04-'05 Educational Quality Assessment the MBOE based their decision on was performed. Rocke cited a "New reading curriculum, new math curriculum, targeted instruction for students, teacher and principal training," all put in place since the EQA report, and stated, "Student achievement is improving," at district schools.

Speaking of the term 'underperforming,' Rocke said, "It's so frustrating to me to hear that label. We have really good schools, and really good teachers. Parents should not be

afraid: it's a label."

Referring to a report by Montague finance committee chair Jeff Singleton showing the G-M schools had lost 25% of their student enrolment in the last 10 years, but had also shed 21% of their staff, Rocke said, "It is difficult for a school to contract efficiently, but we have done exactly that." He said the GMRSD has reduced special education costs by bringing out-of-district placements back to the district, and is exploring the possibility of collaborative administration with other districts in the area.

Rocke said he hoped the move by the MBOE to label the Gill-Montague district 'underperforming,' "would galvanize the community and be a wake-up call to the community."

But he said if the district does not get its fiscal house in order promptly, it is in danger of being declared "chronically underperforming" by the MBOE, which would open the door for the state to take control of the district, and enforce budgetary requirements on the member towns.

As a step towards resolving the \$863,421 gap between what the towns of Gill and Montague have voted and what the GMRSD says it needs to run the schools in '08, the school committee voted unanimously to shave an additional \$300,000 off of the towns' assessment, by cutting \$115,000 by eliminating five more teacher and staff positions (for a total of 10), by declaring their intent to find \$35,000 in unspecified cuts, and by taking \$150,000 out of their free cash (excess and deficiency) account, leaving a scant \$18,700 in free cash to handle the upcoming year's exigencies. But G-M business manager Lynn Bassett said she expected that account to grow by \$150,000 by July 1st, due to the district's stringent penny pinching on supplies and utilities over the past year.

Montague finance committee chair Jeff Singleton, who has been campaigning for the state to assume a fair share of the responsibility for the present budget crunch, said the state has determined the town of Montague's minimum contribution for the schools should be \$4.3 million, "but we contribute over \$6 million. We're 50% percent over what the state recommends." The schools' share of total town spending has increased from 45% to 55% in the past decade, Singleton claimed, while the state's share of net school spending has decreased by a similar percent over the same period of time. "The fiscal problem is primarily on the state side," said Singleton.

Rocke said there was a good possibility that the GMRSD would be eligible for state 'Pothole' funding as early as August or September, but that would still be too late to calculate in the budget as certified by the school committee on Tuesday, nor would it be likely

to go far toward plugging the \$563,421 gap still to be reckoned with. Of Montague's share of that remaining deficit, Singleton grumbled, "The town does not have \$500,000!"

And, at least in the short run, it may be irrelevant whether the town of Montague, by itself, feels it can come up with the additional revenues needed to fund the re-certified '08 school budget. Rocke made it clear that with two failed budgets, the GMRSD is now headed towards a "district meeting," where all registered voters in Gill and Montague will be invited to a joint meeting to vote on the budget. If the voters approve the new figure certified by the G-M school committee on Tuesday - \$16,426,901 - then the towns of Gill and Montague will have to meet separately and find ways to fund their assessments. If, on the other hand, the district voters reject the budget, and a way forward cannot be found, the state requires the towns to pay the district 1/12th of the previous year's budget each month. A one twelfth budget, if it is calculated to include the '07 debt payments for the high school building project (\$1 million more than the '08 debt figure) would be substantially in excess of what the towns have voted so far this year. And if the towns and the district do not agree on a budget by December, Rocke said the state commissioner of education would step in and establish a budget for the GMRSD and require the towns to pay for it.

The district meeting will be held within 45 days, and a time and place, and moderated by a person yet to be determined.

The town of Montague will find it has \$62,000 more than it thought it had to work with in addressing the \$500,000 budget gap. On Tuesday, the school committee also approved a lower than expected contract for replacing the roof on the Montague Center School, for \$95,475, far less than the \$158,000 the town appropriated for the job at the June 2nd annual town meeting. Rocke said that money would be returned to the town.



**NOTES FROM THE MONTAGUE SELECTBOARD**

# Avenue Construction Projects Reviewed

**BY NICHOLE CLAYTON** - The Montague selectboard meeting of July 2nd began with a positive review of the response time of emergency personnel to the swimming accident that took place at the Rock Dam in the Patch on Tuesday, June 26th, which resulted in serious injury to 15-year-old Donovan Murphy. Officer Dan Miner, the first on the scene, was recognized for his bravery and quick thinking assisting in the rescue of the teen, who had received serious head trauma after diving in shallow water. Sergeant Chip Dodge, second on scene, was also commended, along with the teamwork of the Montague police department and the Turners Falls firefighters, along with local residents and family members at the scene who worked together to ensure that Murphy was transferred to the hospital in a timely manner. Board chair Pat Allen said, "The officers and firefighters showed a great deal of dedication and professionalism."

Bruce Hunter, of the Franklin County Regional Housing Authority, reviewed several ongoing town construction projects, funded by the Community Development Block Grant. He said that the new crosswalk and alleyway access project will provide improved handicap and pedestrian access along Avenue A. The work should be completed by the end of July. Hunter said the Peskeomskut

Park renovation on Avenue A was also a great success. There were great reviews from the opening ceremony, great lighting and sound, and the Montague Community Band was happy with the new bandstand. The park's landscaping has greatly improved the appearance of this central downtown green space.

Hunter said the lawns will be reseeded in the fall, under warranty, and the Massachusetts Architectural Access Board has granted a 45-day extension for repaving the walkways to meet ADA code requirements, as the town received no bids by the June 30th cut off date. The town will advertise the repaving work again, and hope for a better response. The oil and stone that was originally laid down had some quality issues, Hunter said.

Abbondanzio said, "Beautifying and making the downtown safer makes other projects easier to fund."

Abbondanzio said next year's CDBG funds of approximately a million dollars will tentatively go towards the new police station: brick and mortar - \$700,000; the administrative cost for the police station project - \$200,000; housing rehab project - \$100,000. The total cost for the new police station is estimated at \$4 million, hopefully to be split between town funds and state grants that the town is in the process of applying for,

along with the block grant funds.

**In other business, the board:**

- Awarded \$8400 for a feasibility study to determine the best way to re-establish driving access to the Dry Hill Road cemetery, work to begin directly.

- Approved an increase in the cost of curbside trash pickup. In October, the cost will go to \$3.00 a bag, and in January the cost of barrel stickers will increase as well. This is to cover the cost of the pick up for both trash and recycling. The fee hike should raise about \$40,000 over a calendar year.

- A reminder from DPW head Tom Bergeron that the leaf pile at the transfer station is just for leaves and grass clippings. Brush and branches can be brought during regular hours to the proper location at the transfer station. If the wrong materials continue to be put in the leaf pile, the DPW will be forced to close it.

- Requests to use the bandstand at Peskeomskut Park are coming in. The Montague Community Band, as well as the Riverculture Project will be holding summer concerts there.

- A date of July 30th was set for a discussion on a new policy for outdoor dining and alcohol consumption on public property.

# They're Coming By River

**BY ANNE JEMAS**

**GREAT FALLS** - The public is invited to help Turners Falls welcome 75 rowers from 17 different countries on Monday afternoon, July 23rd. Bring your children to watch seventeen 33-foot-long boats arrive on the Turners Falls side of Barton Cove, at the beach located at the end of the long field, beyond the old Red Bridge abutment, across from Unity Park.

The rowers are part of an international rowing federation that sponsors a trip on a different body of

water somewhere in the world each year. This year, the rowers will be going down the Connecticut River and raising money for water quality testing for the Connecticut River Watershed at the same time. The rowers will be arriving in Turners Falls around 3:00 p.m.

There will be music and a brief ceremony to acknowledge First Light Power Company for their sponsorship of this event.

For more information on the rowers, go to <http://www.ctriver.org/fisa.html>.

**NOTES FROM THE MONTAGUE FINANCE COMMITTEE**

# Fin-Com to Fund 5-Year G-M Budget Study

**BY JOHN HANOLD**

**MONTAGUE** - The Montague finance committee met on Wednesday, July 11th to discuss possible next steps to resolve the gap between the assessment required by the Gill-Montague school committee's June 27th budget and the assessment voted at the Montague annual town meeting. Though the finance committee and the school committee continue to meet regularly, the upcoming district-wide meeting of voters from Gill and Montague, scheduled for July 31st, was on everyone's minds.

By majority vote, the committee recommended that a consultant be hired, and funded from town reserves, to extend the work on a five-year budget plan to include the school district, as well as the town, to be completed by early fall. This effort would address a need recognized by both the town and the school district to come up with a plan for bringing long term costs into balance with revenues, but

which district staff cannot accomplish in this timeframe with their own resources.

The results should strengthen the district's response to a state fact-finding team which will evaluate the district's budget and the ability of Gill and Montague to fund it. Contributing to the discussion were interim G-M superintendent Ken Rocke, school committee chair Mary Kociela, budget subcommittee chair Valeria Smith, and selectboard member Patricia Pruitt.

A unanimous vote asked the selectboard and school committee to begin the process of application to join the state-sponsored Group Insurance Commission for health insurance coverage, which would probably not have effect until the 2008-2009 year. The expectation is that joining the GIC would moderate health insurance cost increases for town and school employees, though town accountant Carolyn Olsen cautioned the com-

mittee that implementation and family coverage issues may lessen the eventual savings.

Throughout the discussion, committee members and the audience wrestled with issues of local versus outside control of education and financial decisions, active involvement of the legislature in long-term solutions, and the pros and cons of using reserves and a Proposition 2½ override to solve immediate and continuing deficits.

Blue Flag Music presents a benefit concert for injured swimmer and Turners Falls resident **Donovan Murphy** Sunday, July 22nd at St. Kaziemerz 197 Avenue A, Turners Falls 3 to 11 p.m. hosted by Dave King from Catamount Performers include Lowdown (classic rock), Afterglow (classic & modern rock), The Mark Snow Band (country & Southern rock), Mike and Company (alternative rock), Horsepower (Southern rock), The Jason Connelly Band (classic rock & blues), and reuniting for this event with the original members: Watchdog (classic & modern rock). Tickets are \$5 at the door

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Perhaps you stopped by  
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Maybe you took a silent  
walk  
Not being able to talk.  
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Rosser wishes  
To thank you all for your  
acts  
Of comfort.  
A special thanks to the  
community  
Of Wendell for your help  
with Rosalie's  
Tribute on July 1st, and for  
all her  
Wonderful Wendell days.  
We wish to share one of  
Rosalie's  
Poems with you all.

## Things I Love

A smile on a friendly face  
A helping hand – a  
thoughtful word  
A heartfelt kiss – a warm  
embrace  
Poetry – music –  
a beautiful bird  
Sunrise – sunset – a starlit  
sky  
A babbling brook on a  
summer day  
A cozy fire on a wintry  
night  
Family – friends – children  
at play  
Clear lakes – a mountain  
view  
Rainbows – flowers –  
community  
Most of all – my life  
with you.  
– Rosalie Rosser

## OZ from pg 1

pletes its run this weekend, July 13th, 14th (at 7:30 p.m.) and 15th (at 2:00 p.m.). Call ahead for reservations, (413-863-2281); both the opening night and second night shows were near capacity. (Young children might want to try the matinee; the show runs nearly a full three hours, with intermission.)

What is it about this fable of a plucky young lady from the heartland and her battle to best the Wicked Witch that has so tugged the nation's heartstrings for a century or more? Once the failed dry goods merchant and would-be newspaperman, Lyman Frank Baum, son of a Pennsylvania oilman, published *the Wonderful Wizard of Oz* in 1900, with illustrations by W.W. Denslow, he had a runaway best seller on his hands. He wound up churning out thirteen additional tales of the land of Oz to meet an insatiable public's demand. The 1939 MGM film, around which the Country Player's production is faithfully based, merely immortalized Dorothy and Company as national icons, a position to which Baum's books had already elevated them.

Even today, with tornados of unprecedented fury wreaking destruction on Greensburg, Kansas and other communities in our globally warmed midland, Dorothy Gales' tale of pluck and courage in the face of supernatural obstacles and feckless authority figures continues to hit home. Whether we believe Baum modeled the travail of the hapless scarecrow after the plight of the agricultural worker, the rusted tin man on the oppressed industrial worker, and the Munchkins suffering the arbitrary rule of the Witch of East on the little people under the thumb of the Eastern

oligarchy, it takes no sage to see ourselves in Dorothy, yearning for a place free from care and woe, a place neither beyond the rainbow nor at the end of the road, but found only in our heart's ease, our own nostalgic Home.

Director Dave Grout takes a risk staging a production that is so familiar to his audience. If he departs from the MGM classic that is hard-wired into the American psyche after 68 annual viewings, he could be branded for heresy. But if he hews too closely to the screen version, he could be derided for a shameless imitator. He chooses a middle path, and chooses wisely, with only the occasional misstep.

Promising "the movie, with a twist" in the program, Grout and company deliver the goods, including scenes that mirror the movie, some that reinvent it, and some that Victor Fleming and Arthur Freed never would have imagined when they cut their celluloid classic.

Grout's surest stroke was casting Greenfield High School freshman Cayla Plasse in the role of Dorothy. This young lady never shies from the spotlight in a role that would make a lesser actress quail. She has some mighty big slippers to fill, and she does so with seeming ease, and with the unusual mix of tenderness, strength and grace an audience demands from anyone following in that particular movie star's footsteps. Special appreciation is due to Ms. Plasse's handling of the show's signature ballad. "Somewhere Over the Rainbow" is not a song to take over the top, unless you are Judy Garland herself, and Plasse is smart to soft pedal it a bit, which she does, beautifully.

But why stop there? Everyone else in the cast is great; there is not a clinker among them. Well, maybe Grout's choice of his own dad (David Grout, Sr.) to play Uncle Henry could be called into question on a few early lines, but by the time he begins taking Miss Gulch to task in un-Christian terms, we quite forgive him his Plainspoken, earthy reading. And Aunt Em (Sharon Weyers) lends a spare, soulful beauty to her role, bringing her character fully to life as she transforms Em from a no-nonsense, no emotion to spare farmwife to a beacon of love and longing for her wandering niece.

The farmhands are rollicking

clowns in the finest Thespian tradition, and they quote their screen progenitors faithfully once recast as Dorothy's bumbling, devoted companions on the Yellow Brick Road. But they also manage to distinguish themselves from the shadow of Burl Lahr, Ray Bolger, and Jack Haley.

Kati Delaney is a footloose, supple scarecrow, stuffed full of good cheer, straw, and rustic wisecracks. Her *pas de quatre* with three slapstick crows is a scene you could almost remember from childhood, yet entirely original.

Bob Delaney is a stalwart tin man, and whatever he thinks, he's got heart! No matter how well-oiled, he's no Fred Astaire, but he's blessed with charisma to spare, and a can-do attitude.

Last but not least, the pride of the lot, Theresa Chadwick as the comely but cowardly lioness. Quite a lachrymose Leo, she is able to pull off the feat of weeping and moaning and delivering sidesplitting squibs all in one breath. A good dancer, with no thorn in her paw, she remains a thorn in the side of the Wicked ol' Witch to the end.

There are great characters among the munchkins, who bring what is undoubtedly the silliest and most exploitive scene in the movie to wonderful, animated life with their childlike enthusiasm. Especially that darling Lexi Farrick; three cheers for her! And there are great characters among the Winkies and flying squirrels (or are they monkeys?) too.

The whole production moves along swimmingly, scarcely missing a beat, except for one false note when the grim foreboding of Dorothy and Company trudging the path to the Witch's castle is suddenly cast aside for a sprightly, brilliantly lit jitterbug scene, with the entire forest dancing. Just as quickly, the bright lights fade, the mood darkens, and we are expected to bite our nails again, but the suspense has been broken. Here is one scene we wish had played more faithful to the original.

Of the other leads, Sue MacDonald is a bountiful Glinda, all bobbing curls, pink satin, tulle, and curtsies. Jack Arnot is sublime in the role of the Wizard's gatehouse guard. A great, bumbling presence, he upstages everybody with his bluff, booming, full-of-Blarney voice.

Marvin Shedd first bemuses,

then spellbinds in his dual role as Professor Marvel, the wayside prestidigitator in a Carnac the Magnificent hat, and as the great and wonderful Oz himself. Projected larger than life on the side of the stage, omniscient and childlike, like a figure from the final frames of *2001 a Space Odyssey*, he makes a sympathetic cad, loveable and despicable at one stroke. He has a great opening line, copped from Macbeth, as he tries to toast a frank in the gathering storm. But he rises to even greater heights by play's end.

Did we forget to mention Toto? It's hard to choose between the larger than life, hands and knees version (Makenzie Plasse) who accompanies Dot in Oz, and the utterly cute mutt who plays the part in Kansas. Which outdoes the other? We'll let you decide.

Topping them all, and a real showstopper every time she touches down on stage is Mo Hart, the Wickedest Witch of the West. It's not fair to Dorothy, but Evil, in the force of dramatic presentation, always wins out over Good. Even so in *Oz*. She may melt in the end, but Hart keeps us on a wild ride right up to her sudden, sodden denouement.

Plus, she has all the best lines: "You dropped your house on my sister? How could anyone be so unbelievably clumsy?" "I'll stuff a mattress with you, Scarecrow!" "There's nothing so depressing as boundless optimism." And what a face! What a cackle! By god, what a little green make-up can do for a woman.

We won't tell you how the whole thing ends. Oh, what the heck, everyone knows before they walk in how the whole thing ends. It ends with the crowd shivering with that familiar feeling we first felt when we were very young, and we first watched this peculiarly American paean to loyalty, optimism and the power of positive thinking. No matter how corrupt, how hypocritical the powers that supposedly rule our lives and guide our destinies may be, if we stay on the straight and narrow, trust to our friends and our own common sense, we'll find we have everything we've ever needed right at our fingertips. Or perhaps at the tips of our toes. And we'll find our way home again, much refreshed for the experience.



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# Visiting the Land of Cain

**BY PEG & LES BRIDGES**  
**MONTAGUE CENTER**

The Land of Cain, that is one of the names that Labrador, off the north coast of Newfoundland, Canada, has been known by, due to its barrenness, inaccessibility, and cold, damp, foggy climate. It reminded early explorers of the land where Cain was banished by the Lord. Sounds like a great vacation spot, doesn't it? But my husband and I found this land fascinating, historically and culturally, and the people very friendly.



*Les and Peg Bridges in the Iceberg Alley.*

After a two day drive to North Sidney, Nova Scotia, and a 6½ hour ferry ride to Port aux Basques, Newfoundland, we were finally on our way to Labrador via the 'Viking Trail'. En route, we visited Port au Choix. The park's interpretive center told about and displayed artifacts of the First Nations people who traveled from the Bearing Sea land bridge to this site over 8,000 year ago for the abundant fish and game.

From St. Barbe we made a 1½ hour ferry crossing, through Iceberg Alley, to Labrador and the village of L'anse aux Claire. Our bed and breakfast there was delightful. The Lettos, both from generational fishing families, fed us royally with local fish, caribou, and local color and history. A local specialty, found at all the bed and breakfasts in Labrador and Newfoundland, are the par-

tridge berry and bake apple berry jams and preserves, made from the berries found on the rocks in low ground moss. And believe me, Labrador has rocks!

Here there was no electricity until the 1960s, no paved road until 1966. Fishing, long the mainstay of the local economy, has nearly been shut down due to overfishing. We viewed the icebergs from the windows of the B & B, and from all along the road.

We drove the only 56 miles of paved road to Red Bay. There we learned about the Basque fishermen from northern Spain who came to these shores in 1500s for whaling. They established the world's largest whale oil rendering operation in Red Bay. Whale oil, for centuries, was the preferred source of interior lighting and was in great demand throughout Europe. However,

King Philip of Spain put a screeching halt to the transatlantic trade when he requisitioned (twice) all available ships for the Spanish Armada and the planned invasion of the British Isles.

After two days of sighting many icebergs and exploring the small rock-bound fishing villages, we headed back to Newfoundland via ferry through Iceberg Alley to St. Anthony. There we embarked on an exciting boat trip to view many huge icebergs up close. Believe me, they are an awesome sight! The bergs travel two years from Greenland to Newfoundland, where many run aground in 500 - 700 feet of water, then melt and break up in about six weeks.

On this trip, we were also treated to Humpback Whales doing the 'There She Blows!' thing, breaching, slapping the

water, and sounding, with their tails giving us a final wave.

Dr. Wilfred Grenfell, from England, came to Newfoundland and Labrador in the early 20th century and saw a critical need for medical care in the most desolate areas. By dogsled, boat, snowshoe and foot he provided this service. Over the years, Grenfell raised international interest in his mission, and considerable funds. He built nursing stations, hospitals, and even outfitted a medical supply ship. For his efforts, he was knighted by the Queen of England. There is a wonderful museum dedicated to Grenfell in St. Anthony. He retired to Charlotte, VT, and... sur-

prise... he was a very close friend of Dwight Moody, who founded the Northfield School for Girls and the Mt. Hermon School for Boys.

We must now start our trip home, but before leaving this area, I must point out that there is a beauty to all this land, as the terrain varies from tall mountains of the Appalachian mountain chain (Gros Morns) to the rocky coasts, to the lush forests and lovely lake country, with its peat bogs and tundra flowers. The people are extremely friendly, hard working and resilient. Anyone wishing to make this trip, and see whales and icebergs up close and personal, will be truly rewarded with a memorable experience.

## Eagle Watch

**BY PAT CARLISLE**

**GREAT FALLS** - Two eggs again this year; they hatched in early April. The chicks have grown quickly and are now exercising and testing their wings. The larger, first hatched, is often away from the nest, roosting in several trees on Eagle Island, but returns for fresh fish delivered regularly by both parents.

The eagle camera has given us sporadic viewing on Channel 17 this year. We are

hopeful that early winter assessment and repairs will fix the problem.

Those of us who keep watch know the nest tree is old, dead, and very weak. We see it sway in high winds and hope it will fall in a season when there are no eggs or babies. The adults will build a new nest in their area.

We are thankful that the project of "hacking" young eagles to the Quabbin Reservoir in the early 1980s has been a huge success.



*Video Image from Eagle Channel*

There are now many nests near the Connecticut River and around the Quabbin area.

Let's all look forward to another year of eagle watching!

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**Monday July 16th**  
**6:30 p.m.**  
**Discussion to follow**  
**Upstairs Meeting Room**

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# Rough Going for Turners in Newt Guilbault Tourney

BY MATT ROBINSON

**MILFORD** - The Turners Falls Newt-Guilbault Under 12 All Stars won the District 2 Championship, and competed in a state tournament in Milford on Sunday, July 8th. But Sunday wasn't a good day. Turners Falls lost to Milford 6 - 4, and then dropped their second match to Frontier 5 - 4. "This is the worst day we've ever had," said one dejected player.

"No excuses," skipper Ted Bartak said after the second loss. "We have two more tournaments in July."

Turners started off the first game with a first inning home run by Zack Bartak and were able to score three more runs before Milford could answer. But they weren't able to keep the lead, and in the end they lost 6 - 4.

"Playing a team you beat twice already is very hard," coach Tim Meyer explained,



Back row: Coach Mike Markol, Manager Ted Bartak, Coach Tim Meyer, (middle) T.J. Meyer, Zach Bartak, Ryan Wilder, Mike Conant, John Ollari, Malcom Smith, (front) Nino Rodriguez, Cody Booska, Cooper Hemphill, Brody Markol, Marcel Ortiz, Troy Miller

referring to the twice defeated Frontier team. And hard it was. In this game, Frontier scored four runs in the first inning, and though Turners Falls was able to tie the game 4 - 4, they were unable to answer Frontier's last run.

But it's only a game. And they're just boys. "We all went out to dinner after the game and were in great spirits," said Zack's mother, Jennifer Bartak. "The ride home was fine."

Throughout the games, Turners took the high road.

Milford chanted even after the pitcher was on the rubber. But Ted wouldn't allow his team to follow suit. "Good sportsmanship," he yelled to his players from the third base coach's line. "We don't play that way."

And his humor was tested again in the second game. An official timeout was called. Someone from Frontier accused the Turners Falls pitcher of throwing "spitballs." The ump spoke to all parties including the pitcher and then said, with an almost straight face, "Even if he knew what a spitball was, it doesn't matter with a fast ball." Play resumed.

After the loss to Frontier, the coaches spoke to the players, some of whom were in tears. Enthusiasm, hope and forgiveness were mentioned. And as they walked to their cars with their gear, the team received an unexpected round of applause

from their supporters. The wave of blue, who had traveled halfway across the state to root for their team, cheered for them. That put it all in perspective. It is, in fact, only a game.

## NSA Camp Week

**LAKE PLEASANT** - The National Spiritual Alliance will conduct its 95th Camp Week celebration July 20th - 29th. All events except the annual meeting and election of officers are open to the public, and will take place at Thompson Temple across from the post office. The week's activities include healing of animals, Shamanism, developing mediumship, psychic development circle and much more. For a complete schedule, contact: [djjames3@valinet.com](mailto:djjames3@valinet.com), or via automatic writing.

## THE GARDENER'S COMPANION

# Bountiful July Garden

BY LESLIE BROWN

**MONTAGUE CITY** - One of the pleasures of vacation time is leaving the home garden. At home I check the progress of plants and produce daily. Returning from a week's absence brings a whole other perspective, giving one the sense of huge leaps of progress.

Sure enough, the little pips of tomatoes barely visible on the day I left home have increased in size dramatically over the past nine days. The Gardener's Delight cherries sport fruits large enough to eat, if only they were not so hard and green. The Bush Celebrity has some tomatoes that easily measure four inches across, although they have not achieved their full roundness (nor any ripeness).

The only plants which have not matured from bloom to fruit are the beefsteaks; both the Arkansas Traveler and Believe It Or Not are stuck in perpetual blooming. However, after the dire warnings about the decline of the honeybee so necessary for propagation, I am glad to see any transformation from flower to fruit and will be



MARY AZARIAN WOODBLOCK

patient for future development in the largest tomatoes of all my plants.

When I left for Maine, the beans were tender seedlings; in fact I worried about their potential demise as dinner for rabbits or even woodchuck. Now, happily, they are tall and sturdy, likely to bloom soon. Unfortunately, the rabbit did find my raised bed of carrots and clearly enjoyed an appetizer of a few tops. I don't know whether these plants will develop new leaves to support the necessary root development.

This crop has had an air of doom since I planted it. The seed was very slow to germinate. The

soil which was intentionally lightened with much composted material in order to encourage root development did not offer much support to the tiny seedlings when they did emerge. Now the rabbit.

Fortunately, the small woodchuck my neighbor has under his barn has so far stayed in his local vegetable garden. I do have some light weight low fencing around my vegetables in the garden flats; this is enough to discourage the rabbit. But no fence I've ever seen will defend against a determined woodchuck. One year we buried four foot chicken wire two inches underground, hung it from metal posts and then watched a huge woodchuck climb and literally roll himself over into our vegetarian restaurant. That's when we called a friend who trapped the family, leaving us without woodchucks for several years.

Many of my roses finished their first blooming without any admiration from me. Now the bee balm is in bloom and the July daylilies have started opening. The strawberry plants have risen beautifully above their mulch of

straw and I have dutifully clipped the flower buds so that the plants will put all of their energy into roots and leaves. Next year I hope to harvest a nice crop of tasty, red berries.

For this season, I settled for a taste of local berries as the season here wound down, and then enjoyed the beginning crop in Maine. Since mid-coast Maine is about a week or so behind us, I was also able to enjoy the new crop of their asparagus.

Of course, the weeds flourished too while I was gone, but not too badly since I have laid admittedly ugly black plastic over much of the garden bed. I'm hoping that the developing winter squash and nasturtium plants will spread thickly enough to make themselves virtually weed free.

The pepper plants look healthy and are ready to bloom. I fed them once and then resisted any further temptation to fertilize. Last year I fed my peppers each time I fed my tomatoes, and while I did have some of the largest plants and fruits I've ever grown, they did not mature to change color and acquire wonderful sweetness before the cool end of summer turned off their growing time.

The onions have increased

their bulb size dramatically. Before I left for Maine, I weeded them thoroughly and fed them. Now I can see the results of my labors. The tops of the leeks and garlic look thrifty, but of course there's no way to assess bulb development short of pulling one up. The bulbils on the garlic tops did develop before I went away and I snipped them so that the energy would go into the bulbs. Many people chop these small bulbils and cook with them, but I was too pressed preparing to abandon my garden to spend time on frills.

When in Maine I will enjoy not only their current produce but will also visit several floral gardens. Unless you are a retired, fulltime gardener, you usually make a choice between raising vegetables or flowers. We have always affected something of a compromise, edging our vegetable and fruit beds with blooms, but that's not the same as an all-out splendidous cottage garden filled with gorgeous blooms and varieties from spring to fall. I envy those, although the practical side of me continues to plan for rows of fresh organic fruits and vegs. My soul still craves that riot of flowers, though.

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**THE HEALTHY GEEZER**

# Regulating the Heart

**BY FRED CICETTI**

**LEONIA, NJ** - In the last column, we discussed pacemakers. In this one, we'll continue on the general topic of heart regulation with information about implantable cardioverter-defibrillators.

An implantable cardioverter-defibrillator (ICD) is like a pacemaker. Both a pacemaker and an ICD are battery-powered devices installed in the chest to deliver electrical impulses to the heart. In general, a pacemaker is used when the heart beats too slowly; an ICD is used when the heart beats too quickly.

Pacemakers jog the heart with mild reminders that patients usually can't feel. Pacemakers are small; some are only as big as a quarter.

The electrical impulses from an ICD can feel like

being whacked in the chest. These devices are about the size of a stack of three silver dollars.

However, ICD devices today function as both an ICD and a pacemaker.

ICDs monitor for abnormal rhythms and try to correct them. An ICD can reduce your risk of dying of cardiac arrest by stopping these arrhythmias. ICDs have become standard treatment for anyone who has survived cardiac arrest.

An ICD is considered effective in fighting cardiac arrest more than nine times out of ten. Only 15 years ago, few survived this condition.

Cardiac arrest, or sudden cardiac death (SCD), is not a heart attack. However, if you've had a heart attack, you can be at risk for SCD.

A heart attack happens



JESSICA HARMON ILLUSTRATION

where there's a blocked vessel carrying blood to the heart. This condition leads to the damage of heart muscle. The damage may lead to abnormal electrical signals that sometimes cause deadly heart rhythms. An ICD cannot prevent a heart attack.

If you've ever watched shows like "Grey's Anatomy" or "ER," you've probably seen a cliched scene in which a doctor demands electrified pad-

dles to shock a troubled heart. An ICD works inside the chest like these paddles.

ICDs are installed under the skin either under your collarbone or in your abdomen. One or two flexible, insulated wires (leads) run from the ICD through your veins to your heart. The surgery to implant an ICD can be performed with local anesthesia and a sedative. Then you stay in the hospital for a day or two.

Modern ICD devices have an electronic memory that records the electrical patterns of the heart whenever an abnormal heart beat, or arrhythmia occurs. With this information, the electrophysiologist, a specialist in arrhythmias, can study the heart's activity and ask about other symptoms that may have occurred.

This record is available for review during regular check-ups by the physician, who can monitor the frequency and severity of problems in the heart's electrical conduction system that may lead to cardiac arrest or other serious heart disorders.

Like pacemakers, ICDs aren't affected by normal household appliances, but, if you have one, you should avoid strong magnetic fields. For example, stay away from magnetic resonance imaging (MRI) machines.

Power machines are dangerous. Don't go near arc-welding equipment, high-voltage transformers and motor-generator systems.

*If you have a question, please write to [fredcicetti@gmail.com](mailto:fredcicetti@gmail.com)*

**CD REVIEW**

## Limited Edition

**BY BETTE BLACK**

**GREENFIELD** - The latest recording released by the Jason Connelly Band is a thoughtful expansion from the hard rocking bar band repertoire of its past. The recording highlights the original songwriting and musicianship, which features a nice range from ballads to blues to R&B wail, all with a retro flair and refreshingly free of over-production. The recording of the acoustic guitar work captures the depth of sound so rare in this digital age. These songs will easily translate to live performance, electric or unplugged.

The opening song, with the surprising title "Cuddles" is a poignant ballad about realizations that come with maturity and fatherhood. It is a radio edit, with a longer version on the CD as well. "Cuddles" is a radio friendly song with a warm

message and a bit of guitar chicken pickin'.

Much of the lyrics on JCB's *Limited Edition* describe breakdowns, break throughs and realizations, and none of it comes across angry.

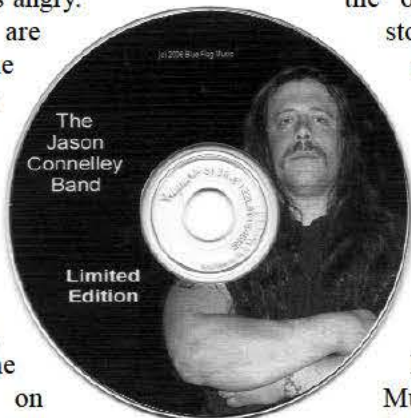
The blues are soulful, the vocals are smoky, some of the songs feature saxophone with a lilt or a swank, and the grooves on "Good Bye Woman" and "OPF" are downright wicked. Dance to these songs if you're feeling loose and have a lot of stamina.

The CD also features three bonus tracks - classic cover songs, again tastefully pro-

duced, with immediate energy as if recorded live in a big livingroom filled with friends.

*Limited Edition* is available in the local music section at About Music in Greenfield, the only place that stocks locally produced music in the area.

You can catch the Jason Connelly Band at the benefit concert for Donovan Murphy at St. Kaziemerz in Turners Falls on Sunday, July 22nd along with alot of other local musicians donating their time and talent to help support Donovan and his family (For more on this concer, see page 13).



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

## Tobacco Land Sold

**BY JOSEPH A. PARZYCH GILL** - After Johnny came home from the CCC, he couldn't find a job. One day, a Ford pickup turned into the driveway of the tobacco land, followed by a big flatbed truck, loaded with lumber. The big truck sank into the soft ground and got stuck. Johnny went out

with a shovel and helped them get the truck going again. Ma spread a blanket on the lawn under the cherry tree. She said I could watch if I stayed on the blanket.

After they got the truck unstuck, the new owner of the land, Arnold Studer, asked Johnny if he would like to help unload the lumber. From there, Johnny went to work helping build a shanty and a big two-story chicken coop. John moved into the shanty with Studer.

I liked to hang around the shanty on Sundays or rainy days when they did not work. The shanty was about ten feet wide and twelve feet long. It was a great place. They joked and laughed a lot, and no one got mad or hollered at me.

A mahogany colored wall cabinet had a door hinged on the bottom, about four feet off

the floor. When the cabinet door was opened, a leg dropped down to prop up the end, making the door a table. Shelves in the cabinet held dishes, silverware, food and spices. When the meal was over, they cleared the table, and up it went, out of the way. The table was now the door to the cabinet again. I loved the way it worked, making everything neat and orderly.

They had two bunk beds made out of 2x4's at the rear of the shanty. They drove nails into the 2x4 wall studs to hang their clothes. Neither of them had much in the way of clothes, so that worked just fine.

One rainy day, I slipped away from home and headed for the shanty. Johnny and Arnold decided to take a break that day. Arnold began cooking stew on the little wood stove. The rain came down harder. Each tried to get the other to go out to the garden to get some onions for the stew. Neither one wanted to get soaked in the pouring rain. Arnold offered me a quarter if I would run out and pull a couple onions. I would have done it for nothing.

To get a whole quarter for just a couple minutes out in the rain sounded great. The cold rain came down in torrents and soaked me to the skin. I got back with the onions and stood by the stove. Water dripping from my clothes made a puddle. I shivered, turning to dry one side and then the other by the stove. When Arnold took the cover off the pot, the aroma of the stew made me hungry.

Seeing he had paid me to get the onion I did not feel right about staying for dinner, but they set an extra bowl at the end of table, and invited me to eat. That was the best stew I had ever had.

They talked and joked while we ate. It seemed good to relax while eating in that cozy shanty. Someday, I decided, I was going to have a shanty like that for my very own.

Arnold began raising chickens so he could sell eggs. It took about four months before the chickens began laying eggs. Arnold bought chicken feed from Potter Grain Company on credit. For food money, he sold the empty grain bags to the bag man who came around about once a week. He paid them a nickel a bag, enough to buy food for the two of them. Arnold said he would settle Johnny's wages when they sold the eggs in the fall.

But Arnold was an impatient man and sometimes had a quick temper. Eggs needed to be gathered, often, during the day, cleaned and weighed - every one - pea wee, small, medium, large, extra large and jumbo, and then put into boxes, and the boxes into crates. Arnold hated doing all that tedious work with the eggs.

The Depression dragged on, and when the government began buying eggs from big producers and giving them away to folks out of work, the price of eggs dropped.

One day, Studer let out a loud curse and hurled a bushel basket of eggs against the wall

in a blind rage. He sold all the hens to a poultry dealer and switched to raising turkeys.

Turkeys also laid eggs, big ones, but they weren't very tasty, and no one ate them except when baked in a cake or in some kind of cooking. The turkeys were raised for meat. Since turkeys are subject to catching all manner of disease, especially from chickens, Arnold painted the floors and the walls of the brooding house four feet up with Black Flag. It was made from coal tar and stunk something fierce.

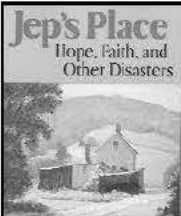
Turkeys take about six months or more to grow big enough to butcher. Arnold and Johnny were back to selling grain bags for food money.

Pa was incensed that Studer had bought the tobacco land from under his nose when he had made it known he planned to buy the property. "Niemic!" Pa spit out the word like an expletive: German, age-old enemy of Poland, destroying his dream. He ranted on about how the Germans had driven the Poles off their land and shipped them off to America where they had to work off their passage like indentured slaves. He went back to clearing and draining his land, more bitter than ever at the continued bad luck that seemed to dog him at every turn. Johnny divided his time between working for Arnold, raising turkeys, and delivering grain for Potter Grain Company with their Mack truck. Potter Grain paid weekly.

- To be continued . . .

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## Montague Old Home Day Tag Sale

Montague Old Home Days will be held this year on the weekend of August 17th - 19th, at the common in Montague Center. This year, due to the unavailability of an auctioneer, the regular Congregational Church

Auction will be postponed until a to be announced date in the fall. A giant tag sale will be held on the church lawn instead, on Saturday, August 18th.

Items for the giant tag sale can be dropped off Tuesday,

from 7 to 8:30 p.m. and Sundays from 10:30 to noon at the church, or by appointment by calling 978-544-8430.

Large auction items should be held for the fall auction.

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# ARTS & ENTERTAINMENT



## FRIDAY, JULY 13TH

Rt. 63 Roadhouse, Millers Falls: **ROCK 201.** Come to dance! 9:30 p.m.

## SATURDAY, JULY 14TH

Concert at The Bookmill, Montague Center: **Matt and Shannon Heaton.** Celtic duo play trad & originals w/bazouki, guitar & Irish flute \$10/\$12. 8 p.m.

**The Pop Rockets!** at The Shriners Hospital for Children Benefit

Energy Park, Miles Street, Greenfield, 1p.m. A great lineup...the PRs, Ethan Stone, Maya Firestone and her Gigantic Puppets, Loose Caboose, and Intonation. Lots of family-fun activities too!!! 1p.m. until 7:30 p.m. All are welcome. Bring a picnic blanket and/or chairs and an umbrella if it's sunny. This is a FREE event but donations are gratefully accepted to support this wonderful children's hospital.

**Richard Chase** will feature at the 1794 Meetinghouse, New Salem Center, New Salem. 7:30 p.m. \$10-under 12 free (978) 544 - 8022 www.1794meetinghouse.org

**Dr. Jekyll and Mr. Hyde** showing at Pothole Pictures, Shelburne Falls. Live music to a silent film by Devil Music Ensemble. The first American film version of Stevenson's horror tale of the doctor who turns into a sadistic beast is haunting, powerful, creepy and expressive of the duality of good and evil. John Barrymore's bravura physical performance is convulsive and overwhelming. Martha Mansfield, Nita Naldi. Directed by John S. Robertson. 1920. NR. 96 min. B & W. Admission \$12 at the door, no advance tickets.

## SUNDAY, JULY 15TH

At The Bookmill, Montague Center: Join local writer Victoria Graw for a **poetry reading.** 5 p.m. free. Victoria will share a kaleidoscope of creative ideas, tales, and stories told.

Sundays in the Park Concerts - featuring **Tracy Grammar & Jim Henry Folk music.** At the Energy Park, Miles Street, Greenfield. 6 p.m. 774-6051 x 14

## WEDNESDAY, JULY 18TH

Deja Brew, Wendell: **Open Mic:** Fiddle Tune Swap, 8 to 10 p.m. No cover.



## THURSDAY, JULY 19TH

Deja Brew, Wendell: **Dave Robinson & Tommy Filault:** Roots Blues, 8 to 10 p.m., no cover.

## THURSDAY, JUNE 28TH

Co-op Concert featuring local musicians **Joe Graveline, Kathy & George Chapman and Ed Phelps.** Three 40-minute gigs each night from the Franklin County Musicians' Cooperative. Bring a picnic dinner, blanket, or chair and enjoy the music. At Greenfield Energy Park, Greenfield. 6-8 p.m.

## MONDAY, JULY 16TH

Montague Community Band Concert at Peskeomskut Park in Turners Falls. 7 p.m.

## FRIDAY, JULY 20TH

Deja Brew, Wendell: **Josh Levangie:** Johnny Cash Covers, 9 to 11p.m. no cover.

## SATURDAY, JULY 21ST

Concert at The Bookmill, Montague Center: **Swing Caravan.** Swinging trio plays gypsy jazz Django-style: energetic genius, \$10/\$12. 8 p.m.

Deja Brew, Wendell: **Mawwal, acoustic world music,** 9 to 11p.m. no cover.

## WEDNESDAY, JULY 25TH

Speakeasy at Great Falls Discovery Center Coffeehouse. What do you get when you combine a hometown favorite with a banjo queen? You get the duo "Speakeasy". Performances by Jared Libby and Diane Sanabria. The duo will be playing music in a range of styles from old-time fiddle

*Last Wednesday of the month Great Falls Coffeehouse series presents: Jared Libby and Diane Sanabria (below) Wednesday, July 25th, 7 p.m. in the historic Great Hall of the Great Falls Discovery Center, Turners Falls.*



Montague Center: Larry Gallagher, Colin McGrath, Reid MacLean

**The Three-Headed Dog Tour.** Clever satirical tunes, folk and rock from three acclaimed musicians. The first annual Three-Headed Dog tour is the confluence of these three songwriters coming together to perform songs from their repertoire and serve as each others' backup band. 8 p.m.

## MONDAY, JULY 30TH

Montague Community Band Concert at Peskeomskut Park in Turners Falls. 7 p.m.

## FRIDAY TO SUNDAY, JULY 20TH-28TH & 22ND -29TH

Ja'Duke Productions presents **Footloose** the musical at the Shea Theater, 71 Avenue A in Turners Falls. July 20, 21, 27, 28, at 8 p.m. and July 22, 29 at 2 p.m. Whatever the barometer may say, this summer it's going to be in the 80's! Tickets are \$12 for adults and \$10 for 12/under and 65/over. Reservations: call the Shea Theatre 863-2281 ext. 2 and are available at the World Eye Bookshop, Greenfield.

COOP Concert featuring **Laura Siersema, Russ Thomas and Tom Carroll** Three 40-minute gigs each night from the Franklin County Musician's Cooperative. Bring a picnic dinner, blanket/chair and enjoy the music. At Greenfield Energy Park, end of Miles Street, Greenfield. 6-8 p.m.

tunes to classical pieces, as well as folk songs and originals written by both Diane and Jared. Doors open at 6:30 pm - coffee & homemade baked goods. Suggested donation \$5 - \$10. The Discovery Center is wheelchair accessible. For more information, please call (413) 863-3221 ext. 3.

## FRIDAY, JULY 27TH

Concert at The Bookmill,

## MONDAYS, JULY 16TH & 23RD

Live Jazz at Ristorante DiPaolo, Turners Falls, 6 to 9 p.m.

## THROUGH AUGUST 12TH

The **Green Trees Gallery**, Northfield, "Conceptual Portraiture" Featured are: Gene Cauthen's bronze sculptures, Nayana Glazier's acrylic color tinted figures against distorted black and white backdrops, Margot Fleck's block printing, Joe Landry's sculptures, Kerry Kazokas' oils, Kevin Slattery's depictions of celebrities, Lauren Watrous' paintings, Robert Markey's oil paintings, and introducing photos by Doug Tibbles. www.greentreesgallery.com

## THROUGH NOVEMBER 4TH

Exhibit - **Made of Thunder, Made of Glass:** American Indian Beadwork of the Northeast features one hundred beaded bags and hats from the Gerry Biron and JoAnne Russo collection. Intricate floral, geometric and figurative beadwork by early nineteenth-century Iroquois, Oneida, Onondaga, Cayuga, Seneca and Wabanaki, Mi'kmaq, Passamaquoddy, and Penobscot. Accompanied by contemporary paintings of Native Americans by Gerry Biron, of Mi'kmaq descent. Memorial Hall Museum, 8 Memorial Street, Deerfield. 11 a.m. - 5 p.m. 413-774-7476.

## THROUGH SEPTEMBER 25TH

**Hymn to the Earth** An exhibit of luminous imagery by photographer Ron Rosenstock. featuring landscapes of beauty and spirit from Ireland, Italy, New Zealand, South America, India and the United States. Hallmark Museum of Contemporary Photography, 85 Avenue A, Turners Falls. Hours: Thursday-Sunday 1-5 pm. 863-0009

## ON GOING

Quinnikut II Riverboat trips. For reservations, (800) 859-2960. Adults \$10, senior (55+) \$9, child (14 & under) \$5. Group (15 or more) \$8.

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## THROUGH JULY

Coffee & Art at the Village Co-op, Leverett. Photographs by Lauren Salva are on display.

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**Saturday Only**  
**July 14th 7:30 p.m.**  
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**Dr. Jekyll and Mr. Hyde**  
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**Music before movie 7 p.m.**  
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Free (except some trips), open to local teens. Some require permission slips.  
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# Connection with Spirit: Ron Rosenstock at Hallmark

BY CHRISTOPHER SAWYER-LAUÇANNO

**TURNERS FALLS** - A number of years ago, in Paris, I went to an exhibition that showcased the early history of photography. It was a splendid show that began with the first-ever 1839 photographs of Daguerre and Talbot and ended with late 19th century photos by artists like Francis Frith, Felice Beato, William Henry Jackson and Louis de Clercq. Before I went to the show I think I expected I'd be seeing a lot of formal portraits of stodgy folks dressed in their Sunday best. There were plenty of those pictures but landscape photography dominated the 60-year retrospective.

Many of the photographs were stunning, as were the places photographed: Palestine, India, North Africa, the American West, China, Japan. At some point that afternoon I had a passel of revelations, not the least of which was how photography by the end of the 19th century largely replaced the artist's sketchbook as a way of recording the foreign. And yet, the impulse on the part of the photographers, at least the best of them, was very much the same as that of the painters who had preceded them: to record not just what was, but the spirit of what was. A more mundane revelation was that these early photographers had to lug around awkward and weighty large-format cameras, heavy glass plates, and easily shatterable glass bottles filled with chemicals.



*Machu Picchu, Peru, 2000, by Ron Rosenstock.*

One of the magnificent landscapes now on display at the Hallmark Museum.

The same spirit that makes the work of those pioneering 19th century travelers and photographers so compelling is present to a high degree in the latest exhibition at the Hallmark Museum of Contemporary Photography. The aptly titled "Hymn to the Earth," a 40-year retrospective of mostly black and white work by Ron Rosenstock, is visually extraordinary. It's clear from the moment you enter the doorway that this show of nearly 60 prints is special, not just because Rosenstock has such a terrific sense of how to frame a shot, or that he managed to transport his 8x10 large format

camera to some pretty remarkable places on our planet, or that he understands that fog and mist and refracted light make something special happen to a landscape. True, these are significant merits, and the prints certainly benefit from his keen eye and mastery of technique. But in so many of these prints, Rosenstock has managed to capture more than just the locale he's photographing. He captures its spirit as well.

And he's been doing this for a very long time. Some of the earliest images in the show date from the 1960s. One stunning image from 1975, for instance, entitled *Three Trees, Dhu*

*Lough, County Mayo, Ireland* conjures up an ethereal landscape in which the tree leaves, as finely delicate as Irish lace, set off a craggy hill and a mysterious vale. As a composition it's fairly simple, and yet the resonance of rural Ireland is palpable in the mist, in the setting, in the stopped time frame of that place at that moment. Another shot of a shed in Kenya is all about how light creates pattern. Rosenstock even breathes new life into a fairly clichéd subject - the Taj Mahal - by focusing not on its marble vastness or decorative columns but on its structure as seen in pale morning light, where the

mist is a silent contributor to highlighting the built form. Nature, in other words, is still in the literal and symbolic forefront.

Every print in this show rewards examination. Rosenstock's remarkable photos of another fairly familiar subject, Machu Picchu, are beautiful and evocative. They also penetrate beyond the beautiful, conjure up something approaching the sacred. They would be worthy counterparts to the great Chilean poet Pablo Neruda's evocation of the spirit of Machu Picchu, of which I quote (my translation) a snippet below:

And over all the sleeping the  
air came in  
with orange-blossom fingers  
months, weeks, a thousand  
years of air  
of blue wind and iron peaks  
as if gentle hurricanes on  
running feet  
polished the lonely brace of  
stone

Although I'm sure a few of these photographs were happy accidents, the quest to capture more than just the beauty of an exotic locale was no accident. In 1972, Rosenstock told *Camera Magazine* that his photographs were "an attempt to understand the process of creation. They represent a personal search for answers to which the questions as well as the answers are wordless. I regard photography not just as a way of seeing but as a way of living, a search or an exploration."

More recently he said that he photographs "as a means of seeking that connection with spirit."

## OFF THE BEATEN TRACK

### Art Drive: Points North

BY FLORE

**BRATTLEBORO** - Once more, the Brattleboro Museum & Art Center has achieved a real *tour de force*. The exhibit currently running combines outstanding artists of all artistic paths.

First, four gifted sculptors open the show: Willard Boepple, Paul Bowen, Jon Isherwood and Millicent Young, all from Southern Vermont.

For this show, they chose the theme of "Other Dimensions." Using versatile media, from wood to delicate horsehair, the material chosen becomes shapes, shapes volumes.

Tom Fels is the insightful guest curator.

Moving to the next room, we encounter the second exhibit, "Worth a Thousand Words," curated by Linda

Rubenstein and Mara Williams.

Based on the idea of a popular story telling idea, each painting tells of myths, using vivid colors to let them find their voice on canvas.

Matt Bracket, Herman Braun-Vega, Michele Fenniak, Trey Friedman, Philip Geiger, and Paton Miller are the artists showcased; each outdoes the other.

"Book of the Night" suspended high above our head, displays the poetic words of Chuck DeWolfe on a slanted transparent roof. The troubadour, the writer of magic words on 137 panes of glass.

DeWolfe makes it worth sitting down, when reading up!

Leslie Fry proposes, in the smaller gallery, her "Accumulated Mysteries."

She casts from existing molds layers of paper which become arms, hands, floating in low relief boxes.

Brian Cohen and his marvelous bestiary offers "The Bird Book" for our admiration. This is a joint collaboration with his wife, Holiday Eames. Each printed etching represents a letter, starting the name of one of our feathered friends. The diversity and magnificence of winged creation is captured on the brink of flight.

To close this unusual exhibit, notice the graphic etched work "Pierrot Lunaire." Inspired by composer Arnold Schoenberg, and written by the Belgian poet Albert Giraud, Cohen translates these dream poems, in English, German and French...

Susan Calabria curates

both these fine shows.

These exhibits are not to be missed! They run only till August 5th. So get your raft in the river and cast off for Points North!

Put this show on your cal-

endar *tout de suite*.

To contact the Museum: call 802-257-0124.

Visit their web site: for all bold explorers of the creative realm:

[www.brattleboromuseum.org](http://www.brattleboromuseum.org)



*Casting Off by Matt Bracket, is one of the paintings exhibited at the Brattleboro Museum through August 5th.*