



HAPPY FOURTH OF JULY

No Newspaper Next Week

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The Montague Reporter

YEAR 7 – NO. 38

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THE VOICE OF THE VILLAGES

JUNE 25, 2009

SCHOOL COMMITTEES TAKE THE LEAD IN REGIONALIZATION DISCUSSION

BY DAVID DETMOLD

TURNERS FALLS – In January, Mary Kociela, then chair of the Gill-Montague school committee, convened a meeting of representatives from the 15 school committees in Franklin county. Since then, the group has met five times, and, as of May, formally elected representatives from each of the local school committees have met and formed the Franklin County School Committee Caucus.

At the June 22nd meeting in the conference room of the Turners Falls High School, with 16 in attendance, Glen Koocher, the director of the Massachusetts Association of School Committees, compared the Department of Education to the King of England, and the FCSCC to the Committees of Correspondence of pre-Revolutionary War New England. The king, Koocher implied, has been failing to heed the petitions of the colonists about taxation without representation. Koocher, see **SCHOOL** pg 5



Juanita Caldwell Retires from G-M Senior Center Post

BY DON CLEGG

TURNERS FALLS – Juanita “Bunny” Caldwell is retiring on June 30th as the director of the Gill-Montague senior center after 12 years. Over 70 people attended Caldwell’s retirement party on Tuesday afternoon, where Allan Adie of Gill said it all. “Bunny has made this senior center.”

Bunny was asked what she is most proud of in her 12 years as director. She came up with a long list of all the services she offered at the center to assist the elderly. She said she especially enjoyed the self-defense class for seniors offered by the Montague police

department, and the senior center Halloween Parties.

Caldwell was particularly proud of the range of activities available to seniors at the center. “There is always something going on,” Caldwell said.

At Caldwell’s retirement party, Pat Allen of the Montague select-board said, “Bunny reminds me of the Energizer Bunny. She is always smiling.”

Mary Ciechomski, who was on the Council on Aging when Caldwell was first hired, recalled how Caldwell first agreed to take

see **CALDWELL** pg 3

Erving Senior Center Fails By Four Votes – Again

BY DAVID DETMOLD

ERVING – Once again, the proposal to build a new \$2.3 million senior center for the town of Erving has failed by four votes.

On May 6th, annual town meeting fell four votes shy of the two-thirds majority needed to approve the senior center: 57 to 35.

Although there had been some speculation in town that fewer people would turn out for a subsequent special town meeting, leaving proponents a clearer shot at passing the measure, in fact on June 22nd both the ‘yeas’

and ‘nays’ increased their showing, and the senior center again fell four votes shy of the needed two-thirds margin: 64 to 38.

Town moderator Rich Peabody started the meeting out by saying the May 6th vote, noteworthy because neither the moderator nor the printed warrant had mentioned that a two-thirds majority would be needed to pass the \$1 million bond to help pay for the senior center, “just didn’t feel right.” Peabody said he hoped everyone would be able to leave *this* vote feeling, see **VOTES** pg 10



Voters in Erving cast their ballots for – and against – the proposed \$2.3 million Senior Center on Monday night. The proposal failed by just four votes.

Theater Review New Century Theater’s 19th Season is Red Hot with Neil Simon’s Last of the Red Hot Lovers



Buzz Roddy as Barney Cashman

BY SUDI NIMMS

NORTHAMPTON – For nineteen seasons now, New Century Theatre (NCT) in Northampton has been producing professional and affordable summer theatre in the Pioneer Valley. In fact, their motto is: “Broadway in your

Backyard.”

As this season’s opener amply underscores, there is no need to go to New York City to take in some great live theater. And this a season of comedy.

Producing director Sam Rush points out NCT’s nineteenth sea-

son, “is, by design, meant to bring a little more humor into all our lives. If laughter is the best medicine, then perhaps the four offerings this summer may be just what the doctor ordered.”

Neil Simon’s “Last of the Red Hot Lovers”, NCT’s season opener, is written for people who love to laugh, and lovingly directed by NCT co-founder Jack Neary. If you are at all familiar with Simon’s witty dialogue replete with zingy repartee in some of his other famous works, “The Odd Couple,” “Biloxi Blues,” or “Lost in Yonkers,” then you know Simon’s comedy is a tonic for the blues. And NCT’s top-drawer cast brings the cure of Simon’s humor bubbling over the top.

It’s 1969 in New York City – the Summer of Love, for some. And Barney Cashman (portrayed with perfect comedic timing by Buzz Roddy) wants a piece of it. Suddenly aware of his mortality, the mild-mannered restaurateur takes a stab at sexual freedom

see **THEATER** pg 16

Brighten the Corner Where You Are: Celebrating Community at the Leverett Village Co-op



Julie Shively and Dan Bennett were honored at the Spring Fling

BY DAWN MONTAGUE

NORTH LEVERETT – Overcast skies on Saturday did not dampen the spirits of those gathered to celebrate the coming of summer at the Village Co-op’s annual Spring Fling in Leverett. Local musicians performed, and artists sold items from hand made shoes to intricately woven baskets. The barbeque lunch was a popular attraction, and kids raced through the grass chasing a giant, colorful balloon.

The Spring Fling is an annual event organized “to give something back to the community,” said Pamela Stone-Humphrey, president of the Co-op board.

This year there was a special recognition ceremony of founding members Dan Bennett and Julie Shively for their many years of service and dedication, both to the Co-op and to the surrounding community.

In 1990, Bennett, Shiveley, see **LEVERETT** pg 9

PET OF THE WEEK

Cool & Sultry



Rosa

My name is Rosa and I'm a female eight-year-old longhair cat in need of a good home. I may be sultry, and just a little aloof, but once you get to know me I can be the best and most affectionate companion you could wish for. I have FIV which doesn't affect people at all. Just to be on the safe side though I should not have close association with other cats. Unless of course they too are FIV+. Ask the staff at the shelter, they will tell you all about it. For more information on adopting me please contact the Dakin Pioneer Valley Humane Society at (413) 548-9898 or via email: leverett@dpvhs.org.

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SLATE LIBRARY NEWS

Your Imagination is the Limit

GILL – The summer reading program and workshops continue at the Slate Library with Space Toys from Recycled Materials on Saturday, June 27th at 10:30 a.m. and Sock Puppet Aliens on Thursday, July 2nd at 6 p.m. And on Saturday, July 11th, explore the science involved in rocket construction at the Mad Science Rocket

Building Workshop at 10 a.m. Pre-registration is required for this workshop.

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 or to register for the Mad Science Rocket Building Workshop, call the Slate Library at (413) 863-2591.

ERVING LIBRARY NEWS

Science in Motion

Mime Robert Rivest will come to the Erving Public Library on Sunday, June 28th at 4:30 p.m. as part of the summer reading program series sponsored by the Erving



Cultural Council. Rivest will be offering a performance of Science in Motion, "a mesmerizing blend of comedy and science that enthralls both children and adults." For more on Rivest, go to www.rivestmime.com.

CARNEGIE LIBRARY NEWS

Moon and Stars

BY LINDA HICKMAN

TURNERS FALLS – Moon and Stars, a hands-on science program with Dawn Marvin Ward, will be held at the Carnegie Library on Tuesday,

June 30th at 10 a.m. The free, fun program is for children of all ages and their families. For more information call the Carnegie Library at (413) 863-3214.



PHOTO BY LINDA HICKMAN



John Collins of the Turners Falls Water Department flushing a hydrant on L. Street on Tuesday.

Gill Public Gathering Hearing

During their regularly scheduled meeting on July 20th, at 4:30 p.m., the Gill selectboard will review an application for a permit for several public gatherings at Schuetzen Verein at 55 Barton Cove Road, in Riverside, Gill. Dates of gatherings run from June 27th through December 19th.

Psychic Fair, Saturday, June 27th

The National Spiritual Alliance will sponsor a Psychic Fair on Saturday, 11 a.m. to 4 p.m. at Thompson Temple across from the Post Office in Lake Pleasant. Divination methods include astrology, I-Ching, hand reading, vibration connection, and tarot cards. Consultation is with a medium of choice. Reiki and spiritual healing services will also be available.

For more information, contact the TNSA internet website (www.thenationalspiritualallianceinc.org).

Photo left: Hannah and Nathan of Turners Falls assisted Magician Debbie O'Carroll during the "Planets Magic Show" at the Carnegie Library on Tuesday, June 23rd. The performance was funded thanks to the Montague Cultural Council.

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local gossip, news & business listings

SENIOR CENTER ACTIVITIES – June 29th to July 10th

GILL/MONTAGUE Senior Center, 62 Fifth Street, Turners Falls, is open Monday through Friday from 9:00 a.m. to 2:00 p.m. for activities and congregate meals. Council on Aging Director is Bunny Caldwell. For information or to make reservations, call 863-9357. Meal reservations need to be made a day in advance, by 11:00 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, June 29th & July 6th
10:00 a.m.; Senior Aerobics
10:50 a.m.; Easy Aerobics
Tuesday, June 30th & July 7th
9:00 a.m. Walking Group
1:00 p.m. Canasta

Wednesday, July 1st & 8th
10:00 a.m. Senior Aerobics
12:45 p.m. Bingo

Thursday, July 2nd
1:00 p.m. Pitch

July 9th
10:00 a.m. Coffee and Conversation
1:00 p.m. Pitch

Friday, July 3rd
Closed for 4th of July Holiday

July 10th
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, 29th
9:00 a.m. Exercise
12:00 p.m. Pitch
Tuesday, 30th

9:00 a.m. Aerobics
12:00 p.m. Painting

Wednesday, 1st
8:45 a.m. Line Dancing
12 noon Bingo

Thursday, 2nd
8:45 a.m. Line Dancing

Friday, 3rd
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.

On Wednesday, July 1st, the Wendell Council on Aging will offer a free workshop called "Enhance Your Memory While Having Fun," presented by Wanda Landry. Landry is the director of the Alzheimer's Center at Quabbin Valley Healthcare.

The program promises to help us understand how our lifestyles can affect our brains and teach us activities to enhance our memories. The presentation will run from 10:30 a.m. to 11:30 a.m. at the senior center, 2 Lockes Village Road (the old town library).

This program will overlap our regular monthly blood pressure and body mass index and foot care screening, held between 10:00 and 11:00 a.m.

For more information, call: (978) 544-2020.

SCHOOLS OUT

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Tines and Tunes II



DETMOLE PHOTO

John Carey helped to serve at one of the many food booths at last year's Tines and Tunes in Peskeomskut Park. The party returns on Saturday, July 11th, with all proceeds benefitting the non-profit Shea Theater

BY LYNN NICHOLS

TURNERS FALLS – The Shea Theater will hold its Second Annual Tines and Tunes Festival on Saturday, July 11th, at Peskeomskut Park on Avenue A in Turners Falls. A free family-friendly event to benefit the Shea Theater, the celebration kicks off at noon and continues until 8 p.m., with performances

from the 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, Ameri-MF-Cana with Ed Vadas and Sue Burkhart, and Haven't A Clue.

For the kids, Mademoiselle Pixie Belle will be on hand doing face painting from 12 to 2

p.m. and balloon art from 2 to 3 p.m. Refreshments will include pulled pork, burgers, hot dogs, veggie burgers and dogs, fresh corn on the cob, French fries, soft drinks, and beer. All proceeds help the Shea Theater continue to bring diverse programming to our area.

For more information, visit www.theshea.org.

Brick House Seeks Board Members

BY PRAKASH LAUFER

TURNERS FALLS – If you are invested in the mission of the Brick House Community Resource Center: to support individual, family and community well-being through collaboration on economic development, youth development, leadership development and education, and you would like to serve our community, consider joining the board of directors of the Brick House.

Our board will meet four times a year for one day (two Fridays and two Saturdays)

with the entire Brick House staff. Our executive committee meets monthly between full board meetings. By serving on the board you will be providing a very valuable contribution to our community, by helping to support and guide the Brick House by collaborating with our staff and community partners in realizing our vision of healthy individuals, families and community.

For more information contact: plaufer@thebrickhouse-inc.org, or by calling (413) 863-9576.

TFHS Class of '74 Reunion

The TFHS Class of 1974 is planning its 35th reunion the week-end of July 17th to 19th. Events include an informal gathering starting at 7 p.m. at Between the Uprights on 2nd Street on Friday the 17th, a tour of TFHS on Saturday at 1:00 p.m., cocktails and dinner at 5:00 p.m. that evening at the French King Restaurant, and a BBQ on Sunday. Anyone needing information, call Karen at (413) 863-0265 or Lynn at (413) 863-2744.

CALDWELL from pg 1 the senior center director's position for two months. Now, 12 years later, the communities of Gill and Montague are sad to see her leave.

"Bunny is a wonderful person and always follows through," Ciechowski said.

Caldwell recalled that when she was first hired she had only wanted to take the job for the summer, as she was planning to return to substitute teaching in the fall. "I wasn't sure I would like it," she said. "But then I got hooked."

Asked what her biggest dis-

appointment has been during her years at the senior center, Caldwell didn't hesitate. "Transportation," she said. "There are so many seniors left out of all the activities at the Gill-Montague senior center because they simply don't have transportation to get here."

Caldwell smiled when she recalled the time the Montague police department took a group of seniors on a shopping adventure in the "big black bus," better known as the emergency task force vehicle.

I bet not many know that Caldwell frequently went out to

seniors' homes and checked on their health. She said her second-biggest disappointment was that she did not have more time to check on the well-being of our seniors. Can you imagine, in this day and age, that someone would actually come to your home to check on your health, help you with your fuel assistance forms, help you with legal paperwork, or to just make sure that all is well?

Senior center participants Mary Tirrell and Karla Bordeaux both said they could not imagine anyone taking Caldwell's place. I hope the

communities of Gill and Montague are not looking to replace Juanita Caldwell, because in the hearts of our seniors she will be irreplaceable. All we can hope to do is to continue and build on her work and dedication to our senior citizens.

Through her work at the sen-

ior center, her advocacy at town hall, her voice at town meeting, her outreach through local newspapers and public access television, Caldwell has had only one item on her agenda, and that is the health and well-being of our elders. We are all grateful for her work.



HIGHLIGHTS FROM THE GILL POLICE LOG Vandalism and Cruelty

Wednesday, 6/17

2:45 p.m. Report of suspicious subject at French King Highway business, investigated same, all OK.

2:47 p.m. Past report of vandalism and cruelty to animals on Barton Cove Road. Under investigation.

Thursday, 6/18

7:01 p.m. Assisted Bernardston police with domestic assault and battery arrest.

Saturday, 6/20

12:20 a.m. Loud noise complaint at

state boat ramp, area checked.

12:50 a.m. Investigated possible intoxicated driver on West Gill Road.

8:01 p.m. Arrested [redacted]

[redacted] Arrested for an outstanding warrant, on French King Highway

11:50 p.m. Assisted Montague police with suicidal subject on Gill-Montague bridge.

Sunday, 6/21

11:20 a.m. Vandalism report taken on

Riverview Drive.

10:15 p.m. Report of suspicious activity at a Myrtle Street residence, investigated same.

Monday, 6/22

5:01 p.m. Assisted Montague police on Walnut Street in Gill with a warrant arrest.

Tuesday, 6/23

7:40 a.m. Loud noise complaint on French King Highway, spoke with reporting party.

3:45 p.m. Report of larceny from a Center Road address.

4:50 p.m. Past motor vehicle accident on Oak Street.

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- Gary and Nancy Melen

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All of our Appointments are Now

The following speech was delivered on Sunday, June 21st, at the United Church of Christ in Belchertown, on the fifth anniversary of Lance Corporal Jeff Lucey's death.

BY ANNE DIEMAND

WENDELL—I am a farmer from the small town of Wendell. My only son Jacob returned last November from his second tour of duty in Iraq, where as chief warrant officer he flew Blackhawk helicopters for the U.S. Army. His wife Cynthia, also in the Army, has completed her first tour in Iraq, and will likely be redeployed in 2010.

We gather here today in solemn remembrance of Jeff Lucey, Iraq War veteran and beloved son of Kevin and Joyce Lucey of Belchertown, who died at his own hand five years ago. Lance Corporal Jeff Lucey, of the U.S. Marine Reserve Corp. could not live with what he saw and what he did in Iraq. He is as much a casualty of that tragic war as the more than 4300 Americans who have fallen in country.

I am also here today to honor Jeff's courageous parents Kevin and Joyce, who have turned their heartbreak not only into healing, but into heroism. Their battle has been for truth against denial, their weapons have been words against silence, and their victories will not be turned back. Through Military Families Connect and Military Families Speak Out, I have come to know and love the Luceys.

The year of my son Jacob's first tour of duty in Iraq was the loneliest year of my life. I knew no one else whose beloved child had been sent to fight this bloody war. Now, sadly I know many such families, and because of Military Families Speak Out and Military Families Connect, I am able to enter a room of people who understand what it means to send a child to war, and the challenges we face when they return, or when they do not return.

At last count, Massachusetts has sent 109 of its finest to die in the killing fields of Iraq and

Afghanistan. Along with the Luceys, I would also like to acknowledge today my friend Karen Brown from Leyden, MA who lost her only child Ari, one of the many fallen who are memorialized in the empty boots before us. Today I am also remembering Greg Belanger of Deerfield, Alex Arrenando and acknowledging his courageous parents Carlos and Malina. And along with Jeff Lucey, we also remember Gabriel Mason of Millers Falls, whom we also lost soon after his return.

Today my son Jacob is back on U. S. soil at Fort Riley in Kansas. Though Kansas may seem far from Belchertown, let me tell you how they connect. We all know too well the struggles of the Lucey family to find help for Jeff when he returned from Iraq. We know how the V.A. failed them. Because Kevin and Joyce had the courage to make their struggles public, others have received the help Jeff Lucey could not find. Because Jeff's story was told on Democracy Now, on PBS and CBS, in the Boston Globe, the New York Times, the Marine Corps Times, on YouTube, in Federal Court in Springfield, and from many speakers' platforms, others have received help.

When my son returned from Iraq this past November, four and a half years after Jeff's death, he—like so many veterans—needed help with the "issues" he brought home. When he went to speak to a counselor on his Army base in Kansas, to tell them he was having problems, he expected the usual bureaucratic evasions and delays. Within minutes a counselor stood in front of him. "When is my appointment?" asked Jacob, expecting to be told to come back in weeks or a month. "Your appointment is *now!*" he was told. Thank you, Kevin and Joyce.

All of our appointments are *now*. Because *now* is all we have.

Now is when we are seeing record numbers of military suicides in Iraq and Afghanistan—more suicides in January than combat deaths.

Now is when Army suicides



LETTERS TO THE EDITOR

An Open Letter to the Police Chief Regarding Wildlife Nuisances on G Street

Chief Zukowski:

Neighbors here long besieged by an overabundance of seagulls and pigeons have a new problem: wildlife feeding at the Geddis house at 2 G Street (roasted peanuts in the shell is the latest item on the menu) has led to an explosive growth in the squirrel population. I evicted one squatter from my garage and another damaged the face of the second floor porch by gnawing a hole in the wood to access a nest, which is visible from the sidewalk.

The neighborhood has been taken over by rodents. There is a continuing problem with wildlife feeding at 2 G Street resulting in skunks and possums besieging the neighborhood at night, and insect and vermin problems caused by the food birds drop in people's yards.

are at their highest level since records were first kept in 1980.

Now is when suicide attempts among Iraqi/Afghanistan veterans have jumped 500% since 2002.

Now is when we lost 314 in combat in Iraq last year, and 128 by suicide. That's 40% as many lost to suicide as to combat.

But *Now* is also when the mil-

I scraped a soggy bagel off my car windshield yesterday and deposited it on the Geddis yard in front of Mrs. Geddis' daughter—the one responsible for most of the feeding there—and asked if they were feeding squirrels peanuts. She said she was. I explained to her the problem of the squirrel population explosion, and asked her to stop, but she didn't want to hear it.

I bet if I went to her home, threw donuts and soggy bread on her car, damaged her home, and stank up her house at night with skunk spray, she might find it disagreeable.

The problem is not Mrs. Geddis, who is elderly. It is her children who persist in disrupting the wildlife environment by turning the neighborhood into a garbage dump.

Would the town, possibly the

board of health, consider taking action to put a stop to the worst excesses? I had heard that the power company had an injunction against feeding birds on their property, but I have photos of Mrs. Geddis' daughter doing just that last year.

And, of course, the ironic thing about the situation is that the Geddises think they are doing the critters a favor. Any credible naturalist will tell you that despite the Geddis' best intentions, they only harm the wildlife they think they are helping.

Seems to me the town could threaten the Geddises with a fine for littering at the very least.

I would appreciate your cooperation. Something needs to be done, and soon.

— Peter Fisher
The Patch

itary has begun to acknowledge the issue. *Now* is when Kentucky's Fort Campbell recently had a three-day "Stand Down" to confront the high suicide rate among the 101st Airborne.

Now is when we must confront the causes of suicide among the enlisted and among our veterans:

- pressure to fill recruitment quotas,
- lack of control over the issues in your life once you are part of the military,
- repeat deployments,

• and first and last, the gruesome, bloody business of war itself,

• compounded by the lack of support for those serving and those who have served.

Now is when we must continue to protest these endless wars. *Now* is when we must keep gathering, keep marching, keep supporting, keep speaking truth to power. And *now* is when we must thank the entire Lucey family as I do today.

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Note to Our Readers

The Montague Reporter will begin our usual summer schedule, printing every other week, following the June 25th issue. There will be no paper on July 2nd, 16th, 30th, August 13th, or 27th. We return to weekly publication on September 3rd.



KAREN WILKINSON ILLUSTRATION

BY NEIL SERVEN

GREENFIELD – The news that the English language has just celebrated – or at least acknowledged – its one millionth word is about as ludicrous as it sounds.

If you missed the story, an organization in Austin, TX called the Global Language Monitor crowned the phrase “Web 2.0” as the one millionth word to enter the English language.

The organization claims to use a mathematical formula to track

the appearance of words and phrases in print and electronic media, accepting as “legitimate” any word or phrase that has generated at least 25,000 hits. “Web 2.0,” referring to the generation of Internet technologies that are centered around blogs and social networking, was announced as the one millionth word to meet this criterion.

The news was met with perplexity and scorn by linguistic scholars. Geoffrey Nunberg, a professor of linguistics at the University of California at Berkeley, called the organization’s claim “nonsense” and “pure fraud.”

Paul JJ Payack, the president of the Global Language Monitor, defended his methods by saying,

“If you want to count the stars in the sky, you have to define what a star is first and then count. Our criteria are quite plain and if you follow those criteria you can count words. Most academics say what we are doing is very valuable.”

Those academics must be locked up in Payack’s basement. The truth is that most linguists themselves have never agreed upon a foolproof, singular method for counting words in a language. It is especially difficult in a language such as English, where many words have more than one inflection and there is a great amount of overlap among words and senses. If you count “jump” as a word, for example, do you count “jumped” (its past tense form) and “jumping” (its present participle) separately? Do you count the noun “jump” and its plural “jumps”? Do you count

“pool” as a place to swim separately from “pool,” the billiards game? What about the numerous uses of a word like “round” (noun, verb, adjective, adverb, preposition)?

What about compounds? Does “open house” count as a word if we’re already including “open” and “house”? How about a word like “step brother,” for which styling widely varies (some people spell it open, others hyphenated, yet others closed). And if you are willing to accept compound terms as unique words, then what about numbers themselves? Surely there are more than a million of those, unless we are to believe that “forty-four” counts but “four hundred and forty-four” does not.

It should come as no surprise to anyone that Payack has a book coming out about the so-called “Million Word March” and the

triumph of English as a global language. While the larger point about English might have merit, I’m not sure how the number of words in its vocabulary is reflective of a language’s dominance. Words come and go in any language; counting them is like trying to count the bubbles in a brook. Trying to pin them down like insect species is not only futile, it tends to overlook their greater value, which is only brought out when they are used in relation to each other to create beautiful poetry and thoughtful prose. The best way to celebrate a language is to use it to its most dynamic potential, to express ideas that leave indelible impressions in the mind of a reader or listener. That is the kind of impact you can’t put a number on.

Neil Serven is an Associate Editor for Merriam-Webster.

SCHOOL from page 1

who has driven out from Boston to attend each meeting of the caucus, said school committees in southeastern Massachusetts and in Berkshire County are also beginning to talk amongst themselves, taking a cue from the committees here in Franklin County.

Paraphrasing what he imagined officials at the Department of Elementary and Secondary Education (DESE) were saying about the Franklin caucus, Koocher deadpanned, “They’re already talking to each other, and they trust each other.”

He praised the group for pro-

viding, “Credible dissent, credible pushback,” to pressure from the state to bundle smaller school districts together into larger districts, or to eliminate split districts like Union 28 in Erving, Wendell, New Salem, Leverett, and Shutesbury, where K-6 students go to hometown elementary schools, before attending upper school outside the district.

Koocher said, “The governor will not have a bill ready for [the legislature’s] regionalization hearing. The governor’s people are too busy tripping over themselves preparing a Readiness Schools bill and dealing with the budget.” He quoted the findings

of an academic study presented before the Department of Education at a recent conference: “Regionalization has never saved money and has never improved student performance.”

John DeWitt, a member of the FCSCC steering committee from New Salem, articulated the purpose of the caucus in proactive terms. “There is a tremendous amount of discussion going on about the future of education in Massachusetts, and school committee members haven’t played a leading role. We want to change that. Our primary job is at the local school level. But we are also called upon to be leaders in

shaping the future of education.”

Still, there was a sense in the conference room on Monday that the crisis that had called the caucus into being – the threat that regionalization would be forced on local districts by the state if they did not take voluntary steps to merge into larger districts first – had receded for the moment behind Boston’s budget woes.

Koocher’s Revolutionary analogy notwithstanding, state legislators and education officials have repeatedly said that Boston is not intending to force the

terms of regionalization on local districts, but will look to the districts themselves for guidance on how the future of local public education will take shape.

On April 27th, DESE associate commissioner of education Jeff Wulfson, at a public hearing on the report of the Commission on Education in Gill said, “Any kind of leadership, any kind of vision has to come from the communities themselves.”

Going Koocher one better, Wulfson invoked Daniel Shays, see **SCHOOL** page 6



JOSEPH A. PARZYCH PHOTO

Nancy Williams died last week at the age of 62, at Baystate Medical Center in Springfield, following a period of declining health.

Her passing leaves a hole in the heart of our community, for all her friends and relations. Many more knew her as the postmistress of the Turners Falls post office, where she served the last fifteen years of her 33-year US Postal Service career. To all who came in contact with her there, she was the soul of courtesy. She always put our needs first, and made customer service a point of pride.

We have missed her at the post office window ever since her untimely retirement. Now we join her friends and family in mourning her untimely loss.

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NOTES FROM THE MAHAR SCHOOL COMMITTEE

Mahar Lowers Town Assessments

BY KATIE NOLAN

ORANGE – Revising the FY '10 budget, considering an alternative method of assessing towns for their contribution to the Mahar district, and K-12 regionalization were major items on the June 18th Mahar regional school committee agenda.

Responding to votes at Orange and Wendell annual town meetings that approved less than the requested school budget amounts, the Mahar committee lowered its budget figures. The committee approved a "tentative proposed" operating budget of \$12,176,549, relying on \$7,397,357 from the state and other external sources, and \$4,779,192 as the "tentative proposed" assessment from the four

towns in the Mahar region: Petersham, New Salem, Wendell and Orange.

The school committee used the term "tentative proposed" because the amount of state funding for the district has not been set. Under the tentative budget, Orange will be asked to pay \$3,116,022, a figure higher than the one approved at Orange town meeting. Wendell's share of the local assessment would be \$345,384.

At Wendell's June 3rd annual town meeting, the Mahar committee requested \$351,151, but the meeting voted the lower amount of \$257,406, based on an alternative assessment method developed by finance committee member Jim Slavos, in an attempt

to stagger per-pupil costs in accord with the aggregate wealth of the member towns. Orange and Wendell are expected to hold town meetings to consider the revised budget request.

During the public comment portion of the meeting, Michael Idoine and Barbara Caruso of the Wendell finance committee presented the reasoning behind Wendell's June 3rd town meeting vote. They summarized the assessment method Slavos had developed as an alternative to the state Department of Elementary and Secondary Education's statutory assessment method. The statutory method currently used in the Mahar district has Wendell paying the highest per-pupil rate for students at Mahar. Based on the aggregate wealth evaluation presented in Slavos' study, Wendell and Orange are the poorer towns in the district, while

New Salem and Petersham are wealthier.

The original agreement when the towns formed the district was that each town would pay the same per-pupil cost.

After this presentation, Peter Cross of Orange moved that the school committee vote to use an alternative method for the 2011 budget cycle and ask the selectboards and finance committees of the member towns to meet to determine an alternative method acceptable to each of the four towns. Under this proposal, the school committee would meet next January to work on a budget based on the agreed alternative method.

This motion generated serious discussion among the committee members. Pat Smith of Orange felt that if the selectboards and finance committees did not meet and agree, equal per-pupil costs

for each town would be the fall-back alternative method, which would raise costs for Orange, the most financially strapped town in the district, with the largest student enrollment, by nearly half a million dollars.

After the motion was changed to a request that the selectboards and finance committees of the member towns meet and work on an alternative assessment method that would be more equitable across the four towns, the motion was passed unanimously.

According to Dick Baldwin, Wendell's representative to the committee, "This is definitely a step forward. For once, the committee has gone along with the idea that assessment should be more equitable."

The K-12 subcommittee has contacted area towns, including Athol, Royalston, and Erving to discuss K-12 regionalization.

SCHOOL from page 5 saying, "If we're going to have a revolution, Franklin County is the place to start."

Kociela said when she initially put out the call for school committee members to caucus at the turn of the year, she did so "to get out in front of the discussion before the state started making demands on us. There was a lot of interest in creating a group that could speak in one voice to Boston regarding funding and regionalization issues, and could also be a way for us to have a voice in the local process. We talked about having education drive the regionalization discussion, and organizing so we could have open discussions and see how each school committee felt about the issues. I believe [the caucus] has potential to become a powerful voice in Franklin County for many issues affecting our schools."

Due to Kociela's successful effort to bring representatives of the county's school committee's together in the caucus, for the first time in 20 years all the Franklin County school committees have also agreed to join as members of a regional education collaborative, the Hampshire

Education Collaborative, which will now open a satellite office in Franklin County with a part time staff person, DeWitt said.

The Hampshire Education Collaborative will be able to assist local school districts in a number of ways: by providing professional development for staff and teachers, consultants in a number of specialized fields, and help with problems like the placement of special education students with particular needs.

Kevin Courtney was present at Monday's meeting. Courtney, the former superintendent at Pioneer, has been working with the Franklin County superintendents through an initiative chaired by Bob Pura, president of Greenfield Community College, and supported by the Franklin Regional Council of Governments, to examine collaboration, consolidation, and cost-saving potential between the Franklin County public school districts: the Franklin County Public Education Study Group. Out of the recommendations of that group, a collaborative effort to jointly purchase school bus services across school districts was attempted for the first time in the county this year, with mixed

results.

Russ Kaubris, business manager for the Franklin County Technical School, who handled the bid for all the school districts in the county, except for Mahar, which opted not to join in, said, "The economy worked against us." He said some of the larger companies the districts had hoped to interest in a countywide school transportation offering had just laid off workers due to the recession, and did not enter bids. On April 8th, when the bids were opened, there were no countywide bids among them. A number of school districts, including Mohawk, Pioneer, and the Tech School itself opted to renew their contracts with their former providers.

Still, Kaubris said, "I know there was cost avoidance involved. If there was no appearance of competition, we would have had higher costs, although those are difficult to quantify." And he said the truly difficult part of the process, getting all the districts to put out a joint bid for school busing, with staggered start dates as their various contracts expired, has now been accomplished, and should serve county schools well five years

from now, when a joint transportation bid goes out again.

Andrea Woods, chief procurement officer of the Franklin Regional Council of Governments, said her organization is currently handling multi-district bids for tradespeople, like electricians and plumbers, and for insurance auditors. On the latter bid, a small, \$25,000 contract for auditors to perform a required health benefits analysis for retirees, bid jointly for Pioneer, Frontier, Gill-Montague, Mohawk, and the Tech School, Wood said the districts were able to save between \$5,000 and \$6,000 overall, "not a bad percentage on a contract of that size."

Courtney said the first phases of the Franklin County Public Education Study Group's work is done now, the report they issued with recommendations for county school governance and collaboration is being studied, and the group is waiting for the next big idea to catch fire. "There is no consensus on that," said Courtney. "It could end."

Meanwhile, DeWitt said the next step for the school committee caucus will be to call a meeting with area legislators and the

chairs of the House and Senate education committees this summer, "to have our voice heard in budget and education legislation" now being crafted. Following that, DeWitt said the caucus plans to pull together an education summit in Western Massachusetts, involving all the superintendents, business managers, special education directors, and school committees, to devise a common framework on collaboration for educational improvement, cost containment, and on the issue of regionalization.

In the meantime, the caucus plans to act as a clearinghouse for the discussions now underway between a number of the individual districts in Franklin and Hampshire County about the possibility of merging into larger school districts. A website will be set up to enable parents, staff, and school committee members to communicate relevant documents, meeting minutes, and information on these issues.

Meanwhile, Koocher said the state is floating various ideas for the consolidation of school districts, including examining the educational capacity of districts on a case-by case basis. But, he see **SCHOOL** page 8

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NOTES FROM THE MONTAGUE SELECTBOARD

Southworth Thanks the Town



David Southworth

BY DAWN MONTAGUE – David Southworth, of the Southworth Paper Company, opened the June 22nd meeting of the Montague selectboard by presenting framed certificates of appreciation to the town's fire and police chiefs, water pollution control facility superintendent, and also to the town in general, for the swift and efficient response to the Strathmore fire in May of 2007.

"Without the help of so many people," he said, "Southworth would have been lost."

Southworth also read a list of the dozens of other Massachusetts fire departments who responded to the arson blaze at the Stathmore Mill's Building #10, on May 29th, 2007. Building #10, then used as a warehouse for recycled paper, was set ablaze in the middle of the night by Jonathan Tanzer, in an act of vengeance against for-

mer Strathmore owner Jerry Jones, who had employed him as a laborer. Tanzer had been severely injured in an electrical accident under Jones's supervision. A swift and heroic response by the Turners Falls fire department saved 90% of the Strathmore complex, and the neighboring Southworth Mill.

Southworth said, "I really appreciate this town, and everything it does. We want to be here and healthy for many years to come."

Keep an eye out for local produce in Montague Center. Matthew Kunze requested and was granted permission to hold a farmers market in on the village common. The market will be open on Tuesday afternoons and Saturday mornings for the remainder of the season.

Vive le 14 juillet! Or even the 25th! The Rendezvous, represented by co-owner Mark Wisnewski, was granted permission to use the municipal parking lot on 3rd Street for a Bastille Day Celebration, to be held during the afternoon of July 25th.

Why the 25th, if the Bastille fell on the 14th? Wisnewski explained, "The 14th is a Tuesday. The weekend before is Tines and Tunes," the Shea Theater benefit in Peskeomskut Park, Saturday, July 11th, noon to 8 p.m. "The weekend after is

the Green River Festival. So we moved it to the 25th."

Pour quoi diable is the Rendezvous celebrating the beginning of the French Revolution - *liberté egalité fraternité* and all that?

"The original building was built to be the Jean Paul Baptiste Society of Turners Falls, a French Social Club," explained Wisnewski, who claims to be French Canadian on his mother's side. "So we are honoring our roots. We're having a raffle for anyone who can find their family names on the registry of the Jean Paul Baptiste Society, which we found in the attic when we bought the place. We're going to have a barbecue and live music. There'll be a mock guillotine for a photo backdrop and an executioner there, so you can take pictures holding your spouse's head in your hands. In general, it's going to be a lot of fun!" he said.

The Franklin County Amateur Radio Club is holding its annual Field Day at Poet's Seat Tower this weekend. The public is welcome to stop by and see ham radio in action!

Permission was granted to

Mark Cannon to hold a grand opening event for *La Bodega*, the new Latino grocery store opening soon on 4th Street. The party will be July 4th, in front of *La Bodega* with an alternate date of July 12th, with a cookout and a DJ. All donations collected at the party will go to the Brick House.

On the issue of the proposed biomass power plant in Greenfield, selectboard member Patricia Allen said, "We are concerned, and know Greenfield will be very thorough in the permitting process." Town planner Dan Laroche said the Montague Energy Commission has sent a letter to the Greenfield Zoning Board of Appeals requesting an independent peer review of the proposal made by Madera Energy. Allen suggested the selectboard send a similar letter to the ZBA before their June 25th meeting.

Ruth Nervig, departing AmeriCorps member at the Brick House, and Bryan Dolan presented a request to the selectboard on behalf of the Great Falls Sk8 Park steering committee for program income funds, in the amount of \$16,000. The request was grant-

ed, and the funds will be used for the survey and design of the proposed permanent concrete skate park to be built in conjunction with the redesign and renovation of Unity Park.

"I am absolutely thrilled that the selectboard is spending funds set aside to develop the town on designing a concrete skate park, which will provide great opportunities for our youth to physically challenge themselves and develop strong social bonds and mentoring relationships with one another," said Nervig. "We can now move forward in planning a concrete park that will last for years, without the major problems with ramps wearing out we face with our current skate park."

"This funding was earned through a team effort between the parks and recreation commission, their director, Jon Doboscz, town planner, Dan Laroche, and the skate park steering committee."

"It has been exciting to watch the community's energy surrounding the skate park transform over the past two years from dejected to hopeful. The funding for design of a permanent skate park is a huge step forward."

HIGHLIGHTS FROM THE MONTAGUE POLICE LOG

Disorderly Conduct Disturbing Turners

Monday, 6/15

9:40 p.m. Report of a domestic disturbance at a Seventh Street address. Arrested [redacted]. Charged with disorderly conduct and disturbing the peace.

Tuesday, 6/16

12:20 a.m. Report of loud noise disturbance at a Chestnut Street address. Arrested [redacted]. Charged with disorderly conduct.

Charged with disturbing the peace, keeping a noisy and disorderly house and for being a person under 21 in possession of liquor.

6:04 p.m. Report of trespassing near Broadway. Services rendered.

7:28 p.m. Report of trespassing near the train tracks, Newton Street. Dispersed gathering.

8:36 p.m. Officer initiated arrest of [redacted] on two default warrants.

Thursday, 6/18

1:02 a.m. Report of burglary / breaking and entering at Cumberland Farms on Montague City Road. Investigated.

2:30 a.m. Report of loud noise disturbance in the area of Avenue A and Equi's Candy Shop. Arrested [redacted] on a default warrant.

9:20 p.m. Officer wanted at an Avenue A address. Arrested [redacted]. Charged with two counts of assault and battery on a police officer, resisting arrest and disorderly conduct.

10:28 p.m. Report of breaking and entering into an automobile at a K Street address. Investigated.

Friday, 6/19
8:26 a.m. Report of burglary / breaking and entering at a Vladish Avenue address. Investigated.

10:58 a.m. Report of burglary / breaking and entering at an X Street address. Investigated.

9:21 p.m. Report of a domestic disturbance at a Park Street address. Peace restored.

Saturday, 6/20

3:20 a.m. Report of a domestic disturbance at a G Street address. Arrested

[redacted] Probable cause arrest for an outside agency.

4:39 p.m. Report of illegal dumping on Plains Road. Investigated.

6:10 p.m. Officer initiated arrest of [redacted]. Charged with violation of an abuse prevention order.

11:48 p.m. Subject on Gill/Montague Bridge taken into protective custody.

Sunday, 6/21

9:03 p.m. Following a traffic stop, arrested [redacted]. Charged with motor vehicle lights violation and operating a motor vehicle while under the influence of liquor.

Monday, 6/22

11:58 a.m. Report of burglary / breaking and entering at a Montague City Road address. Investigated.

3:04 p.m. Report of trespassing at a Davis Street address. Peace restored.

4:33 p.m. Report of liquor law violations at Jay K's Liquors, Avenue A, Turners Falls. Investigated.

4:44 p.m. Officer initiated arrest of [redacted] on two default warrants.

5:53 p.m. Report of trespassing at a Fourth Street address. Advised to contact police if repeated.

HIGHLIGHTS FROM THE ERVING POLICE LOG

Contractor Mediation Service Provided

Tuesday, 6/16

5:20 p.m. Report of several teenagers tubing down Millers River. Caller concerned about well being. Located teenagers, All OK.

5:40 p.m. Barking dog complaint at Ridge Road. Checked same, no home.

Wednesday, 6/17

7:45 p.m. Assisted Montague police with kids on the railroad tracks in Millers Falls.

9:10 p.m. 911 static from Gunn Street residence. Problem with phone or lines. Resident advised to contact phone

company.

Friday, 6/19

6:15 p.m. Resident requests to speak to officer regarding past incident of credit card fraud. Report taken.

Sunday, 6/21

12:09 a.m. Arrested [redacted] for operating a motor vehicle while under the influence of liquor.

11:30 p.m. Report loud music from Renovator's Supply building. Occupant was renting space and advised to shut down for the night.

Monday, 6/22

12:30 p.m. Report of past disturbing of the peace from Mountain Road. Application to be issued by home owner.

1:55 p.m. Disturbance at North Street, disagreement between contractors/subcontractor. All verbal, stood by for mediation.

10:45 p.m. Report of fire alarm at International Paper Mill. Erving fire responded.

11:44 p.m. Officer to Erving Paper Mill report of fire. Erving and Orange fire on scene.

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Postman Calls in Porch Fire



Glenn Brown

cigarette butts on fire, and the small fire had melted through the bottom of the ash tray.

The steam Brown thought he was seeing was in fact smoke from the porch floor boards beginning to catch fire.

Brown acted coolly, knocking on the door until the residents responded, and at the same time summoning the fire department with a quick 911 call on his pocket cell

phone. He warned the people in the building, told them to get out of the house, and "within two minutes," Brown said the fire department had arrived to put out the small blaze. Any damage to the porch had been quickly repaired, a casual inspection confirmed two weeks later.

A near neighbor on Prospect Street, Denise DiPaolo, offered Brown a \$50 gift certificate at her Ristorante DiPaolo for his quick work to avoid a more serious fire. Brown said he was very much looking forward to having dinner there.

BY DAVID DETMOLD
TURNERS FALLS – On June 10th, around 10:30 a.m., Glenn Brown was walking down Prospect Street, delivering the morning mail, when he saw what looked like the steam from a dryer exhaust fan rising by the porch of a large yellow frame house. The house, #30, owned by Louis Ruvolo, is near the closed barrel vault bridge over Spring Street, at the end of the cul-de-sac on the east side of Prospect. A cigarette had been left smoldering in an ash tray on the porch, and had apparently caught other

NOTES FROM THE GILL - MONTAGUE REGIONAL SCHOOL COMMITTEE

GMRSD Passes a New Budget

BY ELLEN BLANCHETTE

At the budget meeting last Thursday, June 18th, Michael Langknecht, chair of the Gill-Montague school committee, led off the effort to come up with a revised FY '10 operating budget, saying, "The clock is ticking."

He explained that because the town of Montague had voted for a lower assessment than the school committee had requested on the warrant at annual town meeting on June 6th, it was counted as a defeat for the district budget. This started a countdown of 30 days (which can be extended to 45 days) during which time a new budget must be presented to the towns.

On June 16th, Gill also voted a lower assessment figure for their share of the \$16,854,053 budget the school committee passed in May, but it only took defeat at one town meeting to require the school committee to submit

another budget.

Interim superintendent Kenneth Rocke explained that once the towns receive notice of a budget from the school committee, they have 45 days to call a town meeting and put the budget to a vote.

On the 18th, Sorrel Hatch offered a motion to reduce the budget by \$166,259. At that time,

the regular school committee meeting, information was more concrete. Rocke reported a positive increase in school choice numbers he estimates will bring an additional \$90,000 to the district for FY '10, and the state aid figures were shaping up to be not quite as dire as they could have been. The regional transportation reimbursement rate is a significant cut from FY '09, but at 40.5% offers a bit more reimbursement than the Senate bill did.

Rocke agreed with a number of committee members that approving a compromise budget that could be accepted by the towns would be the best course of action. Hatch reintroduced her motion, and the committee approved it.

The school committee approved the motion Hatch reintroduced on Tuesday night, bringing the total operating budget down to \$16,687,794.

Rocke said setting a budget now would enable the new superintendent, Carl Ladd, whose tenure with the district starts July 1st, to focus on educational goals for the district at the outset.

Before the approval of Hatch's proposal, Jeff Singleton made a motion to cut the budget by \$250,000 instead. He said, "I don't think we should wait around for the state to set a budget." Singleton said he didn't think a cut of \$166,259, as proposed, was enough to bridge the gap to what the towns can afford. His motion was defeated 4-3, with one abstention by Langknecht. Emily Monosson was absent.

During the budget discussions, Joyce Phillips said she felt there was "too much concern about the towns" being expressed by the school committee members and "too little concern over the impact on education." She said she wanted to know more details,

see **BUDGET** pg 13



BLANCHETTE PHOTO

Departing superintendent Ken Rocke shakes hands with G-M school committee chair Michael Langknecht as former school committee member Timmie Smith looks on.

Rocke recommended against her motion, saying information on cuts in state aid was not reliable. The committee agreed and voted against Hatch's motion.

But by Tuesday, June 23rd, at

from **SCHOOL** pg 6 said, when pressed as to how the state would conduct such an examination, state officials conceded they did not have a plan or resources to conduct one in the present economic downturn. Nor, it seems, does the state have resources to offer incentives for smaller districts to merge into larger ones. (Remember fully funded transportation costs for districts that chose to regionalize way back when? This year, the state is trying to pay 40.5% of those regional transportation costs.)

Nonetheless, Jeff Singleton, of the Gill-Montague school committee, said he believed Franklin County districts should be open to regionalizing, or even joining together in one countywide district, if the state would agree in

return to "fix the funding problem for local schools."

As one illustration of the complexity of that issue, Jim Slavas and Michael Idoine from the Wendell finance committee brought an abbreviated version of their slide presentation on what they consider to be the inequitable arrangement of town assessments for the Mahar district, as mandated by the DESE under the statutory method of assessment. When Wendell, New Salem, Petersham and Orange originally agreed to join together in the Mahar district for upper school students, all four towns paid equal per-pupil costs, based on enrollment. Following Education Reform, the state formula for calculating the minimum contribution of each community, based on the aggregate

wealth of towns, has Wendell, a town nearly as poor as Orange, paying more per pupil enrolled at Mahar than New Salem or Petersham, wealthier towns. Wendell is being asked to pay twice as much as Orange, per pupil, this year. The state formula does not take into account the number of pupils enrolled in the district when determining the minimum contribution, saying, essentially, "this is what you should be able to pay, regardless of how much you use the resource," Idoine said.

The Wendell finance committee has brought their complaint – and their proposed solution, an alternative method of assessing that holds Orange, the poorest town, harmless, and redistributes the assessment totals for the other three member towns according to

their wealth – to the DESE for a hearing not long ago, and have since succeeded in getting the Mahar school committee to bring the discussion up at the selectboards and finance committees of each of the member towns, hoping for local agreement on a more equitable arrangement.

Singleton said the dilemma these towns – which would have to unanimously agree to change the assessment formula at the local level – sheds light on a problem local districts will face if they decide to join together in larger districts. "You're pointing to something I think is really important."

The next meeting of the FCSCC is planned for August 3rd at the Turners Falls High School conference room from 5:00 to 7:00 p.m.



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Social Norms Marketing Takes to the Airwaves

BY DAVID DETMOLD

TURNERS FALLS – “Most Franklin County parents have dinner with their teens most nights of the week.”

“Most Franklin County parents do not allow their teens to drink alcohol.”

“Most Franklin County parents have talked with their teens about sex in the past year.”

You’ve seen these and other social norms marketing slogans on bus stops and store windows, in color advertisements, and on billboards throughout the county, courtesy of the Community Coalition for Teens. Come September, you

will start hearing them on local radio stations, thanks to a lucky pick of CCT coordinator Kat Allen’s business card in a raffle sponsored by radio stations WHAI, WHMP, Bear Country and the River. She won an advertising package on these stations worth \$19,000, and on Friday, the last day of school, Allen brought a crew from the Armadillo Audio Group up to the Franklin County Tech School to dub voiceovers for the radio spots from students in Dean Scranton’s English class.

Allen said teen surveys show that drug and alcohol use is declining among their age group in Franklin County.



Peter Acker prepares to tape a voiceover from Mark Foslay, a junior at Franklin County Tech, for CCT’s social norms marketing campaign.

PARTING COMMENTS: KEN ROCKE



Superintendent Ken Roche at the Turner Falls High graduation in June.

BY ELLEN BLANCHETTE
GILL-MONTAGUE – Interim superintendent Kenneth Roche will be leaving the Gill-Montague Regional School District at the end of this week after serving for two years. Carl Ladd will begin his job as the new district superintendent on July 1st. Roche was kind enough to sit down as he prepared to leave to answer some questions and share some thoughts on the issues facing the district.

On the issue of regionalization, Roche said the message from the state had changed over

the course of his two years working with the district. He said in the beginning the state thought “super-regionalization” – where local districts would join in region-wide districts – would provide a “silver bullet that would solve the fiscal crisis, which is actually caused by a significant decline, on a percentage basis, of state support of education.”

He said the early messages district officials were getting from state leaders boiled down to: “If we would only form larger districts, we would save the taxpayers a lot of money.”

The North Quabbin Time Bank: Building Community One Hour at a Time

BY JEN AUDLEY

ORANGE – At first glance, members of the North Quabbin Time Bank seem to be exchanging favors in a neighborly sort of way:

Ken replenishes the woodpile on Audrey’s porch;

Audrey gives a knitting lesson to Amber;

Amber gives a ride to Tina; Tina does yard work for Pat;

Pat gives Christine and her daughter haircuts; and so on.

Everyone pitches in, everyone benefits, and no money changes hands. What distinguishes this series of exchanges from the neighborly norm in a closeknit community is that Ken, Audrey, Amber, Tina, Pat, and Christine don’t all live near each other; they may have met for the first time when trading Time Bank credits for each other’s services.

A free membership in the North Quabbin Time Bank allows people who live and work in nine towns (Erving, Wendell, Orange, Athol, New Salem, Warwick, Royalston, Petersham, and Phillipston) to request, offer, and receive help from each other in exchange for units of currency called “time dollars.” In this system, all services are valued equally: one hour of any member’s time is worth one time dollar.

The Time Bank, which was established in 2007, has about 90 active members. The organization is headquartered in Orange at YES (the Young Entrepreneurs Society), but the bank itself is web-based. Members log on to



Time Bank intern Caca Wanjala orients new member Nancy Kellogg to the system. www.nqtimebank.org to see the balance of time dollars, to peruse and offer services, and to exchange them.

Skills and requests currently offered include house cleaning; farm help; piano or guitar lessons; massage; computer networking; clothes mending; yoga; babysitting; Japanese, Spanish, and Swahili lessons; chainsaw work; ping pong coaching (by a champ); math tutoring; child care by certified providers; military counseling; pet care; web research; hair cuts and beauty tips; herbal wellness; and biology tutoring.

The Time Bank’s co-coordinators work with new members, helping them decide what they might ask for and offer. They also make sure there are services available for those members whose services are in high demand (at the moment, the

herbalist, the haircutters, and the clothing menders), and they recruit new members with skills that are being requested.

Organizations can become members of the North Quabbin Time Bank, as well, enabling their volunteers to earn time dollars for their volunteer work. The Trustees of Reservations, the Young Entrepreneurs Society, the Swift River PTA, and the North Quabbin Community Cooperative are all members of the NQTB.

The NQTB community comes together face-to-face at quarterly potlucks. Co-founder Karen Werner, who quotes the tagline of timebanking, “Turning strangers into neighbors,” says these events are “such a fun mishmash of community, full of people from different work and family situations, nationalities, and generations, who might otherwise never come together. They’re a crucial part of weaving the community together.”

To join the NQTB, members must be at least sixteen years old and have attended an orientation meeting (to learn how the system works and sign a code of ethics). The next meeting will be held on July 7th, 5:30 to 7:30 p.m. at the Wendell Free Library. Please come for potluck, to learn more about the NQTB, and to join!

For more information, email nqtimebank@gmail.com or call co-coordinators Amber, Karen, and Caca at: (978) 544-1869.

According to the Franklin County Public Education Study Group, and other sources, Roche said, early evidence from districts looking at regionalization, such as Pioneer, showed there would be no initial savings and large up-front costs involved, because when you bring together districts which have a varying economics, all of the districts have to bring their teacher contracts up to the highest level. So a poorer school district that pays a fairly low wage to their teachers, comparatively speaking, would then have to pay the same salary as the wealthier district if they were to join in one large regional district.

Roche talked about the experience of going through the difficult process of closing the Montague Center School as a way of explaining how he thought there was actually some see **ROCKE** page 14

LEVERETT from page 1 and many others began building what has become a bustling general store and community gathering place in Moores Corner. The process was not easy in the beginning, and it took many months for permits to be secured before breaking ground at the site. Prior to that, the Leverett Food Coop operated out of a much older, smaller corner store across the way, at the intersection of Dudleyville Road, Rattlesnake Gutter, and North Leverett Road.

In remarks about the early days of the Co-op, Dan Bennett reminded the crowd to “brighten the corner where you are... This is the village, these are the people with whom we must get along.”

Behind the Co-op is a meadow, of which a portion is being cultivated as a forest garden. A number of edible perennials have

been planted, including paw-paw, gooseberry, sunchokes, hazelnut, and, as of Saturday, an Asian pear tree.

Stone-Humphrey described the forest garden this way: “[It] is an opportunity for the Co-op to extend its mission of environmental concern and community education through thinking about consumption of sustainable plants. It is our hope that the garden will be both a social space to sit, relax, and cultivate community and ideas about sustainable living, while also allowing the Co-op to harvest edibles to be incorporated into some of the delicious homemade food we offer.”

The garden was dedicated to Shively and Bennett with the planting of the Asian pear tree, in the presence of many long-time Co-op members.



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Bodhisattvas of Intervention Theater

BY DAVID DETMOLD
MONTAGUE CENTER – On Saturday evening, five Latino youth from Holyoke brought their hard-edged brand of street theater to the Maezumi Institute in Montague Center, to perform for a workshop of Buddhists. It was a modern *West Side Story* meets the mystic East under the direction of the peripatetic piper of reality theater, Court Dorsey, of Wendell.

Dorsey has been working with inner-city youth in Holyoke, community center participants in Springfield, ex-offenders, incarcerated prisoners, as well as elementary school children in Franklin County and a rotating

cast of English students at the Franklin County Tech School for many years, developing a technique he calls conflict resolution theater.

In his work, Dorsey allows the students to define the terms of their lives and the conflicts that beset them – drug and alcohol abuse, peer pressure, teen pregnancy, gay bashing, abusive parents, out-of-touch teachers – in stark terms and realistic settings, and after a brief period of preparation to deliver the raw, unpolished product on stage for their peers, or for whatever audience cares to look in on their lives for an hour or two.

Each performance piece is followed by a lengthy question and answer session where audience members can ask the performers, in or out of character, about the meaning of the work presented.

Dorsey describes his brand of theater as “art that bears witness to the lives of people,” and bearing witness to the streets of Holyoke was just what his five actors did on Saturday night, as the lotus-posed Sangha of audience members in the converted dairy barn on Ripley Road paid strict attention to their performance – called *Push* – and peppered them with questions afterwards.

Victor Del Valles, Niquita Perez, Radame Jucino, Kevin Garcia, and Angel Roque spun a tale of love and betrayal as old as William Shakespeare, as Garcia is cajoled by his comrades Del Valles and Jucino to spike Perez’ drink at a neighborhood dance so he can bring her to a motel room and have sex with her. In the next scene, Perez is confronted by her father, played by Roque, who has intercepted a phone call from a



Court Dorsey at the Maezumi Institute

health clinic where she has scheduled an abortion. He berates her, and invokes the memory of her deceased mother

to pressure her into reconsidering. She adroitly plays on his sympathies to extract a promise that he will accompany her to the see **WORKSHOP** pg 12

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VOTES from pg 1
 “warm and fuzzy,” satisfied that “win, lose or draw, the people spoke.”

On Monday, the people did speak, discussing the senior center proposal for a solid hour before lining up to cast anonymous paper ballots. But when the votes were counted, the warm fuzzy feeling Peabody spoke of failed to materialize.

“Quiet, isn’t it?” commented council on aging chair Collis Adams.

A hush fell on the auditorium after Peabody announced the outcome of the vote. Then, the senior citizens who had turned out for the vote got up *en masse* and walked out of the hall, leaving a much younger crowd to reallocate \$637,435 of the town’s \$900,000 in free cash to swell Erving’s \$3.5 million stabilization account, and to spend the \$445,364 from taxation that would have helped to pay for the

senior center on relining sewer pipes in Erving Center instead.

“You can tell the true character of people by how they treat their children and their seniors,” observed Joe Bucci, the janitor at the Erving Elementary School, as he put away his vacuum cleaner in the closet just outside the auditorium door after the vote.

“We’ll sit down and look at what we can do,” said Adams, clearly frustrated by the second setback. He said he “wouldn’t even entertain the idea of a smaller senior center. We squeezed it down as far as we could.”

But that wasn’t far enough for former selectboard member Dan Hammock, who led the opposition to the vote in his new role as a member of the finance committee. Hammock said with state coffers reeling from the recession, this was no time for the town to be building a new senior center for “two and a half million dollars.”

He said, “A different and a better senior center is needed, we agree. We just don’t think this senior center at this time is needed in Erving. If you think more cuts are coming, where would you cut the money from. The police? The highway department?”

Hammock said it could cost the town \$30,000 or more to maintain the new senior center, money that is not currently in the operating budget.

Adams countered that even if it cost \$40,000 to maintain the building, that would amount to about 11 cents on the tax rate. “We’re going to argue about 11 cents on the tax rate? Please.”

Hammock said, “It’s difficult for me to stand here and recommend for you to proceed in a cautious, conservative way. It’s tragic that seniors have to leave town to find senior housing. But let’s keep working on it.”

Adams said the effort to locate

new housing for seniors was separate from the effort to build a new senior center, although both would be located on the town owned parcel of land north of the elementary school.

Rural Development Incorporated, the non-profit wing of the Franklin County Regional Housing and Redevelopment Authority that has been exploring the possibility of building 20 units of senior housing on the land, sent representatives to the selectboard on May 11th. There they made it clear that the senior housing could not move forward if the town failed to approve the new senior center first, since the senior center would pay for bringing sewer and water lines to the land, making it possible to build senior housing to the rear of the lot at an affordable price.

Adams also said the town would be responsible for repaying a \$162,839 Community see **VOTES** pg 13

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the poetry page

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

- William Carlos Williams

The editors would like to thank the following for their generous financial underwriting of The Poetry Page:

Klondike Sound, Carlin Barton, Montague Dental Arts, Dr. Robert Koolkin, Michael Farrick, Green Fields Market, and Michael Muller

Poetry Page edited by Christopher Sawyer-Laucanno, Janel Nockleby and Jamie Berger

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

design by Boysen Hodgson

Different is what it is.

(On this date January 12, 2007)

Never want to
Never could be
Never knew anyway else
Never choice the way

Could be regular but can't
Never had a clue what was what
Why be regular
A choice made by life's turns

Why be one self
Why not be true
Why is something you not?
Be your self
Why not.

Lost be gain a soul.

--Elizabeth L. Freeman
Montague Center

From Mexican Suite

Profundity never laid in ambush waiting for me to arrive at a desolate crossroad. But a rooster, that I mentally converted into a fighting cock, once chased me into a ditch. Later I thought I could have won big if I'd fixed spurs to that bantam and hauled it behind the bullring. But that was in another life. Now I've only got the anxiousness of descending dark.

--Christopher Sawyer-Laucanno
Turners Falls
(translated from Spanish by the author)



Market This

To market
To market
To sell my digs
Home again
Home again
To slaughter the pig
And suck on the bones
While the bank
Runs away with my home

--Gini Brown
Berkeley, CA

Desuetude

For Neda Agha-Soltan

The mark upon the beach
Is longing

Placed there by a child
Calmed

By an ocean
Swollen with freight of sunken
galleons

Kraaken, black boxes
The dreams of narwhals
Where a virgin lies

Her head upon the sand
Piles up a castle

With tin shovel and pail
From which to depend

Her dark braid
A vast wave
Cratered drops of spray
Scattered in a bandoleer of tears
Loosed upon the sickled shells

Of revenant nautili
A netted veil cast there
By wiser sisters
Against the lap of night

--David Detmold
Turners Falls

Being Alone

(On this date December 22, 1994)

I have always felt most safe when I am alone when knows when some is coming home soon but not too soon.

Being alone give time to think about what may be going in life without someone else there too. Yes, there are those times where I feel a little lonely, but not that often.

--Elizabeth L. Freeman
Montague Center



Ode (with lumps) for Allen Ross

Out of Montague Center and Civic Concern
Came the Doctor to be a Selectman

Along many rivers he had canoed, into riverly confluence
To town hall where he looked for consensus

He was willing to do whatever he could and gave
Of his time, his humor, and "such like" ideas

He skipped a few things-meetings and lunch, but
Kept to civil procedure

He had a few issues--who doesn't?--
Some were contentious

A few were resolved, and some still
Linger eluding conclusion

He rows his canoe in rigor and rain
In sun-bliss he rows

To travel a river he must paddle the sky
Looking up at him from the water

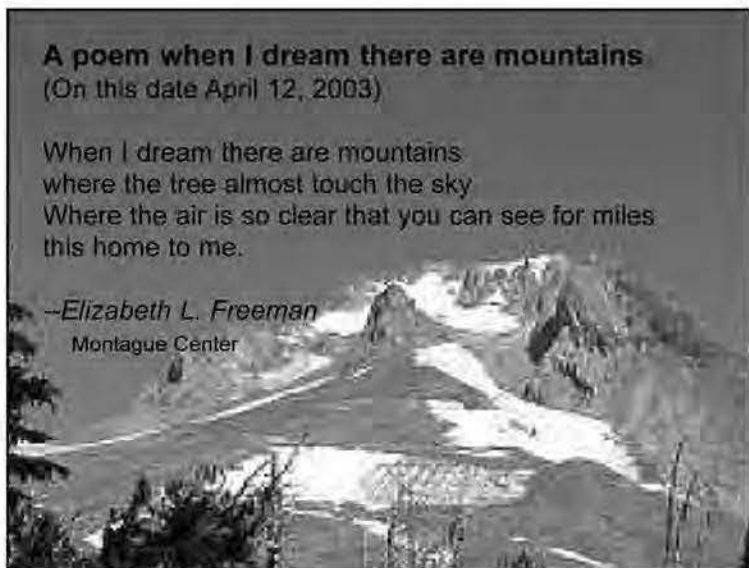
His is the future of Now, and what shall I?
The Town has a future of How and of Why?

--Patricia Pruitt
Turners Falls

A poem when I dream there are mountains
(On this date April 12, 2003)

When I dream there are mountains where the tree almost touch the sky Where the air is so clear that you can see for miles this home to me.

--Elizabeth L. Freeman
Montague Center



CONTRIBUTOR'S NOTES:

David Detmold edits a small weekly newspaper in the town of Montague.

Patricia Pruitt is a poet and a member of the Montague Select Board.

Christopher Sawyer-Laucanno co-edits this poetry page with Janel Nockleby.

Elizabeth Freeman is a Montague Center native. The motto of her business is "Everybody needs an ELF."

Gini Brown is an artist living in Berkeley.

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WORKSHOP from pg 10 clinic and keep an open mind on what is best for her future.

Meanwhile, Garcia catches up with Perez at the bus stop, and learns that he has gotten her pregnant, and that she has decided to take action without consulting him to end the pregnancy. They argue, and he agrees to get a job and support her if she will keep the baby. She gives in.

Next, Garcia confronts his friends, Del Valles and Jucino, who have led him to this fix. To make amends, they offer to set him up with a local drug dealer, so he can make some real good money, support his new family, and even have money left over to pursue his dream of going to college.

But after a brief period of success dealing drugs and raking in the dough, Garcia is confronted by Roque in another role, this time as a drug lord protecting his turf, and Garcia's partner, Jucino, is killed during the confrontation.

Here the brief production came to a close, with an inspired poem by Roque, who riffs on the Bard, declaiming, "To bleed or not to bleed, choose your weapon," rapping about "bullets flying" and "moms crying," before closing with a dedication to Joey Scott, may he Rest in Peace.

"In our culture, there is really no such thing as a happy ending," explained Roque, as the cast sat down to take questions from the audience. "When you are surrounded by so much negativity in the inner city, you can chill, but at the end of the day, you are still going to be in the community."

By saying, "you can chill," Roque was referring to the basic mediation techniques Dorsey, a trained mediator as well as a director, had given to his actors to work with in developing their role plays. The actors summarized these techniques as: "active listening, chill relaxing, brainstorming ideas, and coming up with a win/win solution."

The audience of Buddhists was non-plussed.

Even though the actors had employed aspects of these techniques at each stage of the

drama, still the plot had gone from bad to worse, with Garcia ignoring his own better judgment and accepting the spiked drinks under pressure from his friends, getting his girlfriend pregnant under circumstances he considered to be nothing short of rape, foregoing a chance at legitimate employment for the quick cash and danger of dealing drugs, and ultimately precipitating his friend's murder.

Also, Perez, when she chilled out long enough to negotiate the terms of her pregnancy with her father and boyfriend, appeared to give way on her own conviction about what was best for her as an unwed, unprepared high school student and agreed to go along with the wishes of the men in her life.

Dorsey said, in previous role plays, cast members had tried to portray happy endings resulting from the use of mediation techniques, but they did not ring true. Consequently, the actors decided, "Let's just show the situations the way they are. Then we can talk about it."

Roque said in his community young people, "really don't have enough financial support. They have children at an early age. They are comfortable with that."

Perez said in real life, it is difficult for Latinos to practice active listening, and to chill. "Latinos are loud. They want to get their point across."

But Garcia said, "Chill helps. It's like a key; it opens everything else."

Responding to a question about how it felt to play the more supportive role of Perez' father, and also to play the role of a street thug, Roque said, "I'm a thespian, if you will. I can easily get into character and just run with it. What helps me is real life experience."

He talked about a dead uncle who had been part of a drug gang. "I've been through a lot of negativity. I've been there. I've sold drugs. I started selling drugs when I was 15 years old. I didn't know what I was in for. A lot of my role models were gangstas and drug lords."

Later, Perez revealed that the role of teen mother was not a

stretch for her to portray, as she had been a teen mother herself. She said that in the process of chilling and listening to the feedback from her father and boyfriend about her pregnancy, in the role play at least, if not in real life, "I incorporated their opinions," in deciding what to do about the baby."

But she said in real life, she would never have talked to her mother about having an abortion. "She would have killed me."

The primacy of the family in Latino culture is strong, while other institutions supporting their lives are weak or non-existent, and all the actors referred to this directly or obliquely. Now that they have learned basic mediation skills, and worked with them in role plays and on stage, in what they refer to as "intervention theater," the young people say they are also incorporating the "chill techniques" in their family lives, hoping they may rub off on an older generation, or percolate into the community at large.

"Negativity rubs off, but positivity rubs off, too," said Perez, "and it is so powerful."

One of the audience members said the actors are like Bodhisattvas.

"What's that?" He replied, "A bodhisattva is a winner."

"That's good!"

"A bodhisattva is a winner who is ready for glory, but he decides to go back and work the street, to help his community."

But don't be so sure how that work will end up.

"Was it truly a sad ending?" asked Roque, talking about the play. "The person who was truly the negative influence" – Jucino, who had pushed the spiked drinks, pressured Garcia to have sex, and set him up dealing drugs – "got what was coming to him," declared Roque. "It was karma."

At this moment of Zen, the old dairy barn erupted in laughter and applause, as the Buddhists welcomed the youth of Holyoke into their community, fellow travelers on the eightfold path, for one Saturday night, at least.



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JESSICA HARMON ILLUSTRATION

BY FRED CICETTI

LEONIA, NJ – Q: *There are lots of sunblocks out there with SPF numbers on them. What exactly do these numbers mean?*

Sun exposure is an extensive and important subject that is worth two columns. This is the first one.

Sunblocks – or sunscreens – work to prevent the damage of ultraviolet (UV) rays, an invisible component of sunlight. There are three types of UV rays: UVA, UVB and UVC.

UVA is the most abundant of the three ultraviolet rays at the earth's surface. These rays penetrate through the outer skin. Many of the UVB rays are absorbed by the stratospheric ozone layer, so there aren't as

THE HEALTHY GEEZER: All About Sunscreen

many of these at the earth's surface as the UVA rays. UVB rays don't penetrate as far as UVA rays but are still harmful. UVC radiation is extremely hazardous to skin, but it is completely absorbed by the ozone layer.

Sunburn and suntan are signs of skin damage. Suntans appear after the sun's rays have already killed some cells and damaged others. UV rays do more harm than damaging skin. They can also cause cataracts, wrinkles, age spots, and skin cancer.

Sunscreens are given SPF (Sun Protection Factor) ratings that tell you how well they protect you from damaging rays from the sun. The SPF ratings can be as low as 2 and as high as 100+.

Here's how the ratings work: If you apply a sunscreen rated at SPF 2, you will double the time it takes for your skin to burn. A sunscreen rated at SPF 15 will multiply the burning time by 15.

Dermatologists strongly rec-

ommend using a broad-spectrum (UVA and UVB protection) sunscreen with an SPF of 15 or greater year-round for all skin types.

The SPF number indicates the screening ability for UVB rays only. Research is being done to establish a system to measure UVA protection.

There is a point of diminishing returns with sunscreens. Here's how it goes:

A sunscreen with an SPF of 2 screens 50 percent of UVB rays.

A sunscreen with an SPF of 15 screens 93 percent of UVB rays.

A sunscreen with an SPF of 30 screens 97 percent of UVB rays.

A sunscreen with an SPF of 50 blocks 98 percent of UVB rays.

A sunscreen with an SPF of 100+ blocks 99 percent of UVB rays.

Not applying enough sunscreen can seriously reduce your protection. You should use an ounce – about a palmful – on

your body to gain the full protection indicated by the SPF on the product. Also, dermatologists advise reapplication every two hours or after swimming or sweating.

It seems logical that, if you use half the required sunscreen, you will get only half the protection, but that doesn't seem to be true. A study in the British Journal of Dermatology found that you get the protection of only the square root of the SPF. So, in theory, if you use a half ounce of sunscreen rated at 64, you won't get the protection of an SPF 32, but only the protection of an SPF 8.

In addition to applying a sunscreen, you should protect yourself by avoiding the sun between 10 a.m. and 4 p.m., wearing protective clothing and wraparound sunglasses, avoiding sunlamps and tanning beds, and checking your skin regularly for changes in the size, shape, color or feel of birthmarks, moles and spots.

If you have a questions write to fred@healthygeezzer.com

BUDGET from page 8

such as how many programs would be cut, and how many teachers would be laid off, before considering such a deep reduction.

Kristin Boyle suggested the committee proceed deliberately. She said, "We have spent a long time building up our schools," adding, "Don't panic." She encouraged everyone to slow down and plan before acting.

Rocke said he felt the cut represented by Hatch's motion was a fair compromise that would require the district to find ways to fund one or two positions, but would not hurt educational programs. He said there were four or five open positions that would be the responsibility of the new superintendent to fill. Rocke said the larger cuts in Singleton's amendment could have a serious impact on education.

Jen Waldron, member from Gill, suggested the school committee consider closing Hillcrest School as a way to lower the budget. No motion was made and no discussion occurred.

Rocke announced that all contracts for teachers, paraprofessionals and custodial staff had been approved by the Department of Elementary and Secondary Education. Boyle, a member of the personnel subcommittee, said new contract negotiations will begin again soon.

At the beginning of the meeting Tuesday night, the school committee honored former members who had recently left the board: Terry Lapachinski, Linda Kuklewicz, Timmie Smith and former chair Mary Kociela. Members also thanked Ken Rocke for his service for the past two years, and all present gave him a standing ovation. Gift donations will be made in honor of the former members to district school libraries and to the theater for live sound technology.

Kociela took the opportunity to say how much she had enjoyed working with Rocke. Former members were also given framed plaques expressing the appreciation of the district for all their hard work.

VOTES from pg 10

Development Block Grant that had paid for architectural designs for the new senior center, if the town did not approve the measure. Erving has also spent \$52,198 of town funds on a feasibility study for the new senior center, and for a study of geothermal heating and cooling for the new building.

Adams said the senior center committee had been advised by the selectboard that the new building would have "zero impact on the tax rate," if approved, since the \$1 million bond would take the place of the bond the town is just finishing paying off on the new police station this year, and the money that would have been spent from taxation will instead be allocated for the sewer repair project.

"Some still have doubts about the efficacy of this project," said Adams. "We're not here because of an idle want for a senior center. We have a desperate need. We're working

under very archaic conditions," at the old school building on Pleasant Street where the senior center is now housed. "Erving has the second or third lowest tax rate in Massachusetts. We can afford this senior center. Please help us."

But Hammock said the proposed 7,000 square foot building was too big, with a commercial kitchen and rooms big enough to hold a wedding reception in. "We just don't think Erving needs a senior center that big."

Several people challenged Hammock on this point, saying that by the time Erving approved a new design, construction costs would have risen to the point where the town would probably spend as much money for a smaller building, and he admitted this was probably true.

Senior center director Polly Kiely said about 50 seniors a day take advantage of the present senior center, but the new building would have space for

more programs, and would probably attract more of Erving's 300 residents who are above the age of 60. "It would provide a welcoming place for fitness, for socialization, and for warm meals," she added.

Ann Marie Gilbert said, "I hope Erving will get together and remember the seniors who paid their taxes and took care of the town. I wonder what the finance committee plans to do to help seniors who live alone and have no place to go. I realize the economy is poor, but think about your mothers and grandmothers."

Bob Bitzer said, "With over three million dollars in stabilization, who determines where that money is going to be spent, for a worthwhile project?"

Brenda Silva asked, "How long have the seniors been wanting a new senior center? It seems like there is never a good time. If you keep going on and saying, 'It's always a bad time,' when are you going to do this?"

Her speech drew applause.

Ellie Clark said, "A great deal of seniors live on Social Security. They can't afford their medications. The elderly have put a lot into our community. Most people come very short of their golden years. They're usually rusted and in need of repair."

These arguments were not needed to persuade the majority. But two thirds of the room had to say, "Yes," to win approval and when all the ballots were counted, the proposal still fell short by four votes.

Later in the meeting, the remaining voters approved spending \$25,000 for legal fees and other costs associated with knocking down the derelict and arson-damaged Usher Mill, along with \$24,000 for a contingency plan to retrofit the Erving Center wastewater treatment plant in the event the Erving Paper Mill were to go out of business.

The finance committee recommended both



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Planting, Seed by Seed

BY JOSEPH A. PARZYCH GILL— Back at the beginning of spring, nice weather and near record temperatures gave me the urge to begin planting a garden. I began by rototilling with my backhoe. Just as I was nearly finished, a hydraulic hose sprang a leak, so I fired up my lonesome rototiller to complete the job.

This machine is a front tiller, and is better known as "a man-killer," nearly living up to its reputation before I was done.

While planting seeds in the

near 90 degree weather in May, I was reminded of the time I worked for Paul Jordan in Northfield. He had an auto parts business in an old barn. He had previously owned a Chevrolet agency, but the garage was completely destroyed by fire. There was little or no insurance, so he started all over again in the old barn.

Mr. Jordan had a knack for finding sources of new and rebuilt parts during and even after WWII. People came from far and wide to buy these scarce parts. He even found sources of rebuilt engines.

It was my job to come in early to build a fire in the woodstove on chilly mornings. I also swept the floor and tried to establish some sort of order in the hodgepodge of engines and parts. I arranged the engines by manufacturer with Ford, Chrysler and GM segregated in separate rows to make it easier to keep track of inventory.

Mr. Jordan was happy to have order come out of chaos, but he insisted I not touch his supply of small parts tucked away on

shelves, willy-nilly. He had these small parts all catalogued in his mind and could immediately lay his hands on them.

I liked going out on errands to pick up freight at the railroad station or to ship parts, sometimes out to the Midwest. If he thought I'd been working too hard, he would tell me to take his young son out to treat the boy to an ice cream cone.

The only bad day I had was when Mr. Jordan sent me out to help one of his in-laws plant sweet corn.

His in-law was adamant in his belief in the virtue of working hard for a living. He looked in disfavor at Mr. Jordan's ability to earn a comfortable living talking on the phone or having me pack up a Chevrolet cylinder head to ship to a farmer in Iowa who was most grateful to pay an exorbitant price to receive this cherished part for his disabled truck.

I was not at all crazy about planting corn, but Mr. Jordan said he'd appreciate if I'd help his in-law plant the field in order to get on his good side, since he held Mr. Jordan in disdain, if not contempt, for raking in money and avoiding hard work.

The cranky in-law was fussy

about the planting. He wanted four corn kernels planted two feet apart. I began marking out the rows as he drove off to the Farmers Exchange.

As soon as I began digging holes, placing seeds and covering them as the in-law had instructed, I could see I'd be there planting forever, if not longer.

I began using a method I'd developed on the farm at home. I raised the hoe and chopped a hole with each step making sure they were two feet apart. I methodically chopped my way to the end of the row, switched to the next row and chopped my way back. I then picked up the container of corn, dropping four seeds into each hole with every step. When I got back to the beginning, I picked up the hoe and worked down the rows in the opposite direction pulling the dirt over the seeds, stepping on the covering dirt to tamp it down in robot-like fashion. By the time the grouchy old in-law got back, I had the field almost completely planted. I waited for him to praise me.

He was most unhappy when I showed him my method.

"No, no, no," he lamented, clenching his fists. "That is no way to plant corn. You're digging

the holes too deep, and some of the holes have more than four seeds."

He dug a few demonstration holes and dropped to his knees to carefully drop the seeds in the shallow hole, one by one. He then pulled the dirt over them as tenderly as a mother tucking a child into bed. He then lovingly patted the soil several times before moving on to the next hole.

I figured the rows I'd planted would be producing ears of corn by the time we finished planting these last few rows. I picked up the hoe with a heavy heart, dreading the tedium of planting by the old grouch's method.

"No, no, no," he said, "You've done enough damage already. Go back to work in the barn."

When I told Mr. Jordan how the old grouch had fired me, he just chuckled. When the crop came ready to harvest, Mr. Jordan later informed me that the rows I'd planted produced the best looking crop he'd ever seen, perhaps because the seeds had been planted deeper.

As the memory of that day came back to me, I laughed to find myself kneeling in my garden, counting out seeds dropped into a rather shallow hole.

Treasurer's Clerk
The Town of Erving is seeking a Treasurer's Clerk to assist with clerical work and miscellaneous correspondence. P/T, Tuesday and Thursday mornings. 6 to 8 hrs/wk. Minimum 2 years of general office experience. Requirements: HS diploma, math aptitude, good verbal and written communication skills, ability to multitask, word processing and spreadsheet experience. CORI check required. Send resume and salary requirements to Town of Erving, 12 E. Main Street, Erving, MA 01344. Attention Margaret Sullivan, Treasurer. Deadline July 9th, 2009. AA/EOE.

ROCKE from page 9 value in the concept of regionalization, if it could be done well. He said the Gill-Montague district went from having four inadequately staffed, underutilized school buildings, to three buildings that are fully staffed and serve the students well, without increasing costs.

"My suspicion is that there are savings to be had from 'super-regionalization,' if it were done correctly," Rocke said.

He spoke of special education as an example of a high cost, inefficient way to deliver student services in the current patchwork of small districts. "Where savings would come from is in low-incidence special population programs such as English Language Learners, therapeutic behavioral programs, autism programs, all of which we are legally mandated and morally obligated to provide. But if you don't have sufficient numbers, it's very hard to run

them on a cost-effective basis." He suggested that if you could bring all the county's special education students together in one large district, you could provide services in a more cost effective.

"Could we improve education for our children if we created new, larger organizational structures of some kind?" Rocke asked rhetorically. "Can we use what the state is proposing or some of their ideas and turn them to a positive direction to create a much more effective system of education in all of Franklin County?"

Rocke suggested that districts work together for the benefit of all students in the county, "rather than worrying about competing with each other for a limited number of students."

Asked if he thought we could achieve all of this under the fiscal constraints public education is now facing, he said, "I think we're at a moment of great opportunity."

MCTV Channel 17 Afternoon/Evening Schedule 6/26 - 7/2

Visit www.montaguema.net for complete schedule

Friday, June 26

- 1:30 p.m. Baystate Franklin Medical Center Health Beat
- 2:30 p.m. Both Sides of the Bridge
- 3:30 p.m. Carlos W. Anderson "Big Fat Lie"
- 4:30 p.m. Coffee House: Katie Clarke '09
- 5:30 p.m. Masters of the Universe
- 6:30 p.m. Thomas Jefferson
- 7:00 p.m. GMRS 6/23/09
- 11:00 p.m. The Katie Clarke Band

Saturday, June 27

- 12:30 p.m. Girls Softball SemiFinals 09
- 1:30 p.m. History of Gill Congregational Church
- 2:00 p.m. Loose Change
- 4:30 p.m. Living in the Shadow of VT Yankee
- 6:00 p.m. The Reflecting Pool Interview with filmmaker
- 7:00 p.m. TWB Ergonomics
- 8:00 p.m. Underground Railway Concert '07
- 9:30 p.m. White House Chronicle #1019
- 10:00 p.m. Zero

Sunday, June 28

- 1:30 p.m. TWB Sky Awareness
- 2:30 p.m. The Cabinet of Dr. Caligari
- 3:30 p.m. They Are Still There

- 4:30 p.m. The Western Mass Dem: Chris Forgey
- 5:30 p.m. The Rise and Fall of Lake Hitchcock
- 6:30 p.m. the epics at the vous
- 7:30 p.m. The Reflecting Pool Interview with filmmaker
- 8:30 p.m. Discovery Center Open Mic Night 2007
- 10:00 p.m. The Secret Government

Monday, June 29

- 12:30 p.m. Changing Face of Turners Falls
- 2:30 p.m. Both Sides of the Bridge
- 3:30 p.m. All About Bats
- 3:50 p.m. Discovery Center: Northern Bats
- 5:00 p.m. Falls Table Margaret Fitzpatrick
- 5:30 p.m. Exploring New Worlds in New England
- 6:00 p.m. Franklin County Matters Cogeneration
- 7:00 p.m. Select Board 6/22/09
- 9:00 p.m. Girls Softball SemiFinals 09
- 10:00 p.m. In Liew We Trust pt. I

Tuesday, June 30

- 12:30 p.m. Loose Change
- 3:00 p.m. Luke Massery Live Piano Recital
- 4:30 p.m. Memorial Day 2009

- 5:30 p.m. Naturalist Laurie Sanders
- 6:30 p.m. Over The Falls: Italy Comes To Heath
- 7:00 p.m. GMRS 6/23/09

Wednesday, July 1

- 12:30 p.m. Power Canal Draw Down
- 1:00 p.m. Farmer's Market 09
- 1:30 p.m. Coffee House: Katie Clarke '09
- 2:30 p.m. Masters of the Universe
- 3:30 p.m. MCTV Video Camp 2007
- 4:00 p.m. Montague Update: Ted Graveline
- 4:30 p.m. White House Chronicle #1019
- 5:00 p.m. White House Chronicle #1020
- 5:30 p.m. Wisdom Way Solar Village
- 6:30 p.m. Valley Idol Finals
- 9:00 p.m. Zero

Thursday, July 2

- 12:30 p.m. Seneca Falls
- 1:00 p.m. Rosner Car Show
- 2:00 p.m. The Looming Crisis in Oil Depletion
- 4:00 p.m. Preachin the Blues
- 5:00 p.m. Physician Focus June 2009
- 6:00 p.m. Over The Falls:SFBA
- 7:00 p.m. Select Board 6/22/09
- 9:00 p.m. Loose Change

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JACK COUGHLIN ILLUSTRATION

THURSDAY, JUNE 25th

At the Rendezvous, Turners Falls: comedian, author and hometown boy **Jeff Kreisler** performs, introducing his new book, *Get Rich Cheating*, 7 p.m. No cover.

Route 63 Roadhouse, Millers Falls: Open Mic, all levels. 6-year Anniversary Party. 21+, with host P. Kim on bass. 9 p.m.

At Deja Brew, Wendell: **Larry Kopp**, Country and City Blues Guitar with vocals, 8 to 10 p.m.

Coop Concerts, Energy Park, Miles St. Greenfield 6 to 8 p.m. www.coopconcerts.org.

FRIDAY, JUNE 26th

At the Rendezvous, Turners Falls: **Kristen Ford** and special guest. \$3 cover.

Mocha Maya's Coffee House, Shelburne Falls: **Dick Derry**, original pop-rock tunes including Paul Amenta, guitar & backing vocals. 8:30 p.m.

At Deja Brew, Wendell: *The Relics*, '50s & '60s Rock, 9 to 11 p.m.

Route 63 Roadhouse, Millers Falls: **Evenspeak**, rockers from Orange, back in the house. 9:30 p.m.

FRIDAY & SATURDAY, JUNE 26th & 27th

Pothole Pictures, Shelburne Falls, Alfred Hitchcock's haunting dreams of Manderley: **Rebecca**. Winner of Best Picture Oscar, 1940. Music before the movie at 7 p.m.

FRIDAY JUNE 26th THROUGH SUNDAY, JULY 5th

Hampshire Shakespeare's 2009 Summer Season: *Henry IV, Part I* directed by Ann Garner. Outdoor stage in the meadow at The Hartsbrook School,

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Paul Kaplan, singer/songwriter, performs at the Echo Lake Concert Series, Leverett Town Hall on Saturday, June 27th at 7:30 p.m.

Hadley, 7:30 p.m.

SATURDAY, JUNE 27th

Woodland Ramble in Petersham with ecologist, author and illustrator Elizabeth Farnsworth. The Brooks Woodland Preserve has some of the most diverse plant communities in the North Quabbin region. 10 a.m. to 2 p.m. Farnsworth is a senior research ecologist with the New England Wild Flower Society, the co-author of the *Peterson Field Guide to Ferns*, and a noted botanical illustrator. Participants should meet at the parking area off Quaker Drive, an easterly turn off Route 122/32 south of Petersham center. Info: contact Farnsworth at (978) 249-6771. Free.

Amherst singer/songwriter, **Paul Kaplan**, performs in Echo Lake Concert Series at the Leverett Town Hall. Opening act: Leverett resident and ARHS student, Bess Hepner. 7:30 p.m. \$8 to \$10.

1794 Meetinghouse, New Salem: The broad musical tastes of the *Parkington Sisters*, filtered through their classical training, have produced an acoustic-pop sound that is undeniably their own: songs with vibrant string arrangements, warm, interwoven harmonies, improvisation and voices that blend like only sisters can. 7:30 p.m. Adults/Seniors \$10. Children 12 and under free.

At the Rendezvous, Turners Falls: **Naia Kete** \$3 cover.

Deja Brew, Wendell: **Whiskey Council**, Alternative Country & Bluegrass, 9 to 11 p.m.

Route 63 Roadhouse, Millers Falls: **John Sheldon & Blue Streak** at 9:30 p.m.

SUNDAY, JUNE 28th

Laura Siersma performs music from her new release *Talon of the Blackwater* at 1794 Meetinghouse, New Salem at 4 p.m. Lush music touched by classical, folk, jazz, art-rock and new age, unfolds with piano, cello, fretless bass, fluid guitars, synthesizers and percussion to reveal "souls speaking," says Siersema.

MONDAY, JUNE 29th

At the Rendezvous, Turners Falls: **Open Mic** 8 p.m.

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

TUESDAY, JUNE 30th

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

WEDNESDAY, JULY 1st

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

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.

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.

Junior Rangers is coming to the Great Falls Discovery Center! A four-part science and nature education workshop for children as part of the Massachusetts Department of Conservation and Recreation Junior Ranger program. Program start at 1 p.m. Free. Space is



Saturday, June 27, from 10 a.m. to 2 p.m. Elizabeth Farnsworth leads a leisurely ramble in the Brooks Woodland Preserve, Petersham. (see calendar listing for more info)

limited. Registration required. Info: (413) 863-322.

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.

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MONDAYS - Drop-in, 3 to 6 p.m.
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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

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.

WEDNESDAY, JULY 1st & FRIDAY, JULY 3rd

Morning Nature Walk 7:30 to 9:30 a.m. Walks are designed to be short but interesting, usually lasting about 90 minutes, never more than about 2 miles over level pavement. Participants will meet at the bird bath outside the main entrance to the Great Falls Discovery Center, Turners Falls. Info: (413) 863-3221 or www.greatfallsma.org.

THURSDAY, JULY 2nd

Flaming Dragons open practice 4 p.m. to 6 p.m. at The Brickhouse, 24 Third St. Turners Falls. We want musicians of all styles. myspace.com/flamingdragonsofmiddleearth

Coop Concerts, Energy Park, Miles St. Greenfield 6 to 8 p.m. www.coopconcerts.org. Featured this week: *60% Less Ambiguity*, **Laura Siersema**, and **Jennie McAvoy**.

At Deja Brew, Wendell: **Kellianna**, 8 to 10 p.m.

FRIDAY, JULY 3rd

At Deja Brew, Wendell: **Reggae Vision**. This well known Reggae quintet is new to Deja Brew. Come down and check them out! 9 to 11 p.m.

ONGOING

At the Discovery Center, Turners Falls: **John Kudukey**, black and white river photographs on display in the Great Hall through June.

On display: Massachusetts **Junior Duck Stamp Art**. Selected pieces of art that won awards in Massachusetts are on display at the Millers River Environmental Center, 100 Main Street in Athol. Open Tues. & Weds, 10 a.m. to 4 p.m. **Until July 2nd.** www.fws.gov/juniorduck.

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.ctriver.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

Memorial Hall Theater
POTHOLE PICTURES

Friday & Saturday June 26th & 27th at 7:30 p.m.
REBECCA
Hitchcock's first US-made film. Both a thriller and a deeper study of lives lost and how the past can affect and overwhelm the present. Laurence Olivier, Jane Fontaine. 1940. NR. B & W. 130 min

Music before the movie 7 p.m.
Fri. The Ambiguities Sat. Eric DeLuca

51 Bridge St., Shelburne Falls 625-2896

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www.gardencinemas.net
Showtimes for Friday, June 26th to Tuesday, June 30th

- 1. THE PROPOSAL**
PG13 in DTS sound
DAILY 12:00 3:00 6:30 9:00
- 2. TRANSFORMERS: REVENGE OF THE FALLEN** PG13 in DTS sound
DAILY 12:00 3:00 6:30 9:00
- 3. UP** PG
DAILY 12:00 3:00 6:30 9:00
- 4. NIGHT AT THE MUSEUM: SMITHSONION** PG
DAILY 12:15 3:15 6:45 9:15
- 5. YEAR ONE** PG13
DAILY 12:15 3:15 6:45 9:15
- 6. THE BROTHERS BLOOM** PG13 in DTS sound
DAILY 12:30 3:30 7:00 9:30
- 7. THE HANGOVER** R in DTS sound
DAILY 12:30 3:30 7:00 9:30

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Friday, 6/26 9:00 to 11:00 p.m.
The Relics
50's & 60's rock

Saturday, 6/27, 9 to 11 p.m.
Whiskey Council
Alternative Country/Blue Grass

Sunday, 6/28 8 to 10 p.m.
Nash's Raven Celtic Music with Kevin Skorupa & Mario Cote

Thursday, 7/2 8 to 10 p.m.
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Kristen Ford and Special Guest

SAT: 6/27 | 9:30PM | \$3
Naia Kete

MON: 6/27 | 8PM | OPEN MIC!

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TALKING PICTURES

Home May Be Where the Heart Is
AWAY WE GO – Reviewed

1 eagle = the pits 4 eagles = the heights

BY TODD DETMOLD

CHICAGO – I'm trying not to write off Sam Mendes, as many of my film-watching brethren seem to have already done. It is hard to deny, though, five projects into his career as a movie director, that the man's films live and die by their scripts' power to work with (or despite) his lazy, surface-level ideas.

Following on the heels of last year's abysmal Oscar-bait *Revolutionary Road*, Mendes turns in *Away We Go*, another melancholy film about a melancholy couple trying to find a way to live in a melancholy America.

Trading the monotonous rage of *Road* for atonal quirk, *Away We Go* presents a series of six vignettes cut together as the premise for our heroes Burt and Verona (John Krasinski and Maya Rudolph) to jet-set around North America in search of the place where they might settle down. The episodes are alternately emotionally devastating and broadly comedic, and, saddled as they are with being the emotional core of an all-too-often cold and unfeeling film, we are left with no choice but to be

humbly impressed with the work of the two leads.

Krasinski and Rudolph never seem adrift as actors – the way their characters do in the film – and they anchor the whole enterprise in a calm and collected manner many actors their age would not be capable of. Those of us familiar with their stellar television work will be impressed anew.

The hapless pair is three months away from having their first baby, and in the first act we discover them holed up like hermits in a cozy trailer in the woods of the Pacific Northwest, faxing and phoning in their meager livings. Upon learning that Burt's nearby parents (Catherine O'Hara and Jeff Daniels) are taking off to Belgium for two years, the deserted quickly become the deserters. They pack up to move to a) Tuscon, where Verona has an old co-worker; b) Phoenix, where Verona has a sister; c) Madison, where Burt has a cousin; d) Montreal, where they share a happily-married pair of friends from college, or; e) Miami, where Burt has a brother.

Issues of abandonment (or the



John Krasinski and Maya Rudolph fear thereof) and parenthood (or the fear thereof) run rampant through the film, and Mendes does his best to push them off the frame so we can laugh at the antics of the wacky twosomes along with Burt and Verona, our straight-man audience surrogates.

There is a sense of impending doom hanging over everyone they visit, and it seems as though married co-writers Dave Eggers and Vendela Vida (Dave/Burt; Vendela/Verona: coincidence?) intend that doom to transfer over to Burt and Verona. Whether explicitly stating they don't know how to raise a kid or implying they aren't going to be ready to do so (as they abandon the hosts who really and truly need them in their lives for the next stop on their road trip), it's

hard to assume that Burt and Verona are going to be fine just because they have each other. The script comes lined with references to their un-married coupledom approaching the brink of something less stable than either are willing to admit, and yet at film's end, *Love Is All They Need*. It's either a cop-out or simply a much darker story than Mendes and his producers had any intention of allowing into our theaters.

What we have here is essentially a feature-length kiss-off to the potential for happiness if you are young and in love and living in America. It's clearly essential to the film's message (if it can be presumed to have one) that the only place Burt and Verona ever agree they would be happy is in Canada. But their reasons for leaving Montreal and not going back are hazy and underwritten.

Several strong supporting actors supply pathos in spades whenever they are allowed on screen (Chris Messina and Paul Schneider both offer monologues that would qualify as Oscar Clips if they weren't delivered with such humanity and sincerity), but Mendes wants to juggle subtext and meaning with quirk and comedy. He fails to find a balance.

It's a film about a chronically uncomfortable couple plagued by wanderlust and trying to

make a home out of nothing. Nothing is more or less what they end up with. That's pretty nasty for an ostensibly happy Hollywood ending. Given the thorny issues raised throughout the film, I hate to think that "Home Is Where the Heart Is ... Maybe" was the best they could've come up with.

I applaud Mendes for trying to bust out of his mold after bottoming out with his perennial awards swill, but it's a shame when the material here might've yielded something truly meaningful to the underrepresented loners of America, always boxed in by Hollywood as jesters, manic-depressives or misanthropes.

Congrats, Amber



We are all so proud!

Amber Ackerman graduated from U-Mass Dartmouth, magna cum laude, this past May with a Bachelor of Arts in Marketing. Ms. Ackerman earned Chancellor List honors with a perfect 4.0 GPA for the spring semester. She is on to grad school in the fall.

from **THEATER** pg 1
with amazing inaccuracy.

Can a pudgy, middle-aged man in a blue suit make it with a varied selection of three of New York's more interesting women?

Rounding out the cast are Sandra Blaney, Denise Cormier, and Sara Whitcomb, who play off Roddy with lightning precision. Simon's achingly human look at the pleasures and pitfalls of adultery in NCT's current fare brings on a bonanza of belly laughs.

NCT's lively, hilarious, and heartfelt production of *Last of the Red Hot Lovers* is running now through this Saturday, June 27th.

But wait, that's not all!

Three more NCT productions for grown-ups will run through the first week of August, so there is plenty of comedic fare to choose from this summer. Also, the PaintBox Theatre, for kids of all ages, will kick off beginning July 8th with three shows of their own.

First, here is the rest of NCT's line-up: From July 2nd

to 11th, *Other People's Money*, by Jerry Sterner, directed by Keith Langsdale, is characterized as 'part drama, part romantic comedy' and highlights Wall Street's bullish and greedy glory days. It seems timely that the live theater of entertainment would take on the live theater of corporate gluttony that has so taken over the news of the day, despite its 1989 premier. Who will prevail – Main Street or Wall Street?

Third in the NCT season is Sarah Ruhl's *The Clean House*, directed by Ed Golden, running from July 16th to 25th. Finding a maid was supposed to be the end of the family's problems, until they hired Matilde. Without once picking up a broom, Matilde manages to air their dirty laundry and toss their useless baggage out, all while composing the funniest joke in the world. This whimsical and wondrous comedy was a finalist for the Pulitzer Prize in 2005. *The Clean House* is billed as an exuberant, funny, and deeply moving play.

New Century Theatre's

fourth and final show for the season is Tom Stoppard's *Arcadia*, directed by NCT's co-founder and producing director Sam Rush. *Arcadia* is a comedy of manners set in England at the start of the 19th century. At the same time, it offers a modern day mystery of academia and historical research. Who would have thought that a play that merges history, science, and gardening with affairs of the heart could be so well-loved? Winner of the 1995 Drama Critics Circle Award, this Stoppard work is one part mystery, one part lesson in chaos theory, and three parts laugh-out-loud comedy.

For the children, PaintBox Theatre returns for a sixth spectacular season. Artistic director Tom McCabe has adapted and directed three more classic tales, presenting them in a unique way. High energy and lots of audience participation are hallmarks of each PaintBox show. These shows sell out quickly, so get your season tickets or single tickets early.

This year's entrees are:

Winnie-the-Pooh, *Chicken Little*, and *Pinocchio*.

A.A. Milne's beloved characters are brought to life in *Winnie-the-Pooh*, which runs July 8th to 11th, featuring Tom McCabe as Milne and the audience as Christopher Robin.

Chicken Little runs July 22th to 25th. The bravest, most determined (and possibly silliest) hero of them all. Laugh fear in the face while cheering on the leader Chicken Little, who is determined to save everyone from everything under the sun.

Finally, *Pinocchio* will run from August 5th to 8th. This is the beloved classic of the boy puppet who wants to be real. Kelsey Flynn, WRSI DJ and all-around funny woman, will be featured. The audience will join the circus, travel through the belly of a whale, and share in lots of adventures while learning the meaning of truth and honesty.

NCT and PaintBox Theatre are located conveniently at Mendenhall Center for the Performing Arts on the beautiful Smith College campus on Green

Street in Northampton, with plenty of restaurants to choose from for a pre- or post-theatre nibble, ample parking, and handicap accessibility.

New Century Theatre ticket prices are \$28, or \$26 for seniors (65 and up). They have a subscription plan to make it more convenient and affordable. Student RUSH tickets are available for \$14 the day of the show.

PaintBox show times are at 10:30 a.m., and ticket prices are \$7. Season's passes are \$18. Groups of 25 or more are \$5 each.

For ticket reservations and more information for New Century Theatre and PaintBox Theatre, call the Box Office at (413) 585-3220 or (413) 587-3933, or log-on to www.new-centurytheatre.org.

If you're putting off a more-expensive vacation this year, take advantage of some of the Valley's very best entertainment. You'll support the local economy and get your funny bone tickled at the same time. Everyone wins!



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