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## SKYDIVING

for Young Readers  
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LAKE PLEASANT MILLERS FALLS MONTAGUE CENTER MONTAGUE CITY TURNERS FALLS

# The Montague Reporter

YEAR 6 - NO. 40

also serving Gill, Erving and Wendell

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THE VOICE OF THE VILLAGES

JULY 24, 2008

## School Budget Threatens Bankruptcy for Montague and Gill

BY DAVID DETMOLD

The town of Montague has sent a letter to Massachusetts auditor Joseph DeNucci protesting the imposition of a so-called 1/12th budget - totaling \$16,820,000 - for the operation of the Gill Montague regional schools (GMRSD) for the member towns of Gill and Montague. The letter, dated July 17th, (see page 4 for complete text) is signed jointly by members of the selectboards and finance committees of both towns, and raises the specter that the state imposed budget will send both towns into bankruptcy. The letter calls on DeNucci to use his power

to investigate whether the budget set earlier this month for the Gill Montague schools by Commissioner Mitchell Chester of the Department of Elementary and Secondary Education (DESE) violates the provisions of the local mandates act, by imposing an unfunded mandate on the towns without regard to their ability to pay.

The letter also asks whether the 1/12th budget, which mandates a 4% increase over last year's GMRSD operating budget (an amount that translates to a 10% increase in Montague's assessment and a

13.7% increase for Gill's assessment) "violates the spirit if not the letter of the law, under Proposition 2½."

In light of the fact that state aid to the district schools increased by less see **BUDGET** pg 9

## Wendell Approves Mahar Budget

COMMITTEES ESTABLISHED ON NOISE, OPEN SPACE, WEBSITE, POLICE STATION

BY DAVID DETMOLD

In five minutes at special town meeting on Monday, the town of Wendell settled a running dispute with the Mahar Regional School Committee regarding the method of assessment for



DETMOLD PHOTO

Kathy Becker moderated the special town meeting on July 21st. To her left is selectboard chair Ted Lewis and to her right is Dolores Williston, filling in for town clerk Annie Hartjens.

running the regional high school... at least until next year. Wendell agreed to go along with the other member towns of the school district - Orange, Petersham and New Salem - and follow what is called the statutory method of assessment. That will cost Wendell an additional \$91,289 above the \$266,626 town meeting approved at the annual town meeting of June 3rd, when voters backed the finance committee on their recommendation to use the so-called alternative method of assess-

ment for the Mahar bud-

get. On Tuesday, finance committee member Jim Slavos explained the alternative method of assessment for Mahar, which was the method used by the four member towns prior to the passage of education reform in 1993, stipulated that each town pay the same per pupil cost for Mahar students. When the four towns switched to the statutory method of assessment in the early 90s, "initially there was only a few hundred dollars worth of dif-

see **WENDELL** pg 10

## Recalling Turners' Bygone Days



George Fisette, left and Joe Golonka stand in the garden of Golonka's house on Montague Street. The wrought iron fence in the foreground came from the former bandstand at Unity Park.

BY JOE KWIECINSKI

**TURNERS FALLS** - Turners Falls natives Joe Golonka and George Fisette share many things, but above all they share a deep abiding love for their hometown.

"We're very proud of this area's history," said Golonka, whose stately home on Montague Street is filled with photographs, maps, newspaper articles and documents that tell the rich story of what it really takes to make a village. According to Golonka, he and Fisette "love to reminisce" about the people, industries, businesses, schools, and old buildings, some of which no longer exist, that populate their memories of Turners.

Always quick with a fact or observation, Golonka immediately offered an example: "There once was a silk mill in the vacant lot next to Food City. It was a huge building, just one story, but it was a very long story, let me tell you. I can remember we used to play

football on that very lot. Very few people remember that these days."

The years have been kind to Golonka and Fisette. The two longtime friends are a decade apart in age; Golonka is 83 and Fisette is 93; both still drive. Clad in summer shorts and sport shirts, both men appear quite fit and stylish, and neither dwelt on the natural progression of advancing years. Fisette did briefly concede, "I've certainly got my aches and pains, at this stage of life, but I don't spend much time thinking about them."

Golonka devoted some time during our interview reminiscing about one of his favorite topics, the historic Shea Theater. "We spent so many happy hours there," Golonka said. It opened officially on the night of Monday, February 14th, 1927, with the Shea Theater Orchestra under the direction of Warren E. Brigham presenting the premier programme. The playbill for see **DAYS** pg 13

## URBAN GARDENING at the Brick House



Toby Briggs by the Pergola at the Brick House

DAVID DETMOLD

**TURNERS FALLS** - Undergrowth Farm on Boyle Road in Gill is being farmed by hand by a collective of young tenant farmers, most of whom moved to the country last year from Boston. This season, you will be able to purchase their organic tomatoes, beans, corn, potatoes, kale and cabbage at the Great Falls Farmers Market each Wednesday on the corner of Avenue A and 2nd Street.

Now, only a few months after they put down roots in Gill, the Undergrowth Farmers have branched out to the urban village of Turners Falls in another way. They have taken on the project of framing a

'snacking porch' and pergola attached to the Hot Spot Teen Center, at the Brick House on 3rd Street.

What's a pergola? The dictionary says it's an arbor or a passageway of columns supporting a roof of trelliswork on which climbing plants are trained to grow. But that prosaic description pales in comparison to the work of rustic beauty crafted by Undergrowth Farmer Toby Briggs on the side of the former Turners Falls fire station. Briggs, who has plied the carpenter's trade in Boston for the past six years, built the pergola out of durable black locust beams donated for see **PERGOLA** pg 3

DETMOLD PHOTO

## DEERFIELD VALLEY ART ASSOCIATION COMES TO TURNERS



LISA DAVOL PHOTO

Hand vase and pottery by Pam Adorno of South Deerfield, owner of Gallery 11 in South Bernardston.

BY ANNE HARDING

**GREAT FALLS** - It's been a mad scramble to rejuvenate the vacant building commonly known as the old Cumberland Farms (on Avenue A between the Great Falls Discovery Center and the studios of MCTV) as the Deerfield

Valley Art Association (DVAA) prepares for its first Turners Falls exhibition, which opens Friday, July 25th. The show will be open for public viewing from 11 a.m. to 6 p.m. daily, with extended hours on Fridays until 7:30 p.m. see **ART** pg 9



**PET OF THE WEEK**

Take Us Home!



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We STILL have many kittens available for adoption at the shelter! For more information on adopting these fun little guys and gals please contact the Dakin Pioneer Valley Humane Society at 413-548-9898 or via email: leverett@dpvhs.org.

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**SLATE LIBRARY NEWS**

**Natural Dyes from Wild Plants**

**GILL** - The Slate Library in Gill will host "Natural Dyes from Wild Plants" on Saturday, July 26th at 10:30 a.m. Local naturalist Deborah Bazer will teach a workshop about the beauty of local dye plants in a hands-on workshop for children ages 6 and up. The library is open Monday 2-6 p.m., Thursday 2-8 p.m. and Saturday 10-2 p.m.

**WENDELL LIBRARY NEWS**

**Sticks & Stones July 26th**

The Wendell Library will host "Sticks & Stones: Environmental Art" (adults, teens and children eight and up, with adult) on Saturday, July 26th from 1-4 p.m. with Vermont artist Mark Ragonese. Please pre-register.

**Earn Badges for Reading**

Your child can earn badges for their summer reading. There are 10 colorful cloth badges to work towards, suitable for sewing onto a jacket or hat. Each badge represents a different area of reading interest such as: animals and

nature, sports, mysteries, fantasy, comedy and adventure stories. Stop by the library to get started.

**Museum Passes & Discount Coupons**

Mass MOCA, Massachusetts State Parks, Holyoke Children's Museum, Eric Carle Museum, Hancock Shaker Village and more. For info or to register call: 978-544-3559. Made possible by the Wendell Free Library and the Friends of the Wendell Free Library and the Western Mass Regional Library Service.

**CARNEGIE LIBRARY NEWS**

**Teen Arts & Crafts**

**TURNERS FALLS** - Teen Arts and Crafts at the Carnegie Library on Wednesdays at 2 p.m. This fun, free art program with Ruth O'Mara is for 6th grade and up. Come explore all kinds of easy arts and crafts each week. Some of the projects will be bead making, collage, jewelry and more! For more information, please contact the Carnegie Library at 863-3214.



HICKMAN PHOTO

*Lindsey and Hennessy, both of Greenfield, enjoyed blowing bubbles at a recent Preschool Story Hour at the Carnegie Library. The theme was picnics, so the Story Hour included a picnic on the library lawn. The Story Hour meets every Wednesday morning at 10:15 a.m. at the Carnegie Library. For more information, call 863-3214.*

**SENIOR CENTER ACTIVITIES -- July 28th - August 8th**

**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. Trips: Call the Senior Center 863-9357 or 863-4500

- Monday, 28th**  
10 a.m. Senior Aerobics  
11 a.m. Easy Aerobics
- Tuesday, 29th**  
9 a.m. Walking Club
- Wednesday, 30th**  
10 a.m. Senior Aerobics  
12:45 p.m. Bingo
- Thursday, 31st**  
1 p.m. Pitch
- Friday, 1st**  
10 a.m. Senior Aerobics  
11 a.m. Easy Aerobics
- Monday 4th**  
10 a.m. Senior Aerobics  
11 a.m. Easy Aerobics
- Tuesday 5th**

- 9 a.m. Walking Club
- Wednesday 6th**  
10 a.m. Senior Aerobics  
12:45 p.m. Bingo
- Thursday 7th**  
1 p.m. Pitch
- Friday 8th**  
10 a.m. Senior Aerobics  
11 a.m. Easy Aerobics

Trips: Call the Senior Center 863-9357 or 863-4500.

**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 413-422-2584.

- Monday, 28th**  
9:00 a.m. Exercise  
9:45 a.m. Library  
12 Noon Pitch
- Tuesday, 29th**  
9 a.m. Aerobics  
12:30 p.m. Painting
- Wednesday, 30th**  
8:45 a.m. Line Dancing



CHRISTINA SHEPPARD PHOTO

**The Avenue Got a Thorough Coloring at Last Year's Block Party**  
*for details about this year's party, see page 3!*

**Video Editing Class**

Learn Video Editing At MCTV

Montague Community TV (MCTV) is offering four free video editing classes starting Thursday, August 14 2008. The classes will take place at the MCTV studio, 34 Second Street, Turners Falls.

This is a beginners class using Final Cut editing software on a Mac Pro machine. The class will run from 6 to 8 p.m. for four consecutive Thursdays starting August 14th.

To sign-up for the class please call the station at (413) 863-9200 and ask to speak to Robin or Dean.

**Wendell Old Home Day**

Saturday August 2nd On the Common

featuring Steve Crowe Band, Perry Howarth & the Bear Mountain Boys, Mass Production, Rowan Bado, Julia Burrough, Annie Hassett, Mixed Nuts and many more musical guests. We're all here, because we're not all there!

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

**FREE HOT WEEKEND MEALS DELIVERED**

to elderly or homebound residents of Turners Falls and surrounding area. Prepared and delivered every month by volunteers of the The Bread of Life Kitchen including the Blessed Sacrament Catholic Church, Second Congregational Church of Greenfield. If you would like to receive a free hot meal delivered to your home and are not already on our list, please call Donna or John Leary at 498-5065. We have many volunteers ready to help cook, package, and deliver free hot weekend meals.



# Sneak Preview! Block Party 2008

SATURDAY, AUGUST 9TH, 3 TO 10 P.M.

AVENUE A, BETWEEN 3RD AND 5TH STREETS

BY JEN AUDLEY

"Last year's party was the first one in years, and it was a blast," said J.D. Keating, who organized music and performers in 2007 and returns this year, assisted by Don McAulay, "to build on what we started, even bring it up another notch." Here's a look at what's in store for this year's Turners Falls Block Party:

### Parade

We'll kick it off with a community parade at 3 p.m. Justine Regish, parade coordinator, has a notebook full of ideas, and she's talking with people all over town about getting involved. We're expecting a return of last year's lawn chair brigade, groups representing Parks and Rec and the Discovery Center, and a reprise of the legendary Turners Falls dog parade. Plus, we've heard rumors about zombies, roller disco, and belly dancers. Really!

### Food & Drink

Downtown eateries, including the Shady Glen, Jake's, Avenue A Café, Turners Falls Pizza House, 2nd Street Bakery, the Rendezvous and Ristorante DiPaolo will be open during their regular hours on the day of the party, and some will also be offering classic street fair food outside as well. Turners Falls Pizza House will sell slices, and the Turners Falls fire department will be back with hot dogs and hamburgers, plus, we hear, French fries this year! Patty Cake Patty Cake will offer delectable treats and the Rendezvous will once again purvey their inestimable paninis. 2nd Street Bakery is cooking up something special, and so is DiPaolo's. There will be vegetarian options, a vodka tasting at JK's, an outdoor café at Between the Uprights (formerly 2nd St. Sports Bar), soft pretzels, popcorn from the Elks, cotton candy and snow cones from Sheffield School Community Council.

### Music

This year's line-up includes regional rockers the Amity Front, Andrew Jones' Bahamian /roots groove, local favorites Rust Knuckle Raptor, Ghost Quartet, The Fabulous Maurice, Fletcher and Manzi and more. The main stage will once again be located in front of Spinner Park, with sound provided by Klondike. Shorter sets interspersed with other types of performances will

dominate the afternoon. Once the sun goes down, we hope to see you dancing in the street!

### Fun for All

Montague Parks and Recreation, Linda Ackerman, and Laurie Wheeler are putting together an expanded array of games and art activities for kids of all ages. We'll open up a fire hydrant again, and this year the Brick House will stage its Healthy Start event to coincide with the Block Party. Starting at 2 p.m. look for back-to-school information and giveaways inside and outside Dr. Del Rabbe's office, corner of 5th and Avenue A, plus facepainting and (possibly) free haircuts for kids out on the street. And special thanks to Rich Kuklewicz who is installing additional electrical hookups along the Avenue!

### Meet the Neighbors

Catch up with old friends and make new ones! Southworth Paper is planning to showcase the history of papermaking in Turners, with a hands-on opportunity for you to make your own paper. MCTV plans to use multiple cameras to broadcast "almost live" all day and to offer airbrush body painting. Visit tables and tents to learn about Montague Catholic Social Ministries, Black Jungle Terrarium Supply, Block Party sponsor Turners Falls RiverCulture, and this very newspaper. Stop in and shop at Seth & Eva's, Avenue A Café, Equi's and Arnie's. And stop by the RiverCulture table to buy a raffle ticket for a chance at a catered Mediterranean feast for twenty prepared by the Wagon

Wheel Restaurant! (Proceeds to benefit RiverCulture.)

### Help Wanted

Dozens of local businesses, individuals, and organizations have already donated time, money, and supplies to make this year's Block Party possible. You can contribute, too, by volunteering for an hour or two before, during, or after the party. There are opportunities for everyone - help make it happen!

- Be in the parade\*
  - Be in the parade with your dog\*\*
  - Donate art supplies, strings of Xmas lights, cash for expenses, or food for musicians and volunteers.
  - Help with kids' activities
  - Help keep businesses and vendors updated before the party
  - Set up Saturday morning
  - Clean up Saturday night
  - Pick up and transport supplies
  - Create displays showing what's where, who's performing, and thanking our sponsors
  - Take a turn staffing the information/RiverCulture table
  - Organize volunteers
- \*To get involved in the parade, contact: Justine Regish at brutababy2@yahoo.com (or leave a message for Justine at the Brick House - 863-9559)
- \*\*To sign your dog up or help with the dog parade, contact: Patricia Pruitt, 863-3027.
- Everything else, contact: Lisa Davol, RiverCulture Coordinator, 413-230-9910 or riverculture@montague.net.
- See www.turnersfallsriverculture.org for more information and the latest updates.

## PERGOLA from pg 1

the purpose by Blue Sky of Colrain.

To say the black locust beams are rough hewn would be an understatement: they are in their natural state, except for having their bark peeled away and smaller limbs removed. But they need no finish; black locust will not rot within the lifetime of any carpenter willing to work with the wood.

Secured firmly to the side of the building by metal joist hangers, the resulting structure is a distinctive blend of orthodox design, strong, supple lines, and sylvan simplicity. And now, in mid July, it is serving its purpose as a living greenhouse, with vining tendrils of squash, and cucumbers casting a wavering shade, scarlet runner beans dangling from the rafters, and tomato vines climbing to a height of seven feet or more.

The Undergrowth Farmers practice a wholistic style of gardening, using green manures, cover crops, clover for nitrogen, and composting scraps collected from local restaurants. At the Brick House pergola, their natural aesthetic is evident at every glance: the water for the beds is taken from a recycled 55-gallon drum seated beneath a downspout to catch rainwater, watermelons and potatoes grow on a black roofed side porch, for a real hothouse feel.

Undergrowth Farmer Tim Dean, a recent émigré from Lynn, said the strawberry plants growing in the side beds of the pergola were donated by Cliff Hatch, from Upingil Farm. Taking advantage of every available growing space, Dean said

the planters lining the second story entrance to the Brick House had been seeded earlier this spring with snow peas.

As teenagers wandered through the pergola on their way in and out of the teen center door, Dean said, "There have been a lot of people involved in the planting. We're pretty surprised to see the response."

Jackie MacConnell, who at age 11 is a little young to be frequenting the teen center (but that's OK), said she helps out with the garden regularly, by tying the tomatoes to stakes to give them support, and by watering the plants every other day, or as needed. MacConnell said she is a practiced hand at gardening, having helped her stepmother at her large garden in New Braintree, where she grows tomatoes, green beans, hot peppers, green peppers, and watermelon. She also helps her mom in her garden on Fourth Street in Turners Falls. Her mom grows mostly flowers, and some strawberries.

MacConnell said so far she had sampled a few peas from the Brick House porch, which she rated, "Nice," as well as one strawberry from the pergola. "It was nice and sweet," she recalled.

Briggs, who designed and built the pergola, inspected his work earlier this month, after the climbing plants had transformed it into a living example of green architecture. "Small scale urban gardening is going to be more and more of an important thing in the coming years. It's something we're all trying to get some practice at now." 

**WANTED :**

**50 GOOD DOGS\***

\* Must come with license, leash, owner and poop-scooper

**To March in the Avenue A Block Party Parade**

**August 9th at 3 p.m.**

*(Parade line-up at 2:30 p.m. on 2nd and Avenue A)*

**Water & Dog Biscuits Served**

**Also needed: 4 Parade Banner Carriers\***

\* Must be people to sign up

**Call Patricia at 863-3027 or leave name & telephone number.**

## Build a Sculpture in the Park



Young people can build a sculpture for the Turners Falls Youth Sculpture Park for free! The 3D Collaborative is a group of local artists with resources available to assist young people in building sculptures for outdoor display. We offer financial assistance for materials and help with the creative process. This offer is open to groups, individuals and families. We will transport and erect the sculpture for you. For more information call Joe Landry at 413 863 2915 or email youth3dpc@aol.com.



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# The Montague Reporter

24 3rd Street, Turners Falls, Mass. 01376

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## Driving Our Towns into Bankruptcy

The following letter was mailed this week to state auditor Joseph DeNucci, Gov. Deval Patrick, and local legislators, signed by the selectboards and finance committees of Gill and Montague.

Dear Auditor DeNucci:

We are writing to request that your office perform an assessment of the current practice employed by the Massachusetts Department of Elementary and Secondary Education (MDESE) in calculating the so-called 1/12th budget for school districts, and to determine whether or not this practice violates the provisions of the local mandate act. The attached letter includes an order by the State to appropriate funds sufficient to implement a 1/12th budget for the Gill-Montague Regional School District, as defined by Commissioner Chester of MDESE. We also believe that this mandate by the State violates the spirit, if not the letter of the law, under Proposition 2½. Furthermore, we feel that its implementation by the towns of Montague and Gill would be an irresponsible act and a flagrant disregard of the fiduciary responsibility of our respective boards of selectmen, as this action could drive our communities into bankruptcy by forcing the towns to approve budgetary figures that are totally unrelated to our towns' ability to generate funds.

MGL Chapter 71, Section 16B empowers the Commissioner of

Elementary and Secondary Education to order an appropriation for a regional school district when the regional school committee and the appropriating bodies of the member communities have not agreed on a budget. Furthermore, the commissioner is authorized "to certify an amount sufficient for the operation of the district and order the appropriation thereof in an amount not less than 1/2th of the total budget approved by the region in the most recent fiscal year."

The order from MDESE mandates that the member communities in the Gill-Montague Regional School District appropriate funds, through their assessments, sufficient to support a total annual District budget of \$16,820,004. The letter makes no effort to explain the criteria used to determine the level of funding that is needed to ensure the "sufficient funding of the district." This amount represents a 4.0% increase in the overall operating budget of the Gill-Montague Regional School District, not counting the excluded debt, and translates into a 10% increase in the assessment levied to the member towns. While the appropriation mandated by MDESE is less than the amount currently being requested by the district, the assessments needed to fund it are still well in excess of what the towns can afford, without decimating other essential services or by employing financial management practices that would be considered unsound under any circumstances. In real dollars, this mandate represents, for the town of Montague, an increase of



## Return to the Planet of the Apes

KAREN WILKINSON ILLUSTRATION

approximately \$600,000 over FY 2008, which is roughly 150% of all of the new revenues realized by the town in a given year, without a Proposition 2½ override. The town of Gill, with a required increase of \$174,500 over FY 2008, faces an even more dramatic impact, requiring the use of 262% of all new revenues expected in FY 2009.

The criteria used by MDESE to arrive at the 1/12th budget appropriation, considered "sufficient for the operation of the district," also appear to be inconsistent with the criteria used in determining the level of Chapter 70 state aid that is adequate for funding this district. For the past three years the Gill-Montague Regional School District has essentially seen its Chapter 70 aid "level funded," a reflection of declining enrollments and an assumption that less money is needed to operate the district. State aid policy appears to assume that under these circumstances, the district can live with a budget increase of less than one percent (\$50 per student), since that is the rate at which our state aid has increased. Thus state aid policy assumes that the district can be level funded, while the 1/12th budget assumes that an increase of 4% percent is neces-

sary for the operation of the district.

This is the third year in succession that the member towns have faced assessment increases of 8% or more. Clearly, the regional district budget process, as established under Chapter 71, Section 16B, makes a mockery of both the town meeting and district meeting process. Under this process, failure by the member towns to approve a district budget at their respective town meetings, and at the subsequent district meeting(s) would result in the adoption of the 1/12th budget as established by MDESE, if no budget were in place by December 1st. Furthermore, the state could impose its will upon the towns by deducting the mandated assessment amounts from Gill and Montague's state aid, if necessary. Thus, the towns would be forced under this mandate to spend more than they could afford.

The following questions arise:

1. Is the process established under Chapter 71, Section 16B inconsistent with other municipal finance laws including those governing the power and duties of the appropriating authority?

2. Under the existing budgeting process for a regional school district, what incentive does the district have to accept a budget as voted by the town meetings or the district meeting, if the MDESE can ultimately override

this decision and impose its budget numbers upon the towns, attaching their local aid if necessary?

3. Are the criteria used by the MDESE to arrive at a "(budget) amount sufficient for the operation of the district" arbitrary and capricious and inconsistent with existing state aid policy?

4. Is the 1/12th budget, with its mandated budget increases in excess of 2½ percent, without a commensurate increase in state aid, inconsistent with Proposition 2½ and an unfunded mandate? Have we returned to the days when a school district could anticipate a 4% increase in its budget, regardless of the community's ability to pay?

Montague is consistently ranked in the lowest 10% in the Commonwealth for both per capita income and equalized valuation per capita, and has only been able to meet its required school assessments in recent years by a dangerous reliance on non-renewable reserves and by cutting municipal services. Attempts to secure passage of Proposition 2½ overrides have been unsuccessful due to the economic distress of the community. Despite these fiscal constraints, the town has always valued education and supported school budgets far in excess of the minimum contribution required under the Education Reform Act. In

see LETTER page 5

### Note to Readers: Summer Schedule

The Montague Reporter is printing on our summer schedule, every other week.

The Montague Reporter will print on August 7th and August 21st. Regular weekly publication will resume September 4th. Have a good summer!

### We Welcome Your Letters!

Montague Reporter

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

### LETTER TO THE EDITOR

### Calling All Canines

An open invitation to 50 wonderful dogs of Montague: Please march in the Block Party parade! on August 9th at 3 p.m.\* Come with a leash and owner and your best bark (water and biscuits served). All sizes,

all shapes are welcome. \*Parade line-up is at 2:45 p.m. on 2nd Street by the Discovery Center

-Patricia Pruitt  
Dog Parade Coordinator  
Turners Falls



**LETTER** from pg 4

fact, Montague is currently spending at a level that is more than \$2 million above the the minimum required contribution.

This letter should be read not as a critique of the level of spending by one school district, an amount that may truly represent the needs of that district, but as a broader statement of the dire fiscal consequences that this mandated level of spending will have without a commensurate increase in state aid to the dis-

trict. In the absence of such an increase in state aid, the required level of spending is truly an unfunded mandate. This is an alarm bell we are trying to sound. Montague and Gill will not survive with the current approach, and many other towns in Berkshire, Franklin, Hampshire and Worcester Counties and the Cape are rapidly reaching the same crisis. For our respective towns, the situation is desperate. In the absence of an override and the availability of reserves sufficient to sustain assessment

increases of the magnitude implied in the 1/12th budget, the only option open to communities like ours will be to cut essential services. Gill is in even worse shape, since there are no reserves available to cover the differences, there are minimal central services to cut and an override of this magnitude is likely to fail.

Your immediate assistance would be greatly appreciated, as time is of the essence. In addition to the aforementioned impact on the towns of Gill and Montague, other financial consequences to

each town would also be created, making the situation even worse, if the district budget process were to run its course until December 1st. Chief among these is a delay in setting the town's tax rate, resulting in cash flow problems. In order to meet its financial obligations including the quarterly district assessment payment, the towns would incur additional expense associated with the temporary borrowing in anticipation of taxes.



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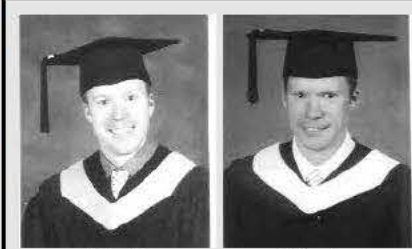
Engaging workshops and inspiring speakers make this a weekend that should not be

missed. Over 200 workshop presenters will share their knowledge and experience on a range of topics, from maple sugaring to sausage making, raising beef to raising potatoes, honeybees to herbs, chickens to composting, soils to solar power, and much more. Running concurrently with the adult workshops are exciting ones for kids and teens with creative crafts, games and projects.

More information can be found at [www.massgrass.org](http://www.massgrass.org), or by contacting Kate Rossiter, (413) 498-2721, or [krossiter@nofamass.org](mailto:krossiter@nofamass.org).

**SCHOLASTIC NOTES**

Congratulations to Mark and Kevin Wasielewski (twins) of Montague, on their recent graduations from college, both on May 17th, 2008. Mark graduated from Bridgewater State College in Bridgewater, MA. with a degree in marketing, and Kevin graduated from Franklin and Marshall College in Lancaster, PA, with a degree in social medicine.



Mark Wasielewski Kevin Wasielewski

School.

Congratulations also to Harriet Booth of Gill, who was named to the academic High Honor Roll for the spring term at Northfield Mount Hermon

Congratulations also to Amber Ackerman of Montague Center, who was named to the Dean's List of Charlton College of Business at UMass Dartmouth for the spring semester. Amber will be a senior in the fall.

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## NOTES FROM THE WENDELL SELECTBOARD

## Town Maintains Conservative Investment Strategy

BY JOSH HEINEMANN

Town accountant Janet Swem appeared before the selectboard on July 9th; she summarized the findings of the annual audit required because of the town's USDA building loan. Some relatively minor recommendations were made as a result of the audit: the town should start saving to pay for health benefits of future retirees, it should have an investment policy, it should inventory all its property that can be easily

stolen, it should bring deposits into the bank more often, and it should have its tax bills sent out twice a year on a November - May schedule.

Selectboard member Dan Keller said the town's investment policy is conservative: put money in the bank. Town treasurer Carolyn Manley said most payments to the town are small, and it's not worth the fuel cost to bring them to the bank more often.

Selectboard member Christine Heard said the town is addressing the problem of late tax bills, although the state Department of Revenue representative has yet to come to Wendell as agreed. He may

still come, and failing that a conference call with him and the town assessors may help establish a regular estimated tax bill to be sent out in the fall, with the precise final bill mailed out in spring. Town coordinator Nancy Aldrich said that New Salem sends out four tax bills a year, which makes each payment smaller and less painful.

John Craddock and Kate Nolan of the community garden committee met the selectboard for a tour of the tool shed, which will be shared by the community garden and the town building landscape committee. More than half the area available for the community garden has been tilled and divided into individual plots or planted with a cover crop. Fifteen plot holders have made a living vegetable and flower quilt with their different styles of planting, mulching and garden maintenance.

The shed was built under budget. The door and front siding are made from boards

that were milled from the old schoolhouse frame that was damaged by the tornado and dismantled. Inside are tools and hangers, shelves for individual gardeners, and a slot for the snow blower that the town will use next winter.

Town custodians Larry and Lori Ramsdell came to the meeting to touch base with the selectboard on maintenance priorities, to see if there is anything they were unaware of. They mentioned that the door to the basement of the town hall is rotting from exposure to water, and suggested as part of the door replacement a berm be added to keep water out of the basement, and away from the bottom of the door. Keller suggested that the highway department might put in a trench so that water flows away from the basement door.

The hot air furnace for the town hall is not turning on, and there is oil in the tank.

Aldrich said the town will soon be asking for bids for next winter's heating oil, and the

specifications will include maintenance and repairs of the furnaces. Policy has been to shut off water to the kitchen during the winter, but Aldrich thought that Good Neighbors might need water year round, and that would require either heat tape or re-routing pipes.

The Ramsdells had found a flooring cleaner and sealer for the town office building, and Larry said he would try his hand at one flooring repair.

Keller said work is not quite complete on the new senior center, in the former town library; gutters are yet to be installed, and the floor is not quite finished, so for now there is no work for the Ramsdells to work in that building.

Town treasurer Carolyn Manley came into the office to report that a number of owned properties were ready for sale. She suggested three dates for an auction, and Keller said he had received several requests that it not be held in summer, so the selectboard chose September 20th for the auction date.

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## HIGHLIGHTS FROM THE MONTAGUE POLICE LOG

## Noisy Neighborhoods

**Tuesday, July 8th**

9:12 p.m. Report of suspicious auto in the area of Randall Road, Montague. Removed subject to hospital.

**Wednesday, July 9th**

1:04 a.m. Report of domestic disturbance at a Locke Hill Road address, Wendell. Referred to other police.

8:08 a.m. Report of burglary, breaking and entering at a Fourth Street address, Turners Falls.

**Friday, July 11th**

5:06 p.m. Report of neighbor disturbance at a Fourth Street address, Turners Falls. Peace restored.

9:55 p.m. Report of loud noise disturbance at a Second Street address, Turners Falls. Peace restored.

10:20 p.m. Report of loud noise disturbance at a Turners Falls Road address, Turners Falls. Peace restored.

**Saturday, July 12th**

1:03 a.m. Officer initiated response to loud noise disturbance at a Dell Street address, Turners Falls. Arrested

arrest and assault and battery on a police officer.

**Sunday, July 13th**

2:58 p.m. Report of suspicious automobile at the train trestle, Franklin Street, Millers Falls. Dispersed gathering.

3:37 a.m. Report of loud noise disturbance at a Montague Street address, Turners Falls. Investigated.

3:40 a.m. Report of loud noise disturbance at a Franklin Street address, Millers Falls.

10:00 a.m. Report of illegal dumping at St. Kazimier's Society, Seventh Street, Turners Falls.

4:06 p.m. Report of suicidal subject at a Second Street address, Turners Falls. Investigated.

8:03 p.m. Report of loud noise disturbance at a Third Street address, Turners Falls. Peace restored.

**Monday, July 14th**

1:10 a.m. Officer initiated warrant arrest of [redacted] Charged as a fugitive from justice.

[redacted] charged with disorderly conduct, resisting

10:11 a.m. Report of automobile on fire at Connecticut River Internists, Burnham Street, Turners Falls. Investigated.

9:22 p.m. Report of a fight at a Twelfth Street address, Turners Falls. Peace restored.

**Tuesday, July 15th**

12:41 a.m. Report of loud noise disturbance at a Montague Street address, Turners Falls. Peace restored.

10:08 a.m. Walk-in warrant arrest of [redacted] on a default warrant.

10:54 p.m. Officer wanted at a Central Street address. Peace restored.

**Wednesday, July 16th**

7:40 p.m. Report of domestic disturbance at a Millers Falls Road address, Turners Falls. Services rendered.

8:11 p.m. Officer wanted at a Wrightson Avenue address, Turners Falls. Peace restored.

8:49 p.m. Report of medical emergency at a Seventh Street address, Turners Falls. Arrest of juvenile, age 14. Charged with assault and battery domestic and assault and battery with a dangerous weapon.

10:23 p.m. Officer wanted at a Millers Falls Road address, Turners Falls. Peace restored.

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**NOTES FROM THE GILL SELECTBOARD**

# Gill Eyes Drastic Cuts

BY DAVID DETMOLD -

At the selectboard meeting of July 21st, administrative assistant Tracy Rogers presented a list of drastic cuts that would be necessitated if the current 1/12th budget for the Gill-Montague Regional School District were to be finalized as the '09 operating budget for the district.

"Based on the 1/12th budget the commissioner of the Department of Elementary and Secondary Education set in July, Gill faces a budget deficit of over \$279,000 this year," according to Rogers. "Since an override of \$279,000 is likely to fail at the polls, the selectboard created a list of potential cuts that would be necessary to balance the budget," if the school budget stands. Those cuts include:

- closing the Slate Memorial Library.
- eliminating one full-time police officer and one full-time highway department laborer.
- no funds for the council on aging, meaning no funds toward the Gill-Montague Senior Center director's position.
- eliminating the part-time position of clerk for the board of health, zoning board of appeals, and planning board.
- reducing town hall staff hours by 20%, meaning the town clerk, assessors' clerk, collector-treasurer, and administrative assistant would be available only four days per week.

- no funds for the memorial committee, historical commission, or recreation commission.

- eliminating stipends for town boards and committees (moderator, selectboard, board of health, board of assessors).

- eliminating the position of animal control officer.

- no cost of living increases for any town employees.

- deferring the \$15,000 pump repair for the fire engine.

- no funds to set aside for future increases in building inspector fees.

"This is what we would have to do to absorb the deficit if we made the cuts July 1st," Rogers said. "We can't truly balance the budget until we know what the school assessment will be, and it doesn't look like that will be settled until the fall, if we're lucky. The longer we wait, the more drastic this list becomes."

The selectboard urged town residents to attend the upcoming school district budget meeting, the date of which has yet to be announced, and to oppose the school budget as it stands. "People need to know what the consequences will be," Rogers said.

Linda Hodson-Mayo gave the selectboard an update on her work as town clerk and assessor's clerk. She said good things were happening in both positions. New software at the assessors office has reduced the time it takes to serve residents,

and the newly appointed assessor, Ray Purington, has been putting in a lot of time at the office already, and has been a great help to her. Hodson Mayo also thanked former assessor Joanne Greenleaf for helping to "bring her up to speed" on the new software.

With this assistance, Hodson-Mayo has found her time somewhat freed up to get more accomplished at the town clerk's office, she said, where she has also been getting volunteer help from Carrie Stevens, wife of selectboard member Lee Stevens. Carrie has been doing a great deal of data entry of the town's vital statistics, which will be useful for people interested in local genealogy. Assistant town clerk Doreen Stevens (Lee's daughter-in-law) has been updating the data entry on the annual street list, voting list, and annual report, so those archives will be complete. Hodson-Mayo said the clerk's office is in good shape for the upcoming elections, with plenty of poll workers. She said the town now has new free standing signs,

similar to the one that has been placed in front of town hall, which will be placed on the Mariamonte property and at the Riverside municipal building, to inform residents from all parts of town of upcoming meetings and events.

Suzanne Smiley, chair of the Zoning Board of Appeals, said her board is having trouble reaching a quorum now that Ray Purington has moved from being an alternate to being a full member, replacing Larry Underwood on the five person board. She hopes two new residents will volunteer to act as alternates. Recently, due to lack of a quorum, the ZBA was forced to postpone a permit hearing for a change of use at Jan's Package Store, where the owners hope to put in a coffeeshop.

Phil Maddern stopped by in his role as building committee chair, to talk with the board about formalizing the role of that ad hoc committee, which has overseen the needs of town buildings. The selectboard recommended that town meeting consider whether the ad hoc building committee might merge into a more formal capital planning committee for the town.

A proposition to form a capital planning committee was tabled at the February 25th town meeting.

MCTV programming schedule available at [www.montaguema.net](http://www.montaguema.net)

**HIGHLIGHTS FROM THE GILL POLICE LOG**

**Alarms & Assistance**

**Tuesday, July 8th**  
11:20 p.m. Report of a disturbance on Walnut Street.

11:40 p.m. Arrested [redacted], Charged with two counts of assault and battery.

**Wednesday, July 9th**

9:45 p.m. Officer called to a possible breaking and entering in progress on Oak Street.

10:00 p.m. Medical assist on Oak Street.

**Saturday, July 12th**

10:30 a.m. General burglary alarm at a Hoe Shop Road address.

12:56 p.m. Motor vehicle accident in area of Gill Mobile - minor injuries.

1:50 p.m. Greenfield police requested assistance with checking the Gill side of Bascom Road for reported shots fired. Nothing found on site.

9:20 p.m. Officer assisted Erving police with an arrest.

**Sunday, July 13th**

4:15 p.m. Officer assisted Montague police as their units were tied up. Possible suicidal subject in the Second Street area.

**Monday, July 14th**

6:35 a.m. General burglar alarm at the NMH gymnasium. All secure.

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**NOTES FROM THE ERVING SELECTBOARD**

**More EMT's Needed**

**BY DAVID DETMOLD** - Fire chief Mitch LaClaire gave an update on his department to the Erving selectboard on Monday, July 14th. Of the 23 Erving firefighters, three are trained and certified as EMTs. LaClaire also has five junior firefighters (under 18) associated with the department. LaClaire noted that any firefighter on the department could be a first responder on a medical call, but the town enjoys back-up service in Erving from Baystate Ambulance and in Erving Center from Orange Ambulance.

The selectboard asked

LaClaire how he could go about attracting more EMTs for the department. He replied it costs \$1500 to take the training course, a fee that is reimbursable by the town only on successful completion of the training. He said he would look into possible sources for funding to provide the upfront costs for EMT trainees.

LaClaire also told the board he had received a \$2000 grant from the state forest fire control agency to replace hoses.

On behalf of the Erving historical society, Carole Lyman came before the board to request funds for renovating the upper story of the former firehouse in Erving Center, which now serves as the town's historical museum. She described the upper floor as "Unusable." In recent years, the town replaced the building's facade and roof. Administrative coordinator Tom Sharp said he would meet with highway superintendent Paul Prest to see how much of the interior repairs could be handled "in-house."

Assistant dog officer Art Johnson, Jr., who has served in an entirely volunteer capacity, came before the board to report that the volume of dog calls,

never mind nuisance cats, was ten times greater than he had anticipated when he signed on for the job. He wondered if the town could emphasize its commitment to the humane handling of animal complaints by providing something more than a pair of gloves and a pat on the back for his work. He would like a budget to go with his informal but steadily expanding workload.

Board chair Andrew Tessier pointed out that as dog officer, Johnson works for the police chief, Chris Blair, and offered to set up a meeting between the three of them to discuss the dog officer's position.

The board finally was able to issue a liquor license to Jillian's on the 2, a restaurant which is now closed. Sharp said the permitting process took such a long time at the state level that the new restaurant had closed its doors before it the license was issued. Jillian's applied for the liquor license on November 19th of last year, as they prepared to open for business, and the selectboard approved their request. The state liquor license board finally issued their approval on June 20th, too late

for the business owners to make use of it.

The board signed Erving's 2008 drinking water quality reports, assuring the public of the quality of Erving's drinking supply. The board also issued late notices to delinquent water users, whose bills are due by August 4th.

The board also signed a \$12,500 contract with Tighe and Bond for ongoing monitoring of the capped landfill on Maple Road in Farley.

The board wrapped up their meeting on a positive note by issuing a business license to Sharon Poirier for her newly reopened Boxcar Diner in Erving Center. The popular social gathering spot opened for business again on Wednesday, July 16th, serving breakfast and lunch to enthusiastic customers.

"I had their Reuben sandwich," said Sharp, of his first visit to the reopened diner. "It was great!"

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Fri. Aug 15 - West Rutland  
Sat. Aug 16 - Rutland  
Sun. Aug 17 - Leicester  
Mon. Aug 18 - Middlebury  
Tue. Aug 19 - Hinesburg  
Wed. Aug 20 - Jericho  
Thu. Aug 21 - Enosburg Falls  
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**HIGHLIGHTS FROM THE ERVING POLICE LOG**

**Black Labrador Retrieval**

**Tuesday, July 8th**  
7:35 a.m. Citation issued to [redacted] for operating a motor vehicle with a suspended license.

8:45 a.m. Arrested [redacted] for operating a motor vehicle under suspension of license, second offense.  
11:20 p.m. Assisted Gill police with domestic assault and battery.

**Wednesday, July 9th**  
9:30 p.m. Assisted Gill police with domestic situation on Oak Street.  
11:15 p.m. Citation issued to [redacted] for defective headlight, operating without insurance, operating with revoked registration.

**Thursday, July 10th**  
9:15 a.m. Report of harassing phone calls to Erving Paper Mills. Under investigation.  
1:40 p.m. Report of suicidal subject on North Street. Subject found to be okay.  
7:40 p.m. Report of several youths on top of baseball dugouts at Vets Field. Children

located and advised to stay off of same.

**Friday, July 11th**  
10:05 a.m. Report of vandalism to a vehicle on Old State Road.

**Saturday, July 12th**  
4:50 p.m. Report of male subject climbing in window at Weatherheads Apartments. Subject locked self out of apartment. All okay.  
7:19 p.m. Citation issued to [redacted] for unlicensed operation of a motor vehicle and registration not in possession.

9:00 p.m. Arrested [redacted] for operating a motor vehicle after suspension of license and possession of fireworks.

**Sunday, July 13th**  
3:00 p.m. Checked Mountain Road for loose Black Labrador Retriever. Picked up same and brought to the pound.

**Monday, July 14th**  
11:25 p.m. Arrested [redacted] for marked lanes violation, failure to use signal and operating a motor vehicle under the

influence of liquor.  
**Wednesday, July 16th**  
3:05 p.m. Report of suspicious vehicle parked at Mill on Paper Mill Road. Gone on arrival.

4:05 p.m. Attempt to locate reported bobcat in Park Street area. Gone on arrival.

8:57 p.m. Citation issued to [redacted] for unlicensed operation of motor vehicle.

9:51 p.m. Citation issued to [redacted] for operating a motor vehicle after suspension and speeding.

**Friday, July 18th**  
10:17 p.m. Report of several males drinking at Laurel Lake Campsite. Confiscated alcohol.

**Saturday, July 19th**  
12:27 a.m. Disturbance on Route 2; subject fled from vehicle after verbal altercation. Checked area, unable to locate subject.

11:25 a.m. Citation issued to [redacted] for unlawfully attaching number plates.

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**BUDGET from 1**

than 1% this year, the letter asks why state aid policy assumes the district, with declining enrollment, can be operated with essentially level funds, while the DESE assumes a 4% increase is necessary, and places the burden on the local towns to make up the difference.

"We feel that the implementation (of the 1/12th budget set by Commissioner Chester) by the towns of Montague and Gill would be an irresponsible act and a flagrant disregard of fiduciary responsibility of our respective boards of selectmen, as this action could drive our communities into bankruptcy by forcing towns to approve budgetary figures that are totally unrelated to our towns' ability to generate funds," the letter states. It goes on to make the point that "Montague is consistently ranked in the lowest 10% in the Commonwealth for both per capita income and equalized valuation per capita, and has only been able to meet its required school assessments in recent years by a dangerous reliance on non-renewable reserves and by cutting municipal services... In fact, Montague is currently spending at a level that is more than two million dollars above

the minimum required contribution," to support the district schools.

Gill would see 262% of its total expected revenues in 2009 go toward the school assessment, if the 1/12th budget remains intact and no additional state aid is made available. The town of Gill has only \$80,000 left in its reserve funds, according to town administrative assistant Tracy Rogers.

Superintendent of schools Ken Rocke raised objections to the wording of the letter at the Montague selectboard meeting of July 14th, and received some assurance that changes would be made to reflect the town's support of education.

"My fear is that this letter will further divide this community. In our turnaround plan, we asked for an increase in state funding," Rocke said. "We did not say the towns were not doing their part." He continued, "I'm not hearing acknowledgement of the value of the schools, or of the extra measures we're taking to gain new revenues." Rocke pointed to the GMRSD's switch to the state's GIC health care plan last year, a move intended to hold down increases in the district's health care costs, as well as the decision to close and consolidate district elementary schools, and the effort to recruit school choice

students to bring new revenue to the district.

"I'm not seeing a respect for the schools and the budget they require. The letter is saying the school budget should be reduced to the level the towns could afford. If that comes about, it would be very damaging to the towns."

Rocke asked the selectboard to tell him the current level of Montague's reserve funds, and asked what the actual increase was for town departments in the present fiscal year. "Are you able to operate with a 0% to 1% increase?"

Town administrator Frank Abbondanzio said the town departments had, in fact, been held to a 1% increase this year, and the cash reserves available to the town are in the \$1.1 million range. He made the point, "If we were to use that to fund school assessments, in Fiscal 2010 we'd have to come up with the same amount of money, with no reserves to turn to. You could put the town in bankruptcy... in one year's time."

"We've reached a point where we need to say, 'Stop!'" said selectboard member Pat Allen.

"But something's going to crash and burn," countered Rocke. "It's the voices of the town that have led us to the GIC, and we're still in the Pothole

(state supplementary funding) game."

Allen responded, "You have tried the reasonable, moderate approach with the state. As far as we can see, they're paying no attention."

Rocke argued, "We've made a heroic effort to advocate for the towns at the state level."

Selectboard chair Allen Ross replied, "But your fiscal pathway is to appeal to a department that can only increase the budget of the schools, at the expense of the towns."

Rocke would not budge. "I think as written this will have a destabilizing effect on the district that we've worked very hard to change the public perception of." He asked for some recognition of the "massive cuts already made at the schools," which lost two dozen staff people in 2002, when the budget crisis first became acute.

He continued, "I understand the difficulty the town is being put in with the 1/12th budget. But

the alternative is equally devastating for the schools. The idea of a 1/12th budget is it allows you to continue business as usual (using 1/12th of last year's school budget each month). But it needs a bump also to deal with inflation." He said with unknowns like the number of students choosing out this September, and the potential for more special education students with expensive individual education plans attending district schools, "We don't even know what our expenses are going to be yet."

Allen turned the debate around by asking Rocke, "What would you like us to do?"

Rocke sighed and said, "I don't know." He concluded, "I think you need the schools for the town to thrive."

"Unless you closed the schools and have everybody choice out," Allen replied, but she made it clear her last remark was intended as a joke.



**ART from 1**

The show will close on August 10th, but the association intends to keep the space open as long as the unheated location allows - and they will participate in the September Arts and Leaves Open Studio tour in Turners.

I'm sure you know the building - a one story brick structure that stands behind the weekly Great Falls Farmers Market and has seemed generally unoccupied in recent years. The truth is several groups, including the Turners Falls RiverCulture, Montague Economic Development and Industrial Corporation [MEDIC], U.S. Fish and Wildlife, and the Massachusetts Department of Conservation and Recreation have shared use of the building for some time, but it has lacked a public purpose for many years.

If you've been in the vicinity of the building recently, it's impossible to miss the "buzz" surrounding the new occupants. The most obvious sign of activity is that the doors have been open and all sorts of people have been walking in and out! They enter well-groomed and exit many hours later somewhat disheveled but apparently exhilarated.

Last week, when I was at the Farmers Market, I could not resist the temptation to poke my head into those open doors to see what was happening. I was fortunate to catch Beverly Phelps, the current president of the DVAA board, who took a break from painting walls to tell me her organization had entered into a short-term agreement with MEDIC to use the building for their pending summer show.

I knew almost nothing about

the Deerfield Valley Art Association, but I confess to being a little envious they'd scooped the building I'd recently envisioned as a local artisans' cooperative. Wait a minute - they essentially *are* a local art coop!

This 200-plus member association of fine artists and craftspeople hasn't changed their mission much since their inception. Handwritten minutes from their very first meeting on September 17th, 1931 state, "Mrs. Homer Taylor acting as chairman outlined a very interesting plan - Briefly - That an association be formed of Artists and Craftsmen banded together primarily to stimulate a deeper appreciation of art in the community and to encourage and inspire all artists toward greater things." (It should be noted the

continued on pg 11

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**WENDELL** from pg 1  
ference," in the per pupil costs for the member towns, Slavas said. But four years ago, the state changed the formula by which it determines how much each town should pay for the schools under the statutory method, and Wendell's per pupil costs for Mahar "shot up from \$5,600 to \$9,200 in one year," Slavas said.

This year, according to Slavas, Wendell will pay \$7,781 per pupil attending Mahar, but that is still the highest of any of the member towns. Orange will pay \$5,026, New Salem will pay \$7,182, and Petersham will pay \$7,561 per pupil once the budget is set, even though by most measures Wendell is the poorest community of the four.

Since Wendell's protest vote at annual town meeting in favor of the original, contractual method (the so-called alternative method of assessment) of all four towns paying the same per pupil costs, the towns of Petersham and New Salem voted to simply reduce the proposed Mahar budget by 4%. This led Wendell to follow suit on Tuesday night, coupled with a promise by Mahar superintendent Reza Namin and other members of the school committee to examine Wendell's desire to return to the original method of assessment in the months to come.

With that assurance, the

sixteen residents at Tuesday's special town meeting approved a budget of \$357,915 for Wendell, to pay for the operation of the Mahar Regional High School for '09.

After the vote, Slavas made it clear the debate on how much Wendell should pay for Mahar in relation to the other member towns was settled only for the time being.

"We feel it is inequitable. We signed a contract in 1966 (agreeing to equal per pupil payments in the Mahar district). It seems ridiculous we're paying this much more money. We feel it is in the long term interest of the school district to have an equitable per pupil assessment," he said.

In other business, town meeting voted unanimously to spend \$5000 to pay for improvements to the town's website, and to establish a committee to oversee the expenditure of those funds, and determine which website designer to work with.

The town also unanimously approved the formation of an open space planning committee, distinct from the open space committee, to update the town's open space plan. Mason Phelps explained that the former open space planning committee had served its term and disbanded, the plan needed to be brought up

to date in order to keep the town eligible for state grant funding, and it would be good to have "different people and different perspectives," representing "every facet of the community," serving on the open space planning committee.

Barbara Caruso wanted to know if the two committees dealing with open space in Wendell would be working together.

Phelps said the two committees would be working together, and may share some members.

Town meeting also unanimously approved a motion to establish a committee to come up with a plan for installing a bathroom in the police station. When the new septic and water lines were installed in the town center last year, pipes were run as far as the exterior of the building. For the past few years, the police have used the bathroom at town hall.

The police station was the scene of an unfortunate flash flood during the course of recent reroofing, when a sudden storm blew up and sent rainwater through the tarp covering the building. Insurance will pay for the damage to equipment and furnishings. (The flood has caused a temporary halt to the Wendell police logs in the *Reporter*.)

Most of the hour long meeting was devoted to discussing whether to form a committee to research noise bylaws used in neighboring communities, toward the end of recommending a noise bylaw for Wendell voters to consider at a subsequent annual town meeting.

On June 2nd, the last annual town meeting, voters roundly rejected a proposed noise

ordinance, which came up late in the evening.

Selectboard member Dan Keller, explaining why a similar article was back before town meeting so soon, said, "Some of the most contentious discussions we've had on the selectboard have been about noise, going back for a long time. A lot of neighboring towns" (including Gill and Montague) "have passed noise bylaws. We realize there's a lot of opposition in general to the idea, but we thought we'd give it another look."

Selectboard chair Ted Lewis opposed the idea. "I haven't found anyone in Wendell you can't talk to, and we have funds for mediation if that fails. A bylaw would be costly if you had to enforce it. Who's to determine if something is noise? I don't think this is something the town of Wendell needs."

Resident Lisa Hoag said, "Sometimes mediation has been refused. If people's sleep is being disturbed to the point where they can't work, it's important to have agreed upon guidelines." She added, "I'd like to think we're the kind of town that is strong enough to seek out opposing viewpoints and hear them."

Caruso said she understood what it was like to be kept up all night by noise, but if she shot the bullfrog in her well that would be an even noisier way of resolving the problem. "My biggest concern is having 10 people decide on a noise bylaw."

Dick Baldwin said, "Since it is a contentious issue, I don't see the harm in finding out what other towns are doing."

Melinda Godfrey said she was a "registered libertarian," "not in favor of a lot of rules and

regulations," but supported "the principal this is something for town government to address."

She continued, "Most of us would agree that we have the right to do what we want on our own property as long as we don't interfere with other's enjoyment of their own property. Excessive noise interferes with someone else's enjoyment of their own property."

Lewis opined, "It's just another law that will be ignored. You ought to go up and talk with someone you have a problem with, not tell them 'You're breaking the law.'"

Harry Williston said, "The annual town meeting voted a noise bylaw down, and now the selectboard has decided to bring it back up on the floor. We don't have enough (people present) to overturn what town meeting did."

But Myron Becker said, "This is clearly a discussion that wants to happen, and I want to hear it out, at an annual town meeting when more people are here to act on it. It's an issue which is pregnant with potential to get a sense of what the town thinks."

The measure passed by a vote of ten in favor, five opposed.

Moderator Kathy Becker asked people in town to step forward to serve on the three newly formed committees.

Town administrative assistant Nancy Aldrich said the town's bylaws are not kept in an easily accessible form, and Keller recommended it would be a good volunteer opportunity for residents who might wish to help Aldrich research the minutes of past meetings to collate the town bylaws, and make them available in usable form.



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**ART** from pg 9

recording secretary had impeccable penmanship, bordering on calligraphy, a form of art that stimulated deep appreciation in this reader.)

As the oldest continuously operating art association in Western Massachusetts, the DVAA offers art shows in addition to demonstrations, lectures and field trips throughout the year, all of which are open to members as well as the public at large. Their ranks have held a veritable *Who's Who* of the Valley art world. They've had their ups and downs but the association has prevailed for 77 years. With the burgeoning arts scene in Turners Falls gaining regional attention, the DVAA coming to town should complement the work already in progress to make Turners a destination for cultural tourism.

It is difficult for an organization to maintain continuity and energy when it moves frequently - the first meeting and exhibition space was Tavern Hall in Charlemont, which was made available for the purpose by the Healy family in 1932. It was considered "admirably situated on the Mohawk Trail for exhibiting and selling purposes." Most recently the DVAA has rented a small office from the Greenfield Business Association, where they store a wealth of archival information and take care of the organizational side of operations.

Over the years exhibits have moved from space to space: Williston Academy, the Pittsfield Museum, area banks, Deerfield Academy, Greenfield High School, the Springfield Museum of Fine Arts, and many other locations. A long time supporter of DVAA, Wilson's Department Store hosted its first exhibit in 1940 to celebrate American Art Week, and continues to house the winter and fall shows.

The summer exhibit has also had many locations, and was cancelled entirely in 1943 due to severe gas rationing, and again in 1956 because an available space could not be found.

This year, programs at the Bement School created a scheduling conflict, so DVAA members at the annual meeting directed the board to search for an alternative gallery space. It was at the same meeting that Beverly Phelps became the president of the board of directors, a position that had been vacant for about two years. She has led the search with a twofold mission in mind, the more immediate need for a summer gallery as well as the hope of finding a permanent home for the DVAA.

A look through the archives shows that members have undertaken that search on more than one occasion - the first time back in 1934 with a modest building trust established in 1935. The trust has been slowly growing ever since. In addition to a permanent operating space

for meetings, demonstrations and exhibits, the DVAA has long hoped to establish an art museum for Franklin County.

When John Gnatek was board president and Dario Politella the information director, back in 1976, the DVAA began its first public search for a permanent space. Succeeding Gnatek as president, Politella claimed, "The greatest challenge we will be facing in the next year will be to provide the spark that results in a museum of art for the people of the area." To that end, the DVAA formed a steering committee and began negotiations to purchase the Franklin First building on the corner of Main and Federal Street in Greenfield. The same year they attained their exempt status under the 501(c)(3) rules.

The *New York Times* Architecture View on February 13th, 1977 ran the headline, "Greenfield, Mass., Gains a Bank and Loses a Museum." The story attributed DVAA's failed attempt to buy the building to two factors - regional economic concerns central to the future of the Millers Falls Company and the difficulty of locating a professional museum fundraiser willing to consider the relatively small-scale project and associated fees. The delay in raising the capital funds to purchase the building meant the Franklin Savings Institution accepted a second offer and sold the building to the Country Trust Company.

At that time, NY Times writer Ada Louise Huxtable stated the "museum program was reasonable and realistic. Its loss is more than a museum or a landmark conversion. What is really being lost is the kind of revitalization that enriches as well as renews, because it adds to the community's life in a way that feeds back directly into the quality of its environment."

A second attempt during Politella's eighteen year stint as DVAA board president occurred in 1985, when Douglas Billideau of Douglas Galleries presented information about a building for sale that had potential as a future gallery. There were many unanswered questions about the sustainability of the venture, and ultimately the board voted against the purchase.

Phelps has been inspired by the revitalization efforts of Turners Falls and is well aware of the town's growing reputation as an active arts community, so to her it seemed logical to explore available spaces downtown. While other locales were visited, the directors were particularly interested in having a presence on Avenue A, and ultimately the DVAA entered into a four-month agreement with MEDIC for the use of their building.

Since then, there have been a few short weeks and many hours of hard work as 15 or so volunteers have rushed to have the facility ready for the July 25th opening reception. Carpets have been taken up, walls have been

scrubbed and painted, picture rail hung and the linoleum floors stripped by hand. Couture Brothers were on hand to advise DVAA about paint choices, and Rugg Lumber donated the picture rail.

Marty Stiles, long time member and current board treasurer, said the DVAA had not been idle during the interregnum, but she felt it was discouraging for members not to have a president at the helm. She believes the organization has been revitalized by Phelps's energetic drive and vision as the new board president, and has benefited as well from her community connections and genuine desire to understand and meet the association's needs.

Phelps is taking things in small steps. She has found the Turners Falls RiverCulture project and Montague officials to be welcoming of her organization. She hopes DVAA might ultimately become a permanent part of the town's arts infrastructure. Phelps invites residents to consider joining the DVAA, which has a modest annual fee of \$18, \$12 for seniors, \$10 for students, or \$25 per family. Members may participate in exhibits showing their original works of fine art or craft.

Stop by the show and learn more about the organization. The opening reception begins this Friday, July 25th at 6 p.m. with refreshments on the lawn!





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**THE GARDENER'S COMPANION**

# Working with Mother Nature

BY LESLIE BROWN  
MONTAGUE CITY

Contrary to some opinions, home gardening is not a science. It is more an art. Each season is different with weather and other variables out of the gardener's control. This is both a frustration and a challenge. For many of us, if everything grew the same and produced as well one year to the next, the savor of gardening would also be gone. True, you could harvest your predictably successful crops year after year. Most of us, however, enjoy working with Mother Nature as she comes.

If you live happily in New England, then you enjoy or are at least accepting of variety, whether in the seasons, the temperatures or the amount of precipitation. I just got around this year to buying a hose caddy. This means that I have a device that can corral the

rubber snake and easily wheel it to the location of my choice. This year, I can count on one hand the number of times I've had to water my garden. So it goes.

The strawberry bed has yielded a bountiful crop of bright red, sweet, intensely flavored fruit. The berries have also been unusually small for "Sparkle" which generally grows quite large. After reading the brochure again from the farm where I bought the plants, I realize that I allowed them to grow too large, crowding their neighbors and thus resulting in smaller if tasty fruit.

I have just followed the post-harvest season advice and thinned my plants to 3-5 inches apart. I've also cut back the old foliage to allow the crown of the plant to produce new leaves for next season. Actually, since I'm a bit late in my post harvest treatment, I can see the new

leaves for next year have already begun to develop beneath the parent foliage.

Hopefully, no harm done. After all, even a gardener has to get away for vacation.

Speaking of which, I have been successfully keeping the woodchuck out of the garden by hanging rags soaked in ammonia at intervals around

the plots. But the fair Maine weather lulled me. True, when I returned, I heard much complaining about the humidity and the frequent downpours, but somehow I didn't process what that might mean to me.

Refreshed and energized, I went back to work on Monday morning. When I returned home and took an evening stroll around the garden, I discovered that I had lost about a third of the kale and the tops of the young bean plants. Further investigation also revealed that the tops of my winter squash plants were missing.

The woodchuck, which was happily feeding on the clover under the apple trees, had blown

up to the size of a well-nourished if not obese small dog. And I had forgotten to renew the ammonia soaked rags that had been cleansed more than once by Mother Nature while I was off gallivanting at the seashore.

Six days later I can report that the kale is developing new leaves, the bean plants are producing pods in spite of their missing foliage, and it looks as if the small leaves the varmint left on the winter squash have grown considerably. Maybe I'll be lucky. I'll certainly remember to keep the anti-rodent treatment going!

While we don't seem to have the usual number of honeybees working the gardens, the summer squash is flourishing, as it likes the heat and humidity. If it's not too hot to run the oven for a bit, you can use some surplus zucchini for a pie crust that is tasty and healthier than the larded variety.

## Zucchini Pie Crust

Grate two cups of squash and drain thoroughly.

Set your oven for 450 degrees and lightly grease a large pie plate.

Mix the zucchini with two beaten eggs, 1/3 cup of flour and seasonings to taste. Press into the bottom and up the sides of the dish.

Bake for about 8-10 minutes until light brown.

Lower the oven temperature to 350.

Remove from the oven and fill your pie with:

Sliced tomatoes topped with basil and shredded cheese or

Grated cheese, mushroom, peppers and onions and a little pizza sauce or any other thinly sliced vegetables you love.

Bake at 350 until the cheese has melted.

Cool slightly and serve.





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**DAYS** from pg 1

the opening evening, of which Golonka has an original copy, included a newsreel from Pathe News, an Our Gang comedy, live performances by "Variety Entertainers", and Paramount Pictures' featured film, "Love's Greatest Mistake," starring Evelyn Brent and former Northamptonite William Powell, of Thin Man fame.

The Shea Theater was named for its builder, Denis Shea. "They'd show a different movie every night," Golonka recalled. "We used to take an old milk bottle from our house and return it to the store for five cents." That would cover half the price of the ten-cent children's ticket.

Fisette added, "Tuesday was Dish Day at the Shea. They'd give the gals a dish for attending the theater, one piece at a time until the set was complete. Boy, I bet those dishes are collectors' items today!"

One of Fisette's fondest memories is of the year he spent working for the Civilian Conservation Corps, a government program developed to put people back to work during the Depression as part of Franklin Delano Roosevelt's New Deal. "It was the best life imaginable for a young fellow," Fisette said with a big smile. "It gave us a place to live in the camp area and barracks in Goshen, where we ate and slept. During the day, we cleared brush, built roads, and cleaned forests. It was very hard work, but we were paid \$30 a month. Five dollars went to me and \$25 went to my father and four sisters."

Fisette shook his head in disbelief and said, "You know, I went back there to the exact spot in Goshen several years ago, and there wasn't a single trace left of anything. Everything was completely gone."

George Fisette had graduated from Turners Falls High School in 1933 and, following his CCC experience, would go on to work in production, and later in the office, at the Millers Falls Tool Company. He began his career there in 1936 at \$12 week, retiring in 1979 after close to 44 years on the job. Ingersoll Rand bought out the local tool company in later years. To this day, George has a pension and health insurance through the company.

Fisette has been married to Muzzy Narelline, 86, for three years shy of seven decades. George and Muzzy's son, Michael, is 63 years old; their two other sons have passed away. Muzzy and George continue to stay active, playing golf at the Thomas Memorial Country Club in Turners. They live on Millers Falls Road.

"I was always active," said George, citing exercise and sports as two of the keys to his longevity. "I played a lot of sports when I was young, and I loved bicycling, swimming, running, golf, and walking. We'd think nothing of taking our bikes from Turners Falls to Springfield. Or we'd go on an evening ride through Millers Falls and head back up the French King Highway and loop back to Turners that way."

Golonka and his wife Rita, meanwhile, will be celebrating their 60th wedding anniversary

on September 10th. They have three children, 57-year-old Joseph W., Elaine Ann, 54, and Peter, 51. Rita and Joe have enjoyed traveling extensively over the years, visiting Hawaii, the Pacific Northwest, the South, the Canadian Northwest, and California on separate tours. This week they're in California again!

The Golonkas have lived at their grand old home on Montague Street in Turners Falls since 1950. "Just to show you how times have changed," Golonka said, "Rita and I secured this house with a down payment of \$50. Can you imagine that?"

Like Fisette, Golonka was able to forge a career with one company. A 1942 graduate of Turners Falls High, Golonka was a dye cutter and a foreman at Lunt Silversmiths in Greenfield. He worked as a foreman there for a quarter of a century. Except for "a couple of years off when I was in the service," Golonka worked at Lunt from 1942 to 1986. He was one of six brothers who served in World War II, the only one in the Navy.

Recalling downtown in the old days, Golonka spoke fondly of the Hibernian Hall, where the offices of Powertown are located now. The name referred to the Brotherhood of the Hibernians, an Irish society. The Hibernian was only one of the sites downtown for dancing in those days, and later it was well known for the top floor gymnasium, where basketball games and boxing matches were contested.

Golonka spoke of the trolley

tracks "which at one time ran right in front of my house." The five villages of Montague were brought together in 1885 via a trolley line, Golonka said, whose downtown route ran through the center of Avenue A to Third Street from Montague City.

As noted before in these pages, Turners was a great town for nicknames. "Everyone in town had one back then," said Fisette. "Down at the Carnegie Library they had a book maintained by Harold Fugere, who was a teacher, listing at one time about a thousand people in town along with their nicknames. I knew a lot of people with names like 'Squash' and 'Wobbles' by their nicknames alone. I remember a police officer we called 'Joe Dollar.' The reason we called him that came from the fact that his real name was Joseph Thaler, which was a German name that translated to 'Dollar.'" Golonka and Fisette noted that Andrew Carnegie, the famed industrialist-philanthropist, endowed the town of Montague with \$12,500 a century ago, and the town built a complete and beautifully appointed building for that sum in 1903.

Golonka and Fisette recalled two devastating disasters to hit the area: the Great Flood of 1936 and the Hurricane of 1938. "Our family had to be evacuated on Eleventh Street in the '36 flood," recalled Golonka. "The police actually knocked on our door and told us to evacuate because the Vernon Dam had given way. Actually, the dam never broke. It was only a rumor. But it was better to be safe and

not sorry. We got to higher ground, on L Street."

Golonka remembered walking to Montague City to look at the water level that day, and finding the covered bridge to Greenfield groaning on its abutments. Ten minutes later, as he walked back to Turners, someone passed him and said the bridge had washed away. It was carried downstream, and took out the bridge in Sunderland for good measure.

Fisette recalled the hurricane two years later. "It was a Wednesday afternoon," he said. "I remember this clearly - the sidewalks were lifted right up, and trees were going down everywhere, particularly elm trees. The hurricane came roaring up the Connecticut River. I saw that incredible wind coming across the airport. This incredible wind literally sucked windows out of the house next door. It was absolutely unforgettable, unbelievable, unreal."

Golonka had gone to the Shea that day to pick up his brother. He doesn't have the playbill for that show, but he remembers leaving the theater and seeing trees blowing down all along the Avenue. "We had no warning there was a hurricane coming."

Among their many memories of Turners, Fisette and Golonka both said they recalled there was more concern for neighbors and community in the old days. "Everyone knew everyone," said Fisette. "There was so much volunteering back then. It was just a different world. People took care of each other, especially during the hard times



JESSICA HARMON ILLUSTRATION

**THE HEALTHY GEEZER:**

**Periodontal Disease**

**BY FRED CICETTI**  
LEONIA, NJ - Q. *What exactly is tartar, that stuff on your teeth?*

Bacteria, mucus, and food particles in our mouths produce a colorless film on the surfaces of teeth. This film is called "plaque." Plaque contributes to tooth decay and gum disease. Plaque that is not removed can harden and form "tartar."

Brushing your teeth will

remove plaque but not tartar. Once tartar builds up, you need a professional cleaning, one of those fun things we all look forward to. Well, it's definitely better than gum disease.

Gum disease is common among seniors because it develops painlessly over a long period of time. Gum disease can be aggravated by ill-fitting dentures and poor diet - both of them senior problems. Symptoms include bleeding, swollen or receding gums, loose teeth, a change in your bite, and persistent bad breath or taste.

Gum disease, known officially as periodontal disease, affects about 80 percent of American

adults. Periodontal disease ranges from gum inflammation ("gingivitis") to a serious stage that causes tissue damage and tooth loss. In fact, periodontal disease is the leading cause of adult tooth loss.

You're at greater risk of developing periodontal disease if you smoke; suffer from diabetes, cancer or AIDS; are under great stress; are taking drugs such as antidepressants that reduce saliva in your mouth; are a woman going through hormonal changes, or have a genetic predisposition for gum disease.

The American Academy of Periodontology says that about one in three people in the USA

may have inherited a susceptibility to gum disease. People who are genetically predisposed to gum disease may be up to six times more likely to develop it, even if they are extraordinarily diligent about dental hygiene.

To prevent gum disease, you should brush your teeth twice a day with a fluoride toothpaste, floss daily, see a dentist regularly, eat a well balanced diet, and avoid tobacco.

[Personal note. Several years ago, I started using a high-powered electric toothbrush that cleans between the teeth. I brush after breakfast and before bed, and I don't use floss. My dentist has been amazed at how little

plaque there is on my teeth.]

Periodontal disease is treated by scaling and root planing. Scaling is scraping off tartar from above and below the gum line. Root planing gets rid of rough spots on the tooth root where the germs gather, and helps remove bacteria that contribute to the disease. Medications may be used with scaling and root planing.

Your dentist or periodontist may recommend flap surgery to remove tartar deposits in deep pockets. In flap surgery, the gums are lifted back and the tartar is removed. The gums are then sutured back in place.

In addition to flap surgery, your periodontist may suggest bone or tissue grafts. Grafting is a way to replace or encourage new growth of bone or gum tissue that has been destroyed.

*If you have a question, please write to fred@healthygeezzer.com*

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# JEP'S PLACE Part LXXXV

## Determination

**BY JOSEPH A. PARZYCH GILL** - While outside one day, I heard a tire hissing on Magrini's car. I pointed it out to him. He took the spare tire off the back of the car, jacked up the car, put on the spare tire, fixed the flat and put the wheel on the spare tire rack. The screw jack operated with a long handled crank designed to be used with both hands. The holes on the wheel were not easy to

line up with the studs sticking out of the wheel hub, but Magrini did it with one hand while wearing a tie and long sleeved white shirt. After putting the spare on the car, Magrini proceeded to pry the flat tire off the rim. He held one tire iron down with his foot while he pried with the other. When he got enough tire pried off to get a handhold, he planted his foot on the wheel and pulled the tire off the rim with his hand.

He removed the tube, patched it, put it back inside the tire, mounted the tire on the rim, pumped up the air pressure with a hand pump, and put the wheel on the spare rack. I couldn't believe he was able to accomplish all that in so short a time. But what impressed me most was that he kept his white shirt clean! I could get a white shirt dirty standing stock still out in the open. Just as he was securing the tire on the spare tire rack, the other members of the family came out. Someone asked what the problem was.

"No problem; just a flat tire."  
 "Why didn't you come in to get us? We'd have changed it for you."  
 "Why? I'm no cripple."  
 After that, whenever I was faced with difficulty, I thought of Magrini overcoming the loss of his right arm. Even when living alone, he dressed himself, lacing his shoes in such a way that he was able to pull one end to tighten the laces and somehow fasten the loose end all with one hand.  
 He learned to drive a

standard shift car by sticking his left arm through the steering wheel and shifting the floor mounted gearshift lever while steering the car. He passed his driving test on the first try.  
 His dress and manners were that of a gentleman. In addition to his administrative job, he opened an insurance agency, and later, a monument business. The day Magrini fixed the flat tire he demonstrated the power of determination. He seemed to have a different perspective on life than Pa.  
 - Continued next issue

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**LOST & FOUND**

A solar light was left at the end of my driveway last week. The police supplied addresses of residents who reported missing solar lights, but none of the missing lights resembled the one I found. Call 863-8386 to identify.

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**EAGLE WATCH Empty Nest Syndrome**

**BY PAT CARLISLE**

**GREAT FALLS** - Our Barton Cove nest is empty; we've watched wing exercises and now our eagle chick has fledged. A telescope finds her perched on branches out of camera range, but still arriving back in the nest for feedings. The blackbirds glean the leftovers and green seedlings sprout in the empty nest.

A watchful parent can be found perched nearby, or delivering fresh fish when the eaglet returns for a meal.

We know by late summer our eagle babies are ready to leave and use the next four to five years growing and acquiring the white head and tail feathers of adulthood. They will find their own mates and a territory for nest building and raising chicks. Farewell, wherever you fare.

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**PUBLIC NOTICE**

The Erving Conservation Commission in accordance with the Massachusetts Wetlands Protection Act MGL Ch. 131 will hold a public hearing at the Erving Town Hall on Monday, July 28th, 2008 at 7:30. The Notice of Intent filed by Ginny Newton of 28 River St. Erving for work within the Riverfront Protection Zone will be discussed.  
 - Chairman David P. Brule

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**CD REVIEW Blame it on Tina**

**BY AMY LAPRADE** - Not just another folk rock CD, *Calling Me Back* by the Wendell band 'Blame It On Tina' and get lost in "Blue Eyes", rings of care-free-spiritedness reminiscent of nineteen seventies pop, while "Ocean" carries a Latin feel with psychedelic surfer overtones. Its subtle guitar licks dance over driving rhythms, conjuring images of horseback riding along the coast of Spain. Spingala's guitarwork is ably abetted by Bob Rosser's reggae tinged riffs, while the whole band is carried along on the broad shoulders of bass player Klondike Koehler and the sophisticated stickwork of drummer Tina Horn. Who do we have to thank for this small gem? Blame it on Tina.

*Blame it on Tina* appears this Saturday at the Rendezvous on 3rd Street in Turners Falls.


*Amy Laprade is a local writer and will be leading a free novel writing group at the Greenfield Public Library starting August 6th, seven p.m. Contact Lisa at 413-772-1544 ext. 108 for additional information.*



Tina' goes far beyond tired genre labeling. With a discerning ear, you can hear at least half a dozen musical styles on any given track gently fused together to create this local band's unique, dynamic sound.

Jen Spingala's vocals inhabit a space somewhere between Dolores O'Riordan and Amy Mann; they convey the gamut of emotion between personal anguish and joy, but the lyrics are simple, discernable, and straight from the heart. "Resolution", the first track, has a George Harrison guitar feel mingled with sweet harmonies, while "Crazy" has a dreamy Ray Lamontagne quality you can close your eyes

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# ARTS & ENTERTAINMENT



JACK COUGHIN ILLUSTRATION

**FRIDAY, JULY 25th**  
At the Rendezvous, Turners Falls: Dance or Die, \$3 cover.

Mettawee River Theatre Company performs in Shelburne Falls a new production of the Winnebago Native American creation tale, Nanabozho. A comic account of how the world began. At Buckland Shelburne Elementary School, 8 p.m., free.

Rt. 63 Road House: **Love Bomb**. Rock & roll, come to dance. 9:30 p.m.

**FRIDAY TO SUNDAY, JULY 25th TO 27th**  
At the Shea Theater, Turners Falls: Ja'Duke presents an encore performance of Disney's High School Musical. Fri & Sat at 7 p.m., Sun at 2 p.m.

**SATURDAY, JULY 26th**  
Butterfly walk: Dave Small leads an expedition exploring Quabbin wetlands and watercourses for both butterflies and dragonflies. Pre-register at [dave@dhsma.net](mailto:dave@dhsma.net) and meet at the Millers River Environmental Center at 8 a.m.; estimated return time is 3 p.m. No charge.

At The Discovery Center, Turners Falls: *Great Falls Geowalk*. Join Interpreter and geologist Steve Winters for a leisurely 90-minute stroll back in time to rocks that formed in the Mesozoic Era—about

200 million years ago. Begins 1 p.m. Info: (413) 863-3221 or [www.greatfallsma.org](http://www.greatfallsma.org).

At the Rendezvous, Turners Falls: *Blame it on Tina*, \$5 cover, 9 p.m.

Rt. 63 Road House: *After The Crash* 2008 US tour. Rock & roll, come to dance, 9:30 p.m.

Deja Brew, Wendell: **Joy Sumberg** - Singer/Songwriter, 9 to 11 p.m..

**SUNDAY, JULY 27th**  
Sundays in the Park Concert Series featuring Red Molly. At the Energy Park, Greenfield. Bring chairs or blanket and a picnic dinner. 6 - 7:30 p.m.

At the Rendezvous, Turners Falls: *Le Cabaret de Voo* (open mic), 8 p.m., no cover.

**MONDAY, JULY 28th**  
Montague Community Band concert at Peskeomskut Park, Turners Falls, 7 p.m. Rain location: First Congregational Church, 148 L Street. 7 p.m. (also on August 11th)

**MONDAYS & TUESDAYS, JULY 28th & 29th, Aug. 2nd & 3rd**  
At The Discovery Center, Turners Falls: *Nature@8*. Early morning nature short, interesting walk over paved bike trails and village sidewalks. Meet at 8 a.m. Info: (413) 863-3221 or [www.greatfallsma.org](http://www.greatfallsma.org).

**TUESDAY, JULY 29th**  
At the Rendezvous, Turners Falls: *The Daily Show's John Hodgman, Secret Show*, (sit-down comedy). 8 p.m., free.

**WEDNESDAY, JULY 30th**  
Great Falls Farmers Market: rain or shine on the corner of 2nd St. Ave A, Turners Falls. 3 to 6 p.m. Fresh Farm products in season, crafts, baked goods, maple, grass fed beef. New vendors are always welcome.

At the Rendezvous, Turners Falls: Montague Phantom Brain Exchange, \$5 cover.

**THURSDAY, JULY 31st**  
At the Rendezvous, Turners Falls: Eric Hnatow & Pattern Driver, \$3 cover.

**FRIDAY TO SUNDAY, AUGUST 1st To 3rd**  
At the Shea Theater, Turners Falls: Ja'Duke presents *Grease!* Fri. & Sat.

at 8 p.m., Sun. at 2 p.m. Continues August 8th-10th.

**FRIDAY AUGUST 1st**  
Neighborhood Movie Night: *Nanny McPhee* at St. Andrew's Church, 2 Prospect St., Turners Falls. Films begin at dusk (approx 8:30 pm) on the lawn weather permitting. Snacks and juice provided. Bring a chair or blanket. Children under 18 must be accompanied by an adult.

Great Falls Discovery Center, Turners Falls: On display in the Great Hall August 1st - 30th, the work of Bee Emily, an award-winning nature & wildlife photographer. See web site: [www.SeekingBeauty.NET](http://www.SeekingBeauty.NET)

**FRIDAY TO SUNDAY, AUGUST 1st To 2nd**  
Ja'Duke presents *Grease!* Performances at The Shea Theater, Turners Falls. Fri. and Sat. at 7 p.m. and Sun. at 2 p.m. 413-863-2281

**SATURDAY, AUGUST 2nd**  
Prepare for the Turners Falls Block Party Parade! Kids and adults of all ages are invited to come to the Discovery Center's Great Hall to decorate your FISH STICK that you will carry in the August 9th parade. Free, 11 to 2 p.m.

Geology on the Quinnetucket II. The Mass Dept. of Conservation and Recreation and First Light Power Resources partner for a ride on the Quinnetucket II to see local geology from the Connecticut River's point of view. Boat leaves 11 a.m. for a 90-minute ride. Seating is limited. Reservations are required. Call (800) 859-2960.

Wendell Old Home Days, on the Town Common, beginning at 11:30 a.m.. Sales, crafts, food & lots of music!

Deja Brew, Wendell: **A Ghost Quartet** - jazzy blues with a taste of fist fight swing. 9 to 11 p.m..

**FRIDAY, AUGUST 8th**  
Friends of Great Falls Discovery Center Coffee House. Open mike night. Come share your talents with your friends and neighbors. 7 p.m., door open at 6:30 p.m.

**SATURDAY, AUGUST 9th**  
Turners Falls 2008 Block Party! Avenue A between 3rd and 5th, 3 - 10 p.m. free! Details at [www.turnersfallsriverculture.org](http://www.turnersfallsriverculture.org).

**SUNDAY, AUGUST 10th**  
Green Trees Gallery, Northfield: opening reception 3 to 5 p.m. for *A River Town: Views of Northfield*, a celebration of Northfield's special connection to the Connecticut River. Artists of all ages may enter the contest through the August 3rd deadline. For more info: (413) 498- 0283 or visit [www.greentreesgallery.com](http://www.greentreesgallery.com).

**SUNDAY, AUGUST 17th**  
At the Rt. 63 Roadhouse, Millers

Falls: YARN, at 3 p.m.

**SATURDAY & SUNDAY, SEPTEMBER 20 TH & 21ST**  
Mark your calendars for a scentational tenth anniversary celebration of *The North Quabbin Garlic and Arts Festival*. Forster's Farm, Orange. [www.garlicandarts.org](http://www.garlicandarts.org)

**ONGOING**  
Quinnetucket II Riverboat cruise along the Connecticut River. Daily trips narrated by experienced naturalists, Friday to Sunday, 11 a.m., 1:15 p.m., 3 p.m. (800) 859-2960.

**AUDITIONS**  
Calling all Vampires! The Country Players auditions for *Count Dracula*, a two-act thriller by Ted Tiller based on the Bram Stoker novel. Cast Includes: 7 Men & 2 Women (Ages 16-60) Please be prepared to read from the script. Audition Dates: Sunday and Monday August 3rd & 4th at 6:30 p.m. at The Shea Theater, Turners Falls. Performances at the Shea October 31st to November 9th. [thecountryplayers@yahoo.com](mailto:thecountryplayers@yahoo.com) or call director Dave Grout 863-2491.

**Neighborhood Movie Night**  
St. Andrew's Church, 2 Prospect St., TF  
**FREE**

**July 25, 2008**  
"Cars" (2006)

**August 1, 2008**  
"Nanny McPhee" (2005)

**August 8, 2008**  
"Parent Trap" (1961)

**August 15, 2008**  
"Charlotte's Web" (2006)

Films begin at dusk (approx. 8:30pm), weather permitting, on the lawn.

Snacks and juice provided. Bring a chair or blanket to sit on.

Children under 18 must be accompanied by an adult.

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- STEP BROTHERS R**  
DAILY 12:00 3:00 6:30 9:00
- THE DARK NIGHT DTS sound**  
DAILY 12:00 3:15 6:30 9:40 PG13
- WALL-E G**  
DAILY 12:00 3:00 6:30 9:00
- SPACE CHIMPS G**  
DAILY 12:15 3:15
- JOURNEY TO THE CENTER OF THE EARTH PG 6:40 9:20**
- HELLBOY 2: THE GOLDEN ARMY PG13**  
DAILY 12:15 3:15 6:40 9:20
- MAMMA MIA PG13 in dts sound**  
DAILY 12:30 3:30 7:00 9:30
- X-FILES: I WANT TO BELIEVE PG13 in dts sound**  
DAILY 12:30 3:30 7:00 9:30

**HOT SPOT TEEN CENTER**  
MONDAYS - Drop-in, 3 - 6 p.m.  
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THURS - Drop-in, 3 - 6 p.m. & Movie Night, 6 - 8 p.m.  
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Info: Jared at 863-9559.  
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Sunday, 7/27, 8 - 10 p.m. Acoustic Trio - Warped Americana: **Steve Crow, Peter Kim, & Joe Fitzpatrick**  
Wednesday 7/30, 8 - 10 p.m. Celtic Music Night: **Kevin Skowpa and Mario Cafe**  
Thursday 7/31, 9 - 11 p.m. Roots Acoustic Duo: **Radio Free Earth**  
Friday 8/1, 9 - 11 p.m. Singer/Songwriter: **Scott Smith**  
Saturday: 8/2, A Ghost Quartet, 9 - 11 p.m.

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# Skydiving for Young Readers

BY DAVID DETMOLD

**TURNERS FALLS** - The day was overcast, with thunderclouds gathering on the horizon. But the children of Erving were gathering too, with their parents, expectantly, at the edge of the Turners Falls airport field, gazing up at the sky, waiting for the plane from Jumptown.

As part of the Wild Reads summer reading program at the Erving Public Library, the trusty librarians, (or the library trustees) decided to schedule a number of wild publicity stunts to attract the attention of young readers. What could be wilder than a bunch of daredevils jumping out of a 1965 Cessna 182 on a sultry summer evening?

On Wednesday, July 9th, Beth Bazler, one of the Erving librarians, waited with the crowd within sight of the landing strip, trying to reassure the children that the plane from Orange was indeed on the way. Only a few Erving residents were there on time, at 6:30 p.m., but within about 15 minutes, dozens more had gathered, gazing up at the lowering sky, and still the clouds gave no sign whether thunder or the roar of a Cessna's engines would be the next sound heard.

Suddenly, as if it had been hanging there against the belly of the clouds the whole time, the tiny plane appeared, followed soon after by the far off hum that

grew louder as it approached, and the children broke out into exultant cheers and then wondered anxiously whether this was indeed the plane from Jumptown. As it banked and turned and landed, it became clear that Yes, in fact, it was.

Making a much smaller leap than the one the children were anticipating, Cameron King, of Great Barrington, Brian Grady, of Cherry Valley, photographer Dave Bryce of Orange and pilot Paul Peckham jumped down on the tarmac and approached the

drift indicator to help the skydivers determine how the wind speed and direction would affect their jump.

"There's a lot of math involved in this," said Bazler appreciatively.

"I took 7th grade algebra four times," replied Peckham. "If there's math, it's done with thumbs, fingers, and crayons."

Waiting by the fence separating the parking lot from the airport field, Charlotte Parody of Gill was doing some math of her own. She was 17, going on 18, and planned to take her first skydiving lessons on her birthday, August 6th, as soon as she was of legal age to do so.

"It's going to be my birthday present," she said, watching the exhibition intently. "I've been waiting for years for this."

Bryce showed the young people how he operated the digital camera and the Sony camcorder mounted on his helmet. He uses his tongue to take the pictures!

King and Grady lounged near the airplane, waiting for Peckham to conclude his remarks, checking and double-checking their rigging. They have each jumped out of flying airplanes more than 4000 times.



DETMOLD PHOTOS

*Cameron King glides in for a landing at the Erving Public Library's skydiving demonstration at the Turners Falls Airport, as part of the library's summer long Wild Reads program.*



*Charlotte Parody of Gill plans to take up skydiving as soon as she turns 18*

waiting crowd.

Peckham explained the procedure the skydivers would follow; he let the kids examine the parachute rigging, and with the help of Keith Rowley, a youngster who moved to Erving recently from South Carolina, he set up a large yellow X to mark the spot where the King, Grady, and Bryce hoped to land, once they got airborne again and gained altitude of about 3000 feet. Peckham said they would make one pass first and drop a wind

After instructing children and parents to remain behind the fence, and not to stray forward into the demonstration zone - "coming in at 45 miles per hour, a parachute can't reverse and stop" - Peckham gathered his crew for a photo by the Cessna. "I have a great deal of love for

ly when they dropped the streamer to test the wind. Shortly thereafter the first man leaped from the plane, and they watched him plummet for a second, until his chute opened in a colorful burst of canvas that seemed to yank him skyward as it arrested his descent.



*Katherine Bezio waits for the skydivers to jump*

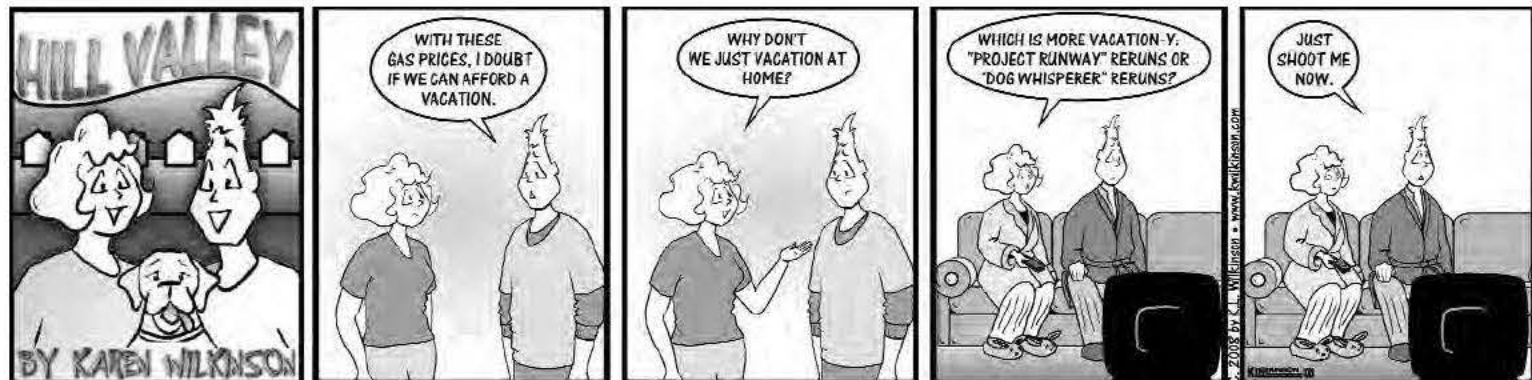
That was King, and he pulled a stunt that the others repeated to the kids' amazement, somehow managing to turn a somersault in midair, without tangling his chute or endangering his fall. He was followed by Grady and Bryce, and each hit the ground running, within spitting distance, if not exactly

dead center on the yellow X.

As Peckham parked the plane and let the children all pile in to examine the controls, Jim Harris of Erving asked the question the exuberant librarians were perhaps secretly dreading. "How can you top this next week?"

Hold on to your hats, it's a summer full of wild reading at the Erving public library, where children only need to read five books to qualify for exciting prizes.

Coming soon, the Boston Museum of Science presents, *Science Magic* at the Erving Public Library, on Friday, August 8th at 7 p.m. How cool is that?



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