



**MARCHING ON**  
**The Montague Community Band**  
 see page 14



**CREATIVITY ABOUNDING**  
**Brick House Mural Completed**  
 see page 16

LAKE PLEASANT MILLERS FALLS MONTAGUE CENTER MONTAGUE CITY TURNERS FALLS

# The Montague Reporter

YEAR 4 - NO. 40

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THE VOICE OF THE VILLAGES

July 27, 2006

Town Hall Losing Talent . . .

## Select Board Denies Town Planner Leave

BY AMY LAPRADE  
 TURNERS FALLS - Robin Sherman, Montague's Town Planner for more than seven years, will not be getting a one-year leave of absence to attend the John F. Kennedy School of Government at



Robin Sherman

the meeting by retracing the process by which the board had come to learn of Sherman's request. She stated that she had first received Sherman's letter asking for a leave on July 7th. On the 10th, the Board met with counsel in executive session to discuss the matter and decided at that point not to grant Sherman a leave. Upon learning this news, Sherman requested a second meeting since she had not been present at the July 7th meeting, or, as Chairwoman Pruitt put it, "Robin wanted to come tell us why we

Harvard to obtain a Master's Degree in Public Administration. That was the final verdict of the Board of Selectmen after almost an hour of discussion, with a number of attendees in the audience voicing their opinions and asking questions.

Selectboard Chair Patricia Pruitt began

utive session to discuss the matter and decided at that point not to grant Sherman a leave. Upon learning this news, Sherman requested a second meeting since she had not been present at the July 7th meeting, or, as Chairwoman Pruitt put it, "Robin wanted to come tell us why we see PLANNER pg 15

## Town Clerk Zywna to Step Down Sept. 30th

BY CHRISTOPHER SAWYER-  
 LAUCANNO  
 TURNERS FALLS - On the first of October, don't look for John Zywna, Montague's Town Clerk, to be greeting visitors to his office. Instead, you might have



John Zywna

freely much in the 15 years he's been Town Clerk, but as of September 30, he'll no longer have to arrive at Town Hall before anyone else, unlock the door, and settle in for a long day's work.

to head to the woods where you might find him taking a long walk, or you could perhaps catch up with him at a trout stream, rod in hand. You also might find him on his New Hampshire property splitting wood. (For years Zywna has spent summer and fall weekends splitting 120 to 150 cords of wood). Then again, it's possible he'll just be sitting at home relaxing. These aren't activities Zywna's been able to pursue

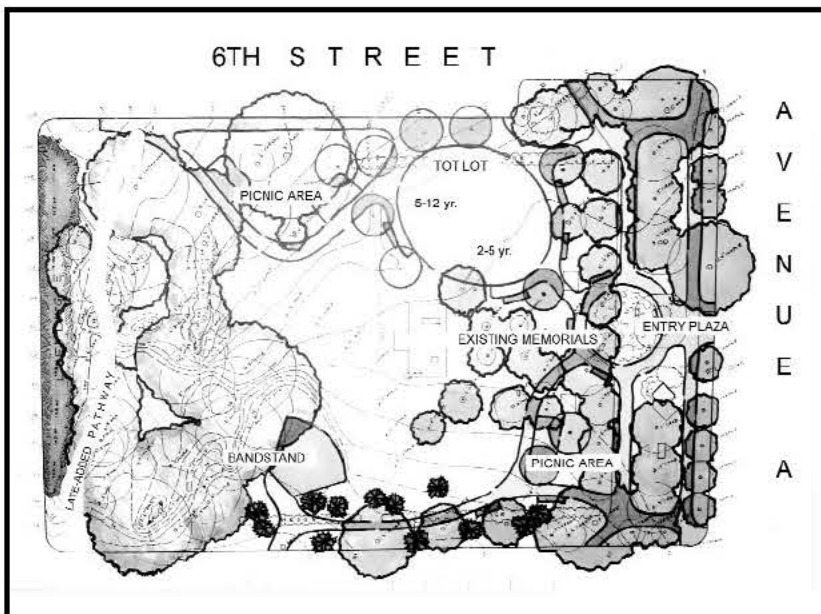
Zywna's departure is voluntary in the sense that he decided to move on. But as anyone knows who witnessed his remarks at the Special Town Meeting on July 12, Zywna is quite upset about the proposed staffing cut in the Town Clerk's office. And while he is unwilling to say directly that his stepping down before his term ends in May 2007 is a protest over the budget plan worked out by the Finance Committee and see CLERK pg 15

## Park's For Rest, Music, Play

BY JONATHAN VON RANSON

With orange construction fences in place and a heavy equipment on site, Peskeomskut Park has moved past the dreaming, struggle and compromise stage of the last ten years into its physical reconfiguration. By November, the one-time gravel pit should have new and rearranged plantings, be able to more comfortably host concerts and gatherings and "play" better with families with young children. In keeping with other recent improvements in downtown Turners Falls, it will be a place of renewed beauty and utility.

A number of needs and wishes had to be balanced to reach this stage. A downtown mother wanted a play area for her tots. The Montague Community Band wanted a permanent bandshell and performance space. Proud and grieving families wanted to preserve the



trees planted in memorial of deceased victims of domestic violence and a fire. Neighbors wanted quiet. Elderly people wanted safety and accessibility.

Not all these desires always

seemed compatible, and there were two or three years of wrangling and indecision. Then in 1999, according to Town Administrator Frank Abbndazio, the Town got the inspi-see PARK pg 5

## Too Darned Loud? August Hearing Scheduled

BY WESLEY BLIXT

The selectboard has scheduled an Aug. 28 hearing to address allegations of chronic, excessive and unnecessary noise in the downtown business district.

The hearing comes in response to a letter to select board chair Patricia Pruitt, sent this week by Christopher Janke, an owner of Suzee's Third Street Laundry. In his

letter, Janke voices dismay over number of downtown noise sources, and is especially critical of the volume of late-night noise generated by Yesterdays, also on Third Street.

Janke feels police noise measurements do not always reflect actual noise levels.

"I don't want to be negative about the town," said Janke late

Wednesday. "I just really hope that town officials do the right thing. I've been frustrated with the pace of action on this."

The town noise ordinance defines as excessive "any noise produced by a person(s) or the operation of any sound equipment or amplification device, drum, musical instrument, sound amplifier-see LOUD pg 5

## Humanitarians Save Mud Puppies

BY ANNE JEMAS

Growing up, the most frequent phrases I heard were, "Don't be so sensitive, you shouldn't let things bother you!" This directed to a child who often didn't want to ride in the car in the off-chance it might run over an animal.

Unfortunately, I can't say that I've changed much, so when I was told about a volunteer opportunity to help rescue aquatic animals from the canal during the annual draw-down, I didn't think I could do it.

The town children's librarian, Linda Hickman, had signed up with

Northeast Utilities to be one of a limited number of people who would be allowed down into the canal after it was drained

out). Linda had a conflict and offered her spot, warning that the scene at the bottom of the canal would be heart wrench-

Great Falls Discovery Center, stressed the importance of as many animals as possible being rescued, I didn't put my name forward.

As the day for the draw-down grew near, I couldn't stop thinking about it, so I decided to do it.

I had heard a small volunteer group was being lead by Fred Morrison, a biologist involved in dragonfly and damselfly research.

I stopped by the Discovery Center Saturday morning to hear him talk. Fred is passionate about his work, and his enthusiasm is contagious. When asked how he start-see MUD pg 13

### NU to Dump the Dam

Northeast Utilities announced Monday that New Jersey-based Energy Capital Partners, a private equity firm, will buy 15 NU generating sites, including the Northfield Mountain pumped-storage facility and the Turners Falls hydro dam. What will Northeast Utilities sale mean to Montague? What will be the impact on Gill and Erving? Find out in the next (August 9) issue of *The Montague Reporter* . . .

on Saturday, July 15th. (There's a safety issue: in the past, some folks who have gone down on their own to investigate have gotten so stuck in the mud that rescue crews had to be called to pull them

ing; littered with fish, turtles, and small animals stranded without water. I pictured myself wandering through the carnage sobbing uncontrollably, so even though Susan Russo, an interpreter for the



**PET OF THE WEEK****Lots of Love****Kittens!**

The Dakin Animal Shelter has loads of kittens available for adoption! These fun little guys and gals are looking for a good home. If you have been thinking of adding a kitten (or two, they make marvelous playmates for each other) to your life, this is a great time! For more info on adopting kittens, please contact the Dakin Animal Shelter in Leverett at 548-9898 or via email at [info@dakinshelter.org](mailto:info@dakinshelter.org).

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**CARNEGIE LIBRARY NEWS****Summer Reading Success**

BY LINDA HICKMAN

The Montague Public Libraries Summer Reading program has been going very well. Since the program began on June 19th, over 250 children have signed up at the three Montague Libraries. Participants read library books at home and keep a reading log of what they have read. Each week they can select an incentive prize if they have been reading. The statewide reading program theme this year is 'What's Buzzin' at Your Library' and insects have been prominently featured. Two live insect programs and an insect print making session were held in June. The weekly Exploring Insects series, which is a collaborative project with the Great Falls Discovery Center, has been very informative on native insects. Each week there are insect trivia questions for both children and adults with prizes.

Nick of Time, the newest No Strings Marionette Company production, was held on the front lawn of the library on July 7th and was attended by 175 people. The Wednesday morning preschool story hours and Thursday morning Music and Movement programs at the Carnegie Library are well attended. Bev Whitbeck has been doing weekly outreach visits to

the Montague Parks and Recreation summer program participants. The Razzle Dazzle Summer Reading Camp has been visiting the Carnegie weekly for stories and checking out books. The Millers Falls Library Club participants have enjoyed various craft projects and games. The children's room at the Carnegie Library has been very busy, with many families checking out stacks of books. Insect books have been especially popular. Many children have been anxiously checking the progress of the monarch caterpillars in the children's room. As of this writing, they have all entered the chrysalis stage and some appear almost ready to emerge as butterflies.

The culmination of the reading program is the parties at each of the three libraries for summer reading program participants and their families, which will be held the third week in August. The Montague Center party on Monday, August 14th is a costume party. The Millers Falls party features many raffle prizes and a wide array of refreshments. A Wolf Talk, with live wolves, will highlight the Turners Falls party on August 16th. For more information, please call the Carnegie Library, 863-3214.

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**SENIOR CENTER ACTIVITIES July 31st - August 11th**

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

**Monday, 31st**  
10:15 a.m. Aerobics  
11:30 a.m. PACE Aerobics  
**Tuesday, 1st**  
9:30 a.m. Aerobics  
**Wednesday, 2nd**  
10:15 a.m. Senior Aerobics  
12:45 p.m. Bingo  
**Thursday, 3rd**  
1 p.m. Pitch  
**Friday, 4th**  
10:15 a.m. Senior Aerobics  
11 a.m. PACE Aerobics

**Monday, 7th**  
10:15 a.m. Aerobics  
11:30 a.m. PACE Aerobics  
**Tuesday, 8th**  
9:30 a.m. Aerobics  
**Wednesday, 9th**  
10:15 a.m. Senior Aerobics  
12:45 p.m. Bingo  
**Thursday, 10th**  
1 p.m. Pitch  
**Friday, 11th**  
10:15 a.m. Senior Aerobics  
11 a.m. PACE Aerobics

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

**Monday, 31st**  
9:30 a.m. Exercise

9:45 a.m. Library  
12 Noon Pitch  
**Tuesday, 1st**  
9 a.m. Aerobics  
12:30 p.m. Painting  
**Wednesday, 2nd**  
9:30 a.m. Line Dancing  
12 Noon Bingo  
**Thursday, 3rd**  
9 a.m. Aerobics  
12:30 p.m. Shopping  
**Monday, 7th**  
9:30 a.m. Exercise  
9:45 a.m. Library  
12 Noon Pitch  
**Tuesday, 8th**  
9 a.m. Aerobics  
12:30 p.m. Painting  
**Wednesday, 9th**  
9:30 a.m. Line Dancing  
12 Noon Bingo  
**Thursday, 10th**  
9 a.m. Aerobics  
12:30 p.m. Shopping

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

**FACES & PLACES**

Kids beat the heat playing Simon Says during the Parks and Rec summer program at Unity Park.

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413-773-5555 Ext 296 or 978-544-2259 Ext 296 and leave your mailing address. You may also email your info to [goodlife@fchcc.org](mailto:goodlife@fchcc.org) with "subscribe" in the subject line. You may receive The Good Life electronically as a PDF file upon request. *The Good Life is a publication of Franklin County Home Care.*



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# Senior Art on Display through August

BY DAVID DETMOLD

**GREAT FALLS** - Marilyn Zelwiyen is an artist from Shelburne Falls who offers art classes at the Shelburne Falls senior center. But when health problems took her away from work for a while, she decided, "I needed to get back into art." A refresher course with Montague artist Louise Minks, who has offered painting classes for 15 years at the Gill-Montague Senior Center turned out to be the ticket to creative rejuvenation for Zelwiyen, who is among the senior artists whose work is on display through the end of August at the Great Falls Discovery Center in a show called "Senior Expressions."

Lyn Clark, of Turners Falls likes Minks' class so much she has taken it four times in a row. "I never painted before," she said, but she has become quite an accomplished artist, working in acrylics, collage, and mixed media. Among the works she has on display in the Great Hall of the Discovery Center are a tender image of her granddaughter, Lexi Griffin, seen from behind as she faces out to sea, dressed in red

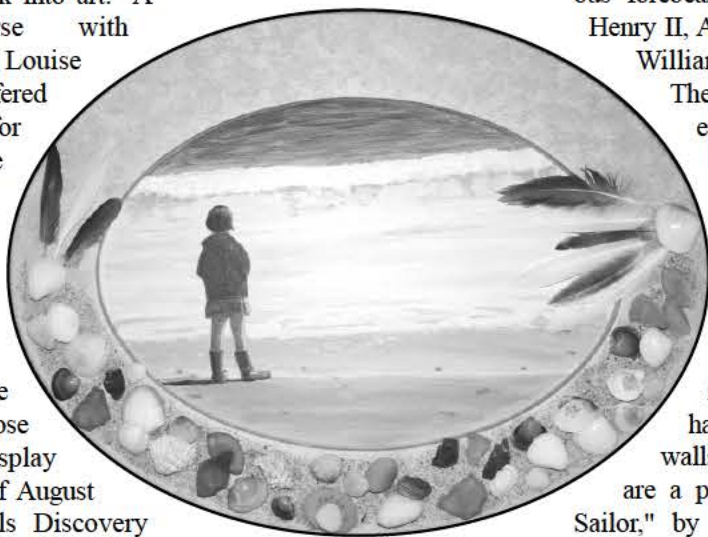
against the swell of blue waves. "She adores the ocean. It's her favorite thing in the world. She'd rather be by the ocean, or in the ocean, than anything else in the world." Clark said her granddaughter suffers from autism, and there is the faintest echo of

base of actual sand. Clark said the sand was gathered by her daughter, Valery, of Gill, who collects sand from all over the world. Another piece Clark has on display shows her "family tree," a collage of photos and sketches including such illustrious forebears as Charlemagne, Henry II, Alfred the Great, and William the Conqueror.

The whole is surrounded by a decoupage of twining leaves and branches, which Clark carefully cut out of a printed page using nail scissors.

Among the numerous images hanging on the brick walls of the Great Hall are a painting called, "My Sailor," by Millie Bessette. It shows a young man in naval uniform, circa WWII, gazing at the viewer with a soft look in his brown eyes. He smiles broadly. The effect is both sad and disarming; his face is partly in shadow. Mrs. Bessette would say only that the painting was of her husband, who died not long ago.

Residents of Gill and Montague can take Minks' fall class at the Senior Center for just \$10; residents from other towns pay \$15. To find out more, call the Senior Center at 863-9357.



Another framed oval painting - "Alone with Sand & Water" by Ardatb Garfield.

Christina's World, Wyeth's famous work of a girl trapped in an ocean of wheat, in the artist's perspective. The sentimentality of the piece is heightened by its placement in an old-fashioned oval frame, set off with seashells.

Clark offers another view of the ocean in a mixed-media seascape, centered on a few brushstrokes in greens and blues, relieved by a balsa wood sand fence in one corner, resting on a

# Giving Kids a "Healthy Start"

The Brick House Community Resource Center, at 24 Third Street in Turners Falls, will be holding "Healthy Start," a back-to-school event that will give families the opportunity to begin the new school year in a positive way, on Saturday, August 12th from 10 a.m. to 4 p.m. Child participants can receive free dental screenings with Lynne Bennett of the Community Health Center of Franklin County (CHCFC) and Dr. Dara Darabi of Avenue A Dental; free haircuts and school supplies will also be available. The Franklin County Sheriff's Department

will be creating Child ID Packets and Captain Robert Escott, Fire Prevention Officer for the Turners Falls Fire Department, will be sharing information on fire safety. Activities with the outreach staff from CHCFC will teach children and parents about healthy food choices and portion control, and delicious free healthy snacks, including apples from Clarkdale Fruit Farm, will be available for all who attend. Jared Libby, Youth Programs Coordinator at The Brick House, will hold an instrument-making workshop, teaching children how to make mini washtub

bases, along with a few other surprises from Brick House staff. There will be information available from several local non-profit organizations, including the CHCFC, Big Brothers/Big Sisters, Montague Catholic Social Ministries, Montague Parks and Recreation, Girl Scouts, Boy Scouts, Gill-Montague PTO, the Community Partnership for Children, and The Brick House. So, give your kids a healthy start and come by The Brick House on August 12th! For more information on this event or other Brick House programs, please call 863-9576.

# 26th Annual Montague Mug Race August 19th

The 26th annual Montague Mug Race will be held on Saturday, August 19th at 8:30 am. Registration for the 5.5-mile race will start at 7:30 on the village green.

The top male and female finishers will be awarded pewter mugs. And the top three finishers in the 10 divisions are awarded ceramic coffee mugs.

Pre-entry fee is \$18 and \$20 the day of the race with the first 75 entrants receiving free tee

shirts. There is also the Mini Mug Race, a 2 mile run for all ages. This race runs the first loop of the Mug Race and will also start at 8:30. The top two finishers in the divisions are awarded mugs, with Tee shirts to the first 50 racers. The pre-entry fee is \$12 and the cost the day of the race is \$15.

For info on both races please contact Ann Fisk At 413-367-281 or shollow@crocker.com.

## School Supply Drive

At Books & More, Monday, July 24th - Saturday, August 19th, we will be holding a school supply drive for our local school system. Markers (thick and skinny), 24 packs of crayons, glue sticks, Kleenex, paper towels, etc. We will have a basket at the front of the store for collection. For more information please call Books & More at 863-9417.

## CONGRATULATIONS to NMH Honors

The following local students have been named to the Academic Honor Roll for the spring term at Northfield Mount Hermon School:

- Academic High Honors**
- Grade 9:** Harriet Booth of Gill
- Grade 11:** Grace Booth of Gill



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# The Montague Reporter

24 3rd Street, Turners Falls, Mass. 01376

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<b>Circulation</b> Jean Hebden Julia Bowden Smith Philippe De guise		

## Listen Up!

Ok, so we were eavesdropping, in a way.

The talk was about downtown noise levels. It was a just a gripe session of sorts, but a couple things really struck us.

1. People get truly miserable when they are subjected to annoyances - even innocent annoyances - over which they have no control; and

2. Those annoyances tend to compound themselves and get huge at time like this, when the days are long and the weather his hot and our reactions escalate.

With that in mind, we would

like to ask our Turners Falls friends and neighbors to be especially considerate in the coming days, and to exercise an extra measure of courtesy and tolerance as we enter the dog days of August.

We would also like to applaud the selectboard for scheduling an Aug. 28 Noise Hearing focusing on the downtown din in Turners Falls, and urge our neighbors to turn out and speak up.

Quietly, of course.

We would report more of our eavesdropping, but unfortunately, it got way too loud.



KWILKINSON '06

## A Much Deserved Holiday

Editor David Detmold, you may have noticed, is largely absent in name, if not in spirit, from this Special Summer Doldrums Issue of the Montague Reporter. We have sent him on a long-deserved and much-needed vacation. We don't know exactly where he is at this moment, which is good, because we would oth-

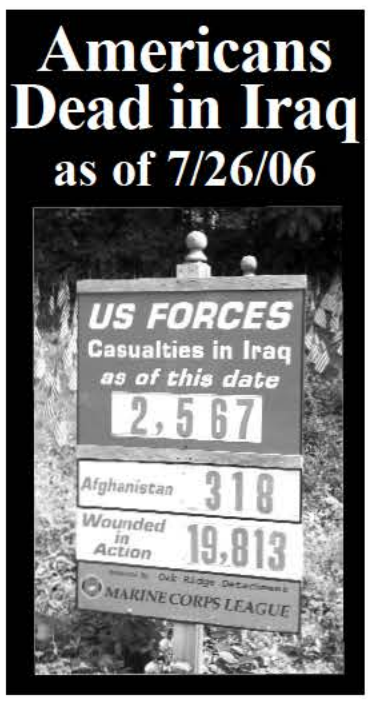
erwise have issued an urgent S.O.S. hours ago.

It has taken five of us several weeks to do what David does week-in and week-out, and at least 15 hours remain before the Reporter is uploaded to the printer. . .

. . . So who are we? We are several members of the Montague Reporter Board of Directors: Jonathan Von Ranson, Christopher Sawyer-Laucanno, Patricia Crosby, David Brule, and Wesley Blixt. You can call us The Summer Doldrums, and if we screw up or offend you, please don't blame David Detmold.

He, fortunately, will be back in two weeks. Forever, if we have anything to say about it!

We welcome your letters.  
**The Montague Reporter**  
 24 3rd St Turners Falls, MA  
 01376 PHONE (413) 863-8666  
 FAX (413) 863-3050  
 reporter@montaguema.net



## LETTERS TO THE EDITOR

### Inspired and Grateful

I just picked up the mail and was very pleased to find the July 13th Montague Reporter in the mix.

The review by Christopher Sawyer-Laucanno is really

wonderful. He did such a fine piece of writing.

It was very rewarding to read his review, which I find to be an inspired reminder that will keep me on the path toward the next

images. Please forward my great thanks on to him.

All best,

- Kevin Bubriski

## MCS Readies Kids for Future

Kudos to Jeff Singleton's recent portrayal of the Montague Center School being much more than just a building (MR IV #37). We are grateful that many concerned Montague residents have strong feelings regarding this issue and choose to express their feelings.

One of the many reasons we choose to live in Montague is the wonderful diversity we have within the five villages. Montague's vast array of cool places and resources give us a sense of community pride we carry with us wherever we go and meaningful content to share at the "water cooler." Montague Center School is one of these gems that adds tremendously to the community spirit of Montague.

If you were lucky enough to have attended Montague Center School or know someone who has attended this school, you are aware of what we are writing about. If not, just ask a child who attends this school what it is like. We

have one daughter who attended four years there and another who will be entering the second grade there. The impact that the faculty and staff of Montague Center School have had on our kids, our family and our community has been tremendous and we look forward to participating in every event that goes on there. As Jeff pointed out, there are many and they include the Halloween parade, ice skating, plays, etc.

While we respect Joyce Phillips and her opinion about closing Montague Center School and the possible financial reasons for doing so, we also feel strongly that she may be underestimating the future growth of Montague Center and the many families who may choice their kids out of Montague if Montague Center School closes. Also, can we really put a price on the relationships that are formed by such an intimate learning climate? What value

can we put on having our kids grow up in an environment that beams of community pride and spirit?

We believe the Montague Center School's faculty and staff do a top-notch job in educating our kids. If this school were to close it could have deep social and economic consequences to our community.

We cannot agree more with Joyce's ending quote - "We cannot always build the future for our youth, but we can build our youth for the future." However, we interpret the closing of Montague Center School to be inconsistent with the true meaning of this quote. Let's keep making the right decisions for Montague and Montague's kids. Keep Montague Center School open and help reinforce the reasons why we choose to live, work, and educate our kids right here in Montague.

- Michael & Amy Johnson Montague

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GUEST EDITORIAL

Support the Troops? Nope . . .

BY WESLEY BLIXT

... Not, that is, if you are serious about ending the atrocity that is the war in Iraq.

The idea that it is possible to "love the warrior and hate the war" - that it somehow makes sense to sport a yellow ribbon and a No War in Iraq sticker - arises from the muddled, self-indulgent, self-righteous thinking that has kept the antiwar movement in the U.S. on its knees since well before the invasion of Iraq.

It's hard to explain this distortion. Something just doesn't add up.

Perhaps it is a simple convenience, an attempt to convince ourselves that we are basically good people, married to principles of justice and democracy, when most of the world marvels at

our unrestrained greed, manipulation, ignorance and brutality.

Or it could have something to do with denial, insulating us from the torture at Abu Ghraib and the murder and rape at Mahmudiyah. It looks a good deal like the denial that kicked in after the massacre at My Lai, when the butchers Medina and Calley were celebrated as war victims by both supporters and opponents of the war in Vietnam. It is the same denial that kicked in when Vietnam vets came home complaining about being labeled "baby-killers" - pleading with us all to ignore, somehow, that there were lots babies lined up in those ditches and that, clearly, the Vietcong had not killed them.

Yes, there were beautiful, brave, selfless souls among those who returned from Vietnam, and among those who did not . . . Just as there are beautiful, brave and selfless souls among our sons and daughters, our brothers and sisters, our friends, our spouses and lovers serving in Iraq . . . Just as the 19 year old young man sleeping in the next room, my son, is - at heart - a beautiful, brave, and selfless soul. Again, it just doesn't add up.

But it's neither convenience nor delusion nor denial that asks us to "love the warrior and hate the war." There is something else, something both simpler and darker that makes the equation work. Something older and more ominous that makes it appear to add up.

It is the terrible and terribly simple idea that some lives are worth less than others. That some brave broken babies are, by an accident of race and place, more expendable than others - more expendable than the baby sleeping in the next room. It is the idea that, if someone has to die, it will be that child instead of this child. That it will be someone running too fast in our infrared sights in Fallujah. That it will be someone fleeing a bit too late from a village in southern Lebanon. It has everything to do with race. It has everything to do with privilege. And it has everything to do with oil.

There are no gray areas here, sisters and brothers. There are no complicated moral, ethical or geopolitical issues at stake. It's a

simple equation. It adds up or it doesn't. To support the troops is to support the war and it is wrong. Simply wrong. Dead wrong.

Each of us has a choice, a choice to not go, and a choice to not support those who do. If you know or love someone who wants to go, stop him. Stop her. Stop the recruitment and stop the recruiters. Stop the troops. Stop the U.S. Interfere if you can and where you can. If you love and support someone who is over there, offer enough love and support to bring her or him home. Now.

We are all babies. Beautiful, brave, selfless babies. Helpless, innocent, lovely babies. Angry, fearful, tearful babies. And this war is killing us all.

Resist.

PARK

continued from pg 1

School of Landscape Design. The young people's enthusiasm, he said, as much as their good ideas and design work, helped propel the parties through their difference.

Through compromise, the present design is a balance of the various interests. It includes handicapped accessibility, four shady picnic tables and trash receptacles in natural settings. The "Tot Lot" is designed as a depressed area with drainage and curbing and has a fence to separate the "spring riders" and swing sets (and their occupants) from cars and traffic. The bandshell, identical to the one at Look Park in Northampton, is of premanufactured

design made of red cedar with a permanent storage area behind it. The Montague Select Board will issue permits for its use. Asked about the considerations for a permit, the town administrator mentioned things like anticipated crowd size, security arrangements and noise. (Under free speech rights, the Board can't refuse based on message or content, he added).

The project, according to Bruce Hunter at Franklin County Housing and Redevelopment Authority, includes removing the existing hedges of burning bush (euonymus) along 6th and 7th Streets and planting American linden, crabapple, white oak, red oak and spreading English yew. Behind the

bandshell will be a stand of white spruce. All the young trees planted as memorials will be preserved. Existing trees will be pruned.

The price tag for this work is \$342,000, of which \$17,000 is construction costs and the rest is project oversight, engineering, bidding, etc. A \$295,408 grant from HUD through the Community Development Block Grant program left the town responsible for roughly \$47,000 of the total cost. General contractor is Northeast Infrastructure, Inc. of Southboro. The Franklin County Housing and Redevelopment Authority administers the grant that it helped apply for.



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LOUD

continued from pg 1

er or similar devices which produces, reproduces or amplifies sound in such a manner as to create a noise disturbance across a real property boundary plainly audible to a person of normal hearing at a distance of two hundred (200) or more feet from the property line of the property from which the noise is generated."

He invited other downtown residents to keep track of noise problems, and noted that a sound meter is not needed to make a determination of excessive noise.



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# Conservation Commission Considers Riverbank Erosion

BY DAVID DETMOLD

**MONTAGUE** - The Montague conservation commission met on Thursday, July 13th with riverbank erosion on their minds. They held a discussion with Bob Mizula, of Nourse Farms, about an emergency repair to an outflow pipe to the Sawmill River near Wills Ferry Road, completed the permitting for long-planned repairs to halt erosion near Greenfield Road north of the Meadow Road intersection, and granted Northeast Generation Company's request for remediation work to a stretch of sloping embankment on the Connecticut River off Millers Falls Road.

According to the order of conditions granting this request, "In June, 2005, the conservation commission received reports of clearing on the bank of the Connecticut River. The commission's agent conducted a site visit and confirmed that trees had been cleared on a section of the bank of the Connecticut River in the vicinity of 107 Millers Falls Road. It appeared that the clearing was done to create a view of

the river on a new building lot being marketed by Regal Real Estate."

The conservation commission contacted Northeast Generation expressing concern that the felling of trees could lead to riverbank erosion. The utility company, which owns the land along the river, hired an environmental scientist, Alec MacLeod, to conduct a survey of the damage.

On the 13th, he told the commission, "Fifty one trees of various diameters were felled" as a result of what MacLeod called "civil trespass by an abutter."

He proposed removing the



PHOTOS BY JONATHAN VON RANSON



A view of Northeast Utilities property taken from Carlisle Avenue (top), open for decades, and a new one Millers Falls Road.

felled timber and slash with a crane, from the top of the approaches to afford better

embankment, and replanting with native hardwoods, including red oak, black birch, and hemlock. Northeast Utilities owns a section of land between Millers Falls Road and the bank where the cutting occurred, so they will be able to bring the crane through to that point.

The conservation commission approved the request.

A casual stroll along Carlisle Avenue showed a number of properties where homeowners appear to have engaged

in similar - if more limited - approaches to afford better

views of Barton Cove. Town conservation agent Robin Sherman said Northeast Generation is in touch with at least one other landowner in town regarding the removal of trees on company land.

Near Wills Ferry Road, "a recent storm has exacerbated a drainage outfall situation" at Nourse Farm, according to Bob Mizula. The conservation commission granted his request for emergency relief, to cut back the bank of the Sawmill to a stable slope and install up to 100 feet of riprap to secure the outflow pipes.

Further upstream, within view of the new bridge on Meadow Road, an eroding bank of the Sawmill has been the subject of long negotiations with regulatory agencies over proposed corrective action. Permitting has finally been completed on a plan to install rock in the streambed itself, to divert the main force of the river's current away from the eroding bank. This approach is not uncommon in other states, but has been difficult to achieve under the pertinent regulations in Massachusetts.

## MCTV Schedule

Channel 17: Friday, July 28th-Thursday, August 3rd

### Friday, July 28th

6:00 am Barton's Cove Eagles  
9:00 am GMRSD Meeting 7/18  
12:00 pm Community Bulletin Board  
6:00 pm NASA Destination Tomorrow #1  
6:30 pm Classic Arts Showcase  
7:30 pm Montague Update  
8:00 pm From the MCTV Archives

7:00 pm Montague Selectboard 7/24

9:30 pm GaiaVision

### Tuesday, August 1

6:00 am Barton's Cove Eagles  
9:00 am GaiaVision  
10:00 am Montague Selectboard 7/24  
12:30 pm Community Bulletin Board  
6:00 pm Classic Arts Showcase  
7:00 pm GMRSD Committee Meeting 7/18  
10:00 pm Montague Update  
11:00 pm From the MCTV Archives

### Saturday, July 29th

6:00 am Barton's Cove Eagles  
9:00 am From the MCTV Archives  
10:30 am Classic Arts Showcase  
11:30 am Montague Update  
12:30 pm Community Bulletin Board  
6:00 pm Montague Selectboard 7/24  
8:30 pm NASA Connect: Dancing in the night sky  
9:00 pm From the Discovery Center

### Wednesday, August 2

6:00 am Barton's Cove Eagles  
9:00 am Montague Update  
10:00 am GMRSD Committee Meeting 7/18  
12:30 pm Community Bulletin Board  
6:00 pm Franklin County Democrat  
6:30 pm NASA Destination Tomorrow #1  
7:00 pm NASA Connect: Dancing in the Night sky  
9:00 pm Prevailing Winds in Denmark

### Sunday, July 30

6:00 am Barton's Cove Eagles  
9:00 am Montague Selectboard 7/24  
11:30 am NASA Connect: Dancing in the Night sky  
12:00 pm Community Bulletin Board  
6:00 pm GMRSD Committee Meeting 7/18  
8:00 pm Montague Update  
9:00 pm Classic Arts Showcase  
10:00 pm From the MCTV Archives

### Thursday, August 3

6:00 am Barton's Cove Eagles  
9:00 am Prevailing Winds in Denmark  
10:00 am NASA Connect: Dancing in the Night sky  
10:30 am NASA Destination Tomorrow #1  
11:00 am Franklin County Democrat  
11:30 am Community Bulletin Board  
5:00 pm Classic Arts Showcase  
6:00 pm Montague Update  
7:00 pm GMRSD Committee Meeting 7/18  
9:00 pm From the MCTV Archives

### Monday, July 31

6:00 am Barton's Cove Eagles  
9:00 am Montague Update  
10:00 am From the MCTV Archives  
11:30 am Community Bulletin Board  
5:30 pm From the Discovery Center

## HIGHLIGHTS FROM THE MONTAGUE POLICE LOG

### Domestic Disturbances

#### Friday 7-14

2:49 p.m. [redacted] was arrested on a straight warrant.

#### Saturday 7-15

3:19 a.m. Report of a domestic disturbance at a Morris Avenue address. [redacted] was arrested and charged with domestic assault and battery.

10:06 p.m. Report of an unwanted person at an Avenue C address. [redacted]

was arrested and charged with violation of a restraining order.

#### Sunday 7-16

12:31 a.m. Report of an unwanted person at a Vladish Avenue address. [redacted]

was arrested on a default warrant.

1:16 a.m. Report of a domestic disturbance at the corner of 5th Street & Avenue A. [redacted]

was arrested and charged with disorderly conduct and disturbing the peace.

#### Tuesday 7-18

12:45 a.m. After a motor vehicle

stop on Canal Street, [redacted]

[redacted] was arrested and charged with a red light violation, person under 21 in possession of liquor, possession of a class D drug, and junior operator with a passenger under 18.

2:33 p.m. After a motor vehicle stop by the Shady Glen, [redacted]

[redacted] was arrested on a fugitive from justice warrant.

11:38 p.m. After a motor vehicle stop on Avenue A, [redacted]

[redacted] was arrested and charged with driving with a suspended license.

#### Thursday 7-20

7:41 a.m. [redacted] was arrested on a default warrant.

5:10 p.m. Report of a restraining order violation at a Park Street address. [redacted]

[redacted] was arrested and charged with violating a restraining order.

#### Friday 7-21

9:07 a.m. [redacted] was arrested on a straight

warrant.

#### Sunday 7-23

1:37 a.m. Report of a domestic disturbance a Coolidge Avenue address. [redacted] was arrested on a default warrant.

4:00 p.m. Report of a restraining order violation at an East Main Street address. [redacted]

[redacted] was arrested and charged with violation of an abuse prevention order.

11:09 p.m. Report of a motor vehicle disturbance at Cumberland Farms. [redacted]

[redacted] was arrested and charged with unlicensed operation of a motor vehicle and operating an unregistered motor vehicle or trailer.

4:15 p.m. [redacted]

[redacted] was arrested at the Exxon on 2 default warrants and also charged with larceny under \$250 and illegal possession of a class E drug.

#### Tuesday 7-25

3:50 p.m. [redacted] was arrested and charged with failure to register as a sex offender.

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**NOTES FROM THE GILL SELECTBOARD**

# Board Moving On Main Road Project

**BY P. CROSBY**

The Gill Select Board held its bi-monthly meeting on 7/24/06 at 4 p.m. Present were Chair Phil Maddern, members Leland Stevens and Ann Banash, Administrative Assistant Deb Roussel, highway superintendent Mitchell LeClaire, and town counsel Donna MacNicol.

**Main Road Construction Project**

The Board first conferred with Christer Ericsson and Geoff Howie, representatives of Greenman Pederson, Inc (GPI), the engineering consulting firm hired by the town to provide design and engineering services to the Main Road construction project that's due to start July 31st. The project, planned since 1998, has been waiting for state/federal resources. In the meantime, the contract with GPI expired and needs to be renewed and amended. Of the 35 hours of consulting time in the original contract, GPI claimed much has been used up. Additional funds will be needed as well.

Members asked how the 35 hours could be exhausted before the project even gets underway. Extra design work had been required due to the discovery of a protected turtle species and there was a need for special culverts to protect it, but board member Ann Banash pointed out that was paid for separately, with additional funds already provided to GPI.

All present acknowledged that engineering consulting time could get "eaten up" quickly now that Mass Highway has finalized a contract with F and J, Inc. for construction -- particularly if, as has happened already, materials go straight to the consultants and they use up contract hours reviewing them. Highway Superintendent Mitchell LeClaire expressed an interest in being closely involved in the project, and "to check in on the site regularly, maybe every day."

"My question" he added, "is, what is the protocol if I see something happening that I don't think is what we planned?" Board Chair Phil Maddern agreed that the town needs to keep a close eye on the project, noting that some 'berms and drains' have been incorporated

into the planned project that some Board members don't consider necessary or advisable.

GPI agreed to write the town a letter detailing consulting time spent and on what activities. The board will move on amending the contract to include more hours, possibly up to 250 hours of additional time. GPI must submit detailed invoices on a regular basis for every 50 hours of time so the town can keep track and make sure the contract lasts for the duration of the project. Mass Highway will be asked to send all materials for review directly to the Board for a decision on whether it is necessary to call on GPI for assistance.

**FY'04/05 Audit**

Tom Scanlon, Jr. of Thomas J. Scanlon and Associates, CPA reviewed the FY'04/05 audit with Board members, who were joined by town accountant Joyce Muka. Overall, town finances and fiscal procedures are in good order, especially with some new practices and procedures implemented over the past year. The management letter recommended several adjustments: a capital asset policy, following a requirement by the Government Accounting Standards Board (GASB) for actuarial projections (calculating post-employment benefit costs in budget planning); and more clearly defined and separated roles of town treasurer and town accountant. The auditor also recommended more regular internal audits and timelier submittal of receipts by department heads. Departments should have up-to-date inventories on file of town property such as mowers, laptops, police vests, etc. Farm animal excise tax hasn't been collected for two years but is in process now. The auditor noted that, overall, the town keeps very good records as compared to many small towns.

**Fire Department Employees**

The board approved two new applicants as firefighters: Mitchell LeClaire and George Emery. Both are currently members of the Gill Highway Department and are on the fire departments in their own towns, where they have received the necessary training. Formal approval by the board of their

applications ensures that in the event of an accident they will receive the same coverage and benefits as others working for the fire department.

**Volunteer Fair**

The Gill Volunteer Fair is set for Monday August 7th at 7 p.m. at the Town Hall. There's been a good response to the invitation. The purpose is to inform citizens of volunteer opportunities on boards and committees and give them a chance to ask questions of people who have served. Banash suggested each committee chair prepare a short fact sheet describing the expectations, including responsibilities and activities between formal committee meetings.

**Hazardous Waste Fee Increase**

A letter from Franklin County Solid Waste Management indicates that hazardous waste fees will be increasing as of Saturday, August 5th. The increase is the first since 1998. New fees are posted at [www.franklincountywastedistrict.org](http://www.franklincountywastedistrict.org)

**Former Mariamante Parcel**

Deb Roussel met with Linda Dunlavy and Bill Gran from the Franklin Council of Governments about the next steps with the Mariamante parcel. Roussel is drafting an RFP with the COG's assistance. The COG urged a committee be appointed to review the RFP being developed and then to review and score the proposals when they come in. Suggested members include the chair of the select board, the finance committee, and the zoning board of appeals or their designees. In addition, two at-large members are recommended. With a member of the COG and the Gill Administrative Assistant, the committee will have a total of 7 members. The Board decided to fill the at-large seats with a representative of the historical commission and someone who participated in the "charrette" planning process leading up to development of the RFP. Kit Carpenter and Peter Jenkins were suggested. The Board approved membership of this committee contingent upon the acceptance of

those indicated. There was some discussion on the subject of who makes the final decision on responses to the RFP. Board members felt no potential buyer/developer would be willing to negotiate with town meeting as a whole. "All the meetings will be open to the public, proposal reviews will be open to the public," Banash noted. Special permit and site plan reviews are also likely. "The proposals will be graded accordingly to the criteria developed in this RFP, and the RFP is being developed with the communities priorities in mind," stated Roussel. "There will be plenty of additional opportunity for public participation," Roussel added. "Citizens should watch the website, the newspaper, and the signboard on Town Common for scheduled public hearings."

**Four Winds Lease Renewal**

Steve Hussey, headmaster of the Four Winds School, housed in the Riverside Municipal Building, appeared before the board to request a renewal of their lease. A year ago enrollment was very low and Four Winds only wanted a one-year lease, but things turned around mid-year and they are now interested in a 3-year lease. Board members were only willing to grant a two-year lease because at some point the town will need to do some maintenance on the building. Rent was raised from \$640 to \$700 per month, in part due to escalating fuel costs. There will be a clause in the new lease that an increase may be required in Year 2 if those costs continue to rise. Current enrollment is ten students. The tenant was reminded that the current rent is for a

maximum of 12 students. For every 1-3 students over that number, the rent should increase by \$70. The tenant should include his enrollment numbers with each monthly rent check and pay accordingly.

The next Gill Select Board meeting will be August 7th at 6pm at the Town Hall.

Note: The Gill Selectboard strongly urges citizens to attend the Volunteer "Job" Fair on August 7th at 7pm at the town hall. Citizens will have a golden opportunity to learn more about how volunteer town government works, and how their strengths and interests may be invaluable.

**Music on the Gill Common**  
**Friday, August 4th**  
**7 p.m.**  
**Concert by the Montague Community Band**  
 Bring lawn chairs and blankets. Bottled water, soda and refreshments available at reasonable prices. In the Town Hall in case of rain.  
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## NOTES FROM THE ERVING SELECTBOARD

# Environmental Concerns Dominate Weekly Agenda

BY DAVID BRULE

A number of issues involving landfills sited in Erving as well as evidence of ongoing problems at POTW#1 topped the Selectmen's agenda this week.

An Enforcement Order was issued by the Conservation Commission to the Town and its engineering consultants, Tighe and Bond, for failure to file a Notice of Intent with the Conservation Commission prior to work on capping the landfill on Maple Avenue in the Farley section of town. The town DPW was directed to install siltation barriers, respect wetland boundaries, file an Information Request with the Mass. Natural Heritage and Endangered Species

Program, as well as to use a seed mix that does not contain invasive species when the site is restored after capping. It is expected that the final stages of capping will be completed by August 1st.

In other landfill news, DEP informed selectmen that repair work was completed on a drainage swale that had not been functioning properly at the Rt. 2 Sludge Landfill. In addition, a closure certification report approval was received by Erving Industries Inc, stating that the Prospect St. Extension sludge landfill was closed and capped according to specifications by Mass DEP. Included in the report was a description of

the five new, separate, private wells for residences on Prospect St. Extension/Prospect Heights Lane.

As concerns the Erving POTW#1 Wastewater Treatment Plant (Millers Falls) and the Erving POTW#3 at Farley, inspections were completed by DEP on June 6th and June 15th respectively. DEP forwarded the Operations and Maintenance Report and indicated numerous violations at POTW#1 involving insufficient compliance with various protocols, expired pH buffers, a spare parts inventory that was lacking and marginal soda ash delivery methods, among numerous other issues at the Millers Falls Plant. A sched-

ule of repairs should be submitted to the DEP no later than August 31st.

A proposal to perform a study of upgrades for POTW#1 for nitrogen removal from effluent was submitted by Tighe and Bond. EPA and State environmental agencies are focusing on nitrogen removal at wastewater treatment facilities that discharge into Long Island Sound, including the Connecticut River and its tributaries. Tighe and Bond outlined a Scope of Work that would help the town proactively plan for future nitrogen limits; the study as proposed would be completed for the lump sum of \$7500. The Selectmen are considering the

proposal.

In news concerning the Millers River, it was noted that the Town has received a Public Health Fish Consumption Advisory from Mass Department of Public Health. The advisory states that the average PCB concentrations in native fish, especially American Eel and Brown Trout exceed the Food and Drug Administration Action Level. Consuming these fish could lead to the increased risk of health effects. For further information, contact the Selectmen's Office or Mass Dept. of Public Health Center for Environmental Health, 617-624-57857.

### HIGHLIGHTS FROM THE ERVING POLICE LOG

## Road Rage

Thursday 7-13

12:35 p.m. Report of erratic operation on Route 2 eastbound in Gill headed to Erving. Stopped vehicles involved. Found to be a road rage situation. Calmed both parties down.

6:56 p.m. Issued criminal application to [REDACTED] for operating after suspension.

10:40 p.m. Several residents reported hearing a person screaming for help in the Millers River. Assisted Montague Police, Erving and Turners Falls Fire Departments with an area search.

Tuesday 7-18

12:30 p.m. Report of a large tree down on Route 2 near 2A. Tree cut up by State Fire Patrol. Removed to side of highway by operators. No damage to road

or power lines.

2:00 p.m. Criminal application issued to [REDACTED] for operating a motor vehicle with a revoked registration, without insurance, and without inspection. Removed with owner by Arsenault Towing.

Wednesday 7-19

8:30 p.m. After a motor vehicle stop on Route 2, [REDACTED] was arrested and charged with having a defective headlight, operating after suspension, disorderly conduct, and resisting arrest.

Sunday 7-23

1:29 a.m. After a motor vehicle stop [REDACTED] was arrested and charged with unlicensed operation and defective equipment.

### HIGHLIGHTS FROM THE GILL POLICE LOG

## Various Disturbances

Thursday 7-13

4:30 p.m. Suspicious activity reported on the French King Bridge - subject holding a sign stating that they needed help. Officers sent to the area. Nothing found matching that description upon arrival.

10:30 p.m. Medical assistance requested in the French King Bridge area. Subject having an asthma attack. Once on scene, subject denied any medical assistance.

Friday 7-14

5:00 p.m. Traffic lights at the Gill - Montague Bridge are reported to be out. Officer sent to control traffic.

8:30 p.m. [REDACTED] was arrested for driving after suspension of license. Same was taken into custody and booked at Gill Police Dept.

11:30 p.m. Responded mutual aid to Erving to assist with a report of a women screaming in the area of Dorsey Road.

Saturday 7-15

7:15 p.m. A report of

erratic operation on Rte 2 heading westbound. Officers in the area were unable to locate vehicle.

Sunday 7-16

7:10 a.m. - Report of damage to a mail box on Boyle Road, under investigation.

Tuesday 7-18

12:50 a.m. Suspicious person reported in the area of the Mobil Station. Same was found and identified, all was fine.

1:19 a.m. Property found at state boat ramp, returned to station by officer

7:30 p.m. Assisted Bernardston Police with a disabled motor vehicle in the Main Road area.

Wednesday 7-19

9:03 p.m. Assisted Erving Police with motor vehicle stop and arrest.

Thursday 7-20

9:15 p.m. Report of a larceny of cash from a Main Road business, under investigation.

Friday 7-21

8:15 p.m. Assisted Montague Police locating a subject in town regarding an investigation.

8:20 p.m. Report of a loud noise complaint from West Gill Road, regarding ATV's.

Saturday 7-22

2:32 p.m. Report of a breaking and entering and larceny from a Barney Hale Road residence. Under investigation.

7:04 p.m. Welfare check requested for a subject heading to the French King Bridge, responded to area. Unable to locate subject.

Sunday 7-23

1:25 a.m. Assisted Erving Police with motor vehicle stop and arrest.

4:26 p.m. Assisted Northfield Police with a domestic situation on Main Street.

6:31 p.m. Responded to an ATV accident on West Gill Road, rendered medical aid, and advised Environmental Police about the accident.



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# School District Fiscal Recovery Thwarted by 'Budget Crisis' Mode

## FRAMEWORK EXISTS FOR SYSTEM-WIDE DECISION MAKING

### Analysis

BY JOYCE A. PHILLIPS

Many of the decisions currently facing the Gill-Montague Regional School Committee have been delayed for reasons of "budget crisis" and/or "process." I would like to address what I believe to be a misconception around the use of those terms.

Gill-Montague reached "crisis mode" in 1999 with the loss of its total Excess and Deficiency Account and a \$750,000 deficit. As a result, a new budget strategy developed: "how to close the gap?" Fiscal recovery - restoring confidence and trust in District - became the goals. A \$300,000 loan from the Town helped eliminate the deficit and improve the financial picture of the district to secure better bond rates for the GFMS/TFHS building project. School Committee decisions focused on the "now," with less focus on the future, more reactive than proactive decisions.

Contrary to the belief of some, who may lack information and/or understanding, closing the budgetary gap has resulted in more of a gap for educational opportunities. While the E & D account was restored, and the \$750,000 deficit made up, there were some major impacts during this 7-year "crisis mode":

- A loss of over 40 staff
- Loss of elementary art
- GFMS/TFHS lost individual and/or small group weekly instrumental lessons
- GFMS/TFHS lost individual vocal & instrumental teachers
- Loss of elementary instrumental music teacher - duties now added to HS teacher
- PE reduced from twice a week to once
- Reading recovery teachers eliminated or reduced at all sites (eliminated from Gill

- & MOC)
- Remedial math for regular ed students eliminated (ironically, now there is a need to improve student achievement in math)
- Consumer science classes eliminated from the high school.
- TFHS art classes cut to part time
- Middle school art cut
- Elective courses cut each year, leading to 115 student interns in one semester
- MS Guidance counselor cut
- Community School Program cut from multiple teachers and counselors in a large space to one teacher and two paras in two small adjoining rooms
- Supplies severely cut have not been restored. Teachers spending up to \$1200 out of their own pocket (with \$400 on the average)
- Non-consumable materials budgets cut or eliminated
- Technology budget cut
- Elementary schools computer lab instructors eliminated
- TFHS computer lab monitors eliminated
- Administrative infrastructure greatly reduced
- Loss of MS principal
- Loss of dean of students HS
- Loss of elementary principal
- Reduction of counselors at Sheffield
- After school bus for students who want to stay for extra help eliminated.
- \$\$\$ reduced for Schedule B, therefore not as many clubs can be offered
- Instructional librarian at Sheffield cut
- Loss of Specials resulted in loss of quality prep time for elementary teachers
- Shorter school day for

students - not teachers to meet needed prep time

- Loss of a teacher in grades 3-4-5 at Sheffield for coming year
- Teachers accept zero % cost of living adjustment
- Reduction, elimination and/or combination of MS sports
- Reduction in staff development time

I strongly suggest that the GMRSC focus on a "fiscal recovery" rather than "budget crisis" and make budget decisions accordingly. It is time that the District not only "talk the talk," but "walk the walk." There must be a focus on the positive - recognizing quality and actively working toward the future.

The second misconception is "the need for a process" today regarding the elementary configuration. The GMRSC has done a lot of process with no evidence of improvement. This has resulted in community, staff, parents and students questioning their leadership and that of the administration.

We all know there have been many studies of the elementary schools, beginning in 1990 with a non-binding referendum. However, in 1998, following a 3-year preliminary study process, including public hearings, there was an extensive and thorough professional feasibility study completed by Mt. Vernon Associates. It cost the district \$10,000. Several meetings were held with invitations to the public. The Building Committee chair was Mike Langknecht and included many of those on the most recent ESG committee.

The study gave information on demographics and the schooling services needed; tax base and community occupation and income; and projected enrollment through 2009. It

evaluated the condition and functionality of all buildings and offered 12 options for the school system's direction.

Although it would be necessary to update some of the data, along with any maintenance, repairs or capital improvements that have been done since 1998; the key components are still very much relevant.

In 1999, there was a separation of elementary and secondary building committees. The accreditation review forced the GFMS/TFHS process to move forward. The elementary study was stalled! Why? - because the results were not what some expected or wanted. Evidence indicated that the physical size of the Montague Center building and land would not meet DOE and/or SBA requirements. However, their budget issues continue: maintenance, custodial, repairs, ADA, busing, heat, utilities, insurance, technology (networking), and duplication of services (nurse, custodial, cafeteria).

Failure to follow the 1998 Mt Vernon Study cost the District an opportunity for state-of-the-art elementary as well as secondary facilities with 90% reimbursement. Today, construction costs have increased and reimbursements have decreased. The guidelines, requirements, needs, etc. make it more difficult to meet SBA approval.

I believe what prohibits each of the studies from finishing is not lack of process but a mindset.

I have learned that many families won't move into our communities, because they do not want to subject their children to the labeling and judgment expressed openly. I have witnessed first-hand, at meetings and in personal conversations, comments that are subtle innuendos to blatant derogatory remarks widening the District

and community gap. I have seen

- GMRSC actions viewed as threats not fiscal responsibility
- Parents not "threatening," but "forewarning" SC they will choose out if Montague Center is closed
- Parents admitting they will choose out after grades at Montague Center are completed
- Parents sharing that no other village can provide the same quality of community, even if their children had the same teachers
- Parents comparing other villages of the town to a ghetto-like environment
- SC members consciously voting 'no' on closing a building regardless of facts
- SC members making promises to a village over district in order to be elected

With only 50% staff remaining at MOC, I question how teachers will be considered for transfer or hiring at Montague Center, if students will not receive quality from those teachers at Hillcrest or Sheffield? Perhaps all elementary teachers should be rotated among all the schools for a better understanding and appreciation of community.

There is not only a budget gap but also an education gap and community gap. I believe that - until the GMRSC accepts the responsibility to make the tough choices to remove uncertainties and unknowns and can demonstrate a sense of community in its decision-making process with a vision on the future for all students - these gaps will only continue to widen.

*Joyce A. Phillips is former chair of the Gill-Montague Regional School District.*

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the  
poetry  
page

It is difficult  
to get the news from poems  
yet men die miserably every day  
for lack  
of what is found there.

— William Carlos Williams

### The Hunt

We speak the same tongue,  
you and I,  
the language of adrenaline.

You sing a fleeting song  
of escape,  
I chant a mantra in harmony.

When our songs are broken  
by the echoed report,  
there follows a silence as you fall.

We speak the same tongue,  
as I approach,  
but our solemn hymns diverge.

—R. J. DiDonato  
Wendell

### Interpretive Dance

Watch gold and purple's prettiest  
when pansies pose,  
gowns smoothly pressed.  
How fine to see the blossoms flow  
in time with breezes, fast or slow.  
Soft petals ruffle, wave a bit,  
then curtsy back to where they fit.

—Kathryn Flagg  
Millers Falls and Allendale, NJ



### kedge

all long time parting water hair boat  
such pull far fingers cross silk night

boat time long time  
part water part time  
all boat parting time

pull night water  
pull crossing far

cross parting time long  
night fingers pull long  
silk water silk long

such far boating  
such night faring

fingers parting part night  
hair silk boat cross night  
pull long longing all night

—Kanika Agrawal  
New York City

Poetry Page edited by  
Christopher  
Sawyer-Laucanno  
& Chris Janke

design by Boysen Hodgson

Readers are invited to send poems  
to the Montague Reporter at 24 3rd  
Street, Turners Falls, MA 01376;  
or email us your poetry at  
reporter-poems@montaguema.net

### Good Night '73

Now we know that the gin drinks do not matter.  
That grown daughters call their mothers around midnight  
from under poolwater. Smoking in bed. What is behind  
the door marked by the potted fir is not memorable,  
but to have such lines on wallpaper in a hallway,  
raincoat yellow, sliding down like firemen  
on poles in a dish liquid commercial on mute.  
This is how to make a day end for a long time.  
To fall asleep mid-moisturizer, hands above the head.  
Tamper with sleep until you get it right,  
and wake with shadow on the lids, as if blown there.

—Elizabeth Hughey  
Montague Center



### Portrait of the Artist with Rossetti's Sitter

Perhaps we give too much to those who leave us too soon.  
We call them Dove or Whetstone or Trumpet Bell. We blow

into their loose sleeves. We imagine them emerging from birches  
fingering harp strings, a shell in their hair, a leaf on our sleeve,

a bower meadow dotted with bees. We bury poems across their breasts,  
hoping they'll rise from the purgative dark of our waking dreams—

*Beau-ti-ful! Beau-ti-ful! Come see the peacocks streaming through the nightfields!*  
But in the end, in the perfect silence of their passing, we slide on

our high boots and gloves, and by the light of a fitful lantern,  
we dig and dig and dig because we have to take it all back.

—Kristin Bock  
Montague Center



### SQUANTO'S LAMENT

Offshore there are floating factories pregnant with pilgrims.  
Buckle their hats and shoes, pin their cloaks with cockle shells,  
pump them full of piety and fire them off at me.  
My grounds are pocked with pilgrim craters.  
One can sell their buckles for scrap or collect them for redemption;  
they make passable fertilizer but gloomy conversation.  
Tamed pilgrims stand in place like rotten teeth;  
in pens, they neither reproduce, nor fight, nor eat each other.  
Last summer I sprinkled pilgrim predator urine  
but it just made them pray louder. Their pelts do not cure,  
they do not lay eggs, their plumage is drab.  
Coach them through winter or pick up their bones each spring.  
Buzzards watch them forage at my feeder and when  
their baths ice over, pilgrims show a genius for apocalypse.  
Pilgrim with a buckskin fetish, pilgrim with musket and plague,  
four and twenty pilgrims baked in pumpkin pie.

—Corwin Ericson  
Wendell

### Impending Rain

I am thinking about albacore today,  
about their sleek silent backs and the way the water  
rolls off in rivulets as they jump above the waves.

I don't think it has anything to do  
with the gray sky overhead. But who knows?

In my vision the albacore leap  
in the sunlight, cavort with impunity:  
so strong, so doomed, so brave.

—Christopher Sawyer-Laucanno  
Turners Falls

### Restoring the Fourteen Stations of the Cross

I looked down on a mountain, on a cry rising up from the cracked earth.  
I looked down on the swine and the cattle, and they moaned a little.  
And I looked down on the tiny beings with their tiny tools, and a few  
looked back and shuddered. I looked on their blades slung low on their hips,  
their ropes and whips, their hem-stained gowns, their filthy scrolls, their field  
of white crosses. And it was good. And I looked down then on a shepherd lost.  
I moved over his path in the dust, and it vanished under my great fist.  
He stumbled. He bled over stones, and this too was good.  
Everything was as it should be.  
I painted him pale and thin as parchment.  
I drained blood from his crown thick and dark like oxblood.  
In the end, his nimbus crumbled in my fingers.  
And when he looked up into the firmament  
—I withdrew from him, from all of them.

—Kristin Bock  
Montague Center

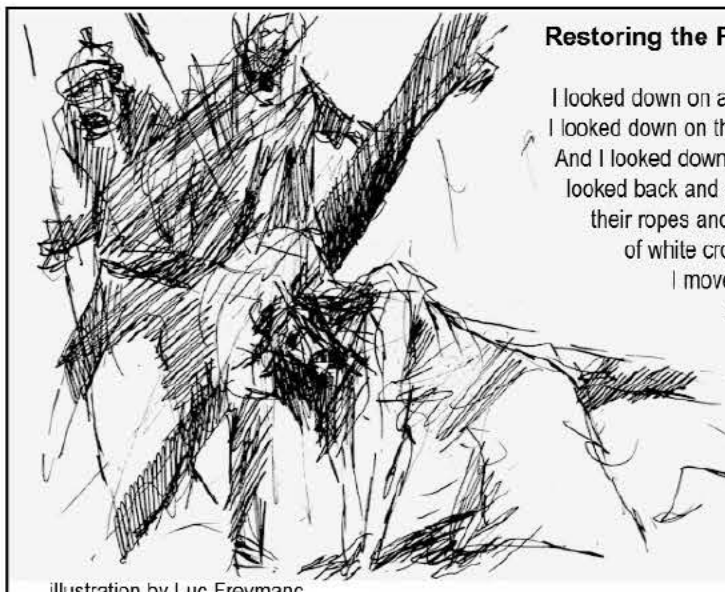


illustration by Luc Freymanc

Kanika Agrawal a graduate of MIT, is currently a student in the MFA Program in Poetics at Columbia.

Elizabeth Hughey grew up in Alabama and now lives with her husband in Montague Center. She is a recent graduate of the

MFA Program for Poets and Writers at UMass.

Raymond DiDonato resides in Wendell with his wife and children.

Marisol Duplisea is a seventh-grader at Greenfield Center School. She lives in Montague Center.

Kristin Bock's poetry has been published in numerous poetry journals including *Hayden's Ferry Review* and *Fence*.



**Postcard from Catullus**

Lesbia, Lesbia.... I was so over you  
utterly and completely  
I even told you off in Carmen VIII.

Then on my deathbed comfortable and dying  
"Lesbia" popped into my head.  
"You're kidding me?" I thought.  
Then, "Lesbia, Lesbia, Lesbia."

So that's how it ended - my last thought  
my last moment thinking of you.

At the funeral I tried to look for you  
through the eyes of my death-mask,  
but the force of my straining eyeballs  
shattered the hardened face.

So here I am in the Underworld  
slapped around by Hades  
wondering if, by any chance,  
you went to my funeral.

I mean - I should hope so,  
all those poems, all those little trifles—  
and of course there was the sex.

I'll bet you didn't go,  
no, you didn't, did you?  
You're so predictable, Lesbia!

Anyway, I have this mask  
and I'm putting it back together.  
It keeps breaking, but c'est la vie.

Because I have eternity  
to piece it together  
and then I will haunt you forever  
with its distorted face.

Then, sweet, dear, Lesbia,  
you will wish that when I ask  
"da mi basia" for another kiss -  
you had gone to my damn funeral!

—R. J. DiDonato  
Wendell

**Look Skyward**

What they found

**in Coastal Counties**

in storm drains

was beachwater

The rush to water continues.

wracked with San Diegans.

64 teenagers crosswalk

The ocean ends up

across California.

in coffee cups

A blue-ribbon, James.

every time it rains.

The Great Lakes,

—Elizabeth Hughey

Richard. Donna says,

Montague Center

*We actually tried to find*

*the arcane nuances*

*of clean water.*



**Atlantic City, the Tropicana**

Move quickly through the mine field of walkers,  
canes and wheel chairs.  
Knowing that if the oxygen tanks  
(on wheels, propped between the slots,  
attached to the faces of the people  
who are attached to the slots with strings)  
spring a leak  
the next 76 year old who lights a cigarette  
will kill us all.  
Each Bic flicked could be your last.

Parking garages, immense  
and filled with dented Buicks.  
This is your father's Oldsmobile,  
or your grandfathers  
that was passed to you  
when he died  
and you really can't  
afford anything else right now.

Late in the night,  
young crowds emerge  
in black and white  
spiked heels and hairspray.  
They avoid the rows of slots,  
the reaper at the doors of paradise.  
And trip with skill  
from 2 drink minimums  
to card tables to clubs  
to all night buffets

There they will sit at booths  
next to booths filled  
with wrinkled future promises fulfilled  
And they will light cigarettes  
together.  
And they will try to figure out  
how to get home  
without 5 bucks  
to pay the tolls.

There were few people  
on the beach this morning  
the sun was gold  
along the waves.  
My sunglasses  
kept fogging up.

—Boysen Hodgson  
Springfield



The Poetry Page is always looking for submissions from new writers.  
We know you are out there, it's time to be discovered!

**Soft leaves**

Soft leaves rest on the center of my forehead  
and the rose buds are big enough to hold my heart in place  
just for a moment  
but then i remember that the stem has some thorns  
and i quickly pull away  
but instead i hear a terrible scratching noise  
and i look down at the horrible mess  
and i scream just for a moment  
and worry that nobody here is going to clean it up  
because there's no one here  
which worries me even more  
my heart is spinning  
and thousands of regrets run into my mind  
just for a moment  
and then i hear a door opening  
and a rusty key hanging from a shelf  
and i wondering if it's my mind going crazy  
or if it's really the noise I am hearing  
and then a loud voice erupts in the room  
and i am lost in my thoughts  
worrying about what will happen next  
and then everything just goes clear  
and i wonder  
if everything is fixed and if there's a mess on my hand  
and if there's blood on the ground  
with no one around  
but my eyes slightly open  
and i wonder where i am  
but i am holding a rose  
and a note that says "I love you."

—Marisol Duplisea  
Lake Pleasant



**Son On a Hill**

I can't see my son anymore.  
He is so tiny,  
the size of a pencil dot.  
In the shopping mall,  
I find a new son.  
A black man in a baseball cap  
looking at telephones. Son, I say,  
because I am your mother, that's why.  
I've missed you, he says.  
We leave and drive back to the house.  
Look, kitchen, I've found him.  
See how little it takes to make a nose.  
An angle is all. A dot for an eye.  
Dear god, Son, you are growing by octaves.  
You are getting too big for this lap,  
for this room, for this street!  
A siren splits the day into two lungs.

One inflates and drifts out over  
the backyard. Go on, I say, and there  
he goes. A tulip droops around noon.

—Elizabeth Hughey  
Montague Center



**Kathryn Flagg** a 60-year resident of Millers Falls, now resides with her son and family in Allendale, New Jersey.

**Boysen Hodgson** is a graphic designer and marketing consultant. He lives in Springfield with his wife, Kendra.

**Christopher Sawyer-Lauçanno** is a poet, painter and biographer. He edits, along with Christopher Janke this poetry page.

**Corwin Ericson** lives in Wendell, Massachusetts, and works as the managing editor of the *Massachusetts Review*. His work appears in

*Harper's*, *the Believer*, *Best American Erotica*, *Slope*, and elsewhere.

We welcome new submissions every month. The Poetry Page will return in August.



# Poems from Somewhere Out of Western Massachusetts

BY JANEL NOCKELBY

It's summertime and the poetry is easy. Well, at least it sure helps to reside in verse-inspiring Montague Center. Elizabeth (Liz) Hughey and Kristin Bock, both of Montague Center, have especially celebratory reasons to feel poetic this summer.

Bock just received a Massachusetts Cultural Council grant for selected poems from her *Cloisters* manuscript. Hughey has just won the Iowa Poetry Prize, and as a result her first book called *Sunday Houses the Sunday House* will be published in the spring of 2007. Both poets are graduates of the University of Massachusetts Amherst MFA program for Poets and Writers. Bock graduated in 1998 and Hughey just finished her degree in May.

Also, both poets have lived in Montague for just over a year now and can enthusiastically account for how Montague fosters poetry and art. The last time Bock had poems appear in *The Montague Reporter*, she was pleasantly surprised that people came up to her and told her that they appreciated them.

Hughey and her husband, after living in Holyoke, were "craving the air and space," so they moved to Montague. "Paul Mariani [Montague resident and long-time poet] lives across the street. I'll go over, and we'll have a conversation about [William Carlos] Williams," while he's working in his yard, said Hughey. "I've had several experiences like that," she explained. Montague is "very cultural and supportive. They ask you how things are going."

Bock described a similar story. "My husband is an artist and one of our favorite things to do is jump in the car and find some beautiful spot to picnic, write and paint. The Bookmill, The Night Kitchen, and The Lady Killigrew Café have always beckoned us to Montague, and we've spent many hours sipping wine by the river, talking poetry and art late into the evening. I believe Montague is truly a special place to live," she explained.

In fact, my conversation with Bock and Hughey at the Lady

Killigrew went well into the late evening hours with topics ranging from what themes you obsess about when you write to how do you actually sit down and make a poem happen on the page. In spite of the wine, Hughey and Bock successfully unraveled the mysteries of their writing experience and their relationships to poetry during our discussion.

Hughey described her writing ritual. "I get a lot of information from Yahoo news. You get up. Get your coffee. Four hours later,

you're looking at African Violets [on the internet]. Maybe it will be a poem, and maybe nothing will ever happen with it. It's the luxury of being a poet, you're supposed to float around. That's our work," she explained.

"Or, I'll go to the library and check out a bunch of books on architecture [for example]. I'll read around and then I'll phase out of that topic." Both poets also recommend reading something other than poetry regularly for inspiration. Bock has spent considerable time studying ancient Christian religious texts, and Hughey reads philosophy from India on a daily basis.

Bock explained that, "at any given time, I'm working on about ten poems at once. I remember my professor, Dara Wier, telling me this will eventually drive me insane, and I believe it does, but it is the only way I can write. I can't say I consciously choose to write poetry. It chooses me," she elaborated. "Sometimes, I even feel a sense of ecstasy while writing, playing with language and exploring new ideas excites me. The drive towards epiphany is strong and intoxicating."

Both poets credit the UMass MFA program for accelerating their proficiency in writing poetry and greatly expanding the range of poetry that they read and appreciate. Bock now participates in a regular poetry



PHOTO BY JANEL NOCKELBY

Award-winning poets Liz Hughey (left) and Kristin Bock.

discussion and critique session with Franklin County poets, mostly former graduates of the UMass MFA program who "fell in love with the area and never left," she said.

Regarding the Massachusetts Cultural Council award, Bock stated, "a surprising number of people living in western Massachusetts have won this award in past years. I feel it's testimony to our thriving artistic community and to the quality of the MFA program at UMASS."

Both poets described criticism as being critical to their writing process, whether it is feedback from a formal class, an informal group of friends, or their husbands. "I'll show him [her husband Chip] something, and if he doesn't like it, I'll be mean to him for the rest of the day," she laughed-though, seriously, she acknowledged that she values his feedback immensely. "You never know how people are going to read your poems," she said.

Hughey has a serious sense of humor. She doesn't expect that she will write poems with humor in them, but

she said her "poems just seem to turn out with some element of kidding or play to it, that I didn't really intend to be there. You don't think [while writing], oh, this is going to be a funny one! But then, it seems to be playful, and they [readers] start laughing, and then, well, it's funny," she mused.

Bock has also written her share of poems with elements of humor, but most recently her writing obsessions, especially in her *Cloisters* manuscript, have been more dark and somber. She explained that recent losses have led her in that direction, but in her description of growing up watching her father paint

still life paintings, it seems there has been an appreciation for darker images since her childhood.

She explained, "Always at his side watching him paint, I became very aware of texture, the qualities of light, and the language between objects at a very early age. His paintings facilitated my understanding of symbolism and metaphor and nurtured my love for powerful imagery. In short, art taught me the vocabulary of poetry. I remember the first painting of my father's that resonated with me: a naked china doll with its eyes extracted, a dark hole on top of its head where hair should have been. I imagined if I could peer down inside its head, I would find a lost button, some balls of dust, a few dried bees. The doll was cocked awkwardly to one side, and its right arm stretched out to the viewer. I was frightened and fascinated at the same time. It gave me a thrill, and, as a despairing as it may seem, I came to identify with the doll, and somehow it became my first conscious metaphor."

To read Bock and Hughey's poetry, see this issue of *The Montague Reporter*, Hughey's forthcoming book in the spring, and look on the internet for some of their poems - Bock's at [www.massculturalcouncil.org](http://www.massculturalcouncil.org) and Hughey's at [Shampooet ry.com](http://Shampooet ry.com).

## Tornado Alters Wendell History

JONATHAN VON RANSON

The Wendell senior center building - once an elementary school and even earlier the town hall - won't become a wing of the new library. It is a casualty of the tornado that hit town July 11.

Already gutted for renovation before the twister hit, it was declared dangerous by Phil Delorey, building inspector, who pulled the building permit of the contractor. Selectboard Member Dan Keller said he expects that board to join the library building committee in voting for the building to be dismantled and a new structure built on the same footprint.

Once the twister passed, its center only a few dozen yards north, the building leaned approximately 12 inches out of plumb, weakening all the mortise-and-tenon joints, according to Bob Leete, an engineer experienced with post-and-beam construction hired for the structural assessment.

Wendell Historical Commission members Jerry Eide and Jean Forward had hoped an assessment would indicate some of the old structure could remain as the "bones" of library's children's wing, and with it some of the historical "tissue" of the town's first town hall. Keller said the contractors will be instructed to salvage what they can of the structure.



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Mud continued from page 1

ed being interested in dragon and damselflies, he laughed and said that his wife (Laurie Sanders of the public radio program, "Field Notes") had said to him, "Fred, I'm tired of not knowing about dragonflies, we have to learn about them!" Now Fred and Laurie, along with Dave McLain, are in their sixth year of a project, funded by Northeast Utilities and the Massachusetts Environmental Trust, to study the effects of bank stabilization on rare dragonflies in the section of the Connecticut River above the Turners Falls dam.

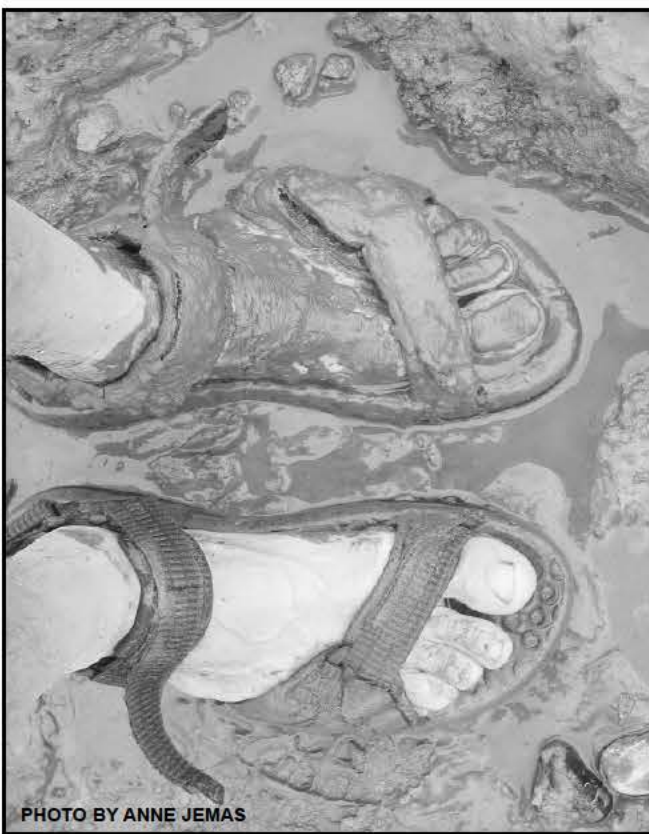
Besides field guides, Fred had two display cases of dragon and damselfly nymphs. I didn't realize that these beautiful insects lived for years in this stage of development, or that the nymphs look completely unlike their adult versions. There is nothing striking or graceful about their appearance; their bodies are made to burrow into the silt, and their coloring is drab for camouflage. After listening to Fred address the group, I decided I would join the volunteers midday at the canal by the Conte Anadromous Fish Laboratory. I stopped by the Survival Center to buy old running shoes that would serve as mud shoes for the day. My partner, Sita, agreed to join me, and as we drove down Migratory Way, I felt anxious at what we would find.

Many cars were parked by the fish lab and folks of various ages walked along the path carrying buckets and dressed for hot, muddy work. Fred Morrison, Dave McLain and Laurie Sanders had their research area set up with many trays filled with water for sorting the nymphs as well as their display case of nymph samples. Beth Bazler and staff from the Department of Conservation and Recreation had a table set up with beverages, a signup sheet, buckets, and nets. Beth briefed people about how to safely rescue the variety of animals we might find, including fish, mud puppies (the largest amphibian in our area), turtles,

sea lampreys (similar to eels), and nymphs. One bucket was designated the "nymph bucket" so that these creatures could safely be brought up to the research team for data collection before they were released into the Connecticut River. Other animals rescued were to be dumped into a huge container of water on the back of a John Deere Gator provided by the research lab that made regular runs from the canal down to the river.

I have seen the canal drained before, but this was the first time I had walked down to the bottom. It reminded me of the ocean at low tide, people bent over intent on finding treasures. The water was not completely drained; there were pools of various depths as well as water still making its way down the canal. To my relief, although there was the occasional dead fish, most of what was on the dry areas was nymphs or lamprey larvae. Beth and others who have participated in this rescue effort many times over the years agreed that the number of stranded animals was far less this year, perhaps because the draining had started at 5:00 in the morning instead of at midnight. I settled into a routine of finding little pools where creatures had congregated. I put the nymphs into a cup of water and the larger things like sea lampreys or fish into my bucket until the containers were full, then headed up the muddy canal bank to have the animals studied and released.

During the day, more people came by and helped, including parents with children. A small snapping turtle was taken to the river and a larger one was left to find its own way. Beth observed that over the years there are fewer reports of people going into the canal to harass stranded animals, and the amount of things like shopping carts and



Wear your mud shoes for draw-down rescue work

tires was also less this year. It seems that people are becoming more respectful of their natural surroundings. "For people with a fish, nature or science background, coming into the canal gives them a window into something they don't normally get to see. And all the volunteers have the heart and spirit of wanting to help the animals that are there."

For the entire day, Fred Morrison and Dave McLain stayed above the canal working with volunteers, sorting, measuring and documenting the seemingly endless supply of nymphs that the volunteers steadily deposited into their buckets. Dave said that although they have done this research during the draw-down before, it has never been on this scale, and that they weren't expecting so many to be collected. The total number of nymphs sorted through was in the thousands, and included at least five state-listed in categories of "special concern," "threatened" or "endangered." Fred added that, "ten different dragonfly species were found, and we expect that the data that all of the volunteers helped to collect will be a big help in our effort to understand another aspect of the population

the canal, so it is a great place to study them. She goes out as the water is getting low to see where the lamprey tunnels are located and measures the depth of the holes. Like nymph research, the lamprey research allows the scientists to better understand the animal's ecology. Another research group this year was led by a professor who had his volunteers there early to rescue mud puppies before the water got too shallow and hot for their survival.

While the volunteers did their rescue work, in other areas Northeast Utilities was doing the repair and maintenance, with heavy equipment, that is the purpose of the annual draw-down.

Asked about the overall condition of the canal, John Krauss, Operations and Maintenance Manager for Northeast Utilities at Cabot Station laughed and said, "Even though the canal is very old, it's holding up very well. I hope I'm in that good of shape when I'm old!" He said more work was done this year than usual, which is why the draw-down lasted a couple of days longer, and began early Saturday morning instead of midnight Sunday. The work

dynamics of these creatures."

Erika Parker, a graduate student at the UMass and an intern at the research lab, said the university and the lab have used the draw-down for research for at least ten years. Erika has been studying sea lamprey larvae, a worm-like animal one to six inches in length. It stays in this stage for four to five years and is abundant in

involves routine repair and maintenance of the canal and clearing of the screens that prevent debris from going into the power turbines. A major additional project this year was the opening of the No. 6 gate at the gatehouse (next to the dams). John said this gate "used to be a log gate during the early days of the canal in the mid-1800's, but was filled in with concrete in the 1970's." Northeast Utilities, at the advice of the Conte Anadromous Fish Lab, may start using it for a fish entrance, so another gate must be functional to take its place. Clearing the concrete out of the gate was a challenge and required that an enormous excavator be lowered into the canal by an even more enormous crane. After the rescue day, I took a walk over the canal bridge behind the Discovery Center and was lucky to be there along with several other town folks see the exciting event unfold.

As I looked down the canal from the bridge, I reflected on how the day had been such a different experience from what I had anticipated. Instead of feeling anxious, I found the work peaceful. How often as adults do we have a reason to squat in the mud and quietly observe and assist the tiny creatures that make that habitat home? How often are we surrounded by people, who despite all of the dire news of the world, keep doing what they can, and with passion? It made me think of a quote by one of my heroes, Pete Seeger. When journalist Amy Goodman asked him what gives him hope while the world is in such a state of crisis and despair, he answered that he imagines a scale that is weighted down on one end with an enormous load, while on the opposite end there are many people adding sand, one teaspoonful at a time. "Even though it seems impossible, eventually, with enough people adding enough teaspoons of sand, one day the scale will suddenly be tipped in the other direction."



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# Some History of the Montague Community Band

BY DON GIRARD

## The Turners Falls Germania Cornet Band

The Montague Community Band saw its beginnings when Oscar Milde and six beginners on different instruments formed the Germania Cornet Band in Turners Falls in 1892. The photograph at the right is from this era, sometime before the 1902 merger with the "Paper Makers."

In 1897, Walter Clapp succeeded Mr. Milde as band manager. At around the same time, employees of the Montague Paper Company organized a musical group dubbed the Paper Makers Band. In 1902, this group and the Germanias voted to merge and became the Turners Falls Military Band.

After 1903, concerts were played from a wooden stand on Avenue A and Second Street in Turners Falls. In 1904, in addition to weekly concerts downtown, two concerts were played in Lake Pleasant, funding supplied by the Connecticut Valley Street Railroad, which ran trolley excursions to the lake resort during the summer. The middle photo dates from 1906.

In 1935, the local unit became part of a newly formed Eastern States Band Association with bands from Shelburne Falls, Orange, Athol, Westfield, Holyoke, and Springfield. The first massed concert in 1938 drew over 15,000 spectators to Unity Park.

After World War II, the band resumed full activity. The bottom photo dates from a concert given in the 1930s.

### All Work and No Play?

The following letter from the Franklin County Musicians Union Local No. 621 suggests otherwise.

Dear Sir and Brother:

At the regular meeting of Local 621, F.F. of M., Sunday, February 12th, 1922, the following resolution was adopted. "That all antics such as standing on chairs, sitting or standing on pianos, shimmying, running around the hall, or other actions tending to lower the dignity of musicians, or offend the public, be strictly forbidden by members of the Local, or members entering the jurisdiction of this Local while performing at any dance or other public function."

The following clipping was found in a band book from the archive. "The program for Sunday's concert by the Turners Falls Military Band has been announced. Light Cavalry Overture, In a Persian Market, Autumn Leaves, Big Band Bossa Nova, Galveston, I Left My Heart in San Francisco, It was a Very Good Year, Tangerine Tango, What the World Needs Now is Love, Casino Royale, Coquette Polka, Helena Polka, Rain, Rain Polka, Tinker Polka, Red Beer Polka, Grasshopper Polka, and Jenny Lind Polka." Can anyone identify the exact date of this concert?

Please email [dpgirard@verizon.net](mailto:dpgirard@verizon.net) if you know.

*Don Girard is a former manager of the Montague Community Band, which is celebrating its 115th season this year.*



## Stirring Souls With Music

PHOTO BY JONATHAN VON RANSON

The Army Band goes march-time for the crowd listening last Thursday on the Montague Center Common.

PHOTOS COURTESY OF DON GIRARD

These three photos show the Montague Community Band in 1896 (top), 1906 (middle) and in the 1930's (above).

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**PLANNER**

continued from pg 1

it, "Robin wanted to come tell us why we were not making the right choice." At this second meeting, on July 17th, also held in executive session, the Board made no decision one way or the other. To reconsider their earlier vote was the reason for the open and public discussion at Monday night's meeting.

Following Chairwoman Pruitt's remarks, Sherman spoke, saying that she has long had a home in Montague, that she loved her community and hoped to be able to return to her job as town planner for Montague when her year of schooling is up. "It has been a privilege working for the board and working for the community and to be able to improve the quality of life for its citizens," said Sherman. "And I certainly would not expect and would not be asking for benefits during the time I am away."

Although the Board of Selectmen all stated emphatically that they recognized Sherman's outstanding leadership skills and performance, Selectmen Patricia Allen and Allen Ross said they had many concerns surrounding the possibility of granting Sherman a leave of absence. Allen said she would not have a problem if the leave of absence were for only three months or even six

months. "But a lot can happen in a year, and in the meantime what will Montague do while waiting for Sherman's return, especially when there are a lot of projects for the town going on at once?" Allen also feared that the town, on a roll and heading in a positive direction despite budget issues, might lose its momentum. Ross echoed Allen's concerns, wondering how the town will complete projects already started. "I realize people take leaves of absence to gain educational experience related to the job and that it can enrich the workplace. In this case, however, it may or may not help serve town of Montague," said Ross. "When one decides to further their education, won't they gain knowledge that will better serve their workplace?" asked Selectboard Chair Patricia Pruitt. She said she felt Sherman's education would benefit the town, and that this opportunity for Sherman could also be an opportunity for Montague.

Among the many questions raised from the audience, Art Gilmore wondered whether the Franklin Regional Council of Governments could pick up the slack while Sherman was gone. Sherman herself answered the question by saying that she had investigated that possibility and the answer was no. Robert Sojka, a town meeting member, wanted to know whether Sherman

would be guaranteed a position at Town Hall, even if she weren't able to return as planner. Chairwoman Pruitt stated that the leave of absence was for the specific job. Lynn Reynolds, a member of the Finance Committee and a Town Meeting member spoke in Sherman's defense: "Robin Sherman is probably one in ten thousand employees out there. Do you really want to blow it? Think about it? She has been such an asset. Would it hurt to try to find a way to get by for just a year?" Chairwoman Pruitt agreed: "Robin is a workhorse. She is one of the most informative people I know, and certainly has the ability to get things done. I agree that she is an outstanding worker, but I am trying to cover my bases."

Despite all the kind words and praise for Sherman, in the end the board opted not to grant Sherman the leave of absence. At the close of the discussion, they still hadn't made up their minds whether they would replace Sherman on a temporary or permanent basis. Then, at the end of the meeting, after most had cleared the room, Selectwoman Allen brought up the point again. Selectmen Ross noted that he had "polled" folks and that there was a feeling that Montague had to move on. Another vote was taken with Selectmen Allen and Ross voting to seek a permanent replacement, and

Chairwoman Pruitt voting against. The Select Board's next steps are to find someone to replace her.

Other news: As a last service to the town, Sherman submitted a proposal for Board approval that would place the Strathmore Mill Building on a state list of the "Ten Most Endangered Buildings in the Commonwealth. According to Sherman, having the Strathmore on the list might help attract a developer and make it easier to obtain public and private funding for redevelopment and improvements. The Board unanimously endorsed the plan.

The Select Board unanimously voted to accept the resignation, effective September 30, of Town Clerk, John Zwyna. (See related feature story). Robert Trombley, Supervisor of the Water Pollution Control Facility, announced that he would be leaving for the month of September for National Guard Service in "a hot and dusty place." When queried as to where this was, he replied, to the relief of all: "Texas."

He will attempt to set the new sewer rates at the next Select Board meeting on Aug. 7. The saga of Robert Jaros' application to create a wine club continues. Chairwoman Pruitt informed Mr. Jaros that the ABCC would only entertain granting him a liquor license as a package

store as they felt his proposed plan for selling cases of vintage wine to members of the club constituted sales of alcohol that would be consumed off-premise. The package store rules stipulate that his club would have to be open from 9 a.m. to 11 p.m. Monday through Saturday, and from 12 p.m. to 6 p.m. on weekends. Mr. Jaros thought this might be possible. The Select Board turned over the matter for him to pursue with the ABCC.

John Reynolds, Chris Sawyer-Laucanno and Irene Dowd were reappointed on a unanimous vote to the Cable Advisory Committee. Sam Gilford's application to rejoin the CAC was turned down by both Selectman Pat Allen and Chairwoman Patricia Pruitt. Allen said that while she had voted to appoint Gilford to the earlier Committee, she had been "disappointed" that he had not worked well with other members. Selectman Ross voted to appoint Gilford, stating that "while Sammy was often repetitive and prolonged in his remarks, he had added to the discussion." The next meeting of the Montague Board of Selectmen will be held on August 7.



**CLERK**

continued from pg 1

Select Board to reduce the Assistant Town Clerk's hour to 17½ hours per week, this clearly played a major part in his decision to leave his post at this time. "My sincere concern is that the Clerk's office will be able to function the way it has with just a part-time assistant, particularly an assistant in an un-benefitted position working just 17½ hours each week," said Zywna. "In all the time I've been here, the Clerk's office has only been closed on five business days, and four times this was because we all went to a clerks' picnic. I can't envision that the office can maintain the same hours under the proposed plan."

Despite his concerns, he has full confidence that Deb Bourbeau, the present Assistant Town Clerk, can step up to the job. "She just came back from 'Town Clerk's Boot Camp' (a week-long intensive training session offered by the State) and she's learned a tremendous amount. And I don't mean just there, but on the job as well." Bourbeau is bolstered by Zywna's confidence in her but is the first to point out that Zywna is a hard act to follow. As for his departure date of September 30th, he explained that he felt this gave the Select Board time to appoint Bourbeau to fill

out his term and hire an assistant for her, preferably for more than the proposed number of hours.

For many in town it's hard to remember a time when Zywna wasn't the Town Clerk. According to Zywna, he became aware that the position was up for grabs in the May 1991 election when the former Town Clerk, Raymond Zukowski, Sr., called him in February to tell him he wasn't going to seek re-election. At that time Zywna was working in construction, and the idea intrigued him. Zywna was no stranger to change. Before entering construction he'd taught English, dramatics and coached the football and softball teams at Turners Falls High School for ten years, and worked, as well, as a logger for a couple of years. And so that February he threw his hat in the ring. "As I recall, there were six or seven candidates running on the Democratic side and the winner of the [Democratic] Caucus would be the candidate in the general election. There was so much interest in the race that the Caucus was moved to Hillcrest [School]. About 1200 people showed up to vote, probably the largest Caucus turnout this town has ever seen. Well, I won, and then went on to face Republican and Independent challengers in the election in May. I'm not a politician but I did work to get elected. I made phone calls

every evening asking for people's support. I had no idea, of course, how it would turn out but I remember telling my boss on the day of the election that I'd be quitting in a few days if I won. So one day I was running a jackhammer on a bridge over the Deerfield River; the next I was wearing a tie and sitting in the Town Clerk's office." Since that first contest, Zywna has run unopposed, a true testimony to the faith the citizens have had in him.

When Zywna last ran for re-election, in May of 2004, he had already agreed to take early retirement from the Town. He explained that, in the spring of 2004 when the Board of Selectmen were offering the retirement option for long-term employees, he decided he might as well take advantage of the offer figuring that his then Assistant Town Clerk, Katherine Crouse, would stay on to help with the transition. But then, she too, announced she wanted to retire and Zywna thought that "with two greenhorns in the office it would be a disaster." "We had a Presidential primary coming up in September and a general election in November. And those are complicated. And so I decided for the good of the town, I'd run again." As a result, Zywna has yet to take advantage of any retirement income, as his pension was frozen

when he remained in the job.

When Zywna looks back on his 15 years on the job he feels fairly satisfied with what he's been able to accomplish. "We've got our records in order and we've got the information retrieval system running very smoothly. Vital Statistics are super critical, and we've got them all organized and easily accessible. The only major complaints have been over dogs, and this only four or five times." He has expressed concern, though, over the oldest records, which are quite delicate and subject to being destroyed by mold. (At the July 24th Select Board Meeting, Chairwoman Patricia Pruitt suggested that the town look into making sure these records are preserved.)

And then there are the fond memories: "My time here has been challenging, sometimes stressful, occasionally even silly. But I've never said to myself, when I open the door in the morning, that I don't want to be here. I've worked hard, yes, but most in Town Hall put their shoulders to the wheel. And I love Montague. There are great people here. I'm also thankful for my wife's patience, and I'm grateful to my three children [now all grown] who had to put up with me having this job that took me away from them a fair amount of the time."

As for the future, Zywna says

he's "not hanging it up." "I'll see what door opens this time, see what I can do. I haven't given much thought to it but I'm not worried. Opportunities are always out there. You just have to be able to see them. And then take them."



**The Healthy Geezer and Finding Balance are on vacation this week. Both columns will return in the August 9th issue.**

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# Behind the Brick House Mural

BY AMY LAPRADE

The mural is up, and the life of the Brick House Community Resource Center goes on in its colorful presence.

Kerry Kazokas, a visual artist from Shelburne Falls, who has had previous experience working on art projects with teens, "loved being with the kids" doing the project.

"Teenagers teach me about life," she said, "and where our society is. They have a lot to offer if adults are willing to give them a chance. I love painting big - especially murals. They convey a powerful message."

Asked about the meaning behind the mural, Kazokas answered by saying she brought in a book of graffiti art containing pictures of the Berlin Wall, and the kids loved it.

"I think that there's a point when graffiti becomes art. It is such an urban art form, and more for poor people. It's risky because it is against the law, and if it's taboo teens are drawn to it," says Kazokas. She says she asked the Brick House Kids how they wanted to be represented and they came up with the idea for the silhouettes of themselves, each one personifying a part of their soul. Kazokas wanted to offer the kids freedom of expression but set the guideline that there be no swearing,



*Justine Regish spins the hula hoop in front of the new mural at the Brick House Community Resource Center. Also shown, left to right, Nate Lyunde, Chris Leamy, Mark Health, Jared Libby.*

violence, or racist remarks. She came up with the setup and background.

"Kids three to 70 to 20 years old from the entire neighborhood were out there, and were very excited when we first started," she said. "Each silhouette represents a part of the Brick House Community, and The Brick House Community is a larger part of the community."

While at the recreational

Center for teens, I had the opportunity to interview two of the artists who worked on the wall. One of them was Nathan Greene of Turners.

"My silhouette is the second or third one from the ending - I'm clicking my heels," he said. He's hung out at the Brick House since he was in the eighth grade and has also been employed there for a while.

Green's sister Athecia is also

participating in the project. "I got involved for the love of painting," she said. "And I got involved with The Brick House when I started coming here after school, then I started working here." She was drawn by the staff "They don't judge or categorize you. They let you be you," she said. She's "the one with the pentagram in the hand - I am born again pagan. I love this project, and wish we could

paint more murals here in Turners."

Kazokas, aside from giving her time to these kids, has many other remarkable achievements under her belt. At just 23, she opened The Freedom Art Gallery in Northfield. She has also done a few solo exhibitions, one at the Green Trees Gallery in Northfield and another scheduled there on November 11th.

Kazokas studied at Mass. Art in Boston and finished her degree at University of New Mexico with a bachelor's degree in Fine Arts in the art of the mural. In addition to visual arts, Kazokas has written and directed with Gretchen Licata a movie called "Free To Fly" by Northern Lights Productions. It will be shown at Green Trees Gallery (date not yet determined) and at Mocha Mayas in Shelburne center on August 11th.

"Free To Fly" is about being young trying to figure out who to become and discovering the self through art, says Kazokas.

The Brick House Community will have a celebration commencing the completion of the mural August 8th from 5-7 pm. All are welcome. For further information contact The Brick House Community at [www.brickhouseinc.org](http://www.brickhouseinc.org).

## VILLAGE SKETCHBOOK

# A Wedding in the Country

BY DAVID BRULE

It was to be a wedding under the full moon of July, and the planning had been going on for months. The relationship between the betrothed had already withstood the test of time, and so this event was finally going to happen!

Indeed, dear readers, family and friends knew that our Jesse was a goner years ago when the winsome Sarah first set her sights on him! I say "goner" in the most respectful of tones, but with the dwindling number of bachelors in our aging clan, we all watched the process with keen interest, for in our opinion, the groom was quite a catch. A

brilliant and diligent scholar, a graduate of the best Massachusetts schools and a doctoral candidate at Cornell, our young man is destined for a rich and rewarding career in the ecological field. And Sarah herself is bringing a promising artistic career to this union, so the future certainly looks bright.

My main job in all of this, as uncle to the bridegroom and father of the Best Man, was to make sure that said Best Man, Kevin, got to the chapel in on time. No small planning chore, since the night before the beginning of the rehearsal and ceremonies, we were thousands of miles away deep in the limestone moonscape of the Burren, County Clare. We had spent hours sitting in the middle of an Iron Age ring fort, contemplating the ironies of Irish history! Nevertheless, through the very familiar workings of a series of modern transportation connections, within hours, deep in culture shock and weary with time-traveling, we were in the chapel, the night before the wedding.

The wedding itself was a celebration of rural village life as one rarely sees nowadays. For the young groom was truly a product of this hamlet of West Whately, his parents, my sister Sue and her husband Bob

Bellemare having left their native town of Turners Falls and headed for the rural hills in the '70's. The inhabitants of this neighborhood have a deep sense of place: it's a spot tucked away in the hills between lake and forest, farmland and country garden. Dogs and children have always roamed freely between the scattered houses and as often as not, the families here have played an important role in raising each generation of young ones - dogs and children alike!

So it was with great pride that July afternoon in the 1896 chapel that neighbors and extended family participated in the wedding. To see our Wild Boys, one the groom and one the Best Man, dressed to the nines with the radiant bride between them, brought back memories of the two boys when they weren't acting so civilized. They have been as close as brothers, these two first cousins, and had traipsed every inch of wood, field, shore and swamp, near and far - from Whately and Barton's Cove to Cape Cod, Florida, Brazil, Ireland, and Brittany. There was many a tear in the eye of those gathered there as the memories of the boys now grown to strong young men washed over family

and neighbors alike. As for the ceremony, it was mercifully brief!

The heat was baking those of us in suits and ties, even though the windows were wide open, and the late afternoon sun was going slowly down. The air fluttered with fans placed in every row for us and provided some respite. The bride's uncle did the honors as pastor, vows and rings were exchanged while we all fanned away in the late afternoon heat of the chapel.

Then it was time to party! A huge tent had been set up in the field opposite the chapel, the cows kept at bay behind new fencing. Again this was a communal effort: the wedding party had worked the whole evening before, as well as much of the morning, under the direction of the bride-to-be, who had worked out every detail herself! Neighbors Dickenson had donated the use of the field, the Mahars and the Newland-De Tullios provided the electricity and tech support, best friend Jamie provided the wedding march, and so on. French Gypsy jazz accompanied the cocktail hour, the champagne flowed, and the revelry began. The Bellemars, Brules, and Aherns had traveled up from Turners Falls, Millers Falls and

Greenfield, as well as from Florida, to represent the bride and groom's immediate family, while friends came in from Maine, New York, New Jersey, all from far and near for this joyous event. For hours, the 150 guests mingled, chatted, feasted and partied until dark.

As dusk drew near, many of the elder guests drifted off, but the rest of us were just getting started. And then there were the bats. The nightly spectacle of the bats began in the fading light as hundreds of the creatures began cuing up and pouring out of the chapel roof in the dusk. The bat spectacle had been worked into the wedding plan, just before the sparklers and skyrockets were scheduled, the natural and human events blending into the age-old cycle. The dancing went on late into the night, children running through the dark field, sparklers trailing, mixing in with flickering lightning bugs in the distance. And above it all the full moon of July shone down, keeping a watchful eye on the revelers, as they drifted home, off into the darkness.

Sarah Ahern and Jesse Bellemare were married on July 8, 2006.



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# Sox in Good Shape Entering Trade Deadline

BY LEE CARRIGAN

**TURNERS FALLS** - The Red Sox are in a position that organizations strive for but don't always attain. The Major League lineup is solid in all three phases of the game and the farm system is probably in its best state in decades.

So approaching this year's July 31st trade deadline, Red Sox general manager Theo Epstein will look long and hard at every player who becomes available. But unless there's a talented veteran who can help Boston for both the short and long term, don't expect Epstein to part with any of his top prospects. The list of untouchables would seem to include closer Jonathan Papelbon, left-handed starter Jon Lester, right-handed reliever Craig Hansen and minor league middle infielder Dustin Pedroia.

Epstein began building the Red Sox organization on November 25, 2002 the day he became general manager. And his brief departure from his post last winter only reinforced how important having a fruitful farm system is to him.

The Red Sox's biggest need heading into the deadline is to deepen the pitching staff. The

top of the rotation seems set with Curt Schilling and Josh Beckett, who recently signed a three-year contract extension. Similarly, Papelbon and Timlin are anchors at the back end of the bullpen. But both of those areas could use more depth - especially with starting pitchers Tim Wakefield, Matt Clement, and David Wells, and reliever Keith Foulke all on the disabled list and veterans Rudy Seanez and Julian Tavarez struggling all season.

It's shaping up to be another seller's market with pitching selling at a premium. Last year was very much the same, with Epstein not buckling to the demands of his competitors. He made a few subtle moves in early July, bringing in Alex Cora, Chad Bradford and Tony Graffanino, but chose not to mortgage the farm to make a blockbuster move as the deadline passed.

That could very well be the way things play out again this season. He has already signed right-hander Kyle Snyder off waivers and traded for sinkerballer Jason Johnson and lefty specialist Javy Lopez. The organization continues to bring up young pitchers to fill needs on



the pitching staff.

Epstein is now in his fourth year as general manager, and the case can be made that his team has never been in such sound shape before the deadline.

In his first year, in 2003, Epstein was desperate for bullpen help and brought in Byung-Hyun Kim, Scott Sauerbeck and Scott Williamson. He also needed a starter and had to trade a solid prospect in Freddy Sanchez for Jeff Suppan, a move that Epstein later admitted was a mistake. Sanchez became an instant success in the National League, while the Red Sox only had the services of Suppan for a couple of months and got little production from him. Since then Epstein has been more careful in preserving his prospects, and the Sox are reaping the benefits with a deep corps of young players in the organization.

This season, some pitching help would be nice, but the Sox also might be able to go deep into October without any significant tweaks. If there are additions, expect them to come in the form of relievers or a fifth starter that would not cost much.

Whatever moves Theo Epstein and the Red Sox decide

to make this year, you can bet, based on what Epstein has done during his short tenure, they will be well-calculated decisions. Especially after the lesson in '03 with Sanchez, the Sox won't be sacrificing any more of their top young prospects unless they are getting back a superb player who will be able to help the Red Sox for years to come.

## Heavy Hitting Champions



On July 4th, 2006, the 10 and under All Stars of the Newt Guilbault League of Turners Falls, won the District 1, Cal Ripken Tournament Championship in Williamstown, MA. The team outscored their opponenets, 60-13, and finished the tournament 5 and 0. The team advanced to play in the State Cal Ripken Tournament in Douglas, MA, July 8-12.

## Free Grill Opportunity ...

As everyone knows, it's time to get ready for that all important cooking technique of the summer ---outdoor grilling! I have found several stores where you can get a FREE Bar-B-Q Grill! This is not a joke. The upper rack can be used for keeping things warm once cooked! Available in silver chrome or natural rust. Note: Portable accessory kit available (not shown) includes a set of four wobbler wheels for the legs and "ham harness" for the warming rack! Just make sure to get the metal one.

Available free now in any of these fine stores' parking lots near you: Big Lots, Home Depot, K-Mart, Lowes, BJ's, Sam's Club, Shop n' Stop, Target, Wal-Mart...



## The Little Monsters: Worth Seeing

BY AMY LAPRADE

Heavy chugging beats, punctuated by driving baseline, searing guitar licks and smoking harmonica - The Little Monsters, fronted by a crazed bearded man with a voice like steel on silk, are a live act worth seeing.

This high-powered rock-infused Blues band performs deep cut covers from artists such as Muddy Waters, ZZ Top, and The Doors, in addition to original material.

The Little Monsters are Charlie Scott, lead vocals; Bo Henderson, guitar/vocals; Janet Henderson, bass/vocals; Thomas Major, slide guitar/harmonica; David Lenson, saxophone/vocals; Charlie Pearson, lead guitar; and Bob Pierce, drum-

mer.

Together for three years, the Pioneer Valley band has performed at venues throughout Massachusetts, such as The Corner Pub in Athol, The 63 Road House in Millers Falls, Mohawk Park in Charlemont, and The Royalston Music Festival at Bullock Park in Royalston.

The Little Monsters, performing as the Reprobate Blues Band - same member line-up except Doug Smith plays drums - can be seen on Thursdays at The River Street Bar and Grille's "Blues and Brews Night" at 7 p.m. on East River Street in Orange.

The Little Monsters also play

monthly at Yesterday's on 3rd Street in Turners Falls.

Future gigs will be Saturday August 5th at Mohawk Park, Route 2, West Charlemont; August 12th at Nesbitt's Portside Tavern in Vernon, Vt.; and The East River Street Bar And Grille, 978-544-8484 (no date given). In addition to these dates, The Little Monsters are available for private parties. Their CD releases can also be found on [myspace.com/The Little Monsters Band](http://myspace.com/The Little Monsters Band). Titles are: "The Little Monsters" and "The Little Monsters' Bash" by the Little Monsters and "Reprobation" by The Reprobate Blues Band - sold at gigs.

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## BOOK REVIEW

# John Parzych Writes His Memoirs

## JEP'S PLACE. HOPE, FAITH, AND OTHER DISASTERS BY JOSEPH A. PARZYCH

REVIEWED BY  
DAVID BRULE

This shining new book made it into my hands a few weeks ago, and spent a few days on the writing table before being opened. I'm one of those readers who likes to spend time with a book, so I made this one last the whole month of July, savoring it like a recently discovered wine. Even before opening this book I liked getting the feel of the heft of it, enjoying the print and layout, the portrait of the farm on the cover, the feel of the paper while I read. This book, in that regard, is a gem.

Jep's Place, a memoir by acclaimed writer Joseph Parzych draws the reader in, right from the first lines of his earliest impressions of growing up in harsh conditions on a subsistence farm in Gill in the early 30's.

The chapters come in rapid succession and often can be read as separate essays. The author's

language is lively and crackling, peppered with humorous and wry observations of growing up poor and Polish in the Pioneer Valley. Certainly his bi-lingual background has given him a way with words, finding poetry in his musings, with dashes of gruesome reality.

Early in Chapter 1, the writer as a small boy, sets the tone for the reader with descriptions of his first memories of riding with his father in his Essex automobile on his way to Church.

"Joy and self-importance swelled my head as we drove off in a swirl of steam from the exhaust of the fancy Essex, sporting real crank-up windows, and bud vases on the door posts. We went down the dirt road, bordered by high snow banks, barely wide enough for one car. The stately Essex rumbled over the planks bridging the brook that bordered our farm....Pa was usually not one to

talk much to children. But it was enough for me to just sit beside him, just the two of us together, though I yearned to hear him say he loved me just once. Pa sat straight up as he drove, looking very masculine with the Lucky Strike clamped in his lips. I gazed up at Pa in adoration...He handled the big wooden steering wheel as though he were piloting a river boat.."

That early trip from Gill to Turners Falls brought father and son to Mass at Our Lady of Czestochowa where young Joe was torn between wonderment, puzzlement and fear during the rituals of the Polish mass: "[The priest's] rapid-fire talk sounded like a cross between an auctioneer and a machine gun. Once he got into the swing of things, his voice rose and fell, and then rose higher yet, until his fierce hollering scared me. His scowling gaze roamed about the room, then seemed to zero in our direction. His face grew redder as he got wound up. I wondered if he was hollering at me for walking in without taking off my beret. At this point I gave up trying to understand what he was railing about. The distance from him to me was comforting. I figured I could probably outrun him to the door if he started after me."

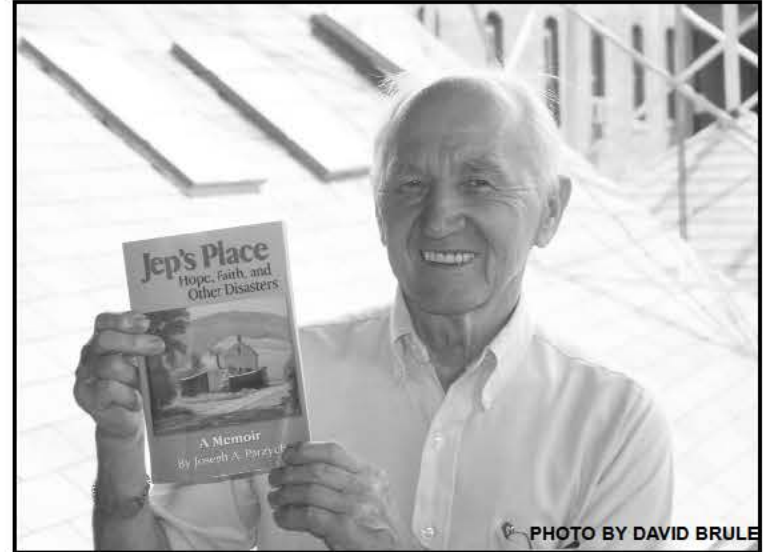
The chapters follow in rapid succession, bringing the reader into the world as seen through a young boy's eyes, growing up during the Depression.

Quickly, the reader grasps the mixed emotions between father and son that make up one of the main themes of the book. Tom between love, pride and terror inspired by Pa, Joe relates the struggles of an unruly yet sensitive boy, a first generation American, being raised by parents from the Old Country who were survivors, and for whom there was little time for, nor familiarity with, sentiment.

This book provides us with a richly documented first hand accounting of life in our region as

it was, in the not-to-distant past. Natives of this place will recognize the scenes of many of the author's adventures: getting ice on the river above the dam, the Polish Club, the Hurricane of '38, Prohibition

fear we'd learn too much from reading books. He often informed us that since he was older than we were, and since wisdom came from age, he would always have superior wisdom-because he



Author Joseph A. Parzych with his book, Jep's Place

and home brew. There are numerous stories and subplots that relate both humorous and tragic aspects of growing up on a farm where much of the time, living was hand-to-mouth, with two proud and harried parents wondering how a family of 13 children would be fed. Parzych recounts the constant threat of getting strapped by Pa, the frequent prejudice and humiliation of being poor and Polish in a Yankee township, finding shoes and clothes, and making them last. Luckily for the author, the Gill Elementary School teacher, a Miss Pagoda, had the gift and capacity to inspire and encourage, setting the young Joe on a path of discovery of another possible world, which led to the Library." The library was our salvation. The books that lined the walls offered solace and a refuge from the oppression we felt at home...Library day was the highlight of our week...but we had to slip away, one by one, so as not to attract Pa's attention. 'Do you all have to go?' Pa would demand.

'Can't one of you go and get the books instead of all of you wearing out shoe leather?' Pa seemed to

would always be ahead of us in years. To his credit, he did learn to read Polish. He reversed his dim view of libraries when we brought home a Polish book left by the bookmobile. Then Friday nights became as important an event for him as it was for us and he didn't object to the waste of shoe leather when we left in a group."

Indeed, this book is a gem, fresh and clear and unpredictable as the trout stream that curved through the pasture of Jep's Place, up in Gill.

Parzych is a master observer of place, character, and turn of the phrase. His book is an important and humorous documenting of life as lived by an immigrant family in the Pioneer Valley.

Jep's Place is available on-line, but deserves to be purchased in person at a local bookstore, like "Books and More" on Avenue A, or maybe the World Eye or Boswell Books in Shelburne Falls. That's the idea: gather up this book by hand, much as you would something fresh from your summer garden, or a bouquet of wild flowers from a meadow in Gill.

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Irish Step Dancing Lessons available in Hadley and Greenfield for Children and Adults. Contact Cara and Kay at [irishdancer@ecomail.org](mailto:irishdancer@ecomail.org).

#### HELP WANTED

The Town of Montague Water Pollution Control Facility is seeking applications for a Custodian, 25 hours per week. General tasks involve the cleaning, maintenance and repair of buildings and grounds. Aids and assists the operating staff in facility operations. For more information call the WPCF at 773-8865.

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**FRIDAY, JULY 28TH**

A Bouquet of Music Concert Series Featuring Moonlight and Morning Star (jazz and gospel duo) with Miro Sprague (jazz pianist) at Franklin Medical Center's Ethel Lemay Healing Arts Garden. FMC, 164 High Street in Greenfield. Noon to 1 p.m. 773-2573

Free Radicals at Rt. 63 Road House in Millers Falls. Rockers, come to dance! 9:30 p.m

**SATURDAY, JULY 29TH**

Melanie Mangum & her Blue Shots, blues and jazz at the 1794 Meetinghouse, New Salem. 7:30 p.m., tickets \$10 and \$8. (978) 544-5200 or www.1794meetinghouse.org

**FRIDAY-SUNDAY, JULY 28-30TH**

Ja'Duke Productions presents Guys and Dolls Performances at the Shea Theater, Turners Falls. Friday & Saturday 8 p.m. and Sunday 2 p.m. 863-2281

**SATURDAY, JULY 29TH**

Rt. 63 Road House, Millers Falls, John Sheldon, rock/blues, come to dance! 9:30 p.m.

In Search of: Teaberry, Indian Toothbrush, Toilet Paper Tree and other Cool Plants Have you ever found yourself on a hike without your toothbrush - or worse, without toilet paper? A nature ramble on Northfield Mountain, Route 63 in Northfield. Ages 8 and older. 9 a.m. to Noon. 800-859-2960

Pianist Benjamin Steinhard

presents a Concert at the All Souls Unitarian Church, pieces by Brahms, Messiaen, John Cage and Prokofiev. 8 p.m. benefit for Citizens Awareness Network. Suggested Donation is \$15 per person. Social Hour at 7 p.m., including music, wine, non-alcoholic beverages and a selection of cheeses available Info. (413) 522-7505 or eadams@earthtones.com

**SUNDAY, JULY 30TH**

Potluck supper at the Montague Grange Hall, by the common in Montague Center. Contra dance follows. All are welcome at either or both. Contra dance admission by donation. 6 p.m.

Annual Polka Mass & Chicken BBQ. 10:30 a.m. Mass is celebrated at Our Lady of Peace, Turners Falls. 12:30 Chicken BBQ dinner follows at the Polish American Picnic Grounds on Plain Road in Greenfield. 863-2585.

Montague Bookmill presents Rock/Blues with Chris Corsano & Family Underground and Jeffrey Alexander & Geoff Mullen Duo: free improvisation, \$8 at 8 p.m. Info 367-9206 or www.montaguebookmill.com

**UNTIL JULY 31ST**

Every day is family day in July at Historic Deerfield. Noon to 4 p.m., Hands-on History Workshop. Learn about everyday life and the material culture of early New England. Free with admission. www.historic-deerfield.org

**THURSDAY, AUGUST 3RD**  
Acoustic Rock with Kellianna at the Copper Angel, Rt. 2A, Erving (413) 422-2885. 6:30-8:30 p.m.

**FRIDAY, AUGUST 4TH**  
Montague Community Band, 115th Season! Concert on the Common, Gill 7 p.m. Sponsored by a grant from the Gill Cultural Council.

**FRIDAY-SUNDAY, AUGUST 4-6TH**  
Ja'Duke Productions presents Urinetown-The Musical at The Shea Theater, 8 p.m. Continues August 11-13. 863-2281

Midsummer Night's Dream, produced and directed by Caitlin Freed with an all youth performed production. Friday and Saturday 7:30 p.m. and Sunday at 2 p.m. at Ashfield Town Hall. Continues August 11th & 12th at Shelburne Falls Memorial Hall. \$5 donation to benefit youth organizations. For info call (413) 575-5869.

**AUGUST 5TH TO SEPTEMBER 9TH**  
Print, Wood Clay exhibit exploring image through media by Gary Grosenbeck at The Barnes Gallery, Leverett Crafts & Arts (413) 548-9070 Reception: **SATURDAY, AUGUST 5, 2-4 p.m.** Info. (413) 548-9070

**AUGUST 9TH**  
8th Annual Flower Swappers Meet Swapping is an attempt to get people to recycle and share extra perennials instead of throwing them away. People can bring perennials, seeds, annuals, etc. At the Sokoloski home located at 170 Whately Road in South Deerfield. Swap starts at 6:15 sharp. Rain or shine. 413-665-7203

**UNTIL SEPTEMBER 24TH**  
Kevin Bubriski Photo Documentary Exhibit,

## Upcoming at the Discovery Center

Seasonal hours: Open Tuesday through Sunday 10 a.m. to 4 p.m.

**SATURDAY, JULY 29TH**

Interpretive Tour on the Bike Path along the Power Canal, Turners Falls. Join Center staff for a walk along the canal, learn about its diverse historical uses, flowers and the birds. Program geared for older children and adults. Dress for being outdoors, and feel free to carry along a field guide and/or binoculars. 1 - 2 p.m.

**SUNDAYS, JULY -OCTOBER**

Family Nature Program geared towards the family group with lots of crafts, nature activities and live animal presentations. Programs at 12:30 p.m., 2:00 p.m. and 3:30 p.m. The GFDC will be open to the public every Sunday from 10 a.m. - 4 p.m.

**FRIDAY, AUGUST 4TH**

Follow Me to the Beach! Join Center staff for a pretend trip to the beach to discover some tricky shorebirds ways of "keeping their

cover" and the steps we can take to make sure while we are enjoying our friends and family, we can be sure to protect these birds at the same time. Program is geared for young children and will include an activity. 11 a.m. - 12 p.m.

**THURSDAY, AUGUST 10TH**

Butterflies of Massachusetts. Powerpoint presentation of over a hundred butterflies species seen in our state. Discover how and where to find these winged beauties; the habitats, flight periods, and migration patterns they follow. Information on Mass Butterfly Club membership and walks available. Presented by Sue Cloutier of the Silvio O. Conte Refuge. 7 p.m.

**THRU AUGUST 27TH**

On display: Senior Expressions: Paintings from the Montague Senior Center.

**Great Falls Discovery Center**  
2 Avenue A, Turners Falls (413) 863.3221  
[www.greatfallsma.org](http://www.greatfallsma.org)

Hallmark Museum of Contemporary Photography, 85 Avenue A, Turners Falls. Gallery open, Thursday-Sunday, 1 to 5 p.m. 863-0009.

**UNTIL OCTOBER 31ST**

Exhibit: George Bluh Photographs: Eastern European Farmers: An exhibit of a photo/journal documentary of farmers of Eastern European heritage in Franklin and Hampshire Counties. Memorial Hall Museum, 10 Memorial Street, Deerfield. 11 a.m. to 5 p.m. 774-3768.



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2. THE ANT BULLY PG DTS  
sound  
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3. AN INCONVENIENT TRUTH  
DAILY 12:00 2:00 4:00 7:00

3. MY SUPER EX-GIRLFRIEND  
PG13 AT 9:00 PM ONLY

4. LADY IN THE WATER PG13  
DAILY 12:15 3:15 6:45 9:15

5. YOU, ME, AND DUPREE PG13  
DAILY 12:15 3:15 6:45 9:15

6. MIAMI VICE  
R IN DTS sound  
DAILY 12:30 3:30 6:30 9:30

7. PIRATES OF THE CARIBBEAN:  
DEAD MAN'S CHEST  
PG13 IN DTS SOUND  
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## THE GARDENER'S COMPANION

# Unexpected Gifts

BY LESLIE BROWN

**MONTAGUE CITY** - This cool rainy spring has brought some of the best cool weather crops I've ever grown. The pea vines were thick and covered with long, fat pods filled with sweetness. My salad greens are lush and still holding against the summer heat. The tomatoes need staking, they are so tall, and in addition to blooms they have sizable fruit which is alas still very green without even that whitish cast which signals the impending evolution to red. I'm impatient for that first tangy sweet bite but this phase always seems the longest. The carrot tops seem almost high enough to ignore the weeds but I know better. If the roots are to grow straight and long, they need any underground competition removed. The garlic has produced sinuous tops capped by the false seed called bulbils. The spinach I didn't harvest has bolted and the beans are ready to flower.

Despite the five plus inches of rain we had last month, things seem to be thriving, especially the weeds. While the spring season comes in fits and starts, we are fortunate here in New England to have a long growing season. There are still three full months left, so with care you can still manage most any crop you'd like to grow even if you haven't started yet. If you want to produce cool weather crops like spinach, radishes and peas, you will need to wait for a late season planting. There are varieties specifically designed for greater heat tolerance. These can be planted in mid or even late summer. You do need to allow more days than the seed packet suggests because you want to har-



vest before the first killing frost and because growth slows down during the cool fall days. Lettuce and beans can be planted at two or three week intervals for ongoing harvests. Of course, if you've done nothing about tomatoes yet you'd better buy someone else's large ready to bloom plants.

It may be that our rainy season will be followed by weeks of hot dry weather, but if your crops are well established in good, fertile soil, they will continue to produce for you whatever the weather, providing you keep them relatively weed free and don't let them dry out too much. Mulching with plastic, newspaper, or grass clippings will keep moisture in. It's fine to mulch now because the ground has thoroughly warmed up. If the aesthetics don't concern you, you can leave weeds around some plants as they get tall. Young plants need all the help they can get and as mentioned before, root crops need to be regularly weeded in order to allow for good development.

Most gardeners believe that proper soil preparation and a large dose of organic matter will get plants off to a good start regardless of the vagaries of New England weather. Of course,

each season some crops do especially well while others flag behind. My pepper plants appear to be headed for the latter category. The problem likely started because I was late in starting the seeds, so the plants I put out were quite small. They've also provided good eating for some insects, so I've had to spray them with insecticidal soap. Only one plant has the start of a flower. Last year, by comparison, I had some of my biggest plants ever, but the fruit never got past its initial red hue to the fine rainbows of orange, yellow, purple and chocolate that I'd hoped for, because the weather got too cool.

When we first dug a garden at our house thirty years ago, we carved out the space by removing small saplings, shards of pottery, glass and old tin cans, as well as about a ton of rocks. Thus began the effort to develop friable, healthy loam out of heavy clay, sand and dirt. Every year we dug in large amounts of composted manure and harvested the annual crop of rocks. One year early in the battle we bought a package of earthworms and turned them in. Earthworms eat their way through the soil digesting dead leaves and animals, producing castings rich in organic materials. Then microorganisms naturally found in the soil break down the castings releasing calcium, nitrogen, potassium and phosphorus to be absorbed by your plants. Worms are handy little critters and well worth cultivating. I don't remember how much that box of worms cost, but after we turned them into the soil, we never saw them again. If they survived, we imagined they provided some happy robins with a fine meal. This week, literally decades later, I was weeding the heaviest garden square, which is now good workable loam. I uncovered some of the longest and fattest earthworms I've ever seen. So who knows? In any case, I'm certainly not complaining about this unexpected gift.

Speaking of gifts, gardening is hard work and will never save you money. Don't become a slave to your garden or you'll lose all the joy it can bring. I've planted fragrant roses around our garden space. One of my greatest pleasures is admiring it all in the cool of early morning or late evening, smelling the rose perfume and harvesting the freshest food you can imagine.

Happy gardening to you.

## De Christopher brings Turners Falls to Northampton



John Carey stands hands clasped framed by a collage of menus, close-ups of a giant orange megaphone trumpeting freedom of expression, the drained power canal and meditations on the meaning of the word Cathedral - "I must work or I am damned" in Tim de Christopher's *For the Love of God, in praise of Turners Falls* at the Oxbow Gallery in Northampton. The show closed Sunday

## Habitat For Humanity Launches House on Second and L

BY DAVID BRULE  
TURNERS FALLS

On Wednesday evening July 26 at 5PM, the Habitat For Humanity organization hosted a reception in the Hallmark Museum of Contemporary Photography. Many administrators of the organization were on hand, as well as the future owner of the house under construction. Nancy Denig, President of the local branch, as well as MJ Adams, Executive Director, addressed the gathering of volunteers, friends of the new owner, and other members of the Organization. Adams noted that Habitat For Humanity now has three sites under construction: 6 units in Northampton, one in Amherst and now one in Turners Falls.

Habitat For Humanity is a cooperative effort that involves volunteers, professionals, and future owners ("Sweat Equity") building homes for first-time homeowners. The process involves Family Selection, Family Mentoring, and long-term interest-free mortgage loans, according to Connie Clark, Family Mentor. It was noted that for each home built in the US, Habitat International was also able to build another home somewhere in the Third World.

The guests of honor were the future owner Connie Forcier and her three children: Summer, Elijah, and Aleeva. Forcier was brief in her remarks, movingly thanking God for providing her with a miracle, for providing her with a house. She then led a group to the building site to view the foundations and wall of the future 2-story dwelling.

Claire Bolton, Volunteer Coordinator, announced that volunteers were needed to begin building the new home and that an organizational training workshop would be held on August 6 at 3:30 at the First Congregational Church. From then on, work is scheduled 9-4 on Saturdays and 12-4 on Sundays. All interested volunteers can get more information by calling 413-586-5430.



Connie Forcier with her children Elijah, Summer and Aleeva are brimming with anticipation for their new home on 2nd and L Streets in Turners.

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