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Nature is Abounding!

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MEADOW OR MOW?

One Family's Choice

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LAKE PLEASANT MILLERS FALLS MONTAGUE CENTER MONTAGUE CITY TURNERS FALLS

The Montague Reporter

YEAR 7 - NO. 39

also serving Gill, Erving and Wendell

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THE VOICE OF THE VILLAGES

JULY 9, 2009

SPECIAL TOWN MEETING SET FOR JULY 15TH

BY JOSH HEINEMANN
WENDELL - The selectboard has set a special town meeting for Wednesday, July 15th at 7 p.m. at the Wendell town hall. Articles will consider the town's assessment for the Mahar Regional School budget, as well as funding a state mandated inspection of the dam at Fiske Pond, and the creation of a five member energy task force to look for ways to reduce energy use in town and private buildings.

In the run-up to the special town meeting, the full finance committee met with the selectboard at the board's regular June 24th meeting, to report on meetings the finance committee held with the Mahar school committee on June 18th, and the regionalization

subcommittee meeting on June 23rd.

Finance committee chair Michael Idoine said the Orange annual town meeting voted Mahar \$171,000 less than the school committee asked for, a 5% cut. That is the second-lowest assessment rate authorized by any of the four towns in the district. If Wendell voted to adjust their assessment to a similar percentage, it would bring Wendell's Mahar contribution for FY '10 up to \$339,000 from the \$257,000 authorized at last month's annual town meeting.

Petersham voted the full budget, New Salem voted a 2% cut, Orange a 5% cut and Wendell, in an ongoing effort to start discussion on see **MEETING** pg 13

Geothermal Design Featured in New Police Station

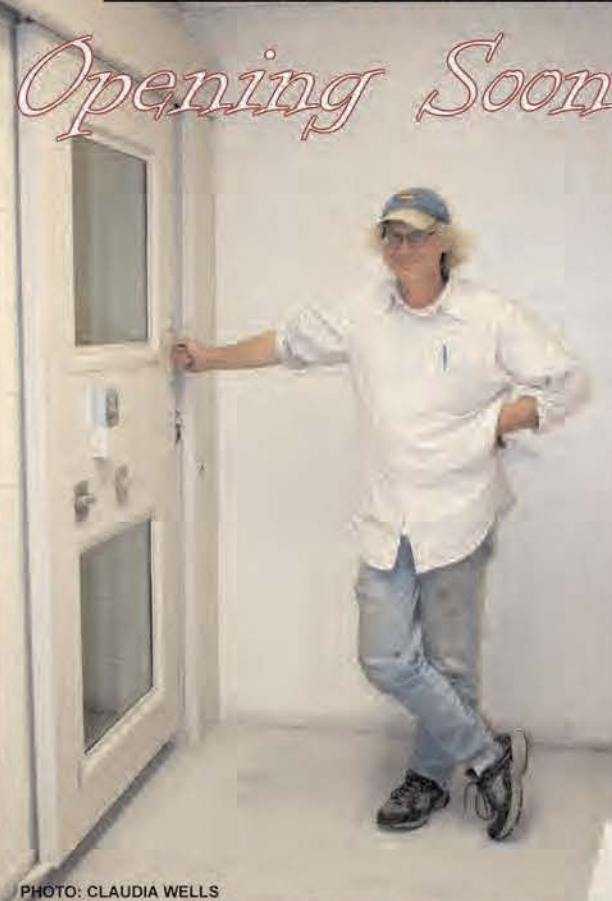


PHOTO: CLAUDIA WELLS

Montague building inspector David Jensen stands in front of a holding cell at the soon to be completed police station. An open house is planned for Saturday, August 29th.

BY URSULA MUNN

TURNERS FALLS - Construction and commissioning of the Montague police department's future quarters, including a state-of-the-art geothermal heating and cooling system, continues to be ahead of schedule and under budget, according to those involved with the project.

Building committee members predict the job will be finished approximately \$700,000 under the \$5.6 million budget originally agreed to by voters at a town meeting in May 2007, and ratified by a 66% plurality of voters in a townwide referendum on November 6th of that year.

Furthermore, contingency money has been thus far untouched.

"We've benefited greatly from the fact that our architect and owner's project manager did an

extremely careful job setting things out prior to bidding," said Pamela Hanold, chairwoman of the building committee for the project and a member of Montague's energy committee. "Our change order is a very small percentage - under 3% - which is evidently quite good."

Hanold said the decision to invest in a geo-thermal heating and cooling system for the new police station was part of the overall package approved by voters in 2007, at a time when rising oil prices made the upfront costs of installing geothermal wells and controls look like a good deal over the long term. The building committee used the ball park estimate of ten years for paying off the initial \$150,000 added cost of installing the geothermal system, after which point all energy savings provided by the system would be see **OPENING** pg 11

Greenfield Savings Breaks Ground for New Branch Office in Turners



Steve Greenwald, of Renaissance Builders (l - r) joins architect Joe Mattei, GSB's project manager Denise Coyne, bank president Rebecca Caplice, Patty Dion, GSB's Turners branch manager Linda Ackerman, Harris Snyder, Wendy Bogusz, Lil and Kip Miskinis at Tuesday's groundbreaking

BY DAVID DETMOLD & JOSEPH A. PARZYCH

TURNERS FALLS - The Greenfield Savings Bank formally broke ground on Tuesday on a \$2 million construction project for the bank's new branch office in Turners Falls at 282 Avenue A, between Miskinis TV and Food City.

The nearly two-acre lot, purchased by the bank from the Mackin family, was the former location of the so-called Romper Factory, where baby clothes were manufactured once upon a time.

The 7318 square foot, one-story building, to be constructed by Renaissance Builders of Gill, according to plans drawn

up by architect Joseph Mattei of Shelburne, will outwardly resemble a train depot. The design will echo another historical use of the site, as the last location of the Turners Falls depot for the B&M Railroad.

As the 10:00 a.m. groundbreaking ceremony approached, a CAT excavator was already hard at work in the rear of the lot, behind the assembled bank and town officials, filling a 10-wheeled dump truck with excavated material. Renaissance Excavators, also of Gill, is handling the foundation excavation and site work for the project, and has been hard at it for the

see **BANK** pg 8



Dave Peck, as Bill Sikes, dominates the scene, and his girl, Nancy, played by Jessica Holton in the Country Players Oliver! opening this weekend at the Shea. Consider yourself well in.

BY DAVID DETMOLD

TURNERS FALLS - Dropping by the Shea for a dress rehearsal of the Country Players upcoming production of *Oliver!* is like stepping back to an early 19th century England of poor houses, street urchins, benevolent gentlemen, bumbling beadles and brutal murderers like Bill Sikes, played here with a commanding intensity by Dave Peck. His abused partner, Nancy, the girl with a heart of gold and a soft spot for our young hero, is portrayed by Jessica Holton, who has a lovely pure voice, which she employed to great effect on "As Long As He Needs Me."

We only stopped by for a few minutes,

not wanting to spoil the fun of opening weekend, but we can report that director Sara Gibson has marshaled all the talents of this cast of veteran actors and young unknowns, stirred them up with Erin Girouard's musical production and Haley Descovich's deft choreography, and put them all together against a stark backdrop, with robust stage management, and stunning period costumes to weave a seamless tapestry of dramatic delights.

You think the economy is tough these days? Wait til you fall in league with the likes of Dave Grout's Fagan and his crew of charming pickpockets, cruising the mean streets of London looking for their

see **OLIVER** pg 17

PET OF THE WEEK

Such A Love



Midnight

My name is Midnight and I'm a female shorthair cat in need of a good home. I am such a love! I enjoy being held and purring in your arms. I am a petite little kitty. I'm a year old, but I look like a kitten! Personally, I think I'm a purrrfect size to snuggle in your arms and hang out on your lap. For more information on adopting me please contact the Dakin Pioneer Valley Humane Society at (413) 548-9898 or via email: leverett@dpvhs.org.

Erving Recreational Day Camp

at Erving Elementary School
Space Still Available

Program through August 14th
Monday to Friday, 8:30 a.m. to 3:15 p.m. Applications available at the school or the town hall.

Rates: \$50/wk or \$12/day for residents, \$65/wk or \$15/day for non-residents. Weekly field trips and weekly lake trips. Bussing provided in town.

Thank You

Council on Aging and Select Boards of Montague and Gill for the retirement party and your support and cooperation over the past 12 years. It has been a pleasure to serve the seniors of these communities.
- Juanita "Bunny" Caldwell
Montague/Gill
Council on Aging
Director

The Montague Reporter

Published weekly on Thursday, (Every other week in July and August. Wednesday paper fourth week of November. No paper last week of December.)

PHONE (413) 863-8666
FAX (413) 863-3050
reporter@montaguema.net
Postmaster: Send address changes to
The Montague Reporter
58 4th Street
Turners Falls, MA 01376

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ERVING LIBRARY NEWS

Library Summer Programming

BARBARA FRIEDMAN

ERVING – There are three upcoming July shows at the Erving Public Library sponsored by the Erving Cultural Council. These are free and open to the public. In addition to the Sunday Summer performances, the Erving Library offers a Wednesday story hour at 9:30 a.m.

Sunday, July 12th: Lady Elvis 4:30 p.m. The show will be outside (bring a lawn chair or blanket and a snack) and will be about an hour long. Elvis tribute artist, Laura Herbert, performs in the '70s "jumpsuit era" style of Elvis, focusing primarily on the songs

of that era..

Sunday, July 19th: Stories of Japan with storyteller Motoko 4:30 p.m. Parents' Choice Award-winning storyteller, enchants audiences of every age with her weaving of ancient lore, original tales, lyrical movement and traditional music.

Sunday, July 26th: Rob and Laura at Erving Library 4:30 p.m. Rob and Laura perform an eclectic array of songs from the '30s through the '70s. Based in Erving, the duo performs throughout New England.

For more information contact the Library (413) 423-3348 or ervinglibrary@netscape.net.

SLATE LIBRARY NEWS

Cosmic Cartography for Kids

GILL – The summer reading program and workshops continue at the Slate Library with an Outer Space Maps making workshop on Saturday, July 18th at 11:00 a.m. using ink and colored pencils. We'll let our imaginations run wild, drawing planets, galaxies, and creatures like you've never seen before.

Discover new puppet civilizations with Rosalita's Puppets on Saturday, July 25th at 11:00 a.m. In this story Rosalita discovers a

new planet in her telescope, then travels on an adventure into space to find it and prove it does exist. This delightful marionette show, brand new for 2009, involves singing, audience participation, and a whole cast of handmade marionettes. Slate Library welcomes new patrons and is open Mondays 2 to 6 p.m., Thursday 2 to 8 p.m. and Saturday 10 a.m. to 2 p.m. For more information call the Slate Library at (413) 863-2591.

CARNEGIE LIBRARY NEWS

Music and Movement Thursdays

TURNERS FALLS – The weekly Music and Movement series with Tom Carroll and Laurie Davidson will be held at the Carnegie Library in Turners Falls on Thursday mornings at 10 a.m. during July and August. Young children of all ages and

their families or caregivers are invited to the free programs. Registration is not required. The series is partially funded by the Friends of the Montague Public Libraries. For more information, please call 863-3214.

Solar Rollers Ride Again!

BY DAVID DETMOLD

TURNERS FALLS – Join the Solar Rollers on their 31st anniversary tour, on a two-week bicycle trip through the hills and vales of Vermont, as we once again – for the third straight summer – bring the word to the people of Vermont that we who live downwind of the aging nuclear

power plant in Vernon are depending on the citizens of the Green Mountain State to call on their state legislators to shut the accident prone Vermont Yankee reactor down on schedule in 2012. Our lives, and the health of our environment depend upon it!

The Vermont state legislature will vote next year on whether to

FACES & PLACES



Harvey Atkins, harmonica, Dan Roberge, percussion and Kip Dresser, guitar, limber up with the Curly Fingers Dupree Band in front of Between the Uprights at 2nd Street's Outdoor Cafe on the 4th of July.

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The Future of Area Elders

Franklin County Home Care (FCHCC) invites all interested persons to participate in public hearings to plan for the coming needs of area elders. The hearings are scheduled for July 20th at 10 a.m. at the Orange Armory, 135 East Main St in Orange and for July 23rd at 10:30 at Montague Senior Center, 62 5th Street, Turners Falls. Both locations are handicap accessible. Attendees will receive information from recent Focus Groups (listening sessions regarding elder needs) and a Goals/Objectives statement.

Franklin County Home Care, the Area Agency on Aging, seeks input from elders and others so they may properly address elder needs in Franklin County and the North Quabbin area for the next four years. Refreshments will be served.

Read more at www.fchcc.org

add 20 more years of nuclear radiation poisoning to our biological burden, by extending VY's license. It is time to shut Vermont Yankee down. Join us in this crucial effort. The Rollers are leaving August 9th. Come with us for a day, a week, or for the entire tour. Donations for the leaflets we will distribute by the 1000s are welcome, at 58 4th Street, 01376. For more info: call 413-863-9296.

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SENIOR CENTER ACTIVITIES – July 9th to July 17th

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

Monday, July 6th & 13th
10:00 a.m. Senior Aerobics
10:50 a.m. Easy Aerobics
Tuesday, July 7th & 14th
9:00 a.m. Walking Group
1:00 p.m. Canasta
Wednesday, July 8th & 15th
10:00 a.m. Senior Aerobics

12:45 p.m. Bingo
Thursday, July 9th & 16th
10:00 a.m. Coffee and Conversation
1:00 p.m. Pitch
Friday, July 10th & 17th
10:00 a.m. Senior Aerobics
10:50 a.m. Easy Aerobics
• Tickets are on sale for the Senior Picnic, \$6.00, Tuesday, July 21. Buy early – only a limited number of tickets available.
Gill/Montague Senior Trips: Call 863-9357 or 863-4500 for more information.

ERVING Senior Center, 18 Pleasant St., Erving (Old Center School, 1st Floor), is open Monday through Friday from 9 a.m. to 2 p.m. for activities and congregate meals. For info and reservations call Polly Kiely, Senior Center director, at (413) 423-3308. Lunch daily at 11:30 a.m. with reservations 24

hours in advance. Transportation can be provided for meals, Thursday shopping, or medical necessity.

Monday, July 6th & 13th
9:00 a.m. Exercise
12:00 p.m. Pitch
Tuesday, July 7th & 14th
9:00 a.m. Aerobics
12:00 p.m. Painting
Wednesday, July 8th & 15th
8:45 a.m. Line Dancing
12 noon Bingo
Thursday, July 9th & 16th
8:45 a.m. Line Dancing
Friday, July 10th & 17th
8:45 a.m. Aerobics
9:00 a.m. Bowling
11:00 a.m. Lunch
WENDELL Senior Center is located at 2 Lockes Village Road. Call Kathy Swaim at (978) 544-2020 for hours and upcoming programs.

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Erving's Living Room

BY JOE KWIECINSKI – The Erving Public Library is a pretty exciting place to be these days, with a new addition to its staff and a terrific schedule of summer programs on tap.

Riana Figueroa has recently been hired as a library assistant. Figueroa, a history and government student at Bunker Hill Community College in Boston, worked previously at Wheeler Library in Orange. She will work 12 hours a week in her new position.

"Riana is doing a great job," said director Barbara Friedman. "She has great rapport with the children who come here. Riana just started during the last week in June, and she's already helping with our story hours."

According to Friedman, her new worker is blending in well with the atmosphere in the small schoolhouse-shaped building. "Our library is a special place," said Friedman.

Hired back in October 2008, Friedman refers to the environment at 17 Moore Street in glowing terms.

"This place is like a large,

comfortable living room," Friedman said.

"We have couches, children working at computers, and we were doing hula hoops in the

to have it."

The following Sunday, July 19th at 4:30 p.m., another cultural attraction is coming to the library in the form of Japanese storyteller

Motoko, winner of the Parents Choice Award. Motoko blends lyrical movement, traditional music, original tales, and ancient lore into a performance that, according to Friedman, "enchants audiences of every age."

For more information on these and other offerings at the Erving Public Library, please call (413) 423-3348, or go to: ervinglibrary@netscape.net

The Erving Public Library is open Sundays, from 1 to 4 p.m., Mondays, from 1 to 7 p.m., Wednesdays, from 10 a.m. to 4 p.m., and Thursdays, from 1 to 7 p.m.



New staff member Riana Figueroa helps Samantha Kololziej with a craft at the weekly story hour at the Erving Public Library. Also in this photo are Ian Bastarache and his mother Keriann Bastarache

backyard a few minutes ago."

The Erving Library is conducting 16 programs this summer. Coming up on Sunday, July 12th at 4:30 p.m., Erving's own Laura Herbert, known to her fans as Lady Elvis, will perform her popular tribute to the King of Rock and Roll.

"This is a great show," said Friedman, "and we're delighted

Wounded Warrior Directory

The National Resource Directory (NRD) is an online resource for wounded, injured, and ill service members, veterans, their families, and those who support them. The NRD provides information on, and access to, medical and non-medical services and resources across the country, which will help them reach their personal and professional goals as they

successfully transition from recovery to community living.

The NRD is an online partnership of the Department of Defense (DoD), Department of Labor (DoL), and Department of Veterans Affairs (VA), as well as numerous Veteran service/benefit and other organizations.

Find wounded warrior resources on Military.com.

Wendell Community Tag Sale

Saturday July 11th

9:30 a.m. - 3:30 p.m.

No early birds please
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toys, collectibles

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Wendell State Forest Hike

On Sunday, July 12th, from 9 a.m. to noon, Mount Grace stewardship biologist Tom Wansleben will lead a tour of the Hidden Valley Conservation Area, a 66-acre forested area inside the Wendell State Forest, donated in 1996 to the Mount Grace Land Trust in memory of botanist Arthur Cronquist. The hike is the second hike in the New England National Scenic

Trail Summer Series, which consists of six events taking place on and around the Metacomet-Monadnock Trail in Northfield, Warwick, and Wendell from July 6th through August 8th.

The event series aims to bring community members of all ages onto the land to share and appreciate the beauty of the trail and forest tracts around it

which Mount Grace and its partners are working to protect.

Meet at the Wendell State Forest entrance off Wendell Road, three miles from Millers Falls. For more information, contact David Kotker at (978) 248-2055 x19. For a full listing of the event series go to www.mountgrace.org/news.htm#events

Ways to Help Support and Sustain this Community Newspaper

Reporting. Hard as we try, we can't be everywhere. Going to an event or meeting that might interest our readers? Write it up, and chances are we'll print it.

Letters. Always welcome! Send kudos, complaints, corrections, and clarifications to us at reporter@montaguema.net.

Donations. Subscriptions, advertising, and in-store sales barely cover the basic cost of producing the Montague Reporter each week. Your gift helps us by, for instance, providing stipends for dedicated volunteers, upgrading equipment, and dealing with rising costs of mailing and distribution.

Deliveries. Help with mailing on Thursdays, or get your own paper route (one or two available)!

Subscription maintenance. Our circulation manager could use help from a detail oriented person.

Layout. Familiar with Quark? Got a few hours to spare between Sunday and Wednesday night? We could really use help in this area.

Proofreading.

Ad sales.

Come to our table at the Gill Picnic on July 26th, the Block Party in Turners Falls on August 8th, or at Old Home Days in Montague Center or Wendell on August 15th, pick up a t-shirt, give us a word of encouragement, or let us know how you would like to get involved!

Deerfield Valley Art Association presents

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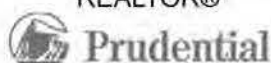
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Editor
David Detmold

Editorial Assistants
Hugh Corr
David Brule
Michael Jackson

Circulation
Suzette Snow Cobb
Don Clegg

Layout & Design

 Claudia Wells
Boysen Hodgson
Katren Hoyden
Karen Wilkinson
Suzette Snow Cobb

"The Voice of the Villages"
Founded by
Arthur Evans Harry Brandt David Detmold
August, 2002

Photography

 Bobby Darling
Joe Parzych
Claudia Wells

Technical Administrators

 Michael Muller
Michael Farrick

Conservation First

An Open Letter to Governor Patrick

FROM the WENDELL

SELECTBOARD – We are writing to express both our short- and long-term concerns about the proposed biomass facility in Greenfield and, by extension, the Commonwealth's energy policy.

Your work to support conservation and the growth of alternative and sustainable approaches to generating energy has put the Commonwealth at the forefront of the sustainable energy movement. Your credentials as a leader pushing us toward a greener future are quite established.

Unfortunately, your legacy is being threatened by the proposed Greenfield biomass facility and by existing state regulations that do not attend to the distinctions between the various alternative sources of energy: solar, wind and biomass. Though solar and wind are almost always clearly "green" choices, not so with biomass. Though biomass has some green elements, and has an appropriate place in our energy plans, its use has many potential problems:

• **Efficiency** – Biomass incineration is an inefficient method for generating electricity.

• **De-forests and Accelerates Global Warming** – Biomass facilities consume forest resources in short-order, and biomass incineration releases carbon into our atmosphere, speeding global warming.

• **Pollutes the Air with Carcinogens** – As has been the case in other states, biomass facilities often lead to biomass shortages and the incineration of inappropriate materials, such as construction debris, which can contain pressure-treated wood and plastics that, when combusted, emit known carcinogens.

• **Public Health** – The health of the ecosystem is inextricably tied to our health, not just in the obvious role forests play in water and air filtration, but in more complex ways. Recent epidemiological studies show that intact, undisturbed ecosystems have major impacts on mitigating the

spread of infectious diseases.

• **Harms Local Economies** – Existing biomass facilities in neighboring states are consuming massive quantities of available wood, destroying local firewood economies, impacting small producers' abilities to make their livelihoods, and hurting those citizens of the Commonwealth who heat their homes with wood (an increasingly popular and appropriate local-energy alternative).

While these negative consequences will hurt all of the Commonwealth's citizens – not to mention surrounding states – the burden borne by our town in particular would be exceptionally heavy.

• **Air Quality** – Wendell's air quality would decline precipitously as the Wendell State Forest is logged, and prevailing winds bring emissions from the proposed Greenfield plant into Wendell.

• **Financial impact** – In addition to truck traffic that would increase the costs of road maintenance (almost 1/2 of our town's budget), the biomass facility would also threaten our local firewood economy which provides many citizens' livelihoods and other citizens' heat.

Given the fact that Wendell is in the cross-hairs of six proposed plants within a 100-mile radius (three in MA and three in other states), the impact described above would be multiplied and would certainly lead to calamity. Despite these dire short- and long-term consequences for Wendell, the Commonwealth, surrounding states, and future generations, the plan is moving ahead because of the following reasons:

• **Lure of Easy Money** – The town of Greenfield is projected to receive \$1,000,000 a year in tax revenue from the proposed facility. In these times of fiscal deficit, this seemingly "easy" money is very appealing.

• **Jobs** – During construction, the plant will generate many jobs – though only 20 jobs will be permanent. This appeals to locals



TIM VIELMETTI CARTOON

The farm animals always amazed the neighbors with their level of creativity when allowed to graze in the wild cannabis field

LETTERS TO THE EDITOR

No Flags in Millers Falls

Several years ago, I wrote a letter to the Montague selectboard suggesting a procedure for the placement of American flags in the various villages.

I recommended the Montague Center fire department take care of Lake Pleasant and Montague Center, the town highway department take care of Montague City and Turners Falls, and the Turners Falls fire department take

care of Millers Falls. The selectboard approved this plan and passed it on to the departments involved.

The flags were to be placed in the various villages prior to Memorial Day and taken down following Veterans Day. Except for Lake Pleasant and Montague Center, this still appears to be a problem. As of the date of this letter, July 6th, the village of Millers

Falls is still without flags, and quite possibly the only village in Western Mass with no flags honoring veterans on Memorial Day.

I have always supported our various town departments, and if a minor logistical problem such as this cannot be resolved, I hate to imagine what would happen if we had a major problem.

– Art Gilmore
Millers Falls

who see this as a boon to the economy.

• **Fiduciary Responsibility** – The company building the plant is a for-profit entity. As such, they have fiduciary responsibilities to their shareholders that trump all other concerns, including environmental and community stewardship.

• **Insufficient Regulation** – We need much more strict protocols and efficiency standards than are anticipated in the proposed facility. On a state level, regulations – and tax credits and incentives – should better reflect and support the fact that solar and wind are always efficient choices for energy generation; not so for biomass.

• **Short-Term Focus** – Energy conservation is the appropriate solution to our current energy challenges. The anticipated price tag of the Greenfield plant is \$250,000,000. We would be much better served spending even a fraction of that money on

energy conservation. The electricity saved would dwarf the proposed output of the facility. The problem is that people are scared of deprivation and conservation seems scarier than building a new plant to "generate all the electricity we need."

Ultimately, we've been told our concerns are unfounded and this is a "win-win." That notion is built on careless analysis of a complicated problem. For example, at a recent meeting of the Franklin Regional Planning Board in Greenfield, the Department of Conservation and Recreation presented statistics on how much biomass can be sustainably harvested in Massachusetts annually, but when pressed for a working definition of "sustainable," admitted they "don't have one." In addition, they have no goals for the forests in terms of stand density, canopy composition, or what percentage/part of a harvested tree should be left behind in the forest to replenish the nutrient cycle. The DCR doesn't even have a target number for what percentage of the biomass needed to feed these facilities would come from

state forests.

The real solution to our energy crisis lies not on the production side of the equation, but on the consumption side. Al Gore and others have pointed out that our existing consumptive gluttony is untenable and not only threatens the economy, but our security. The Commonwealth's existing approach to conservation does not reflect that fact, nor our role in the environmental vanguard. If we were to truly take up the mantle of environmental leadership, the Division of Energy Resources would set a more aggressive goal than leveling the growth curve of energy consumption, and we certainly wouldn't allow biomass facilities to sprout up over the state in a reckless fashion, built on faulty analysis. Instead, we would push for solar and wind power and, above all else, energy conservation. We implore you to cement your record as a true environmentalist and withdraw support for these facilities and work with the state legislature to change regulations accordingly.

– Christine Heard, Chair,
Daniel Keller, Jeffrey Poozer

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Note to Our Readers

The Montague Reporter prints every other week in the summer. There will be no paper on July 16th, 30th, August 13th, or 27th. We return to weekly publication on September 3rd.

We Welcome Your Letters!

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Zoning Board Approves Special Permit for Biomass Plant

BY ALEX GOTTSCHALK & DAVID DETMOLD

GREENFIELD – Although the auditorium at the Greenfield High School was only half full on the humid evening of June 25th, the air fairly crackled with tension as opponents of the proposed 47 megawatt biomass plant proposed for the I-91 Industrial Park gathered to present their concerns to the Zoning Board of Appeals.

The meeting was a continuation of the ZBA hearing of June 15th. That meeting had lasted over four hours, and 75 residents had spoken against the plan.

The purpose of the continuation on the 25th was to allow those who had been left out previously to have a chance to speak.

During the first hour, a number of project opponents were given a chance to speak for two minutes apiece, after which Matt Wolfe, of Madera Energy in Cambridge, the developer behind the project, answered questions from the zoning board.

With exactly one Greenfield resident speaking in favor of the plan, those in attendance spoke overwhelmingly against the construction of the plant. Terms such as “environmentally regressive”

and “reckless” set the tone, as residents of from Gill, Leverett, Shelburne and Deerfield all came to speak before the board.

One Greenfield man said, “This is not a legal or economic issue: it is a moral one.”

Glen Ayers of Greenfield brought the crowd to their feet in applause when he asked of the board, “Which side would you rather be sued by? [Wolfe] or the people you represent?”

The evening reached its dramatic pitch when Pam Roldan, whose property abuts the site of the proposed plant, took the microphone while experts called to testify set up their audio/visual equipment.

Roldan was initially told to stand down, but vehement protests carried the day and she was allowed to speak, although she was told by board member Tom McClellan that this would cut into the time of the subsequent testimony.

Roldan then went over her allotted two minutes, at which point the board called officers to step in. Further crisis was averted when Roldan withdrew from the microphone unescorted by the police.

But the mood of the crowd continued to intensify. Mark

Beaubien, an environmental scientist from Montague, gave an eight minute presentation on his view of the drawbacks of the plan and its potential consequences, complete with slides and pages of statistics.

When Wolfe and his compatriots began to answer the questions put forth by the board, they were initially jeered and booed by the audience. A visibly irritated Mark Maloney called upon the crowd to exhibit “some fair play and common courtesy,” which muted the more vocal opposition, although a low rumbling of discontent aimed at the ZBA, who had shut down several speakers prior to this, continued.

Although clearly rattled by the vehemence of the opposition, Wolfe and company answered questions, which included queries about noise levels, acid rain impact and the quality of the wood to be used for burning.

This part of the agenda went on for two more hours, before the meeting adjourned.

The ZBA first decided to vote on the proposal on Friday, June 26th, and then rescheduled for Monday, June 29th.

At about five minutes past nine on the 29th, with no dissent-



Matt Wolfe, left, at the Greenfield ZBA hearing, June 29th

ing votes, the Greenfield Zoning Board of Appeals approved a special permit for the construction of the biomass burning electricity power plant in the industrial park off Adams Road.

The decision was jeered by a crowd of more than 100 residents who had gathered to witness the vote at the Greenfield High School cafeteria.

The ZBA placed restrictions on the special permit, limiting Matt Wolfe, of Madera Energy, the applicant, from accepting deliveries of wood chips at the plant on Sundays.

Wolfe had requested permission to ship wood chips to the plant seven days a week, 6 a.m.

to 9 p.m., but the board limited deliveries to between 7 a.m. and 8 p.m. Mondays through Fridays, and 9 a.m. to 5 p.m. on Saturdays and holidays.

Wood chipping at the site must be limited to 8 a.m. to 5 p.m. Monday through Friday. Shipments of wood chips must be made in covered loads, and are prohibited from traveling through on West Gill Road, Lovers Lane, High Street, or the north end of Adams Road.

The ZBA considered imposing a maximum limit of 60 truck trips a day to the plant, but bowed to pressure from Wolfe's attorney, who called that limit

see ZONING page 7

Gone But Not Forgotten



LINDA HICKMAN PHOTO

The Fabulous Maurice in action, as we remember him.

Maurice Bostley – ‘the Fabulous Maurice’ – passed away on Sunday, the 5th of July.

This is not a eulogy but a simple thank you.

I was told once you meet Maurice he is a friend for life. I believe that. He sang Happy Birthday for me at one of his performances, and I will never forget that.

This week on MCTV you will be hearing much of his music behind our bulletins. Next week, we'll air lots of Fabulous Maurice highlights, from his many unique performances.

Thank you, Maurice. You were number one in the business of delighting all and sundry with your irrepressible accordion.

You will be missed.

– Don Clegg
Turners Falls

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Discovery Center Bursting with Activity



Colin Driscoll of Baldwinsville and Ayana Sofia of Turners Falls were captivated by a baby screech owl at the Great Falls Discovery Center on Thursday, June 25th. The screech owl was brought by Tom Ricardi of Conway, who rescues and rehabilitates birds of prey.

BY DON CLEGG

GREAT FALLS – The Great Falls Discovery Center, 2 Avenue A, in Turners Falls is drawing large crowds this season. The third annual Family Fun Fishing Day on May 30th was attended by more than 200 children and adults, outdoing last year's total by more than 50 people.

The fifth annual Open House at the Discovery Center on June 25th drew in a record 235 attendance. The crowd took part in arts and crafts that started at 3:00 p.m., followed by the local band

Skin and Bonz at 4:00 p.m., and capped by an appreciative audience of 155 watching Tom Ricardi and his Birds of Prey.

In the summer, the Discovery Center is open seven days a week from 10:00 a.m. until 4:00 p.m. There is always something going on, with activities running the gamut from the Junior Ranger series, coffeehouse concerts, morning nature walks, exploring the Montague sand plain and artist receptions. For more info: call (413) 863-3221, or check out greatfallsma.net.

NOTES FROM THE GILL SELECTBOARD Barking Dog Complaint Heading to ZBA

BY DAVID DETMOLD – The Gill selectboard held a morning meeting, on Tuesday, June 23rd. Reverend James Diemand attended, as did Duncan Elliott. This is the third selectboard meeting in as many months the two residents of Hickory Hill Road have appeared at over an ongoing noise complaint from Diemand, who has been supported by other neighbors, in an ongoing dispute about barking dogs at Elliott's Hickory Hill Kennel.

Selectboard chair Ann Banash reported that town counsel Donna MacNicol has advised the board that their responsibility in the matter of Diemand's complaint is to make sure the zoning board of appeals, the regional building inspector, and the police department all respond and do their jobs appropriately, as well as to investigate complaints and enforce town bylaws to the best of their ability. Banash believes the selectboard has upheld these responsibilities in this instance.

Diemand asked about the town bylaw which prohibits barking dogs from disturbing the peace and quiet of a neighborhood. Banash said MacNicol agreed with Franklin County

cooperative building inspector Jim Hawkins' view that this bylaw regulates the barking of dogs owned by individuals, not kennelled dogs.

Banash said Diemand would have to take his case to the ZBA now, if he wanted new restrictions placed on the kennel, and Diemand said he had already sent a letter detailing his complaint to the Zoning Board's agent, Jim Hawkins, to initiate that process.

Before Diemand and Elliott left the room, Banash also recommended mediation as a way for the two sides to reach a mutually acceptable agreement.

In other news, the board:

- Approved a new date for the Friends of Gill annual picnic on the common – Sunday, July 26th – after the first two dates were rained out in June.

- Reinstated a spending freeze on all non-essential purchases or new hires by all town departments, and urged departments to exercise restraint on all other spending, up to a \$500 maximum.

- Approved a request from the Gill agricultural commission to hold a farmers market at the Riverside municipal building on

Sunday, August 2nd from 1:30 to 5:30 p.m.

- Agreed to hold a goal-setting meeting under the facilitation of Ray Purington, in closed session if town counsel advises that would be legal, on July 15th at 1:00 p.m., perhaps at Northfield Mount Hermon.

- Discussed possible appointments to new committees approved by town meeting: a Riverside municipal building planning committee; a committee to study changes to the regional school district agreement with Montague; and a regional school district planning committee. Doff Storrow and Jenn Waldron were suggested for the latter two committees.

- Suggested lowering the asking price for the used dump truck being offered as surplus by the town, after a minimum offer of \$5,000 drew no bids.

- And toured the basement of town hall with highway superintendent Mick LaClaire, to inspect the rooms for the presence of mold.

The board met again, briefly, on Tuesday, July 7th, but just to sign warrants. No other business was on the agenda.

Tines & Tunes II

A free, family-friendly festival Saturday, July 11th from noon to 8 p.m. at Peskeomskut Park Avenue A, Turners Falls

Performances include members of the Country Players production of *Oliver*, 2009 Valley Idol winners, Katie Clark and Green River Band, Still Creek, Ameri-MF-Cana with Ed Vadas and Sue Burkhart and Haven't Got A Clue. Face painting and balloon art for the kids and a wide range of summer fare refreshments available. Proceeds benefit the Shea Theater. For info visit www.theshea.org

HIGHLIGHTS FROM THE GILL POLICE LOG Barton Cove Disturbance

Wednesday, 6/24

12:10 p.m. Report of past trespassing and attempted larceny on Pisgah Mountain Road.

Thursday, 6/25

7:30 a.m. Report of illegal dumping on Oak Street extension.

7:55 a.m. Report of illegal dumping and suspicious activity on French King Highway.

8:50 a.m. Assisted with medical emergency on West Gill Road.

2:15 p.m. Report of damage to mailboxes on River Road.

Friday, 6/26

11:50 p.m. Assisted Northfield police department with arrest and breathalyzer.

Sunday, 6/28

4:33 p.m. Report of trash and illegal dumping in fields off of River Road along river bank.

4:15 p.m. Assisted Bernardston police

with false 911 call.

7:01 p.m. Report of loud noise on West Gill Road.

Monday, 6/29

8:54 p.m. Report of a possible domestic dispute on a boat in Barton Cove.

9:11 p.m. Report of littering near Barton Cove on Riverview Drive.

9:33 p.m. Report of a disturbance on Barton Cove, involving threats of arson.

Tuesday, 6/30

1:10 p.m. Picked up stray dog on Oak Street Extension, transported to kennel.

3:10 p.m. Assisted Sheriff's department locating a subject on North Cross Road on outstanding warrants. Subject taken into custody.

5:11 p.m. Report of subject attempting to swim across Connecticut River near old bridge abutments. Subject later arrested by Montague Police once on shore.

5:45 p.m. Assisted with medical emer-

gency on West Gill Road.

Thursday, 7/2

4:31 p.m. Report of vandalism on Barton Cove Road, under investigation.

8:30 p.m. Assisted Montague Police with missing person.

Friday, 7/3

10:58 a.m. Report of possible jumper on French King Bridge, assisted Erving police with subject located off of Dorsey Road bridge.

4:03 p.m. Report of possible jumper on French King Bridge, checked area with fire departments.

6:32 p.m. Investigated possible forged registration at state boat ramp on French King Highway.

9:29 p.m. Fireworks complaint on Main Road.

Saturday, 7/4

1:01 a.m. Assisted Bernardston police with arrest.

12:01 p.m. Report of past vandalism on French King Highway.

5:30 p.m. Report of a disturbance at the state boat ramp.

11:15 p.m. Assisted Northfield police with domestic assault and battery.

Sunday, 7/5

9:03 a.m. Report of vandalism on Boyle Road.

7:10 p.m. Report of possible disabled boat on Connecticut River, advised fire department and environmental police.

9:15 p.m. Report of illegal burning in the South Cross Road area.

Monday, 7/6

10:39 a.m. Neighbor dispute on French King Highway.

10:55 a.m. Report of past larceny from a Main Road residence.

7:11 p.m. Assisted with medical emergency on Northfield Mount Hermon campus.

8:14 p.m. Fire alarm at Stoughton Place, assisted fire department.

9:17 p.m. Noise complaint on West Gill Road.

Tuesday, 7/7

9:45 a.m. Motor vehicle accident on Mount Hermon Road.

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NOTES FROM THE GILL-MONTAGUE REGIONAL SCHOOL DISTRICT

GMRSD Receives \$11,000 Planning Grant

BY ELLEN BLANCHETTE – The Gill-Montague Regional School District school committee welcomed new superintendent, Carl Ladd, at their July 7th meeting. Ladd announced the award of a Massachusetts Readiness Schools Preliminary Planning Grant for the district in the amount of \$11,080, for the development of one or two schools: an Alliance elementary school and a school to serve students with autism.

Ladd said the intention is to develop a Hillcrest-Sheffield Alliance school that would allow the district to reach out and partner with regional institutions such as colleges, museums, and educational organizations, to bring innovative programs to students.

The grant will also support planning for the development of a Readiness Alliance school, in partnership with other school districts in the region, to provide

services for students with Autism Spectrum Disorders (ASD). Individual districts have difficulty providing specialized programs to meet the needs of ASD students, who are often placed inappropriately in programs that serve students with a variety of behavior issues. In some cases, ASD students are placed in residential programs far from home because no appropriate services are available in their local districts.

The grant will pay for preliminary discussions and planning sessions to explore the best way to provide these services within the region. More grants will be offered in the fall to continue the process.

Ladd credited the administrative team for moving quickly to get the planning grant application in within the two week window offered by the state. Gill-Montague was one of only sixteen

districts in the state to be awarded a grant in this round. According to Ladd, there is an "enormous amount of money about to open up" from federal stimulus funding aimed specifically at improving education.

Ladd told the school committee he felt they had approved a good budget – at \$16,687,794 – with reductions that would not harm educational services. He reported an unexpected cost to the district of \$40,000 in medical insurance expenses resulting from a decision by Franklin Medical Center not to participate in the HMO portion of the district's Group Insurance Commission health care program. He suggested the committee make up for this expense by not filling one of three staff positions still open. He said it was up to the committee members to decide which position not to fill, but stated his strong preference

not to cut the music teacher position, as he felt the arts were essential to a well-rounded educational program.

The committee voted to keep the music teacher. The other open positions are the Resource Officer and the Latin teacher. Ladd emphasized it was up to committee members to decide how to make up for the lost revenue.

The following day, a source at the hospital indicated this problem may be resolved soon, and resulted from an error by the GIC.

GMRSD business manager Lynn Bassett presented new budget numbers reflecting increases in state aid to the district. Bassett said the new numbers would permit lower assessments for the towns, without changing the total operating budget number the committee passed on June 22nd.

Joyce Phillips, reading from state regulations, explained the school committee is charged with passing an operating budget for the district, while the district treasurer sets assessments based on a

combination of the district income and state aid, as they appear on the day the budget is set.

Bassett explained further that changes in state aid may change the financial outlook, but once assessments are set they do not change unless the school committee votes a new budget.

The school committee voted a new budget, with a one-dollar reduction from their June 22nd budget: \$16,687,793. District treasurer Peter Roy-Clark will certify new assessments to the towns based on the new state aid numbers. The new FY '10 assessments will be \$7,132,301 (without debt) for Montague, a decrease of \$32,673 from June's numbers, and \$1,395,112 (without debt) for Gill, a decrease of \$6,085.

The towns have 45 days to respond to the new budget. Montague has set the date for a special town meeting on August 5th at 7:00 p.m. at the high school.

The next school committee meeting will be held on July 21st, at 7 p.m. at Turners High School.

ZONING from page 5
"problematic." The ZBA amended that requirement, limiting shipments to an average of 60 truck trips per day.

The ZBA made all restrictions on the special permit transferable to any future owner of the plant. The board required Wolfe to post a \$400,000 bond payable to the city of Greenfield in the event the plant was abandoned and had to be cleaned up.

Other restrictions included the stipulation that no painted or treated wood, construction debris, or biohazards be included in the fuel stream. Diesel fuel will be allowed as an alternate fuel for start-up and flame stabilization.

The Greenfield board of health wrote a letter to the ZBA decrying the lack of local regula-

tory control of plant emissions, which "denies the citizens of Greenfield's fundamental rights." The health board cited regulatory work in progress by the EPA which is likely to place a lower safety level on ultrafine particulate emissions than the level proposed by Wolfe's company for the Greenfield plant.

But other Greenfield boards supported the proposal, with city planner Eric Twarog recommending approval, since the site is zoned for industry, power plants are allowed there, high power transmission lines run by the site, which is in close proximity to I-91 and Route 2, and because the current use of the site – as a gravel pit – already produces noise, dust, and truck traffic.

Greenfield stands to gain up to \$1.3 million a year from the proposed plant in property taxes, sewer and water fees.

Wolfe must now seek state and federal permits and \$250 million in financing for the plant.

Tom McClellan, ZBA member, said the board had looked at all aspects of the plant's operation, including air quality, traffic, hours of operation, noise, impact on rare and endangered species, sewer and water use, and visibility and determined the plant could operate acceptably, with all impacts mitigated, "except for truck traffic," which the ZBA then sought to limit. But McClellan said anyone owning property as an abutter to the industrial park must expect to have truck traffic passing to and

from the park.

Before the board voted, Greenfield resident Ann Hassett stood up and called out, "Is it the consensus of this room and the surrounding community that we do not want this biomass plant?"

The crowd cheered affirmatively.

The board then voted without dissent to allow the plant to

exceed Greenfield's zoning requirements for noise, height (of the 250 foot smoke stack) and to approve the plant itself.

Opponents later contended the rescheduled meeting on the 29th was in violation of the 48-hour notice required by the Open Meeting Law, so a revote was scheduled for Wednesday, July 8th.

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NOTES FROM THE ERVING SELECTBOARD

Erving Wraps Up Plans for Defeated Senior Center

BY DAVID DETMOLD — Bruce Hunter, the owner's agent for the town on the twice defeated \$2.3 million senior center project, met with the selectboard in the staff room of the Erving wastewater treatment plant on Monday, June 29th. The selectboard was meeting at the wastewater treatment plant to take a tour of the progress of the \$6.2 million renovation at that facility. Hunter was there to get the board to sign off on the last few items on his punch list for the senior center, even though the prospect for building the new center appears bleak, now that town meeting has twice in as many months failed by four votes to gain the two-thirds majority vote needed to approve the borrowing associated with building it.

The proposed 7,000 square foot, geothermally heated and cooled senior center would have been built on town owned land just north of the elementary school on Route 63.

Last year, the town applied for and received a \$162,839 Community Development Block Grant to develop bid ready plans for a new senior center. To com-

plete the grant, Hunter needed the board and the conservation commission to sign off on permits for the water and sewer hookups that would have been needed had town meeting given the go ahead to build the senior center.

But since town meeting turned the project down, first on May 6th and then again on June 22nd, selectboard member Andrew Goodwin wanted to know if Hunter could just leave the permitting of water and sewer hookups unfinished, and not spend the money associated with completing the final details of the plans.

"Can't we call down to Boston and call it off?" Goodwin asked.

Selectboard chair Andy Tessier explained, "We have to complete the terms of the grant."

Hunter said his responsibility as the town's owners agent required him to finish preparing the bid ready plans, including the



DETOLD PHOTO
The Erving selectboard and town employees gather around a map of sewer lines scheduled for relining and repair in Erving Center, as Mike McManus, a consultant from the engineering firm Tighe and Bond (center) goes over the scope of work.

final permits. After that, Hunter said, the town could put the plans, "on the shelf. If the project ever comes back you can take it off the shelf and go."

Hunter said once the final permits are completed for the water and sewer hookups, and the bid-ready plans are completed, then the clock starts ticking for the town to either build the new senior center or pay back the federal government the \$162,839 they granted the town to design the project.

from BANK pg 1

last week or so, despite daily thunderstorms.

Denise Coyne, project manager for the GSB, said the new bank branch would be finished by the end of December, despite getting off to a late start. The delay was caused by the discovery of four species of dragonflies that use the rear of the lot toward the canal side bike path as favored habitat. A state review cleared the project to go forward. No dragonflies will be harmed in the course of construction.

"We needed a larger building," explained Coyne. "We've outgrown the old location."

Coyne said the new branch would have three drive up lanes, as well as an early morning 8 a.m. to 9 a.m. walk-up window, all located on the Food City side of the building. There will be a bike rack for cyclists' convenience. On the west side, a large parking lot will provide ample parking for customers.

Branch manager Linda Ackerman assured customers that "the same dedicated crew" of tellers and assistants will be working to keep customer service at the forefront of the operation in Turners.

The new location will feature a conference room that can be made available for community meetings, without interfering with bank business. The new location will also provide safe deposit boxes, for those with valuables too important to trust to the top of the knickknack shelf.

Business owner Kip Miskinis, who sells and repairs televisions at his store at 294 Avenue A, is looking forward to having the

bank as a next door neighbor. "It's moving the business district down this way, and that will help me and my tenants out. I think it's an asset to the town. This lot has been empty for a long time."

In Miskinis' basement, the foundation of the old Romper factory is still visible, with supporting pipe protruding from the brick bunkers that once stabilized the heavy machinery.

In olden times, three sets of rail tracks ran past the empty lot. A trolley track ran up the center of Avenue A. Another set of train tracks ran at a low level at the rear of the lot to the railroad station located in the vicinity of what is now the Rite Aide drug store.

Those tracks ran through an underpass beneath Avenue A by the current Shanahan Supply. Beavers have flooded the old rail bed, still visible behind Shanahan Supply. The train station sat in a ravine, since filled, where Rite Aid, Food City and other businesses are now located. That track continued past the station to run along the canal opposite the mills to serve the former International Paper Mill in the vicinity of the Turners Falls — Gill bridge.

A third railroad track ran along the canal at a higher elevation, crossing the canal on a trestle whose framework still exists, adorned with graffiti, out behind the construction area. That track continued on the west side of the canal to serve Esleeck and Keith paper mills and the Russell Cutlery.

Gulow's hardware and mill supply store, located on Avenue A where Robert Koolkin now plies his dentistry alongside

Shanahan's masonry supply, once used the old discontinued railroad station as a warehouse.

When Peter Mackin filled the ravine where the station stood, his employees moved the wooden timbered station to the lot now under construction for the new bank. Teenagers gathered there to smoke and hang out. Sometimes they built fires in the building. Eventually, the building was razed and the timbers salvaged.

The lot where Greenfield Savings is building is a filled area over original sand covering

mer Esso service station, owned by Couture Brothers.

Samuel I. Couture recalled that he and his father hired Dominic Ferrante of Greenfield to put the building up, with its two service bays, along about 1955, just before they built the Shady Glen further down the Avenue. Red Bauch ran the service station for Couture Brothers.

Miskinis said when he goes in to make a deposit at that office, he often jokes with the tellers, "I used to get my oil changed, right here."

The grease bay was closer to

For the last two years, a senior housing committee has been meeting, touring senior housing projects and working on plans to build 20 units of senior housing on the rear of

design grant.

Hunter assured the board that was so, and administrative coordinator Tom Sharp said phone calls he had made to Boston confirmed that point.

Hunter pointed out the Erving had also expended \$52,198 in town funds on feasibility work for the senior center.

Tessier said, "If this project went forward and we decide to do something different on the water and sewer, would we have to pay this back?"

Hunter said if the town pursued another avenue to bring water and sewer to the lot, but still built the senior center as planned, the town would not have to pay back the grant money. He pointed out that a gravity sewer line would cost \$300,000, considerably more than the force main system planned to hook up with the sewer lines that run as far as the elementary school.

Hunter said the town also had the option to apply for a construction grant to cover a percentage of the total cost of the senior center, a choice the town had not opted to pursue in the run-up to the failed town meeting vote.

see ERVING pg 9

Savings Bank, which needed an accessible location with parking. The bank had formerly operated a Turners branch at the old Crocker Institute for Savings, on 2nd Street and Avenue A, with granite steps and not much in the way of on street parking.

On the topic of accessibility, Ackerman said the new branch office would have a wheelchair-level check writing desk and teller window.

After the posing for the press with other officials and bank president Rebecca Caplice holding a gold-plated shovel,



Architect's rendering of the facade of the new Greenfield Savings Bank Turners branch office, as seen from Avenue A.

ledge. Test borings indicate ledge about six feet down in one location. The ledge rises toward Avenue A.

The plan is to excavate to the foundation depth and have a soil engineer take a look, said Mattei. Construction will then proceed on the recommendations of the soil engineer.

The present bank branch at 195 Avenue A is located in a for-

the teller windows, Couture confirms. In the further bay, the one closer to St. Kazimierz', Couture said they installed the first automatic car wash in town, with mechanisms on pulleys rotating on copper pipes to soap and rinse your car.

He said the station closed in 1972, due to the poor economy, and the building was renovated and leased to the Greenfield

Ackerman gave out home baked cookies with GSB Digs Turners Falls spelled out in green icing.

By 10:28 a.m., when the ceremony ended, two ten-wheeled dump trucks filled with loam from the site were already rumbling up the Avenue toward Gill.

Gold-plated shovels aside, nothing breaks ground quite like a CAT excavator.

from **ERVING** pg 8

Sharp had estimated the town could apply for \$600,000 of the \$2.3 million cost, had the selectboard chosen to pursue that route.

After meeting with Hunter, and conducting routine business, the selectboard toured the renovations at the treatment plant, with engineers from Tighe and Bond and Peter Standrowicz, supervisor for R.H. White, the contractor for the \$6.2 million job.

Among the main features of the renovation, the treatment plant has switched from chlorine to ultraviolet light to treat the sewage, eliminating a health hazard for workers who will no longer have to breathe in chlorine gas, and eliminating the threat of the build-up of chlorine compounds in the Millers River as well. Exposure to ultraviolet light weakens the micro-organisms in sewage so they can't survive to reproduce, explained Mike McManus, of Tighe and Bond.

Additionally, the contract includes the installation of a new roof at the operations building, new doors and windows, and doubled the insulation in the main buildings. "They're going to see a huge energy savings," said Tighe and Bond engineer Peter Valinski. A new heating, cooling and ventilation system should also improve energy performance.

R.H. White will also be putting in an odor control system, moving air from the brand new headworks building and the sludge tanks through a carbon filter, to alleviate the smell which has bothered neighbors of the plant along River Road.

There have been some minor problems on the job so far, including an elusive crack in the concrete at the bottom of one of the aeration tanks, causing a leak to a subterranean maintenance tunnel, which engineers have been at pains to locate and patch. Also, a boom truck offloading equipment accidentally crushed the new exterior brick façade on a corner of the headworks building, but Standrowicz assured the selectboard there was no structural damage to the building, and even if there were, "We'll fix it."

Also, the selectboard has offered to settle a dispute with a subcontractor over a \$7,900 bill for cost overruns encountered while installing the new HVAC equipment in the roof of the main operations building for \$5,000, to avert legal action. Valenski said the town was on firm ground if this dispute makes it to court.

In other news, the selectboard deferred a request for a \$5,000 bonus from town treasurer Margaret Sullivan, who resigned her post for two months earlier this year and performed her duties as a volunteer, to avoid a conflict over her retirement package at her other job as purchasing agent for the Franklin Regional Council of Governments. Following the town election of May 6th, Sullivan was re-elected to her position at full salary, but the two-month break left the town treasurer's budget in the black by an amount similar to what Sullivan was seeking for a bonus.

Sullivan insisted she was seeking the bonus for extra work she had taken on in the treasurer's office recently, not as compensation for the months of March and April when she worked as a volunteer.

But Tessier said he feared it would place the town in violation of the stricter ethics laws passed in Boston recently if Erving began giving bonuses to elected officials, and asked Sharp to get a ruling on this from town counsel Donna MacNicol.

By the following Tuesday, July 7th, Sharp said he had spoken with MacNicol, who warned the town would be in an ethically delicate position if it offered a bonus to an elected official.

"We have done it before, but not for elected officials," said Tessier, on June 29th. By this, he was referring to bonuses the town gave to appointed highway superintendent Paul Prest, and police chief Chris Blair, in recognition of work performed above and beyond the call of duty in past years.

Board member Andrew Goodwin said, "We should have a stated program for bonuses beforehand, so it is objective, not subjective."

Prest was present at the meeting, and told the board there may be some snags in the planned relining of sewer pipes in Erving Center. Not all the pipes could be inspected by remote video monitors, due to obstructions. "We may have to dig and replace some sections," he said.

Old pipes along a number of streets in the Center are leaking groundwater, costing the town extra at the treatment plant. The plan is to spend \$150,000, approved by town meeting last month, to reline sewers along Arch, Church, North, High, Prospect Streets and a section of Route 2. Some manholes will also have to be replaced or rehabilitated.

Despite possible pitfalls, Tessier seemed confident the budget was sufficient. We'll make it work and get this job done," he said.

The board agreed to allow the wastewater treatment facility to purchase a new John Deere lawn tractor – at a cost of about \$2400 – to replace a used model the department had inherited from the cemetery commissioners.

The board received good news on the upcoming bid for repainting the water tower, north of Route 2 in Erving. No lead paint abatement will be needed prior to the repainting. That should translate to a savings on the repainting contract – for which the town has allocated \$512,000 – once it goes out to bid later this month.

Before leaving to tour the sand filtration water treatment facility in Erving, also up for renovation – low bidder Waterline Industries of Seabrook, NH won that contract at \$287,677 (a \$126,323 savings over the \$414,000 the town had allocated

for the renovation) – the selectboard detoured to inspect the public water supply well, located just up the access road from the Erving treatment plant. Tessier said the water in the public aquifer was so clean it only needed to have the pH balance periodically adjusted.

The town is considering changes to the zoning bylaw which would allow a gas station to be built within the protected zone of the aquifer. French King Entertainment Center owners Eric and Ralph Semb have plans to build a gas station and quick stop drive through restaurant and convenience store on the site of the former Countree Living restaurant, abutting the bowling alley, in the protected aquifer zone. The planning board will hold another public hearing on the proposed zoning changes on July 16th at town hall at 5:30 p.m.

HIGHLIGHTS FROM THE MONTAGUE POLICE LOG

Pool Showroom Expanded

Tuesday, 6/23

1:00 p.m. Reported sex offenses at a Chestnut Street address. Investigated. 8:47 p.m. Officer initiated arrest of [redacted] on a straight warrant.

Wednesday, 6/24

10:05 a.m. Restraining order violation at an L Street address. Investigated.

Thursday, 6/25

7:17 a.m. Report of a domestic disturbance at an Avenue A address.

4:36 p.m. Report of a suicidal subject at a Griswold Street address. Services rendered.

Saturday, 6/27

2:00 a.m. Report of a neighbor disturbance at a Chestnut Street address. Arrested [redacted].

[redacted] Charged with disorderly conduct.

7:34 a.m. Report of an assault at a Fourth Street address. Arrested [redacted].

[redacted] Charged with assault and battery with a dangerous weapon, breaking and entering in the daytime for a felony and person in fear.

1:01 p.m. Report of a domestic disturbance at a

Chestnut Street address. Services rendered.

Sunday, 6/28

1:27 a.m. Report of a domestic disturbance at a Montague Street address. Peace restored.

Tuesday, 6/30

1:59 p.m. Walk-in arrest of [redacted] on a straight warrant.

5:11 p.m. Report of water rescue at buoys on the river. Arrested [redacted].

[redacted] Charged with trespassing and disorderly conduct.

9:29 p.m. Report of a domestic disturbance on Greenfield Road. Arrested [redacted].

[redacted] Charged with assault and battery, domestic.

Wednesday, 7/1

3:26 p.m. Report of rape at an Avenue A address. Investigated.

10:56 p.m. Officer wanted at a South Park Street address. Arrested [redacted].

[redacted] Charged with assault and battery and threat to commit a crime.

11:10 p.m. Officer initiated investigation of a domes-

tic disturbance at a Fourth Street address. Peace restored.

Thursday, 7/2

2:23 a.m. Report of a domestic disturbance at an M Street address. Peace restored.

10:57 a.m. Officer initiated arrest of [redacted].

[redacted] on a Fugitive from Justice court warrant.

9:17 p.m. Report of an unwanted person at an M Street address. Subject returned to home or family.

Friday, 7/3

1:42 a.m. Following a traffic stop, arrested [redacted].

[redacted] Charged with operating a motor vehicle while under the influence of liquor, driving to endanger, leaving the scene of property damage, marked lanes violation, possession of a class E drug and motor vehicle lights violation. [redacted] allegedly drove her Subara station wagon through one wall of Apollo Pools, 72 Unity Street, and out the other side, rupturing a gas line and causing extensive damage to the building.

2:49 p.m. Report of assault and battery at an L Street address. Investigated.

11:29 p.m. Report of a domestic disturbance at a G Street address. Peace restored.

Saturday, 7/4

12:37 a.m. Officer initiated investigation of a disabled motor vehicle. Arrested [redacted].

[redacted] Charged with operating a motor vehicle while under the influence of liquor, second offense, and possession of an open container of alcohol in a motor vehicle.

2:41 a.m. Report of assault and battery at a Prospect Street address. Arrested [redacted].

[redacted] on a default warrant.

12:07 p.m. Report of an unwanted person at a Davis Street address. Referred to an officer.

Sunday, 7/5

9:05 a.m. Report of burglary / breaking and entering at Great Falls Discovery Center, Investigated.

Monday, 7/6

1:21 a.m. Report of a domestic disturbance at a Fifth Street address. Arrested [redacted].

[redacted] Charged with assault and battery with a dangerous weapon, disturbing the peace, resisting arrest and assault and battery on a police officer.

8:58 p.m. Report of a domestic disturbance at a Fairway Avenue address. Peace restored.

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To Mow or Not to Mow? *The Evolution of a Meadow*



JOANNA FRANKEL PHOTO

Joanna Frankel and Max Brody's meadow in Gill

BY JOANNA FRANKEL
RIVERSIDE – When my husband Max and I bought our house in the Riverside neighborhood of Gill last June, we inherited a hundred foot tall silver maple, which promptly fell on the house three days after settlement, and an almost half-acre parcel of lawn.

It didn't take us long to realize this was just too much grass for us. The question soon became not when to mow, or who would mow, but whether or not to mow at all.

Although now ubiquitous, lawns are relatively new to the

American landscape, laid out in the country's first suburban communities following the Civil War. While lawns had been a staple of English estates far longer, Americans brought lawns to the common folk, a sea of grass comprising the shared scenery. With the invention and spread of the lawnmower, ordinary people could have the same turf as an aristocrat.

What happens if a person chooses to stray from this collective terrain, to break the unspoken pact of homeowners all over the country that our neighborhood backdrop will be

one continuous lawn? Luckily, in Gill, I've found acceptance, even support, for deciding not to mow. Others are not so fortunate, fighting local regulations mandating the standard height for grass. These "noxious weed laws," first created to protect farmers from weeds that could compete with crops or harm livestock, have morphed into ordinances that masquerade as a way to limit health hazards or protect property values.

According to Michael Pollan's book *Second Nature: A Gardener's Education*, one

Thoreau scholar in Buffalo, NY has racked up tens of thousands of dollars in fines in protest against a court order that he cut his lawn or pay \$50 a day. Some municipalities will simply come and cut your grass for you, then send you the bill. All this griping over some grass?! Besides not wanting to mow, what could be wrong with a lawn?

Although grasses are tough and good growers, cultivating the fluffy green carpet homeowners desire takes work, and apparently lots and lots of chemicals. On average, Pollan notes, lawns receive more herbicide and pesticide per acre than any crop grown in the United States. The Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) estimates that homeowners apply ten times as much chemical pesticide to their lawns as farmers apply to cropland.

In his book *Lawn People*, Paul Robbins reports that chemicals used for lawn maintenance are significant contributors to water quality problems in the United States.

There are other environmental impacts from our sea of green, as well. The National Wildlife Federation estimates that 18 percent of municipal solid waste collected is organic yard waste such as cut grass and branch trimmings. The same organization also estimates that 30 percent of the water consumed on the East Coast goes toward watering

lawns, keeping green and lush the turf grasses that are actually species best suited to a cool, damp climate.

The EPA estimates that the average lawn mower emits 11 times the air pollution of a new car for each hour of use. Not to mention the noise pollution, that constant loud buzz that marks our weekend mornings.

If none of these reasons are compelling enough to make you forego your lawn, look to your pocketbook, where typical lawns are costing homeowners \$700 per acre per year to maintain.

After completing the research I've cited here, and after much deliberation, Max and I have opted to allow a meadow to flourish on our property. We wrote a letter to our neighbors explaining our decision, and have been met with a positive response (just another reason we love living in this part of the world). In fact, we found out that the woman who lived in our house for many years did the same thing with the property, letting it go to meadow and then mowing once a year in the fall.

Just last week Max met someone with even more town lore to share, who told us that before the cove and dam existed on the section of Connecticut River in our backyard, this area was all hayfields. So perhaps our choice is not so revolutionary after all, just a nod back to history – before the lawns.



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Vicissitudes of New England Gardening

BY LESLIE BROWN
MONTAGUE CITY

Remember the summer-like heat in the middle of May?

Many gardeners, myself included, were seduced by the warmth and rushed to put in tomato plants in order to take advantage of the possibility of earlier fruit.

Only a day or two later, this unseasonable warmth was followed by a huge drop in temperature and a desiccating wind. I tarped these early planted tomatoes. One beauty lost its stem to the flapping of the very plastic that was to be its protector; others bent low to the wind and sulked.

Fortunately, I am a New

Englander, if only by adoption. I put in only half of the plants I had set aside for my own use.

At the end of May, the traditional Memorial Day planting date, I put in the rest of my tomato plants in seasonable but friendly weather.

The newly planted tomatoes took hold; the rest languished, at least in the short view.

The Hillbilly, perhaps used to more southern climates, has never recovered and remains stunted and poorly, struggling to put out blossoms I predict will never become edible fruit. On the other hand, the early-planted Sungold cherry has yielded its first ripe fruit on July 5th. This is unusual and happily welcomed.

Overall, some tomatoes have done well, others have not; but outside of the Hillbilly, there is not much difference to be seen between the early and later planted ones.

The pepper plants are another

story.

As I need hardly note here, we have just experienced a long, dreary damp spell not conducive to gardening except for the early spring cold weather crops. The Lincoln peas, for instance, are thick, hardy and bearing very well. The sweet peppers are sulking.

It may seem foolish to grow peppers when they will be plentiful later locally without the angst. I grow them as I do many crops because there are particular varieties I want to enjoy at harvest time.

My favorite sweet pepper is called Chocolate, but only because of its color when ripe. This beauty is sweet and delicious, although not chocolate-flavored, when grilled.

I hope that's the plant that is sporting blossoms. The rest of the crop are yellow and spindly and are under attack by insects. Although I waited until the start of June to put these in, they have suffered from the long damp, sunless spell and are unlikely to produce well.

The mole and vole chasers are working well. These battery-operated metal tubes send out underground vibrations apparently irksome to the tunneling creatures. I can almost see the progress of the varmints across the yard. I think I need just one more buzzer to send the critters out of my yard altogether!

Unfortunately, the battle with the woodchuck continues. My chicken wire fencing around peas and beans has been totally successful at foiling his forays. However, the tomato cages surrounding the squash plants did not deter the beast, who went in and enjoyed a few of the tender, new leaves. Now I'm a presence in the yard again, and I will also hang ammoniated rags to discourage him or perhaps camouflage the scent of new green growth.

While it is sad to report, I have just returned from a week at the Maine coast where I enjoyed the same damp, rainy weather as enjoyed here, although more in the form of fog and mist than actual rainfall. I arrived in time

for their strawberry season and enjoyed a second crop of sweet, red fruit which seemed to have done well despite the monsoon.

I needn't have worried that the bodacious crop of peas would come in and pass on to starch without me. They are just coming in, and I have enjoyed the first pods of garden candy, fresh, green and sweet right from the garden without any other treatment. They are fabulous and make the damp cool weather more worthwhile.

On my return home I also picked the first cherry tomato and it did not disappoint. Tart-sweet, tender-skinned and luscious, it certainly whetted my taste buds for more.

Each garden season is different, with its own challenges. Some crops do well; others have no merit. Tonight I am well pleased with the peas and the solitary cherry tomato. I am afraid the pepper crop will be very disappointing.

Gardening in our corner of the world isn't easy. Still, if it were, how much fun would it truly be?

OPENING from pg 1

considered 'gravy' for the rest of the station's useful life.

Just prior to the referendum, in October of 2007, the price of a barrel of oil was averaging \$77.56. On Monday of this week, the *New York Times* reported the price of a barrel of oil was \$70. But the benchmark price of oil has fluctuated wildly over the last 20 months, reaching a peak of \$145 last summer and dropping to \$33 a barrel in December of 2008. This extreme price volatility has given headaches to any business or municipality trying to come up with solid cost-benefit analyses of alternative energy systems, like the geothermal system at Montague's new safety complex.

The new building, adjoining the Turners Falls fire station on Turnpike Road, was designed with energy efficiency as a top priority. The fire station, whose administrative offices were retrofitted for geothermal heating and cooling last year, was the first municipal building in Montague to employ such a system.

Fire chief Raymond Godin attributed the decision to install geothermal systems in both stations to a number of factors.

Environmental friendliness and minimized long-term operation costs were of particular concern.

As predicted, the fire department has seen a significant decrease in its oil consumption during the last heating period, according to Godin, also a member of the building committee for the police station.

"Our usage for the season was down around 1,600, maybe 1,700 gallons," Godin said, comparing these figures with an average of 4,100 gallons per year over the last nine fiscal years.

Godin said he is "confident it will still eventually pay for itself," despite the fluctuation in oil prices since the system was first installed. Nonetheless, the outcome has not been flawless.

"In fairness, I think we're still working some of the bugs in the system out," said Godin. "Most of them have to do with humidity issues, and we haven't been through our first cooling season, so it's a little bit difficult to give a real guess at the impact."

A free-standing system in the police station proved to be more

cost-effective than simply extending the system to the fire station, Godin said, saving about \$7,000 in construction costs.

The geothermal HVAC oper-



Building committee member Jason Burbank stands beside the geothermal well field pumping system at the new police station.

ates as a closed loop system, according to engineer and building committee member Jason Burbank. It includes 15 wells, each 400 feet deep, from which ground water at even temperature is extracted and run through pumps and heat exchangers. This allows for the heating and cool-

ing of air from a base temperature of about 55 degrees all year round.

The HVAC will be piloted digitally by the building's Direct Digital Control system, referred to as the DDC. Electronic sensors will measure outdoor temperatures and determine if, and when, cooling with air from outside is more efficient than running the geothermal compressors. Similarly, occupancy sensors will allow for automatic HVAC and lighting adjustments depending on the use of various spaces, Burbank said.

With nearly everything in place and only some electrical and control system work to conclude, the building is ready for commissioning, which involves testing and adjusting to confirm proper installation of all systems in the facility. Burbank, whose profession includes commissioning at the University of Massachusetts Amherst, has volunteered his expertise to this task, cutting from the building's budget the \$40,000 proposed for hiring an outside commissioning agency, according to Hanold.

Hanold cited several initia-

tives, aside from the geothermal system, that will help improve energy and cost-efficiency at the new police station. These include hot water pipes providing radiant heating in some slab flooring and the consolidation of several individual rooms into one large patrol room in the original plans. Elimination of a separate bulk evidence storage area and consolidation of an evidence room into secure two-way lockers also helped shave about a third of the original footprint off the building's design, from 18,000 to under 12,000 square feet, Hanold said.

Currently, working groups are discussing the possibility of installing photovoltaic solar panels on the station's roof as an added renewable energy source. A final decision regarding photovoltaics would be made by the selectboard.

One of Hanold's biggest concerns is keeping the community informed and bringing the town into decision-making processes.

"This is quite an accomplishment for Montague, in the fact that the town supported it," she said.

However, the committee has see **OPENING** pg 17

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NOTES FROM THE MONTAGUE SELECTBOARD

Entertainment License Approved for Latin-Style Restaurant

BY DAWN MONTAGUE

TURNERS FALLS – The agenda was light at the July 6th meeting of the Montague selectboard. John Keating was on hand to represent Burrito Rojo, his soon-to-open eatery on 3rd Street, in the rear of the former VFW building. Keating was applying for an entertainment license.

He said he anticipates both day-time and evening events, from children's birthday parties

to bluegrass and jazz. Keating assured the selectboard that the noise level will be kept relatively low; quiet enough to be able to hear your friend at the bar.

Preparations at the restaurant are ongoing. They are painting, working on electricity, and getting ready to install beer taps next week, Keating said.

The selectboard unanimously approved the entertainment

license.

Keating expects Burrito Rojo to be open by August 1st. (For more on Keating's progress, go to www.burritorojo.com.)

In other news, Carroll's Market in Millers Falls will be changing hands soon. Although the sale is not yet final, the new owners were at the selectboard meeting to request the liquor license be transferred to them. The selectboard approved the

liquor license transfer to new owner Mohammed Rasel, of Taunton.

Jon Dobosz, parks and recreation director, will soon hold a public hearing to determine the use of a small piece of land at the corner of Rod Shop Road and Masonic Avenue in Montague City, which may be the future site of a public park. The hearing is scheduled for Wednesday, July 22nd at 7:00 p.m. at the Masonic Lodge.

Robert Trombley, water pollution control facility superintendent, gave a brief report on sewer rates. They will be increasing by approximately 13% for fiscal year 2010. For the average household, the annual sewer bill will escalate from \$523 to \$591, if the new rates are approved at the next town meeting.

The steep rise in rates is expected as a result of Montague's nearly completed \$5.7 million combined sewer overflow remediation project.

Selectboard member Patricia Allen asked Trombley about general operations at the plant, with the increased flow caused by a very rainy June. Trombley replied that every day is a different challenge, but that the combined sewer overflow improvements have enabled the treatment plant to handle most of the added flow.

Preliminary tax bills have been mailed out, based on last year's bills. The second quarter bills will be adjusted once the town sets a tax rate for FY '10. For the first time, residents can pay tax bills online at the Montague town website. See the treasurer/collector department on the www.montague.net website for details.

A special town meeting has been scheduled at the Turners Falls High School for Wednesday, August 5th at 7:00 p.m. Allen emphasized that a quorum is needed for important votes, including a decision on the proposed \$16,854,053 Gill-Montague regional school budget.

Other items on the agenda include: a decision on whether to adopt local option meal and lodging taxes; an article to petition the legislature in support of Jordan Quinn's request to obtain an additional liquor license for the town of Montague, for her planned Montague Performing Arts Center in the former Ste. Anne's Church; and an article to abandon Williams Way to make room for a concrete skate park as part of the renovation of Unity Park.

Allen encouraged town meeting members to mark their calendars and attend.

Great Pitching Has the Sox on Top

BY LEE CARIGNAN

MONTAGUE – The first place Boston Red Sox continue to benefit from having the deepest pitching staff in all of Major League baseball. It's the fruits of general manager Theo Epstein's labors developing young pitching within the organization.

The Sox have had a good mix of young arms and veteran hurlers that round out the best pitching staff in the majors. This has the Red Sox favored to be playing in October again this year.

The Sox are currently one game ahead of the Yankees in the American League East. The Yankees have been hanging around in the standings, but have remarkably lost all eight games this year against the Red Sox.

Despite the half billion dollars the Yankees spent on first baseman Mark Teixeira, starting pitchers C.C. Sabathia, and A.J. Burnett last off-season, they neglected to improve their bullpen, which has cost them some games this year. However their hot bats have helped them overcome their weak bullpen lately.

Last year's A.L. East champs the Tampa Bay Rays have got off to a slow start, and are in third place and five games behind the first-place Sox. The Rays are underachieving after losing last year's World Series. They were thought to be serious contenders this year.

Josh Beckett (9-3) and John Lester (7-6) lead the Red Sox starting rotation. Both have come on strong after slow

starts, giving the Sox one of the top 1-2 combinations in the Major Leagues. Knuckleballer Tim Lincecum, who has been with the Red Sox since 1995, is having one of his best seasons with a 10-3 record, and has been selected for his first All Star game. Newcomer Brad Penny (6-3) has gotten stronger throughout the course of the year.

You know your pitching is in good shape when legendary hurler John Smoltz is your fifth starter. Smoltz is coming back from shoulder surgery.

After a rough start in the first inning of his first game back, he has looked good.

Smoltz doesn't have quite the velocity he had in his prime, but still reaches an acceptable 92 mph on his fastball. However he still has good movement on his off-speed stuff. The long time Atlanta Brave pitcher is also adjusting to the American League. With his playoff experience he should be a great addition down the stretch and in the postseason.

The pitching-rich Sox also have two young up and coming prospects in the minor leagues in Clay Buchholz and Michael Bowden. Buchholz appears ready for the majors now, with a 6-1 record and a 2.05 ERA at Pawtucket. On any other team he would be up in the major leagues already. Two years ago he threw a no-hitter, but struggled last year and has been in

the minor leagues since. The young righty has great stuff with a good fastball and a nice curveball.

The Sox also have Daisuke Matsuzaka on the disabled list.

The Red Sox have the best bullpen in the majors. It is anchored by closer Jonathan Papelbon. He continues to be one of the top closers in the league with 20 saves and a 1.76 ERA.

The Sox have two newcomers, Takashi Saito (3.45 ERA) and Ramon Ramirez (2.25 ERA). Ramirez came over from the Kansas City Royals in the Coco Crisp trade. Both pitchers have been solid additions. The Sox have also gotten help in their bullpen from within their organization, developing young pitchers

Manny Delcarmen (1.97 ERA), Justin Masterson (4.12 ERA), and rookie Daniel Bard (3.10 ERA). The hard-throwing rookie has topped 100 mph on the radar gun. Bard could be a potential closer for the Red Sox down the road if the team loses Papelbon.

The Red Sox commitment towards developing young pitching and building up their minor league talent has paid dividends with winning World Series titles in '04 and '07. Their pitching should be deep for years to come, and they should be playing deep into October again this year.



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CLAUDIA WELLS ILLUSTRATION

SWEET TALK ON THE AVE Next Stop: Beijing Station

BY BRIDGET SWEET

TURNERS FALLS – In between downpours, I was able to speak with Yuki Liu, the new co-owner of the Beijing Station at 51 Avenue A, on the corner of 2nd Street.

Liu and husband, Xin Guo Li, moved from Boston and opened their new restaurant three days earlier than scheduled. Seems a customer needed a quick fix of General Tso's Chicken, and they already had their board of health clearance. Since then, business has been brisk.

Beijing Station occupies the storefront of the former Chinatown Restaurant, beautifully redone in lacquered paneling, with gleaming counters and furnishings. Part of a small family-owned chain established since 1989 with restaurants in Boston and Virginia, the Beijing Station seats six tables of four. A con-

necting room big enough to accommodate a party of 20 is available upon request.

You may have seen the menu – they were mailed out the first of July to local residents.

Former *Montague Reporter* writer Barbara Stewart waited five minutes for her take-out order and was pleased with the new establishment. Stewart noticed Liu and Li's wedding poster enhancing one of the lavender-painted walls.

Liu said, "We'll deliver to seniors, because we want them to eat too. We don't deliver to everyone, because we want to serve food faster by picking up."

The Beijing Station's hours are Sundays to Thursdays, 10:30 a.m. to 10:00 p.m., and Fridays and Saturdays 11 a.m. to 11 p.m. Their two telephone numbers are (413) 863-8988 and (413) 863-2666. Good luck, Beijing Station!

Meanwhile, around the corner at the 2nd Street Baking Company, 69 2nd Street, co-owner Christa Snyder was making sugar-free Thumbprint Cookies. "We will be expanding, just not yet. We ran into problems with renovations," she said. "The landlord has some work to do."

Second Street Bakery plans to

serve sandwiches and salads in their expanded spot, with hopes to break down the wall to the adjoining storefront before the end of summer.

Cakes, coffee and pastries aren't the only items for sale at this local establishment. There are different colored 2nd Street Bakery t-shirts for children XS to XL (\$10.95) and adults S to XXL (\$13.95). Homemade dog treats with cheddar and bacon can

from **MEETING** pg 1

adopting an alternative assessment method that would peg per-pupil costs to each town's aggregate wealth, voted a 30% cut, with the understanding a special town meeting vote would be needed to set a higher amount.

Finance committee member Jim Slavas said the so-called statutory method of allocating town assessments the Mahar school committee is using now results in Wendell being assessed \$3,000 more per student than Orange, and more than either Petersham or New Salem, wealthier towns.

Both Slavas and Idoine felt the Mahar school committee is continuing to ignore Wendell's effort at arriving at a fair assessment agreement among the member towns. But finance board member Barbara Caruso saw one step forward when Peter Cross, a school committee member from Orange, made a motion to consider an alternative method of assessment.

The meeting opened with the selectboard members signing a stack of appointment slips for town committee members whose terms ended with the fiscal year, June 30th.

Ray DiDonato, representing the town website committee, said the committee chose to interview five of the 30 applicants that responded to their request for proposals (RFP) for upgrading the town's website to make it more user friendly, timely and informational. The committee recommended Christine Texiera from Wendell and Christopher Parker from Putney, VT, with a project cost of \$3,700 for creating the website. A beta version of the website should be ready by August 10th, and a full version by October.

The town already authorized and set up an account to cover the expense of the upgrade at a special town meeting in July

please your pooch for 50 cents.

Seth & Eva's of 115 Avenue A have photo prints for sale, along with a dozen of Sarah Adams' watercolor and ink drawings.

Second Street Bakery's Wall-of-Fame holds autographed black-and-white photos from TFHS gala performers Don Campbell, Gregory Caputo, Van Hansis and Elisabeth von Trapp. In addition, 19 of Zoë Colby and Rebecca Wright's newly graduated Sheffield Elementary School English Second Language Learners have their poems hanging on the wall, titled "Where I'm

From." Check 'em out.

Hours are Tuesdays to Saturdays 7 a.m. to 6 p.m. More information at: www.2ndstreet-bakingco.com.

Snyder said it best: "Awesome, I love this town."

Can't believe it. The sun just came out. Warm, almost summer. Who says that with this economy we cannot live well? Stroll down the Ave hungry and you'll change your mind. Tell them Ms. Sweet sent you. Ta-ta for now dearies.

Bridget Sweet can be reached at bsweet.writer@gmail.com for more information, or for news tips.

2008.

Board member Jeffrey Pooser attended a recent town broadband committee meeting, where committee members discussed an effort by Warwick to use town money to establish fast internet connections via a signal sent from Springfield, received at Mount Grace and broadcast from there through the town. After scouting around Wendell looking for places where that signal was clear, it was found the police station has the best reception. Some committee members eyed the steeple that is sitting in front of the Meetinghouse, waiting to be hoisted into place, but the committee felt the historic commission would not be pleased with that choice. The police station is not part of the town common historic district.

The receiver includes a twelve-foot pole, two inches in diameter, that can be removed and relocated as needed without much trouble. Pooser said with that in place, people could get WiFi on the common and other places where there is an uninterrupted straight line to the police station. Service will be faster and cheaper than HughesNet. Work will probably start on this project in the fall.

The owner of the Maple Valley School, which closed June 30th, is trying to arrange visits to the campus for people or organizations seriously interested in the property. A group in Montague has considered it for a charter school, and the Franklin County Department of Corrections is aware of the vacancy. The facility is assessed at \$7 to \$8 million, with a list price of \$3.5 million. The owner wants to get the space used and will consider any serious offer to help cover the cost of taxes, heat and maintenance.

The Center for Ecological Technology (CET) discontinued its matching contributions for households that enrolled in the

Greener Watts program at the end of fiscal 2009. Towns received a contribution from CET for each household enrolled in the special account, which adds 2% to their electric bills to pay for alternative energy generation. Wendell now has more than \$5,000 coming from this source for Greener Watts participants from April, May and June. The town can apply for grants to use that money on photovoltaics, educational materials on solar energy, science kits, or solar lights to illuminate a town monument.

The selectboard adopted a set of procedures developed by the open space committee regarding the town's use of the right of first refusal on Chapter 61 properties put up for sale. The procedures involved informing other boards, the open space committee, and the conservation commission about the sale to determine if any other boards have an interest in the property.

Tri County Construction of Wendell submitted the lowest bid on three of the four repair projects on the highway garage and fire station: repairing the roof, painting, and building an enclosure for the generator.

Fleet Construction, also from Wendell, submitted the lowest bid for repairing the siding at the garage.

The board approved all four bids.

The selectboard also approved procedures for a 90-day probationary period for newly hired workers. If a new hire is let go during that time, that worker will be ineligible for unemployment based on their work for Wendell.

Mass Recycle submitted a letter in favor of expanding the bottle bill to include non carbonated beverages including bottled water and fruit juice for the support of the selectboard. The selectboard gave their support to that initiative.



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The Dakin Pioneer Valley Humane Society A Safe Haven and Much More

BY LYN CLARK

LEVERETT – Chief Seattle of the Suquamish tribe, in a letter to President Franklin Pierce, wrote, “If all the beasts were gone, men would die of a great loneliness of spirit, for whatever happens to beasts also happens to man. All things are connected.”

According to Candy Lash, public relations spokesperson for the Dakin Pioneer Valley Humane Society of Leverett, on August 1st that organization will expand – not move, an important distinction – into the former MSPCA building at 171 Union Street in Springfield, a large, modern facility forced to close its doors in March due to lack of funds.

If Nature truly abhors a vacuum, then Dakin had little choice when the closing of the MSPCA left a gaping hole in Hampden

County’s animal support services crying to be filled. It’s a match made in heaven for both the MSPCA and Dakin. The building was already designed for just such an operation; the MSPCA was anxious for it to continue to be used to benefit animals, and Dakin had for some time been searching for land on which to build and expand with money already raised for that purpose. The facility, which cost the state over \$10,000,000 to construct, was purchased by Dakin for \$1,200,000.

Where did Dakin obtain the funds? Much of it from you, from donations large and small – you must have noticed the little cans with the dog and cat logo at area businesses – from the many events held for its benefit, and from private founda-



CAROLYN CLARK PHOTO

Candy Lash with Jean Bean, a long-haired chibuabua adopted by Leslie Harris, executive director of the Dakin Animal Shelter

HIGHLIGHTS FROM THE ERVING POLICE LOG

Three-Car Crash at Maple & Route 2

<p>Tuesday, 6/24 10:57 a.m. 911 call with static from a Gunn Street address. No one home, ongoing problem with phone line. 3:10 p.m. Officer to a Northfield address regarding a child custody dispute. Thursday, 6/25 4:11 p.m. Report of a past larceny at a River Street address. 5:50 p.m. Report of juveniles being harassed at Veteran’s Park. Friday, 6/26 7:39 p.m. Three car motor vehicle crash without personal injury on Route 2 at Maple Street. Saturday, 6/26 12:20 p.m. Medical emergency on Church Street. Assisted Erving fire, Orange ambulance. 9:15 p.m. Loose dog complaint at a Mountain Road address. Sunday, 6/28 12:15 p.m. Report of vandalism to a motor vehicle at a Prospect Street address. 12:45 p.m. Fire alarm at International Paper Mill. Fire chief on scene, checked building, no fire. Monday, 6/29 3:00 p.m. Spoke with resident regarding item stolen from his vehicle. 9:51 p.m. Welfare check on Gill resident. Spoke with same, all OK. 10:00 p.m. Report of parties disturbing the peace in a boat, officer to</p>	<p>boat ramp with Gill police. Unable to locate from ramp. Tuesday, 6/30 1:19 p.m. Welfare check at a Warner Street address. All OK. Wednesday, 7/1 11:40 p.m. Assisted Montague police with domestic situation on Grand Avenue. Thursday, 7/2 11:10 a.m. Report of an unwanted male subject at an East Main Street address. Peace restored. 11:35 a.m. Report of out-of-control woman at a Gunn Street address. Party concerned boyfriend will do harm to her property. Assisted same. 6:20 p.m. Assisted Northfield police with a report of stray unhealthy dog in the area of Mim’s Market. Unable to locate. Dog officer to investigate. Friday, 7/3 11:20 a.m. Subject on French King Bridge taken into custody and brought to Baystate Franklin Medical Center. 1:30 p.m. Report of illegal dumping in the area of Arch Street behind the Usher Plant. 3:42 p.m. Report of male subject climbing over rail of French King Bridge. Arrived on scene, no one in the area. Fire and ambulance activated and area searched. No one located.</p>	<p>5:50 p.m. Responded to Laurel Lake for 911 call. All OK. 7:50 p.m. Met with reporting subject to retrieve dogs. Brought dogs to owner on Northfield Road who was advised of town bylaw. 9:50 p.m. Report of suspected abuse of a dog in the area of East Prospect Street. Checked same, dog not distressed. Saturday, 7/4 10:15 a.m. Officer to a Gunn Road address to assist with removal of personal belongings. 11:30 p.m. Assisted Northfield police with domestic assault and battery arrest. Sunday, 7/5 10:35 a.m. Request to speak with an officer regarding abandoned property. 11:20 a.m. Abandoned 911 call from an East Main Street address. Youth playing with phone advised of correct usage of 911. 7:53 p.m. Report of two youths lighting firecrackers near North Street. Checked area, unable to locate. 9:46 p.m. Assisted Orange police with search for a missing child. Monday, 7/6 11:15 p.m. Assisted Montague police with an intoxicated female in Millers Falls.</p>
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tion grants. Fundraising must now begin in Hampden County since Dakin’s yearly operating budget of about a million dollars is estimated to double when the Springfield facility opens.

Dakin is a private, non-profit organization. It does not receive government money, nor money from any national humane society, but relies on the support of this community; in other words, on ‘the kindness of strangers’ and their passion for animals.

The Greenfield animal shelter, which merged with Dakin two years ago, will cease all operations at the end of this month, while the Leverett facility will remain open. Although much of the intake, rescue and rehabilitation of animals will be done in Springfield, both Leverett and Springfield will shelter and offer animals for adoption.

Lash explained that by expanding into Hampden County, Dakin could best realize its goal. “We want to be a community,” she said, “where no adoptable animal, or no animal capable of rehabilitation and made adoptable, will be euthanized for lack of a home.”

What Dakin receives from the community, Dakin gives back tenfold. This is not simply a shelter that offers pets for adoption. This is an educational, proactive organization that goes into the community and schools, reaching more than 15,000 people a year, with a remarkable variety of programs designed to

fulfill its mission of preventing the homelessness of animals. In the belief that you have to catch them young (people, that is), education and outreach manager Lori Swanson brings Dakin’s outreach programs to schools, scouting organizations, after-school programs, residential treatment programs, at-risk youth, and other community groups. There she teaches “empathy, kindness and integrity in relationships,” with offerings such as Animals and Ethics; Kids, Critters and Character; Animals in Society; and Animal-assisted Therapy, to name only a few.

Then there is the “span” program, which offers temporary foster care and shelter to those animals whose owners cannot care for them for a period of time due to illness, domestic abuse, homelessness or other situations, yet who don’t want to give up their beloved companions forever.

Also, donations of pet food, where needed, are given to Meals on Wheels recipients for their furry friends, and to low-income families in an effort to keep the family – two and four-legged – together.

And then there are the cats. Lots of cats. Highly reproductive cats. For seven years Dakin has held Feral Spay Sunday free clinics, where more than 5000 feral and barn cats have been spayed, and every year a Catsnip program, with the assistance of local veterinarians and

generous donors, has helped hundreds of low-income families afford to neuter and spay their cats.

In 2010, under the direction of the full-time veterinarian on staff, Dakin will open the old hospital wing of the Springfield facility with a low cost, high volume, spay and neuter clinic, not only for its own animals, but for the benefit of other shelters within a 90-mile area. It’s all part of what media mogul Lash (catch her on Channel 22) describes as “preventing animal homelessness.”

I asked Lash what drew her to this work. She replied, quite simply, “A love of animals.” Lash was a volunteer before she worked for the MSPCA and now for Dakin. “I want a better world for them,” she explained. “They are the voiceless. We must be their voice.” Well, some of the feral cats in Turners are not exactly voiceless, but I know what she means.

Mahatma Gandhi said: “The greatness of a nation and its moral progress can be judged by the way its animals are treated.” Gandhi would have awarded high marks to Lash and her colleagues.

To learn more about the Dakin Pioneer Valley Humane Society, and how you can give, become one of their many volunteers, or in some way be a part of this wonderful organization, visit www.dpvhs.org, or call (413) 548-9898.

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Village Sketchbook

One Day in July '37

BY DAVID BRULE

MILLERS FALLS – Downstairs in the kitchen, Ma was up first, as always, getting breakfast together for the children still sleeping upstairs. Soon they'd come pouring down those stairs, but for the moment it was quiet up there.

It had been hard to fall asleep

had started his repertoire of noisy imitations, chattering endlessly from the center of the bridal veil bush in the backyard, but the children were used to the racket and had slept on. The rooster had been announcing daybreak for hours, trying to outdo his tireless rival in the backyard tangle of shrubs. Crowing and flapping his

or at any one of the other bars in town. Kids usually played as much as they could, in between chores: maybe baseball over in the ballfield at the edge of the Tool Shop barns, or roller-skating up and down the sidewalks, shaded by towering maples that formed a leafy arch the whole length of the street.

But today, the men could look forward to bottled beer and shooting the breeze up at the picnic. They would be meeting up with all the others they worked with day in and day out, plus

or hitch-hiked. The families here on the Flat were almost all employees at Millers Falls Tool, the street lined with cottages where the workers lived. Out and up the street went the Dodge clan, the Williams, Sokoloski, Yez, Cherwa, and our family of Smiths.

Later in the day, after the picnic, and before the evening fireworks, a photographer appeared and captured the moment. There they were now in black and white, all those people, that community of factory workers caught

while growing up, others that were as familiar as family members. She worked through the picture and put the names on the faces.

There she was, in the front: Shirley Smith, and her sister June, then came many, many others. Eleanor Cherwa, Mary, Sis, Hazel, Ellen and Jake Dodge, their grandmother Sarah Jeffers, Guyla Rockwell, Rose and Tony Silva, Charley and Etta Deprete, Anna Goly, Anna Yez, Barbara Borthwick, Laura Williams, the Glazeski twins, the Ray Bartletts,



The caption on this vintage panoramic photo, only part of which we are able to reproduce for publication, reads: "Outing, Millers Falls Company, Millers Falls, Mass – Packard – July [17th] 1937. Packard refers to Packard Heights, in Athol, where the company picnic took place. The photo is available for viewing at the Erving Public Library."

the night before, with the excitement that the day would bring. There was the promise of fun, and something different to do on that summer Saturday morning of the Millers Falls Tool Company picnic. The kids all up and down the street on the Flat had been talking excitedly about it for days. Depression or no Depression, the Tool Shop was still going to take the whole lot of them – all the employees and their wives, husbands, and a neighborhood full of kids up to Packard Heights in Athol for the summer outing.

Brothers and sisters upstairs began stirring in their beds as the daylight worked its way into first the south-facing bedroom where the girls slept, then slowly brightened the north bedroom where the brothers were.

The birds, of course, had been up since first light. The catbird

wings, he was cajoling his hens to get up and at 'em. In fact, they had been busy and had produced a clutch of eggs that Pa gathered up for breakfast.

The two cows had spent the night out in the pasture along the river after the evening milking, but had come back up to the gate below the barn for the morning ritual. They had made a night of grazing, listening to the hooting owl and the whippoorwill, while the river flowed swiftly past the fields in the moonlight.

School had been out for weeks. The Depression was deep and getting deeper. The danger of war in Europe was growing; FDR had been on the radio the night before, but today was the picnic.

The workingmen could look forward to something other than the usual one day off from the Shop, usually spent smoking, drinking beer upstreet in Equi's,

there'd be the men from the other shifts. The conversations would likely never stray from the talk of work, fishing, the Depression, and baseball.

The wives, of course, would get a small break too – for once not having to scrape a meal together, cook, and wash dishes. They would enjoy a bottle of beer maybe, and converse with other women about what everyone talked about in those days, how to get by.

For the kids it was going to be great fun, soda pop, all the hot-dogs you could eat, games and fireworks by the lake. Plus the getting there: the ride on the bus!

After breakfast, the families started heading up the street to the Tool Shop, where the buses were parked and waiting to take everyone to Athol – a great trip in itself for families who had no car, when people walked to Turners

in the middle of the Depression and just before the years of the War, gathered for a small break from worry and cares on that day in July...

The sunlight poured through the same south-facing bedroom this July just a few days ago, the first sun after a month of rain in June. The catbird sang endlessly from the lilacs, the bridal veil bush of long ago having disappeared. The cows, barn and pasture are gone from here too, the Tool Shop closed in the 60s, a few years after Abe retired, having made its hundred years' run.

But today, it was just the right time to write the story of that photograph of the picnic more than 70 years ago. In the quiet living room on Carlisle Avenue, my mother and I went over the names of those in the picture. Names that I had heard vaguely

Laura Podelenski, Sophie Goly, Clara Dziema, Pearly Jemison, and of course our own Abe and Hannah Smith, all in a crowd of faces. There they were, perched on the edge of hard times, with the Depression, the years of war to come, the Hurricane of '38 in the not too distant future. Boys who would go off to war, some never to return. Marriages would come and go, families would thrive or fade, there would be happiness somewhere there, punctuated with heartache.

Old photographs can have a strange effect on a person: shadows frozen in time, names and faces from long, long ago: they look out at us from the past. Some of us know how the stories of their lives played out, but rather than telling, oftentimes it's better to see them as they were on that day in July of '37, and let it go at that.

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300th Combat Engineer Battalion repairing the under piling of a bridge destroyed by enemy fire along the Carentan - Cherbourg Road in France - June 30, 1944.

BY BRAD PETERS AND JAN ROSS - In recognition of the 65th anniversary of the U. S. campaign in Europe in WWII, the Montague Reporter will follow the men of the 300th Combat Engineer Battalion as they moved through France, Belgium and Germany from their landing in Normandy in June 1944 to VE Day on 8 May, 1945. Donald Ross, father of Jan Ross of Erving served with the 300th.

At Carentan, France in late June, the 300th built their first permanent bridge. It was a fixed, 80-foot wooden bridge. The bridge was under heavy and accurate enemy artillery fire requiring numerous reconstructions of sections of the bridge. On 27 June while working alongside his men, the commanding officer of the 300th, Major John Tucker was killed by enemy shell fire and 15 others of the 300th were wounded. The bridge was named

Dispatches from France, July 1944

The Tucker Bridge and remained in service for more than 50 years.

William McAlexander of the 300th describes what happened.



William McAlexander of the 300th Combat Engineer Battalion
"We built a bridge at Carentan, France. The Germans had us zeroed in and they were firing 88's at us at the bridge site so we took cover. That's where we lost our company commander, Major Tucker, because he came up on the bridge and told everyone you don't stop for artillery - you keep working. It's hard to do, to stop jumping in a hole. But he took a direct hit and got killed. I worked under the bridge and I knew if they hit the bridge, they would hit me too. So we had to just grin and bear it. That introduced us right away to the bad, bad parts of war.

Norman Webb of the 300th describes being under enemy fire in Carentan. "One incident at Carentan Bridge is that of a lieutenant gathering a few men and making an invasion, so to speak, on a two story home located not far from the bridge site. It seemed

that every time there were quite a few men concentrated on or near the bridge the Germans would start lobbing in artillery shells. This caused some to believe there could be a spotter informing the Germans who were obviously so far away with their artillery. I happened to be one of those the Lt. grabbed to go with him. We did not find anything at the home except some very nervous civilians.



Norman Webb of the 300th Combat Engineer Battalion

"After the bridge at Carentan was completed and in use, I was assigned the job of taking three or four men out to the bridge and more or less standing guard on the bridge and being available to repair the bridge in case it was damaged by artillery fire. The men I took with me and I had decided to grow a beard as we were actually out of training and assumed less restrictive regulations would be required. My detail and I arrived at the bridge site in the afternoon and the shelling started before we had gotten off the truck. Things set-



The Major Tucker Bridge at Carentan, Normandy, France in July of 1944

led down and the next morning Major Crandall [Major Riel Crandall was now Commanding Officer due to the death of Major Tucker] found me up near a slit trench area where we had settled in. He had come by the bridge and noticed the two men on guard had whiskers. I approached and saluted him and he stood me at attention and gave me a lecture and then said, 'I am coming back out here in about an hour and you and every man in this detail had better have a clean shave!'

"So I was getting some water ready to shave when the Germans started shelling. I felt it more important to take cover than to continue trying to shave. The artillery had hit the bridge and the road just in front of the bridge and created a crater about six feet or more in diameter and perhaps two or three feet deep. The shelling went on for thirty to forty-five minutes or more - the longest session and the worst I can remember. My slit trench was perpendicular to the hedge row next to the road and I had my

head at the hedge row end. I could feel the hedge row shake like an earthquake when a big shell would hit it coming in and explode.

"When the shelling let up, I headed for the bridge and we started to repair the bridge planks that had been hit and to fill the crater in front of the bridge. While we were working, a colonel and some other officers came up. I reported to the colonel and he was quite friendly. He grinned at me and said, 'You know, I am going to have to get after you boys about these beards.' I laughed and replied 'Well, Sir, you are a little late!' Then I told him about Major Crandall and his ultimatum and told him but for the shelling having been just about continuous since Maj. Crandall had left, we would all be clean-shaven. He got quite a chuckle out of that."

For more on the 300th Combat Engineer Battalion, go to: www.300thcombatengineersinwwii.com

La Bodega Opens on Fourth and L



La Bodega, open for business on 4th and L

BY DON CLEGG
TURNERS FALLS - Downtown Turners Falls has a new shopping experience, like none other in the area, according to Mark Canon, proprietor of La Bodega. Doors opened for La Bodega, a Latino con-

venience store, at 104 Fourth Street, on Sunday July 5th, with a Grand Opening scheduled for July 12th.

The Grand Opening will include free hotdogs, hamburgers and soda served from 11:00 a.m. until 2:00 p.m. in

front of La Bodega, in the former Patty Cakes bakery, with an outdoor fiesta and DJ featuring Latin music. Donations received at the fiesta will all be given to the Brick House teen center, Canon said.

Canon has wanted to open a bodega for a long time. As a truck driver for 15 years, Canon said helped set up many bodegas along the East Coast, and was well aware of their popularity. A survey of 588 people in seven different locations in Franklin County suggested a bodega could thrive in Turners Falls. After checking into four locations, the 104 Fourth Street address seemed to be this best fit, in the heart of downtown and convenient to the FRTA bus route.

La Bodega will feature 85% Latin food and 15% American-style convenience items, Canon said. The main distributors will be Goya Food

Products and Latino Food Distributors of Springfield.

Doing direct business with these vendors will allow La Bodega to offer very reasonable prices.

Canon has already shown his commitment to keeping things local by carrying Dean's Beans fair trade coffee, from Orange, Adam's Donuts, from Greenfield, and he is exploring the possibility of stocking local produce from area farms. Each of his four part time employees lives in downtown Turners Falls.

The opening of La Bodega was greatly assisted by the Western Massachusetts Latino Chamber of Commerce and the Community Development Corporation. Funding was provided through the Western Massachusetts Enterprise Fund in Holyoke. Hours for La Bodega will be 6:00 a.m. until 7:00 p.m., seven days a week.

Stop by!

Solar Open House!

BY CHRIS MASON
MONTAGUE CITY - Stop by Thursday afternoon, July 9th, to congratulate Montague's local energy heroes! Tina Clarke and Doug Stevens of Montague City (owners) and Bic Corsa (builder) have won the top award in the statewide Zero Energy Challenge for the design and construction of a new super energy efficient home in Montague City. The house produces more energy than it needs!

To find out how they did it, come by, tour the house, and ask your questions. They are holding a special open house on Thursday from 4 to 7 p.m.

If you are driving from Montague Center, take Greenfield Road toward Montague City Road. Just after the sewage treatment plant and the bike path, look for a sign on your right for the open house and turn right onto Sherman Drive. From Montague City Road, turn onto Greenfield Road, then left on Sherman Drive.

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JESSICA HARMON ILLUSTRATION

BY FRED CICETTI

LEONIA, NJ – Q: *I used to get poison ivy a lot when I was a kid. As an adult, I can't remember getting it. Do you develop an immunity to poison ivy?*

Most people have some level of sensitivity to toxic plants. It's the world's most common allergy.

Sensitivity to poison ivy, oak and sumac tends to decline with age. People who got rashes as children usually see their sensitivity decrease by early adulthood. People who were once allergic to poison plants may

even lose their sensitivity entirely later in life.

The irritating substance is the same for each plant, an oily sap called urushiol (u-ROO-she-ol). If the sap gets on your skin, a rash will usually begin to appear a day or two later. The skin will become swollen and red. Then, small blisters will begin to form, and the skin will itch. The rash will begin to go away after about a week.

If you contact a poison plant, use soap and water to wash yourself, your clothing and anything else that may have touched the plant such as garden tools, walking sticks, golf clubs or camping gear. Rubbing alcohol is an effective solvent for urushiol, which can remain active for a long time.

To treat an itchy rash, you can use calamine lotion, hydrocortisone creams and oral antihista-

mines. Cool showers, wet compresses and oatmeal baths relieve symptoms.

Get medical attention if you are feverish, your condition is not improving, the rash is widespread, blisters are oozing pus, or the rash is in your eyes, mouth or on your genitals. Prescription medication may be needed to reduce the swelling and itch.

The best prevention methods are avoiding poison plants, covering up when you know you might be exposed, and applying an over-the-counter product that contains bentoquatam, which helps prevent urushiol from penetrating the skin.

Aluminum chlorohydrate, an ingredient of many deodorants, can prevent urushiol from irritating the skin. If you don't have a skin-barrier product with you before going where there might

be poison plants, spray deodorant on your arms and legs, but don't get any on your face.

A few misconceptions.

- Poison plant rashes can't be spread from person to person.

- The rash will only occur where the plant oil has touched the skin, so a person with poison ivy can't spread it on the body by scratching.

- The fluid in blisters is not plant oil and cannot spread the rash.

How can you identify these toxic plants?

Poison Ivy

Poison ivy is found throughout the United States except Alaska, Hawaii, and parts of the West Coast. It grows as a vine or shrub. Each leaf on poison ivy has three smaller leaflets with smooth or toothed edges. Leaves are reddish in spring, green in summer, and yellow, orange, or red in fall. Poison ivy may have

white berries.

Poison Oak

Poison oak grows as a low shrub in the eastern United States, and in tall clumps or long vines on the Pacific Coast. Poison oak has fuzzy green leaves in clusters of three; they are lobed or deeply toothed with rounded tips. Its leaves resemble the leaves of an oak tree. Poison oak may have yellow-white berries.

Poison Sumac

Poison sumac grows as a tall shrub or small tree in bogs or swamps in Northeast, Midwest, and parts of the Southeast. Each leaf has clusters of seven to 13 smooth-edged leaflets. Leaves are orange in spring, green in summer, and yellow, orange, or red in fall. Poison sumac may have yellow-white berries.

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

from **OLIVER** pg 1

next mark. That might just be Bob Delaney, well cast as Mr. Brownlow, the kindly gent who is not about to let a minor thing like the theft of a pocket handkerchief get the better of his humanitarian instincts. Marvin Shedd plays a comic and clueless doctor paying a house call to Brownlow, to look in on a winsome young urchin he has taken under his wing.

And who, pray tell, is the winsome young lad at the center of all this brouhaha? Why that would be 10-year old Emma

Henderson, who picked up a Cockney accent to play the part of *Oliver!* as quickly as the Artful Dodger could relieve you of your pocket watch. Henderson is a diamond in the rough in more ways than one, and her plaintive alto will



Emma Henderson plays the title role in the County Players production of Oliver! opening this weekend at the Shea.

pierce the most hardened heart on such well-worn but much-beloved classics as "Where Is Love?"

Where indeed? It is always when things look darkest, that a ray of light shines through, and even so as the wicked Sikes slaps and mauls and has his way with Nancy. She determines not

to let this wicked life devour the innocence that Oliver represents in her dreary demimonde. Can she save the lad?

There is only one way to find out.

Tickets can be reserved at the Shea box office by calling 863-2281, extension 1. Friday and Saturday shows start at 8 p.m. this weekend and next; Sunday, July 19th ends the run with a matinee at 2:00.

Reserve one ticket for yourself, and after that, call back and tell 'em, "Please, sir, I want some more!"



OPENING from pg 11

been met with criticism as well as support.

"When prices per barrel went back down, all of a sudden people were saying the geothermal didn't look as efficient," said Hanold, who added she believes an ultimate peak in the cost of oil is inevitable, thus rendering the station's system cost-efficient in the long term. Though the financial benefit may not be apparent immediately.

"I wouldn't expect the pay-back for the added cost of our wells and such to be better than ten years, at least not by my calculations," said Burbank. "I'm optimistic that we'll do pretty well," he added.

Members of the building committee agreed that the construction of the new station has gone smoothly as the result of cooperation among working groups and the dedication of many individuals.

"This is a committee that has always been extremely focused

on annual operating costs and wanting to be very conservative, and to look at the impact on the town and its future," Hanold said.

"We've just tried to spend the town's money as effectively as possible," agreed Burbank.

Talking about bringing the project in so far under budget, the town's project manager for the police station construction, Ted Fiffy, was modest. "We hit the bidding at an ideal time," he said. "It was approved by the town when the economy was healthy." During the ensuring economic turmoil, Fiffy said, construction costs have declined while the availability of contractors has gone up. "And the quality is very, very good," he said.

Fiffy also commended Chief Godin and police chief Ray Zukowski for being "masterful" in pursuing grants from federal and state agencies.

"They've both really had their heads up and have been paying attention to all kinds of funding programs out there," Fiffy said.

The town initially received a \$200,000 grant from the state Executive Office of Public Safety, to help defray the cost of construction. In addition, the police and fire departments jointly received an \$80,000 grant from the Department of Homeland Security to purchase an emergency back-up generator, now installed on the west side of the complex, large enough to power both facilities, at no cost to the town. Also, the police department received a \$17,000 federal justice assistance grant for purchasing furniture for the new station. Finally, the fire and police department received two grants from the state Department of Public Safety, totaling \$19,000, to help pay for the new \$26,000 dispatch console.

That's the good news. The bad news is the town had been sold on the project partly by assurances that Montague would apply for and receive a \$700,000 federal Community Development Block Grant to help reduce the

building's cost. The town applied for the grant, and got zero. Fortunately, the project appears to be coming in under budget by an almost identical amount.

Chief Zukowski said an open house will be held for the town to view the completed police station on Saturday, August 29th. The next week, his department will move in, and they can't wait.

"It's a very big day for us," said Zukowski, as the finish line approaches on what has been a 40-year quest by three successive police chiefs to gain the backing of the town for a new police station. The cramped quarters the department presently occupies has none of the amenities the new station will offer in terms of security for staff and the public, elbow room for duty officers to work, safe storage of evidence, to say nothing of energy efficiency. Rodents, floods, sewer line breaks, manacled suspects in common hallways, ancient cells, and computer breakdowns have all been recent stress factors

added to already difficult conditions in the town hall basement, where the department works now.

"The officers sneak into the new station at night and look around," said Zukowski. "My word, what a difference!" he said, putting it mildly.

Work will not yet be finished at the new station when the new geothermal system is switched on. Burbank said he hopes to closely observe the station's operation for at least a year, in order to assess and compare its energy consumption with that of other similar, high-performance buildings. Such auditing will be made relatively simple by the building's Direct Digital Control system, and adjustments will be made according to the data collected.

It's just one of the many ways in which the new police station should enable the department to work more effectively and efficiently for the town of Montague.



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BY DAVID DETMOLD -

I never liked Tom Jones when I was growing up, and for good reason. My girlfriend in 7th grade had a huge crush on him, and she watched every episode of *This Is Tom Jones*, his weekly TV show, and gushed over his clothes, his dimples, his beady eyes, and of course, his sexy voice. He was a difficult act to compete with.

Finally catching up to Tom Jones live 40 years later, at the Pines Theater in Leeds on June 22nd, I wonder why I even tried.

At 69, he hasn't lost a thing. His voice is still an irresistible combo of leonine growl and sultry croon, he's still got that cheeky smile, those dimples, he's got the moves, he's got the power, and women are still tearing their undergarments off at the sight of him and hurling them onto the stage. It's not fair.

He's got that "Old Black Magic" intact, (he sang a muscular, uptempo version of that Johnny Mercer standard) and even promised the crowd that it would not rain during the course of the concert. He kept that promise too.

While my girlfriend would lose track of her homework assignments getting dewy-eyed over Tom Jones swaying and singing "What's New Pussycat," in front of a full band, with his bow tie casually undone, suggesting he was ready to take the rest of clothes off, and perhaps hers as well, as soon as the show finished airing on a Friday night, I used to spend after school afternoons in the TV room watching Star Trek. I know, not cool.

It occurred to me last week, watching my rival tear through "It's Not Unusual" and "She's a Lady" with undiminished vigor, that Tom Jones bears an uncanny resemblance to William Shatner.



JIM NEILL PHOTO

**TOM JONES
LIVE AT LEEDS**

They both strode boldly over the line between camp and cool. They both seemed amused with themselves as they cast their spell on every kind of female, terrestrial or extraterrestrial, and they both favored skin-tight clothes, tuxedos or space suits, whichever.

The similarity ends there. Shatner has released a number of albums in his otherworldly recording career, beginning with *The Transformed Man*, featuring spoken word renditions of "Lucy in the Sky with Diamonds" and "Hey, Mr. Tambourine Man" over orchestral arrangements, establishing himself as one of the world's worst vocalists of all time. Tom Jones, whatever else you can say about the man, has a great voice, as he proved for the millionth time as soon he hit the stage in Leeds, belting out a full

throttle version of Tommy James and the Shondells' "I'm Alive".

As if there were any doubt. Animal attraction was rife in the humid air, you could smell it everywhere beneath the pines. Women who were there with their wives and women who were there with their husbands all swarmed the stage shamelessly, some waving Decca album covers from decades past. And yes, the man was knee-deep in knickers before the show closed, with a powerhouse rendition of Shocking Blue's "Venus!" followed by the disco subversion of

"Sex Bomb".

In between he gave his eleven piece band a full-court workout, with the horn section shining on the Mexican-flavored polka of "Delilah," Brian Monroney uncoiling a slinky wah-wah riff on his Telecaster on "The Road" (off Jones' well-reviewed new release *24 Hours*), and gorgeous go-go girls Sharon Hendrix and Darelle Holden giving it their all on "I'll Never Fall in Love Again." They never stopped shimmying.

Jones stripped down to the basics on Willie Dixon's "300

Pounds of Heavenly Joy" (he said Howlin' Wolf originally did that song, but when Jones covered it he shaved it down to 200 Pounds of Joy), and then got down even dirtier with Earl Thomas' "Git Me Some." He put a new gloss on Bill Withers' "Grandma's Hands," with the old Welsh trick of pronouncing every syllable in every line (never heard those words before) and stood back and let the band work on Jerry Lee's "End of the Road."

But mostly, he swayed and crooned and watched the women swoon, just like always. Dammit.

ERVING BYLAW MEETING

Erving planning board has scheduled an informational meeting at 5:30 p.m. on Thursday, July 16th at Town Hall, 12 East Main St., Erving, to discuss changes to the bylaws that would allow gas stations and restaurant drive-thru windows.

PUBLIC HEARING

MONTAGUE CITY - The Montague Parks & Recreation Department will hold a public meeting in regards to developing a park in Montague City. The meeting will be held on Wednesday, July 22nd at 7:00 p.m. at the Harmony Masonic Lodge, located at 20 Masonic Avenue in Montague City. Public participation is welcomed.

MCTV Channel 17 Afternoon/Evening Schedule 7/10 to 7/16

Visit www.montaguema.net for complete schedule

Friday, July 10	Birds of Prey.	Biomass Plant	5:30 p.m. Carlos W. Anderson "Get a Clue"
1:30 p.m. Senior Center: Ruth Harcovitz	4:00 p.m. Discovery Center: Fossil Tracks	9:00 p.m. Montague Update: John Ancil	6:30 p.m. Coffee House: Jeff Martell
2:30 p.m. Seabrook 1977.	5:00 p.m. Gill Arts & Craft Fair 2008	10:00 p.m. Naturalist Laurie Sanders	8:00 p.m. Coffee House: Rosemary Caine
4:00 p.m. Reflecting Pool Interview with filmmaker	6:00 p.m. Physician Focus July 2009	11:00 p.m. My Man Godfrey	9:30 p.m. Discovery Center: Emus
5:00 p.m. Coffee House: Rosemary Caine	6:30 p.m. Poetry Music Jam for Montague Reporter	Tuesday, July 14	10:30 p.m. Discovery Center: Northern Bats
7:00 p.m. GMRSD 7/7/09	7:30 p.m. Positive Profiles in Courage	12:30 p.m. Zeitgeist The Movie	Thursday, July 16
Saturday, July 11	8:30 p.m. The Looming Crisis in Oil Depletion	2:30 p.m. Wisdom Way Solar Village Documentary	1:30 p.m. Tiny Tim
2:00 p.m. TWB Ergonomics	10:30 p.m. Rosner Car Show	3:30 p.m. Wisdom Way Solar Village Studio Panel Talk	2:30 p.m. TWB Growing a Green Community
3:00 p.m. Turners Falls vs New Leadership	Monday, July 13	4:00 p.m. White House Chronicle #1023	3:30 p.m. Underground Railway Concert 07
5:00 p.m. This is Montague Dec 06	1:30 p.m. Loose Change	4:30 p.m. Valley Idol Finals	5:00 p.m. White House Chronicle #1021-1022
5:30 p.m. They're Still There	4:00 p.m. Coffee House: Rosemary Caine	7:00 p.m. GMRSD 7/7/09	6:00 p.m. Funny thing happened on way to the moon
6:30 p.m. Spirit of Lake Pleasant	6:00 p.m. MCTV Video Camp 2007	11:30 p.m. An Inside Look into Iran	7:00 p.m. Select Board 7/6/09
8:30 p.m. The Flow of Time	6:30 p.m. Montague Update- Susan Shilliday	Wednesday, July 15	8:00 p.m. Zero
9:30 p.m. Epics at the vous	7:00 p.m. Select Board 7/6/09	1:00 p.m. Beat The Devil	10:00 p.m. Mark Beaubien: Biomass Plant
10:30 p.m. Zero	8:00 p.m. Mark Beaubien:	2:30 p.m. Both Sides of the Bridge	
Sunday, July 12		3:30 p.m. Changing Face of Turners Falls	
1:30 p.m. Both Sides of the Bridge			
2:30 p.m. Discovery Center			

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ARTS & ENTERTAINMENT



FRIDAY, JUNE 10th

Great Falls Coffeehouse-Featuring Lynne Walker & Charlie Hunting. An evening of show tunes & turn-of-the-century popular music, 7 p.m. in the historic & acoustically rich Great Hall of the Discovery Center. Sliding scale suggested donation to benefit the Friends of the GFDC is \$6 to \$12, free to children.

Deja Brew, Wendell: *Nexus*, harmonic, eclectic rock, 9 to 11 p.m.

FRIDAY & SATURDAY, JULY 10th & 11th

The Shea Stage in The Country Players' production of Lionel Bart's musical *Oliver!* Based on Charles Dickens' classic novel *Oliver Twist*. Opens Friday, July 10 at 8 p.m. and continues July 11, 17, and 18 with a Sunday matinee on July 19 at 2 p.m. Tickets can be reserved at The Shea box office in Turners Falls by calling 863-2281 ext. 1 Keep your hand on your pocket watch, as the pickpockets take to the stage.

1794 Meetinghouse, New Salem: Talent, melody, rhythm, harmony and original composition in vocal and instrumental music linked to a special ingredient - the strength and beauty of modern independent women. *Indiegirl Showcase*. On Friday beginning at 7:30 p.m. Continues Saturday at 7:30 p.m. \$10 for adults/seniors, children 12 and under free of charge. For the line-up, go to www.1794meetinghouse.org.

SATURDAY, JULY 11th

Athol Bird & Nature Club: Butterflies for Beginners. Butterfly expert David Small and expert butterfly gardener Susan Heinricher will offer an introduction to the wonderful world of butterflying beginning at 8:30 a.m. at the Millers River Environmental Center, 100 Main St.,



Great Falls Discovery Center Coffeehouse present Lynne Walker and Charlie Hunting singing "Songs of Summer" Friday, July 10, 7 p.m. in the Historic Great Hall at the Great Falls Discovery Center, Turners Falls. "Deep River"

Athol. Info: (978) 249-0246.

The Shea Theater's 2nd Annual Tines & Tunes Festival! 12 to 8 p.m. in Peskeomskut Park, Turners Falls. A family-friendly festival to benefit the Shea Theater. Live entertainment begins at noon and continues all day, with performances including: cast of The Country Players production of *Oliver!*, the 2009 Valley Idol and Valley Idol Jr. Winners, Katie Clark and The Green River Band, Still Creek, AmeriMF-Cana, face painting, balloon art and refreshments. Free admission.

Route 63 Roadhouse, Millers Falls: *Donna Lee DePrille Band*, 9:30 p.m. Great rock & roll, dance, dance, dance!

Deja Brew, Wendell: Music By *Richard Chase Group*, acoustic, folk rock, 9 to 11 p.m. Then After the *Wendell Misfit Prom Party* with Waffles! 10 p.m. All you Boomers better bring a note from your Mom and don't forget to turn your keys in at the door! (For Prom tickets and info contact Donna at the Wendell store (978) 544-8646).

At the Bookmill, Montague Center: *Brooke Brown Saracino*. Selected to perform in this year's Falcon Ridge Folk Festival Emerging Artist Showcase. 8 p.m. \$10. Also playing: Dan Burke of Orange Ocean www.theorangeocean.com

SUNDAY, JULY 12th
Route 63 Roadhouse, Millers Falls: *Second Sunday Comedy*, 3 Comics, lots of laughs, free, 7:30 p.m.

Deja Brew, Wendell: *Steve Crow, Peter Kim & Sturgis Cunningham*, acoustic trio/warped Americana, 7:30 to 10 p.m.

Ethan Bremner, a classically trained tenor, sings popular operatic music at the 1794 Meetinghouse, New Salem, 4 p.m. Adults/seniors \$10. Children 12 and under free.

At the Bookmill, Montague Center: *Bell & The Bees*, blend of folk-pop, country, and classical. And *Gracious Calamity*. Also

performing: *Dragon Turtle*, the atmospheric musical collaboration of Brian Lightbody and Tom Asselin. 8 p.m., Free/Pass-the-hat.

TUESDAY, JULY 14th
At The Rendezvous, Turners Falls: *Knit & Craft Night*, free juke box, 7 p.m.

WEDNESDAY, JULY 15th
The Great Falls Farmers Market, corner of 2nd Street and Avenue A, Turners Falls. 3 to 6 p.m.

Deja Brew, Wendell: *Knitting & Crafts Night* - 7 to 10 p.m. Any craft and any skill level welcome. Get a chance to win our monthly crafty gift with every \$5 you spend at Craft night.

Super Fun Bowling Club. Non-competitive bowling club for all ages and abilities! 7:30 p.m. at the French King Entertainment Center. This week's theme: *Mustache Mania!* Come in "disguise" with a fake mustache! Held every other Wednesday. www.superfunbowling.com.

Social Ballroom Lessons every Wednesday 7:30 to 8:30 p.m. Dance till 9 p.m. \$8 per person. Come solo or bring a partner. At the Montague Elks, Turners Falls. July classes: *Waltz!* Info: call Frances, (413) 885-8888.

THURSDAY, JULY 16th
Flaming Dragons open practice 4 p.m. to 6 p.m. at The Brickhouse, 24 Third St. Turners Falls. We want



Anne Price and Steve Siffet do a set on the lesser known songs of Woody Guthrie, "Woody Revisited", as well as their original work at the Echo Lake Concert Series, Leverett Town Hall, 7:30 p.m. on Saturday, July 18th.



musicians of all styles.

Music on the Patio at the Leverett Library, 75 Montague Rd. 7 to 8 p.m. (indoors if rain) This week Women's barbershop music with *Straight from the Heart Quartet*, sing-a-long. Info: (413) 548 9220.

Coop Concerts, Energy Park, Miles St. Greenfield 6 to 8 p.m. www.coopconcerts.org. Featured this week: *Tom Carroll, Jenny Goodspeed, Pat & Tex LaMountain*

Route 63 Roadhouse, Millers Falls: Open Mic w/hosts P. Kim on bass, Jimmy Arnold on drums, 9 p.m.

Deja Brew, Wendell: *Wailin' Dave Robinson, Tommy Filault and Company*, blues-based roots music, 8 to 10 p.m.

Live jazz every Thursday. Treat yourself, bring a friend. Great food and service. *Ristorante DiPaolo*, Turners Falls. 6:30-9:30 pm. (413) 863-4441

FRIDAY, JULY 17th
Route 63 Roadhouse, Millers Falls: *John Cantalini Band*, rock & roll dance.

Deja Brew, Wendell: *Angela Easterling*, Country Folk Singer songwriter on tour, performing tracks from her newly released CD *Blacktop Road*. www.angela-easterling.com 9 to 11 p.m.

At the Bookmill, Montague Center: *Crystalline Roses*, thoughtful, progressive, Fahey-inspired pieces for banjo and guitar. A local treasure. Justin Pigott with Peter Bonneman, 8 p.m. \$5 adv / \$7 door

SATURDAY, JULY 18th
Artist's Reception with Bob Hallock in the Great Hall of the Great Falls Discovery Center, Turners Falls. 1 to 3 p.m.

Geology on the Riverboat with Massachusetts Department of Conservation & Recreation Interpreter Steve Winters. Geology interpretation is free and will be provided by DCR Interpreter Steve Winters. Quinnetucket II boat leaves 11 am for a 90-minute ride. Limited seating. For ages 10 and older. Reservations required. Call 1-800-859-2960 to book a ride.

The Echo Lake Concert Series at the town hall, 9 Montague Rd., Leverett presents New York singer/songwriters, *Steve Siffet* and *Anne Price*, 7:30 pm. Admission: \$8 to \$10.

Route 63 Roadhouse, Millers Falls: *D.I.X.* with *Bill Dyer, Paul Interlande* and *Ronnie Xeno*, rock & roll, 9:30 p.m.

Deja Brew, Wendell: *Blame It on Tina*, 9 to 11 p.m.

At the Bookmill, Montague Center: *The Dhamma Brothers* Award winning film tells an inspiring story of human potential and transformation as it documents the stories of a group of prison inmates who enter into an arduous and intensive Vipassana meditation program. 8 p.m., free. Followed by Q&A

ONGOING

On display at The Discovery Center, Turners Falls: *Black and White Landscape Photography* by Robert Hallock. On display through July.

Great Falls Discovery Center days and hours are daily from 10 a.m. to 4 p.m.

CALL FOR ENTRIES

Living Along the River - a Songwriting Contest. Presented by the Connecticut River Watershed Council. Looking for great songs about the Connecticut River and its tributaries. For contest rules and entry forms go to www.criver.org. **Deadline July 15.** (413) 772-2020 x 203

Keep your hand on your pocket watch, as the pickpockets take to The Shea Stage in The Country Players' production of Lionel Bart's musical "Oliver!" Based on Charles Dickens' classic novel "Oliver Twist"

Opens Friday, July 10 at 8 p.m. and continues July 11, 17, 18 with a Sunday matinee on July 19 at 2 p.m. Tickets can be reserved at The Shea box office in Turners Falls by calling 863-2281 ext. 1

HOT SPOT TEEN CENTER

MONDAYS - Drop-in, 3 to 6 p.m.
TUES & WEDS - Ongoing Music Project, 3 to 6 p.m.
THURS - Drop-in, 3 to 6 p.m. & Movie Night, 6 to 8 p.m.
Free (except some trips), open to local teens. Some require permission slips.
Info: Jared at 863-9559.
Hot Spot Teen Center is in The Brick House
24 Third Street, Turners Falls, 01376



www.gardencinemas.net

Showtimes for Friday, July 10th to Tuesday, July 14th

1. PUBLIC ENEMIES R in DTS sound DAILY 12:00 3:00 6:30 9:30
2. TRANSFORMERS: REVENGE OF THE FALLEN PG13 in DTS sound DAILY 12:00 3:00 6:30 9:30
3. ICE AGE: DAWN OF THE DINOSAURS PG DAILY 12:00 3:00 6:30 9:00
4. THE HANGOVER R DAILY 12:15 3:15 6:45 9:15
5. THE PROPOSAL PG13 DAILY 12:15 3:15 6:45 9:15
6. I LOVE YOU BETH COOPER PG13 in DTS sound DAILY 12:30 3:30 7:00 9:30
7. BRUNO R in DTS sound DAILY 12:30 3:30 7:00 9:30
Midnight July 14th HARRY POTTER & THE HALF BLOOD PRINCE



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Friday, 7/10 9 to 11 p.m. *Nexus* Harmonic Eclectic Rock
Saturday, 7/11, 9 to 11 p.m. *Richard Chase Group* Folk Rock
Sunday, 7/12 7:30 to 10 p.m. *Steve Crow, Peter Kim & Sturgis Cunningham* Warped Americana
Thursday, 7/16 8 to 10 p.m. *Wailin' Dave Robinson, Tommy Filault & Co.* Blues Based Roots

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THURS: 7/16 | 9 PM | \$5
Jim Olsen and Friends Dress Rehearsal (dj & live music)

MON: 7/20 | 9 PM | \$5
The LPs return w *Tom Waits' Rain Dogs* w. Peter Mulvey

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Local Nature Notes *July: Things to See, Hear, and Do*

BY JEN AUDLEY

WEST DEERFIELD – The moon, waning until July 22nd (it was full on Tuesday morning, July 7th) and then waxing again.

Daylilies. The ancestors of these hardy perennials came from east Asia, but were brought to New England mostly by settlers from Europe. The orange daylilies you see in many of the sidewalk planters on Avenue A in Turners Falls are the most common type, *Hemerocallis fulva*, also called Tiger Lily. The botanical name for daylilies, *Hemerocallis*, is derived from Greek words meaning “beauty” and “day,” a reference to the fact that each flower blooms for just one day. However, because each stalk contains many buds, a single plant can bloom for weeks.

Ragweed. This polliniferous plant started popping up in open spaces all over the place earlier this month. It's easy to recognize – look for it in your garden, on lawns, beside sidewalks and along roads. If you pity hay fever sufferers, pull it out before it flowers! (Ragweed pollen, cast out of the plant's unassuming

small green flowers, is the culprit behind many people's late summer and early fall allergies.)

Wild and cultivated berries, appearing more or less in this order: black raspberries, red raspberries, yellow raspberries, blueberries, and blackberries. Many songbirds shift away from the high protein, insect-focused diet they followed when feeding their young in May and June and start eating lots of berries at this time of year. The sugar in berries helps them build fat reserves they'll use during migration in the fall.

Ducklings, goslings, and cygnets. On a recent trip to Rhode Island, I saw lots of young ducks, geese, and swans. All were still sporting quite a bit of



Ragweed before flowering.

fuzzy down and just beginning to grow in their flight feathers, so they stayed close to their adult guardians: the ducklings following close behind one female, the goslings protected by a gaggle of many adults, and four cygnets generally led by their mother, with their father keeping a lookout and bringing up the rear. I wondered why I haven't been seeing more young waterbirds around here. Have you?

Crickets and katydids. Hot, humid summer nights are the best time to hear night-singing insects. There are many different types, and they all make distinctive sounds. The Snowy Tree Cricket is the “thermometer cricket” that chirps more times per minute the hotter the night. The one that makes the raspy “katy-did, katy-didn't” sound is the True Katydid. Other, less famous species include these fabulously-named creatures: the Slightly Musical Conehead, the Slender Meadow Katydid, and the Redheaded Bush Cricket.

Sunset, right now at about 8:30 p.m., with sunrise at about 5:20 a.m. Daylight hours in July

decrease by about one minute each day.

Learn More:

Morning Nature Walks: Wed. & Fri. 7:30 - 9:30 a.m.

Start the day observing nature in Turners Falls! Join staff from the Great Falls Discovery Center in an amble over paved bike trails and village sidewalks. Walks are designed to last about 90 minutes, never covering more than about two miles over level pavement. Meet at the bird bath outside the main entrance to the Discovery Center. For more information, call (413) 863.3221 or visit www.greatfallsma.org.

Explore the Montague Sandplain: Sat. July 11, 9:00 a.m. - noon

Join Massachusetts Department of Conservation and Recreation interpreter Steve Winters and hike the Montague Plains for a general introduction to the flora, fauna, and geology of this amazing and threatened habitat. Easy-to-intermediate difficulty. Bring water, sunscreen, insect repellent, and binoculars. Free, registration required. For more

information or to register call (413) 863-3221.

Geology on the Riverboat:

Sat. July 18, 11 a.m. - 12:30

Take a ride on the Quinnetucket II to see local geology from the Connecticut River's point of view. Geology interpretation will be provided by DCR interpreter Steve Winters. Boat leaves 11:00 a.m. for a 90-minute interpretive riverboat cruise. Limited seating. For ages 10 and older. Reservations required. Call (800) 859-2960 to book a seat. Adults: \$12, Seniors: \$10, Children: \$6

Astronomy Conjunction:

Fri. & Sat, July 24th & 25th

Northfield Mountain will host the 27th Annual Connecticut River Valley Astronomer's Conjunction. Enjoy the camaraderie of amateur astronomers learning and observing together. As in past years, the weekend will be jam-packed full of slide presentations, talks, and night sky viewing through telescopes of all shapes and sizes. For ages 12 and older, registration required. Check out the conjunction website at: www.philharmonington.net/astroconjunction/

Canalside Nature

BY DAVID DETMOLD

GREAT FALLS – Whether or not he is alone, Massachusetts Department of Conservation and Recreation naturalist Steve Winters faithfully carries on his interpretive nature walks each Wednesday and Friday morning, departing from the bird bath in front of the main entrance to the Discovery Center at 7:30 a.m.

Sometimes as many as three people join him for these personalized inspections of the local geology, flora and fauna along the canal, the River, or the byways of downtown. Sometimes fewer. On some outings, he is accompanied only by a comprehensive Audobon field guide to New England plants and birds and animals.

But what if the life form being inspected is neither animal, vegetable, nor, by definition, mineral? We'll get right back to that.

This is not the first summer Winters has been leading guided tours of the natural world within walking distance of the Avenue, as faithful readers will recall.

“The walks are calm and relaxing,” admitted Winters. “They're kind of addictive.” He continues leading them until Labor Day.

What about all this rain?

“It's been good for the wildflowers.”

And the slime mold.

“Slime mold is kind of a fungus,” explained the bearded, bespectacled naturalist, as he stared down at a goodly specimen of the amorphous yellow glop spreading in the mulch beside the Center's service entrance.

Winter's calm, abstracted mien bears some resemblance to Sigmund Freud. “It defies our typical classification. It is neither plant nor animal.”

Well, what the heck is it then?

“It pops up overnight. It might be gone tomorrow. It moves like a glacier, disperses its spores and drifts, grows along its edge and dies away behind.”

Further research revealed that it's not really a fungus, either, but some sort of weird unicellular, or acellular mass of naked protoplasm, that feeds on bacteria on decaying vegetative matter. If you can call it feeding.

It looks like someone got careless with a can of expanding foam. Or dropped a bag of Peeps on a hot skillet.

“That's a nice way to start a nature walk,” said Winters, as we headed off toward River.

The canal was full to the brim from weeks of soaking rain funneling down the watershed. It rushed and ran in its concrete

channel, twisting in sinewy currents, a thing of raw power, pure oxygen, and twice as much hydrogen. Tree swallows arced and pirouetted above the surface, catching insects on the fly, and generally enjoying themselves more than other flying creatures.

Across the brokeback footbridge, a wary specimen of *Sylvilagus floridanus* eyed us, her liquid black pupil fixed timorously in a pale ring of white fur. She hopped off as we approached, white cottontail bounding away through the tall grass. But one of her offspring endured our approach, cropping clover close to the River wall.

The young one's ears stood straight up, shafts of sunlight rendering them translucent, dewy in the vanishing mist. When we got too close, he scooted under the chain link fence, and continued his breakfast, a few away from us, unconcerned.

Tall spires of mullein, with scattered yellow florets, stood sentinel around the grassy lawn. Scarab beetles were in fair supply on the green ragweed, along with a lone ladybug. Common St. Johnswort was common, its cheery butter-colored flowers revealing its reputed medicinal qualities as a natural anti-depressant. The spreading white umbrells of Queen Anne's Lace nodded on tall pylons of green,

each flower a botanical miracle of construction, with the dark central nubbin representing the Queen lost within her lacy ruff.

We walked for an hour along the canal, and saw many things: evidence of ancient rivers washing sand and sediment into an ancient lake, creating thick sandstone deposits, undergirded by crumbling washes of shale where the thin-bedded lacustrine sands settled on the shore 20,000 years earlier. Or maybe it was the other way around; you'd have to ask Winters. Geology is his specialty, and he has authored a self-guided geology walking tour of Turners Falls to help ground you on your rambles. (You can pick it up at town hall, the Carnegie Library, Jay K's Liquors, or the Discovery Center.)

Standing on the bike path, we saw how black and white birch had rooted in the shale beds beneath the back wall of the Discovery Center. Then an alarm bell sounded across the way, and flashing lights from the door of the Strathmore Mill distracted us.

Three minutes later, the fire chief drove down the access road in his purple car, followed 30 seconds later by one fire engine, then another.

er. Soon, the building inspector arrived. Turned out, a lightning strike the night before had knocked out power to the hydro generating plant on the ground floor of the mill, disabling the sprinkler system at the mill's north end. It was the second time in as many weeks the fire department had responded to a false alarm at the Strathmore.

We studied a variety of ferns, while this was going on, including sensitive ferns and hay scented ferns, interspersed with ripe blackberries. Daisy fleabane bloomed with a myriad of tiny stars. On the lot where the new bank building will soon be built, Caterpillars crawled up huge mounds of earth. Three crows stood in a dead oak tree beside the flooded railbed. One preened the feathers of another. All three ignored our passing, as something quite beneath their dignity.



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