



**STROLLING WITH HEIFERS**  
in Brattleboro  
Page 20



**FIELD DAY**  
at Hillcrest School  
Page 9

LAKE PLEASANT MILLERS FALLS MONTAGUE CENTER MONTAGUE CITY TURNERS FALLS

# The Montague Reporter

YEAR 5 - NO. 35

also serving Gill, Erving and Wendell

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THE VOICE OF THE VILLAGES

JUNE 7, 2007

## \$740,000 Gap Remains in Montague's School Budget

ANNUAL TOWN MEETING VOTES TO FUND MONTAGUE CENTER SCHOOL ROOF; IMPEACH BUSH AND CHENEY

BY DAVID DETMOLD

Following Saturday's annual town meeting, Montague has come up about three quarters of a million dollars short on the GMRSD's request for the coming fiscal year. For a total estimated GMRSD '08 operating budget of \$16,534,401, the town of Montague's assessment would equal \$7,566,072 an increase of only 1.2% over last year. But if the debt for the recently reimbursed TFHS school building renovation project is removed from consideration, the actual increase in the operating budget to run the schools this year would equal 16.6%, a fraction the selectboard and finance committee apparently never seriously considered meeting in the run-up to the town's annual all-day budget setting session.

"I don't understand why it takes sixteen and a half million dollars to graduate 71 students,"

see **BUDGET** pg 11



Alice Armen stands at her organic garden. Her speech to Montague Town Meeting, reprinted below, led to the town going on record 56-16 in opposition of genetically modified organisms.

## Protect Our Food Supply, and Family Farms

BY ALICE ARMEN - I am a resident of Montague Center, where my family grows much of our own food in a large garden. We also keep poultry and honeybees.

Genetically modified organisms (GMOs) have been dumped into our food and agricultural systems almost without public debate in this country, and with very little independent scientific data ascertaining their environmental and public safety. Since the issue of GMOs has never been brought to the public for discussion, we think town meeting is an appropriate venue to do so.

see **ARMEN** pg 11

## STRATHMORE MILL FIRE: THE AFTERMATH Trail of a Repeat Offender

BY DAVID DETMOLD

TURNERS FALLS - Turners Falls fire chief Ray Godin and Montague building inspector David Jensen took Strathmore Mill owner Jerry Jones to Housing Court on Wednesday, June 6th. After more than four hours in the Northampton courtroom presided by Judge Dina Fein, Jones emerged under order to produce a plan by a licensed contractor to reactivate the sprinkler system at the fire- and water- damaged Strathmore Mill, reactivate the electrical system and fire alarm and secure the mill buildings still standing at the complex by no later than 11 a.m. on Monday, June 11th. Jones, represented by attorney Jack Mason of Greenfield, is to return to court in Northampton with plans in hand at that time and date, according to Turners fire chief Ray Godin.

But if recent history is any guide, the likelihood of Jones complying with a court order to secure his property and provide minimum fire prevention in working order is in doubt. Jones has a history of ignoring, defying, or exceeding orders to comply with fire code regulations at mills he has previously owned or leased in Holyoke and Easthampton, prior to his arrival in Turners Falls, and Turners falls public safety officials were well aware of his track record prior to his arrival in Turners Falls.

Despite that knowledge, and despite efforts on the part of the building inspector and fire chief to get Jones to comply with their requirements at Strathmore, he was still able to get away with running a paper recycling operation out of the mill that exceeded fire safety and building codes, failed

to maintain a fire alarm and sprinkler system in full working order, conducted copper salvage operations that endangered the life of a temporary employee and caused a "serious arc fault" explosion, caused other fires in another building of the mill that required a fire department response in recent

months, and maintained living quarters and allowed temporary employees to live in buildings of the mill, which is not zoned for residential use, with the full knowledge of town boards and inspectors.

Jones was in residence with a female companion at the Strathmore Mill on the night of Friday, May 25th and into the early morning hours of Saturday, May 26th, when Building #10 of the mill caught fire and burned to the ground.

Smoking a cigarette on the pedestrian bridge overlooking the burning ruins of that 19,000-square-foot building on the morning of the 26th at 7 a.m., building inspector David Jensen said Jones had, to his knowledge, exceeded a court negotiated agreement to store warehoused rolls of paper only on certain floors of that building, and also said it appeared the building's fire alarm, which he termed "a chronic problem" during Jones' tenure at the mill, had failed to function on the morning of the fire.

News of the Strathmore fire came as no surprise to Easthampton deputy fire

chief David Mottor. His department became familiar with Jones' pattern of fire code violations in between the years



Jerry Jones

of 2001 and 2003, when Jones was leasing a space in a mill complex at 1 Ferry Street in that city. He was using the mill as a warehouse for paper recycling, storing "paper, paper products, and cotton bales."

"We went in there because the sprinkler system activated," Mottor said. "Jones was pushing so much paper product through there, he blew out windows, froze the pipes, and deactivated the sprinkler system. We went in there and told him to clean it up."

Asked for more specifics on his department's interaction with Jones during those years, Mottor put down the phone, commenting, "Let me get the file. It's a two-handed job."

In 2001, Mottor said, his department ordered Jones to keep fire doors in working order at the Ferry Street mill, keep paper products clear of fire prevention devices, and keep aisles clear at the mill. "He agreed to our order; he was very accommodating. We went back to inspect a few months later and found paper stored everywhere; we couldn't get past his office area."

see **FIRE** pg 15

## Home Town Idol

BY JESSICA HARMON

TURNERS FALLS - A packed theater eagerly awaited the finale of Valley Idol on Saturday night. Friends, family, neighbors and fans showed up to cheer on their favorite contestants. A steady buzz filled the house as anticipation grew.

The five finalists waited in seclusion until the moment of their grand entrance, broadcast to the audience by way of a large screen television onstage. The excitement was palpa-



Valley Idol Winner Alana Martineau, who won \$1,000 and the "Audience Favorite" Award

ble and the finalists didn't disappoint; attired in glamorous, disco-inspired outfits they strutted through the theater and took their places backstage. Emcee David Peck was dashing in his tuxedo, and lent the evening a note of grandeur.

Opening the competition was Jen Tobey, of Montague, who'd not previously had the challenge of singing first. Additionally she had

see **IDOL** pg 16



## PET OF THE WEEK

### Take Us Home!



## Kittens!

Kittens! We will have many young kittens from now until November. Most of our babies are adopted within a few days of arriving at the shelter, and so they never appear on the website. If you're looking for a young kitten, come on by to visit and see all our young charmers! If you're looking for a particular color, please give us a call on the day you plan to visit and we'll let you know who is available that day. For more information on adopting kittens please contact the Dakin Pioneer Valley Humane Society at 413-548-9898 or via email at [levrett@dpvhs.org](mailto:levrett@dpvhs.org).

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## MONTAGUE LIBRARIES NEWS

### Summer Reading Program Begins June 13

BY LINDA HICKMAN

**TURNERS FALLS** - The Catch the Beat at your Library Summer Reading program starts at the Montague Public Libraries on the last day of school, Wednesday, June 13th. On-line registration will also be available. Children of any age are invited to participate in the fun read-at-home program. Many exciting programs and activities will be held at the libraries throughout the summer. The kick-off event is Everything That's Musical, followed by folk instrument making for children with Storyteller and Musician John Porcino of Amherst on Tuesday, June 19th, at 10 a.m. Music and Movement with Tom Carroll and Laurie Davidson will be offered at the Carnegie on Thursdays at 10 a.m. during July and August. The Millers Falls Library Club, featuring arts and crafts, games, and music meets on Thursdays at 3:30 p.m. The weekly preschool story hour with Bev Whitbeck is held at the Carnegie Library on Wednesdays at 10:15 a.m. Stories and Songs with

Children's Librarian Linda Hickman on guitar and banjo will be held on Mondays at 6:30 p.m. at the Montague Center Library. On Tuesday, June 26th at 2 p.m., Michael Nix of Greenfield will perform "Lutes and Limber Jacks," an educational concert featuring a lute, guitar, banjo, lumber jacks, and other percussion instruments. The No Strings Marionette Company will perform The Treasure Hunt at either Peskeomskut Park or the Carnegie on Friday, July 6th, at 10 a.m. The Reading Music Connection Concert on Tuesday, July 17th at 10 a.m. will feature a tuba, horn, and trombone. The Razzle Dazzle Reading Camp and the Sheffield Summer School Program will be visiting the Carnegie Library weekly for special programs featuring books and music. Special parties will be held at each of the three Montague Libraries for summer reading program participants in the third week of August. The Carnegie Library party will include live animals. More events for all

### Australis Aquaculture Awards Scholarships to TFHS Graduates

**TURNERS FALLS** - Australis Aquaculture, home of the barramundi fish, is pleased to announce that three local high school students will receive scholarships to help advance their career goals of working in the environmental sciences field.

Australis raised over \$1,200 for local charities and community scholarships with their "Swing with the Big Fish" charity golf tournament last fall. In addition to the scholarships, Australis made donations to the Relay for Life and Big Brothers Big Sisters.

The three high school students receiving scholarships are:

- Joseph Reed of Turners Falls High School. Joseph will receive a \$500 scholarship towards his Forestry degree at the Stockbridge College of the University of Massachusetts.

- Abigail Phelps of Franklin County Technical School. Abigail will receive a \$250 Scholarship towards her Environmental Science degree at the Massachusetts College of Liberal Arts.

- Cara-Leigh Cook of Franklin County Technical School. Cara will receive a \$250 Scholarship, studying Environmental Science at Mount Wachusett, with the ultimate goal of becoming an Environmental Police Officer.

Michele Johnson, Australis business manager and tournament organizer, said, "We're

delighted to offer these scholarships to these deserving students, and encourage their studies in the environmental studies field. It is our hope that our 2007 tournament will raise even more money towards our local charities and student community."

Australis' second annual charity golf tournament is scheduled for September 22, 2007 at the Thomas Memorial Golf Course in Turners Falls, MA. For further information, please contact Michele Johnson at 863-2040 ext. 101, [Michele@australis.us](mailto:Michele@australis.us).

### Montague Community Band Dedication Concert

The Montague Community Band will hold its Bandstand Dedication concert on Monday evening, June 11th at 7 p.m. in Peskeomskut Park. If the park is not yet open, the concert will be held at Turners Falls High

School. Tickets will be necessary if the concert is held at the high school. To be safe, pick up your free tickets now! Tickets are available at the Montague Town Hall and at the Greenfield Savings Bank in Turners Falls.

### SENIOR CENTER ACTIVITIES June 11th - 15th

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

**Monday, 11th**  
10 a.m. Senior Aerobics  
11 a.m. Easy Aerobics  
1 p.m. Canasta  
**Tuesday, 12th**

9:30 a.m. T'ai Chi  
**Wednesday, 13th**  
10 a.m. Senior Aerobics  
11 a.m. Social Security Presentation with Dan Moraski, public affairs specialist.  
12:45 p.m. Bingo  
**Thursday, 14th**  
1:00 p.m. Pitch  
**Friday, 15th**  
10 a.m. Senior Aerobics  
11 a.m. Easy Aerobics

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

vided for meals, Thursday shopping, or medical necessity by calling Dana Moore at 978 544-3898.

**Monday, 11th**  
9:30 a.m. Exercise  
9:45 a.m. Library  
12 Noon Pitch  
**Tuesday, 12th**  
9 a.m. Aerobics  
12:30 p.m. Painting  
**Wednesday, 13th**  
9:30 a.m. Line Dancing  
12 Noon Bingo  
**Thursday, 14th**  
9 a.m. Aerobics  
12:30 p.m. Shopping

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

## FACES & PLACES



DETMOLD PHOTO

Workers from C & A Construction out of Ludlow have begun repairing handicap access curb cuts on Avenue A in Turners Falls. Here, they set a granite curbstone at the corner of 6th Street in front of the post office on Wednesday.

Public Libraries' summer programs include the Gill - Montague Council of the Family Network, Community Partnerships for Children, Family Literacy Project, the Montague Cultural Council, Waste Management, and the Massachusetts Regional Library System. For more information and for registration for the summer reading program visit the Carnegie, Millers Falls, or Montague Center Libraries, or call 863-3214.

## GFMS Students of the Week

**Week of May 11th:**  
Grade 7: Daniel Colton  
Grade 8: Derek Sicard and Morgan MacConnell

**Week of May 25th:**  
Grade 7: Dakota Albano  
Grade 8: McKenna Brunell and Sarah Foster

**Week of June 1st:**  
Grade 7: Mark Hudyma  
Grade 8: Rachel Arial and Natasha Vaughn

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**NOTES FROM THE GILL SELECTBOARD**

# Gill Tightens its Belt

**BY ALEX GOTTSCHALK** - After the defeat of the \$300,000 combined town and school override on May 21st, the Gill selectboard got right down to the difficult business of balancing the budget without new revenues at their June 4th meeting with town department heads. Seeking to cut \$77,000 from the budget, they asked for budget cuts from each department. "Maybe you've thought of something we haven't, because everyone is affected," said selectboard member Ann Banash to the assembled department heads.

The consensus of the town departments that evening was that cuts could be made, but sooner or later more money was going to be needed to run the town. Fire chief Gene Beaubien commented, "We can knock some out, but eventually it's going to catch up with us." Beaubien was able to reduce his budget by \$10,000, due to the fact that "...labor costs were down; there just weren't as many fires this year."

Similarly, the department of public works was also able to save the town a considerable sum, in the region of \$16,000, due mostly to a compliant Mother Nature. Mickey LaClaire of the DPW said, "What saved us was our light winter. We don't know what we'll have next year. I've looked at the budget; I've reduced our salt and sand and can get by, but like Gene said, it will come back to haunt us." The DPW's hopes for a new dumptruck also went down to defeat on May 21st, as their \$125,000 override for the purchase also failed at the ballot box.

The police department was able to cut \$10,000 from its budget. Police chief David Hastings was unable to attend the meeting; Sergeant Chris Redmond stood in for him. Asked the next day where the cut would come from, Chief Hastings said, "From shift coverage, that's the only place it can come from."

The town library is reviewing a suggested \$833 cut, which

would affect its services. "We're skating pretty close to the minimum number of hours we can be open," said library trustee Ann Perry.

Other cuts were less dramatic in scope, but were felt nonetheless by a town that is already operating close to the margin. The board of assessors is looking at a \$4,500 cut. The information technology committee is cutting \$1,000. The department of recreation is dropping a previous request for \$2,400. The board of appeals cut \$350 from their budget; \$45 was cut from the planning board and \$50 was cut from the conservation committee. Town hall itself took a \$500 cut.

Overshadowing the meeting was the fact that the GMRSD school committee has not submitted a revised budget yet. "The school has a big problem, because we've inherited a school system with a low student to teacher ratio; it's 15 to 1, when the state norm is 25 to 1. It's very expensive. But it's very traumatic to let teachers go, and even if that happens, unemployment money becomes a new issue," said

finance committee chair Paul Nowill.

When Banash asked if the school system could realistically reduce its budget, Nowill said, "No, and the political situation around the schools is stacked against solving the problem."

At the end of the two and a half hour meeting, which packed the first floor offices of the Gill town hall, Banash reviewed the flurry of figures and said, "If we take the cuts discussed, and tweak it, we can come to approximately \$77,000." According to Banash, none of the cuts are "set in stone." However, it seemed unlikely that any department would enter the new fiscal year unscathed.

Nowill had this to say at the end of the meeting. "We're really trying hard to get by without an override, while dealing with uncontrollable costs. It's only a matter of time before we have to have an override, because costs are going over 2.5 %."

Earlier in the meeting, in reference to the school department, Nowill opined, "We're paying for sins of many years in the past."

# Erving Protects Scenic Farm

**BY DAVID KOTKER** - Erving has completed the purchase of the 125-acre Giniusz Farm on Old State Road. Erving bought 119-acres outright and purchased a conservation restriction on the 6.8 acres immediately surrounding the Giniusz house.

The land, which runs uphill to the summit of Poplar Mountain, will be the first town-owned conservation land in Erving. The town will manage the property for recreation and open space. "It's a great thing for the town," said conservation commission member Laura Herbert "We're excited to start working on opening the land to the community and getting trails set up."

The farm, one of the only existing early twentieth century farms in Erving, abuts the historic Holton Cemetery, burial place of many of Erving's founders, where headstones date from 1815. The land is forested with several streams and small pockets of wetlands. Discontinued logging roads and old stone walls meander through the woods. Towards the summit, rocky outcrops and cliffs culminate in a broad vista at the top, overlooking the Millers River

rapids.

The land and the conservation restriction were purchased from Nathalie and Bunny Giniusz, heirs of John Giniusz. The Erving conservation commission was assisted throughout the process, including in drawing up the conservation restriction and warrant articles, by the Mount Grace Land Conservation Trust. The town, which voted to purchase the property in June of last year, has been awarded a grant covering part of the purchase price from the Massachusetts Division of Conservation Services Self Help Program. In 20 years, through collaborations and partnerships, Mount Grace has protected over 20,000 acres.



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# The Montague Reporter

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## Dealing with Parasites

By Wesley Blixt & David Detmold - Jerry Jones is a predator, and a parasite.

Towns like Montague have long given him cover and nourished him.

In Turners Falls, he found it all-too-easy to:

- snap up a valuable piece of industrial real estate;
- flout our laws and regulations;
- stiff our tax collector;
- exploit our most vulnerable people for his own profit;
- endanger his neighbors and emergency personnel;
- create conditions that nearly caused a much wider catastrophe;
- and now leave us up the canal without a paddle.

And we have allowed him to do it. All of us.

While some are turning over the circumstantial details of the fire, trying to piece together a plausible theory to explain the cause of the blaze that consumed a 19,000-square-foot Strathmore Mill building on May 26th, others are asking perfectly legitimate questions about how town officials could have allowed this man to live in the Strathmore Mill - a man with a known track record of serious fire code violations, and fires, at former mills in nearby cities and towns in

Western Massachusetts.

Montague fire code and building code enforcement officials, and members of the selectboard say they have known of Jones' track record for many years.

These are just some of our questions:

- How could they have let Jones live in the Strathmore, and pretend he was fulfilling the role of 'night watchman,' and continue living there despite the fact they knew full well he was employing unlicensed temporary workers to strip and scavenge copper conduit and other materials from the mill, and despite the fact that some of that wiring was live, that the salvage operations had already resulted in fires and horrifying personal injuries to his help?

• How could they have let him remain in residence at the mill when they knew full well he was repeatedly and purposefully violating their court-negotiated agreements to limit the storage of combustible materials to permitted areas, where fire suppression systems were in working order and capable of doing their job?

• How could Jones have been allowed to jeopardize not only the safety of the 137-year-old mill complex - with all its potential for productive reuse for bettering our town's economy - but also the security of neighboring industries that provide employment and tax payments for our community?

• In hindsight, it is easy to that say mistakes were made. Mistakes were made by people we have elected and appointed to protect Montague from this type of predator who thinks Montague is an easy mark.

Jerry Jones does not have a good record with abandoned mills. He had a reckless, lawless, fire-prone reputation that preceded him when he arrived in Turners Falls five years ago. Since then, he has done nothing but aggravate that reputation with his callous disregard for the health, safety, and well-being of our community.

His ownership of a once pow-

## BORDEAUX WHINE

by denis bordeaux



## LETTERS TO THE EDITOR

### We Work Hard at Sheffield

This year, my fifth grade students worked exceptionally hard preparing for two major events. I would like to express a heartfelt thank you for the wonderful articles recently published in the *Montague Reporter* regarding these events. The reporting of our play, "Mighty Minds" (by Anne Harding, *MR V#31*) and our Science Project Fair (Bridget Sweet, *MR V#32*) brought proud smiles to all my students. These articles were not only well written, but were unique as each child had their moment to shine when their names were mentioned or their words quoted. The children's sense of pride was priceless as I read each article to the class.

The class and I have created a lively bulletin board display just



Left to right, sitting at desks: Emma Johnson, Cameron Jacques-Burek, Marcel Ortiz. Standing in back pointing up is Kaineeca Pabon and hands on hip is Elyssa Carnier.

outside our classroom that features these two articles. The display is entitled, "In Fifth Grade We Work Hard and Play Hard." The articles are surrounded by photos of beaming children hav-

ing fun during these events.

Thanks so much for helping us share the great things we do here at Sheffield!

- Sue Guy-Greene  
Sheffield School

## American Dead in Iraq as of 6/6/07



erful economic engine has produced nothing of value for the area. Rather, he has stripped it of every saleable commodity he could get his avaricious hands on, and has now so tied it up in legal red tape, any buyer who hopes to again put it to productive use will be hard pressed to do so. Whether or not he dropped the match, Jones' actions set the stage for a catastrophe that many - including our professional firefighters - anticipated. Only their timely and heroic response prevented that catastrophe from turning into total devastation.

The fire that burned down Building #10 cost more than we will ever know. What we do know is that it is a cost that will be born by the 22 Franklin County fire departments that responded that morning, along with the fire departments from surrounding states and counties that backed them up, not to mention the neighboring paper mill and hydro generating facility.

It is a cost that will be born by this community for years to

come. If the past is any indication, Jones will likely claim indigence and walk away from the calamity he created, and he will then set up shop in some other small town to repeat his depredations.

Montague must learn a lesson from this disaster. Look around. Vital pieces of property in key locations in town are now in the hands of unscrupulous 'business-people' - properties across the street from the post office in Turners Falls, blocking a town road that provides one of the two entrances to the densely populated residential neighborhood of the Patch, and sitting like a spider at the main intersection of the village of Millers Falls come to mind.

Town officials must proactively defend the wider interests of neighborhoods and seek to advance the common good, rather than the rights and privilege of the individual property owner, especially when their reputation, destructive actions, and predatory intentions are so plain-

## From One Turners Falls Observer to Another

When I was a kid in the 60s, my dad, the great Western Massachusetts newspaperman Neil Perry, started a paper in town called the *Turners Falls Observer*. I was too young to do any writing or reporting, but I did deliver free copies as my dad tried to make a go of it. It didn't work out, and the town didn't have another until the *Montague Reporter*. My father would be proud of your heroic effort. Good luck!

- Chris Perry, Turners Falls

ly established. Town officials should take every means available within their regulatory arsenal to rein in the anti-social tendencies of these individuals.

Finally, we must *all* be more vigilant, and we must make people like Jerry Jones live within the law before another disaster occurs. And we must begin by calling them by their proper name: parasites.



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# No Choice But to Sue the Town

With regard to the article published on May 31st (MR V#34) concerning *Anderson v. Wendell*:

The town of Wendell, after purchasing the property that abuts mine, demolished a small residence that was situated in conformance with zoning bylaws and that sat centrally between the east and west boundaries. They built a large, tall municipal building at the minimum setback (25 feet) from my side lot line and in non-conformance at 20 feet from the front lot line. In short, the town office building was built much closer to my house than zoning laws would allow, and much closer than I could reasonably expect, both when I purchased my property and when this project was proposed and approved. This placement

has not only crowded my house and yard, but has also blocked a significant view of the eastern horizon from both stories of my house. The large addition that I built was designed with this view in mind: windows and rooms were oriented toward it. The view of Mt. Monadnock that Mr. Keller referred to in the *Reporter's* recent article opened up due to the tornado last summer. Monadnock is barely discernible from a small corner of my yard and is not visible from the interior of my house.

I would like to reiterate that I was never contacted concerning a variance for this project by certified mail, as is required by state law, or by any other means. I did not discover that a variance was needed and had been granted until December of last year. I was not contacted by

certified mail, by regular mail, or by any other means concerning the Site Plan Review as Mr. Keller alleges, and other abutters have told me that they also did not receive any notice. As this project unfolded, I was certainly unhappy with the placement of the building. However, I assumed that the town was proceeding legally, that it possessed or had obtained all legal rights necessary to proceed with the project. I also assumed that town officials had no reason or need to violate my rights as an abutter and would give this serious matter due diligence. These assumptions, premised on the belief that the town would follow the rules it is responsible for enforcing, were, in retrospect, large and somewhat painful mistakes.

State laws, not just Wendell

bylaws, were violated in this process. The town did not make just one small clerical error: no abutters were notified by certified mail as required and the variance decision, although purportedly made on August 29th, 2005, was filed on February 15th, 2007 after I requested a copy. A building permit was issued without a variance being filed, and a certificate of occupancy was issued despite the fact that an appeal had been filed. State law mandates that, after a variance decision has been filed, a 20-day appeal period must pass without the filing of an appeal before the variance is legally granted. This appeal period started after major construction was complete, essen-

tially denying abutters due process. The variance decision itself likely would not - and will not - survive the appeal process because it does not comply with the strict state requirements for the issuance of a variance.

Town officials do not want to acknowledge the impact that this project has had on the value of my property, have not been open to negotiation, and are not, in my opinion, taking responsibility for violating town bylaws and Massachusetts general laws. Unfortunately, the town's intransigence has left me with no alternative but to seek redress in court.

- Brian Anderson  
Wendell

## Soldiers Memorial Thanks

The trustees of the Soldiers Memorial Trustees of the town of Montague would like to express their special thanks to all who participated in the Memorial Day parade and ceremony on May 28th. Thanks are due to Senator Stanley Rosenberg, Major Gary Longley and the Civil Air Patrol, Brenda McGurk and the Turners Falls High School Band, the Montague Elks, Pam Lester Exalted Ruler, Joanne Brown, Chaplain, John Murphy, Brian SanSoucie, Al Cummings and the various military organizations they represent, TFHS student Charles Peterson, Walt Kostanski, Nicholas Prokovich, Larry Parker, Bruce Dunbar and Troop 6

Boy Scouts, Kim Hersey, Charlene Arsenault, Brownie Cub Scouts #21, and Cadet Scouts #24, Frank Abbondanzio, town administrator and USAF vet, select-board members Pat Allen and Patricia Pruitt, Donald Girard, the Montague police, highway department, and the fire departments of Turners Falls and Montague Center, Tom Bergeron, the Mohawk Ramblers Motorcycle Club, the Greenfield Rotary Club for helping prepare the memorial, veterans agent Leo Parent for his assistance putting the ceremony together, fellow trustees Chris, Don, Al, and John, and last but not least Kathleen Belanger for her tireless efforts supporting us.

Very special thanks to all of the many donors who contributed to our memorial renovation drive, and to the many who contributed well over \$1000 each, including: Gill-Montague Triad, the Fire Department Carnival, Our Lady of Czestochowa, the Turners Falls Firemen's Relief, St. Stanislaus Society, Hallmark Institute, Western Mass Electric Co., Montague Elks, New England Extrusion, Franklin County Chamber of Commerce, Alyce Sokoloski, the Kiwanis of Greenfield, the Montague 250th Anniversary Committee, Kathleen Belanger, and the Greenfield Savings Bank, that topped our drive off with its large donation of \$13,000, allowing us to break ground this Memorial Day, 2007.

We would also like to thank the many, many other people, societies, and businesses that donated to this project. Without you, it would never have happened. On behalf of every veteran within the town of Montague, we thank you.

- Art Gilmore, Chair  
Soldiers Memorial  
Trustees  
Town of Montague



Don Girard plays taps at Montague's Memorial Day Ceremony

## Erving Graduates Soar at TFHS

As the Erving representative to the Gill - Montague school committee, I had the pleasure of attending the class of 2007 Senior Awards Night and Graduation at TFHS.

There were no National Honor Society Members among the 12 Erving graduates. However, I believe the following statistics not only illustrate the accomplishments of the Erving seniors but also prove the education they received at Gill-Montague was of high quality academically and in terms of extracurricular activities.

- 12 Erving students represented 17% of the graduating class (71 graduates).
- 50% of the Erving graduates received scholarships.
- 33% of the Erving graduates received awards.
- 80% of the Erving gradu-

ates will be furthering their education.

- 20% of the Erving graduates will be entering the work force.

Erving has an agreement with Gill-Montague to tuition their students for grades 7 - 12, with an option to choice to other schools. However, the majority of Erving high school students continue to tuition into Gill-Montague.

Congratulations to the 2007 Erving graduates of TFHS: Michael Bartos, Krista Bascomb, Gregory Dorman, Mitchell Guevin, Katelyn Mailloux, Raymond Perkins, Cheri Poirier, Evan Pollard, Scott Rau, Joseph Reed, Jr., Nicole Rosewarne and Kaleigh Shaw. The citizens of Erving are very proud of each and every one of you.

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# Police Station Building Project Moves Forward to August

**BY PATRICIA PRUITT**  
**MONTAGUE** - The Montague public safety facility feasibility committee voted unanimously on May 24th to endorse the town's purchase of land located between Montague Street and Turnpike Road as the site of the future police facility.

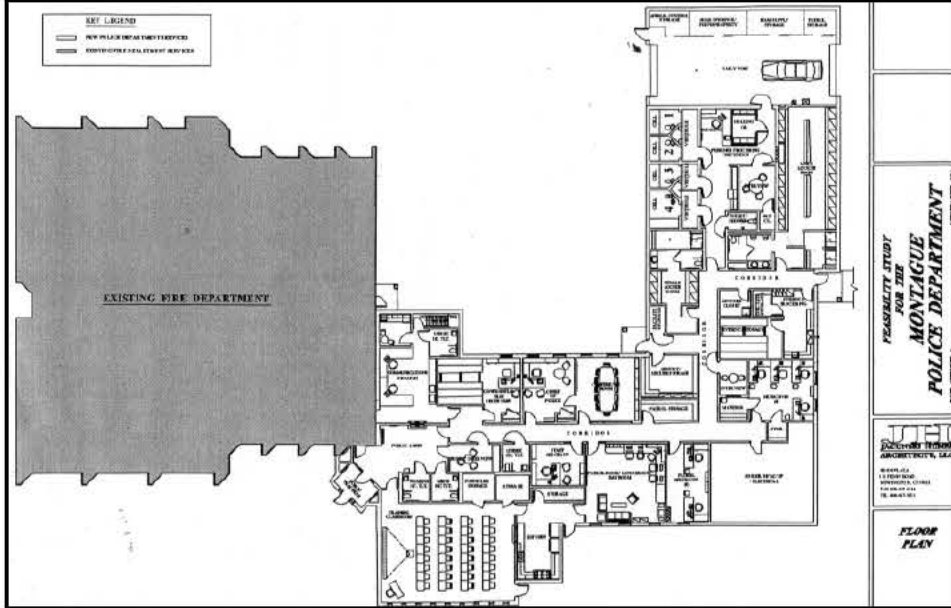
On June 2nd at the annual town meeting, police chief R a y Z u k o w s k i highlighted in graphic photos why the town needs to build a new police station, and presented the 'footprint' of the proposed

new facility. He asked town meeting to approve the first step toward a new station, by approving the request to purchase land owned by the Springfield Diocese of the Roman Catholic Church. Town meeting members listened and voted for the purchase from the Springfield Diocese of 25.19 acres as the site of a new police station. Town meeting's approval carries the contingency that the appropriation of \$235,000 for the land must be approved by townwide ballot as a debt exclusion along with the

proposed new station construction project. The station design project is nearing completion, and will be presented at a special town meeting in mid- to late August, to be followed by a

undertake a review of the land to ascertain whether there are any Box Turtles currently in residence.

In conjunction with the land purchase, the town sought and received town meeting



Schematic plan for the new police station on Turnpike Road adjoining the Turners Falls Fire Station, as presented at annual town meeting.

referendum ballot by September 15th.

The Springfield Diocese preferred to sell the land in its entirety and understands that the sale is contingent upon the passage of the debt exclusion vote for the entire police building project. Recently the town learned that the land has been designated "priority habitat" by the Natural Heritage and Endangered Species Program. It is the habitat of the Eastern Box Turtle, who seems to have a special affinity for life in Montague. The town will

approval to discontinue the right of way known as the Montague Street Extension. If voters approve the building project and land purchase in September, the future police station will sit partially in the space occupied now by the Montague Street Extension.

The town hopes the land purchase will provide future access to other town-owned parcels in the area, as well as provide for future building space as needed. In addition the wooded portions of the land may offer some opportunities for small-scale logging.

# HIGHLIGHTS OF THE MONTAGUE POLICE LOG Flamingo Flies The Coop

## Thursday 5-31

8:51 p.m. [redacted], Belchertown, was arrested on a default warrant.

11:45 p.m. Report of a domestic disturbance at an Avenue A address. [redacted]

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

## Friday 6-1

4:19 p.m. Report of an environmental incident by the Bookmill. A large tree limb had fallen and wires were hanging. Road closed. DPW notified. Utility companies also notified.

9:25 p.m. Report of a larceny at the corner of Avenue A and 4th Street. Caller parked bike in front of friend's house, and when she came out, bike was gone. Report taken.

## Saturday 6-2

9:43 a.m. Walk-in to station reported an assault at TFHS. Reporting party states that while passing out informational literature before the Town Meeting, an irate person crumbled the leaflet up and threw it back into her face. Report taken. Advised of options.

12:17 p.m. Report of a breaking

and entering at an Avenue A address. Caller states that a screen is ripped and an empty apartment may have been broken into.

## Sunday 6-3

10:11 a.m. Report of an animal complaint on Route 47 near the Sunderland line. Caller states that she almost hit a dog and it was limping around. Officer located owner of dog who stated that the dog was really old. Owner picked it up.

## Monday 6-4

6:57 a.m. Report of a larceny at a 3rd Street address. A pink flamingo sign was stolen from a garden. Report taken.

## Tuesday 6-5

11:10 p.m. Report of a domestic disturbance at a 4th Street address. A child was out of control. All parties advised of their options.

11:57 p.m. Report of a fight at 2nd Street Bar. Still under investigation.

## Wednesday 6-6

2:32 p.m. Report of a loud noise disturbance at a K Street address.

[redacted] was arrested and charged with disturbing the peace and possession of a class D drug.

# MCTV Schedule Channel 17: June 8-14

**Barton Cove Eagles:**  
 \*Eagle Broadcast is dependent upon working Equipment at Barton Cove\*  
 7A-8A (Daily); 10A-6P (Wednesday); 1P-6P (Sunday, Monday, Thursday); 130P-6P (Friday); 330P-6P (Saturday)

**Friday, June 8**  
 8:00 am Montague update: Geo Caching  
 8:30 am Montague Select Board 6/4/07  
 10:00 am Valley Idol 2007 Finals  
 6:00 pm Nasa Destination Tomorrow #24  
 7:00 pm GMRSD meeting 5/22/07  
 10:30 pm Valley Idol 2007: Night Three

**Saturday, June 9**  
 8:00 am Nasa Destination Tomorrow #24  
 8:30 am GMRSD Meeting 5/22/07  
 12:00 pm Valley Idol 2007: Night 3  
 6:00 pm The Well Being: "Managing Chronic Pain"  
 7:00 pm Discovery Center: Pop Rockets  
 8:30 pm Road To Recovery: El Alcohol en la comunidad Latina  
 9:30 Coffee House Series: Stephanie Marshall

**Sunday, June 10**  
 8:00 am The Well Being: "Managing Chronic Pain"  
 9:00 am Discovery Center: Pop Rockets  
 10:30 am Road To Recovery: El Alcohol en la comunidad Latina  
 11:30 am Coffee House Series: Stephanie Marshall  
 6:30 pm Montague Update: Block Party & Parade  
 7:00 pm Child & Family Today: Children's Mental Health  
 7:30 pm Memorial Day Events 2007  
 8:30 pm Fall Town String Band  
 10:30 pm Over The Falls: Lorena Loubusky Lonergan

**Monday, June 11**  
 8:00 am Montague Update: Block Party &

**Parade**  
 8:30 am Child & Family Today: Children's Mental Health  
 9:00 am Memorial Day Events 2007  
 10:00am Fall Town String Band  
 12:00 pm Over The Falls: Lorena Loubusky Lonergan  
 6:00 pm On The Ridge: Denise Murchison  
 7:00 pm Montague Select Board (6/4/07)  
 9:30 pm Valley Idol 2007: Finals

**Tuesday, June 12**  
 8:00am On The Ridge: Denise Murchison  
 8:30 am Valley Idol 2007: Finals  
 6:00 pm GED Connection: Getting Ideas on Paper  
 6:30 pm Independent Voices #29  
 7:00 pm GMRSD (Live)  
 10:30 pm Carlos W. Anderson: "Right Here All Along"

**Wednesday, June 13**  
 8:00 am GED Connection: Getting Ideas on Paper  
 8:30 am Independent Voices #29  
 9:00 am Carlos W. Anderson: "Right Here All Along"  
 6:30 pm NASA Destination Tomorrow #24  
 7:00 pm GED Connection: The Writing Process  
 7:30 pm The Well Being: "Managing Chronic Pain"  
 8:30 pm Montague Grange Variety Show  
 10:00 pm Memorial Day Events 2007

**Thursday, June 14**  
 8:00 am NASA Destination Tomorrow #24  
 8:30 am GED Connection: The Writing Process  
 9:00 am The Well Being: "Managing Chronic Pain"  
 10:00 am Montague Grange Variety Show  
 12:00 pm Memorial Day Events 2007  
 7:00 pm Montague Select Board 6/4/07  
 9:30 pm Valley Idol 2007: Finals

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- The History of Shea Theatre and the Colle Opera House
- Whither Goes Turners Falls?

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**FROM LAST WEEK'S MONTAGUE POLICE LOG**

**Domestic Disturbances**

**Thursday 5-24**

8:40 p.m. Report of a domestic disturbance in front of a Bridge Street residence. Mother and daughter arguing. Found to be verbal only.

**Friday 5-25**

1:46 a.m. Report of a motor vehicle accident on Turners Falls Road.

was arrested and charged with operating under the influence of liquor.

10:57 p.m. Report of a domestic disturbance at a High Street address. Found to be verbal only. Peace restored.

**Saturday 5-26**

7:01 p.m. Request for a well being check on the Gill

Montague Bridge.

was arrested and charged with possession of a class B drug (oxycodone), possession of a class C drug (lorazepam), and disorderly conduct.

**Sunday 5-27**

11:30 a.m. Walk-in to station reported a breaking and entering. A motor vehicle had been entered. Nothing reported missing.

**Monday 5-28**

10:28 a.m. Report of a larceny at an Edward Avenue address. A vehicle had been entered and \$10 in coins was missing. Report taken.

**TFHS Graduates 71**

BY ALI URBAN - Members of the TFHS class of 2007 frequently reminded underclassmen of their "sweep"- their four consecutive wins in the annual Booster Day float competition. However, Gill-Montague Regional School District school committee chair Mary Kociela reminded seniors the themes they chose for the floats did more than display their creative abilities; they also paralleled lessons she hopes they will carry with them into adulthood.

During remarks at the TFHS graduation June 1st in the school gymnasium, Kociela referred to their freshman year 1910s-theme float that focused on the Titanic, reminding the graduates to "let nothing break your spirit in the face of great tragedy." She urged them to enter into a new phase of their lives, like Alice in their Alice in Wonderland float, with the same conviction they have demonstrated in their high school years.

"Think of the heroes in your life," Kociela said to the class whose senior float featured Spiderman. "Today, you are our heroes." She added that students should not burn their bridges, reminding them of their San Francisco float.

Superintendent of schools Sue Gee commended the graduates on their adaptability during the schools' renovation. "Change is a constant in life," she said. "Be true to your word and positive toward life."

The positive energy was evident in the TFHS gym. A standing-room only crowd showed support for the 71 graduates - the young men in blue caps and gowns and the young women in white ones. Of the group, 30 plan to attend a 4-year college, 23 plan on studying at a 2-year college, and six will attend vocational schools. The remaining graduates plan to enter the military or join the work force.

The night before graduation, members of the class attended an awards ceremony in the TFHS theater at which students were recognized for service, academics and athletics, and

scholarships were awarded. The class also viewed a slideshow showing students'



Kayleigh Cummings adjusts Shanna Clark's tassel while preparing for THFS graduation on June 1st

progression from elementary students to high school seniors.

The TFHS symphonic band, with the addition of some middle school students, provided music for the event, playing both "Pomp and Circumstance" and "Alma Mater."

Principal Jeffrey Kenney told the audience at commencement his top memories of the class of 2007. He enjoyed attending parent night at band camp at the end of the summer, participating in the class' Breakfast with Santa and cheering on the football team to its win over Greenfield in the Turkey Day game. He chuckled when he told of the senior prank of Saran-wrapping his office and flying a skull and crossbones flag on the schools' flagpole.

On a more serious note, he commended the graduates for their hard work and cooperation. "No matter where you go or how many new friends you make," he said, "graduates of Turners Falls High School share a special bond which will carry them through the rest of their lives."

Salutatorian William Shattuck IV noted the high quality of the class and students' ability to work well together, while Valedictorian Benjamin Garber asked students to close their eyes and capture the moment - a moment he called an end to a beginning and a

beginning to an end. Class President Adam Bastarache finished student speeches at graduation when he led his signature football and swim team cheer one last time. But instead of a response of "Turners" to the question "Who are we?" the class of 2007 enthusiastically replied, "Graduates!"

**HIGHLIGHTS FROM THE GILL POLICE LOG**

**Smoke on the Water**

**Wednesday 5-30**

3:30 a.m. Report of barking dog on Center Road; dog barked only three times in ten minutes per responding officer. Referred to animal control.

5:27 p.m. Assisted with disabled school bus on French King Highway, Koch's towing removed same.

10:15 p.m. 911 call from Boyle Road resident having problem with husband.

**Thursday 5-31**

11:19 a.m. Report of possible jumper on French King Bridge; checked bridge, was not actual jumper.

12:45 p.m. Assisted farmer with loose cows on West Gill Road.

3:55 p.m. Report of stolen canoe from Mount Hermon campus.

5:45 p.m. Report of smoke on French King Highway near Greenfield town line; was actually fog off of water.

5:51 p.m. Report of loose cow on North Cross Road.

8:08 p.m. Report of fire alarm at French King Highway address. No officer available to respond.

**Friday 6-1**

4:59 p.m. Report of lost or stolen cell phone from Pisgah Mountain Road.

5:15 p.m. Report of subject who is suicidal and

enroute to French King Bridge. Checked area, unable to locate subject.

5:40 p.m. Parking complaint on Walnut Street, regarding tractor and trailer.

6:20 p.m. Report of possible illegal dumping possibly containing hazardous material on Hickory Hill Road.

**Saturday 6-2**

1:50 a.m. Report of prowler, suspicious person in woods on West Gill Road.

7:45 p.m. Fire alarm on Mount Hermon Campus, false alarm.

**Sunday 6-3**

3:05 p.m. Subject taken into custody for psychiatric evaluation for suicidal actions on French King Highway, transported to hospital for treatment.

**Monday 6-4**

3:24 p.m. Report of subject in traffic slumped over the steering wheel at Gill lights. Checked area, unable to locate anyone in distress.

**Tuesday 6-5**

10:38 a.m. 911 mis-dial on Main Road, checked with resident, all o.k.. Accidental.

3:20 p.m. Distributed free bicycle helmets to students at Gill Elementary School for upcoming class bicycle ride.

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## NOTES FROM THE MONTAGUE SELECTBOARD

# Firefighters, Police Congratulated

BY JOHN HANOLD - A visibly relaxed Montague selectboard started its summer meeting schedule on Monday, June 4th with an agenda featuring public recognition of accomplishments and progress on various projects around town. Stormy weather outside may have discouraged attendance, but those present in town hall heard a succession of upbeat reports.

Board member Patricia Pruitt, in her role as a member of the police station building committee, noted the June 2nd annual town meeting had approved both the abandonment of the portion of Montague Street that runs by the Turners Falls fire station and the purchase of 25 acres of adjoining land from the Catholic Diocese of Springfield, the latter contingent on subsequent approval of the plan to build a new public safety building there. A vote on the proposed new police station - estimated to cost between \$4 and \$5 million - is planned for an August or September town meeting. At that time both the land purchase, building construction, and all other elements of the project would be the subject of a townwide debt-exclusion vote.

Board member Ross suggested the record include a distinction between a debt exclusion and a Proposition 2½ override. Town administrator Frank Abbondanzio explained a

debt exclusion raises property taxes only while there is outstanding borrowing for a specific project, and only for the specific funds needed to service the debt. During and after that period, the levy limit affected by Proposition 2½ is unchanged. An override, on the other hand, raises the levy limit permanently, and the resulting revenue is not restricted to any particular use.

Fresh from his own department's prudential committee meeting, Turners Falls fire chief Ray Godin reported that his crew has checked the Strathmore Mill site twice daily for any 'hot spots' remaining from the extensive fire of May 26th, and confirmed that the fire is completely out. The site is now under examination by the state building inspector, state fire marshal, and local fire and town inspectors as the 'cause and origination' investigation continues. This investigation, and settlement of code compliance at the ten mill buildings still standing at Strathmore, along with issues of ownership and responsibility for the Strathmore, will determine what happens next in the clean-up and development of the mill complex in future months.

Board chair Pat Allen repeated her public thanks to the firefighters from both Turners Falls and the mutual-aid responders from surrounding towns and counties for their hard

and dangerous work saving so much of the mill, and related that the state fire marshal was similarly impressed. Chief Godin repeated in turn his gratitude for the support and co-operation of town and area residents, ranging from the donated pizza and water to the portable toilets and related hospitality of Southworth Paper and nearby residents. The chief praised his crew, saying again that by the time he personally arrived at the scene his first responders were already executing an attack and containment plan that preserved the majority of the mill complex from destruction - though "it was touch-and-go till mid-morning." He also pointed to the good working relationship between town departments and organizations, citing the police department's action in escorting the golf carts from the Thomas Memorial Golf Club, which proved useful in the confined spaces between the canal and the Connecticut River.

Godin recalled from his childhood that his father had responded to smaller fires at the mill as part of the call force for the department, and Ross also noted - rather than recalling himself - that the entire mill burned to the ground in 1878, but was rebuilt immediately. One hopes that is an omen for another Phoenix-like renaissance at the mill in 2007!

Asked for his assessment,

building inspector David Jensen said, "I'm trying to look to the future, but I'm a little depressed." Issues of code compliance, reactivation of fire alarm systems, and securing of the building still demand attention.

Superintendent Bob Trombley of the Wastewater Pollution Control Facility presented a more routine progress report. Phase One of the combined sewer overflow project is essentially wrapped up, with the rapid completion by Ludlow Construction of permanent patching on Avenue A and Seventh Street, smoothing out areas of pavement that were so bumpy in recent months. The selectboard approved the issue of bid requests for Phase Two of the project, with responses expected by late July. With costs of some building materials falling a bit, and contractors interested in filling their order books, there is hope that the bids may come in a little lower than the current budget.

Trombley briefly reported that no major findings resulted from a recent inspection by the state Environmental Protection Agency at the treatment plant, characterizing most of the lesser findings as cleaning up references to regulations, permit terms, etc. The principal action indicated is to ensure consistency of pH standards for major customers and preparation of sludge discharge control plans for them.

In another gratifying example of mutual-aid among area towns, Abbondanzio passed on a commendation from the Erving chief of police Chris Blair to Sergeant Chip Dodge and officers Chris LaPointe and John Dempsey for their aid in apprehending felony suspects at the former IP mill in Erving on May 13th. In addition to recovering a considerable quantity of stolen copper, the arrest may lead to closing eight cases of breaking and entering over recent months. Pat Allen said of the officers, "We know they're good, and we're pleased that others recognize our officers, too."

Eagle Scout candidate Ted Dunbar, the first in 28 years from reviving Troop 6, reported on his efforts to build a sun shelter at Unity Park as his Eagle project.

The planning board and parks director Jon Dobosz have approved his plan, and the board waived the usual permit fee for construction on the grounds that it was a non-profit effort broadly benefiting the town. The posts will be permanent, but the canvas shade will be taken down over the winter.

The completion of Peskeomskut Park in time for the June 11th dedication by the Montague Community Band and Marine Forces Reserve Band of New Orleans is still uncertain. The town has received and rejected one very high bid for correction of the sidewalk deficiencies cited by the state's Architectural Access Board, and hopes a more reasonable bid will come soon for the one-day job. It was clear from the discussion that the town feels the AAB citation was unwarranted for a completed project, and that application of the same standards to other finished projects would affect numerous parks across the state, including a hundred in Boston alone. Abbondanzio requested and received approval to expend up to \$35,000 of program income money, to repave the walkways if a favorable bid is received in time, since the selectboard will not meet for two weeks. The next hurdle is securing 100 folding chairs for band members, with town fraternal organizations mentioned as possible sources.

Before going into two executive sessions for real estate matters, the board referred to the series of all-day events focused on the history of Turners Falls taking place at the Shea Theater on Saturday, June 9th, sponsored by the Pioneer Valley Institute, and set its next meeting for June 18th.

A meeting of the selectboard and finance committee on Wednesday, June 13th is being considered, to brainstorm ways to deal with the gap between the amended assessment requested by the Gill-Montague Regional School District and the amount voted at Montague's annual town meeting. Since the gap is still over \$700,000, some considerable effort on the part of the town and the schools will be necessary to arrive at a balanced budget before the next school year.

## Bandstand Dedication Concert



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Community Band  
&  
the  
United States  
Marine Forces  
Reserve Band  
of  
New Orleans

\* If the Park is closed due to repaving, the bands will play on Sixth Street between the Park and the Post Office. In the event of rain, the concert will take place at Turners Falls High School (At TFHS tickets will be required and may be available at the door the night of the concert, where doors will open at 6:15 p.m. Tickets are available at the Montague Town Hall, TF branch of Greenfield Savings Bank. ). Admission is free; bring your own blanket or lawn chair.

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**74 PROSPECT ST. TURNERS FALLS**



# Hillcrest Has a Field Day

BY BRIDGET SWEET

**TURNERS FALLS** - "Together We're Better" is Hillcrest Elementary School's motto, and it rang true for the successful Field Day held on the playing field on May 30th. Parents, volunteers, students and staff played in the eleven different Olympic-themed exercise stations planned by Physical Education instructor LeeAnn LaRue.

The stations were: parachute, Olympic torch relay, bubbles galore, the great sack race, javelin throw, great potato race, obstacle course, disc throw, Chinese chopstick relay, shot put and Olympic rings. LaRue chose nerf balls, Frisbees, foam hockey sticks, rubber chickens or fish, rhythm sticks, noodles, and hula hoops for her students to use at the stations. Bob Flaherty, GMRSD maintenance man, happily delivered the equipment that morning.

LaRue said, "The skill they are building is teamwork. It's challenging and relaxing at the same time." LaRue was seen busily assisting students, answering questions and demonstrating the course throughout the two hours of fun.

"It's a tradition (of Hillcrest) to use Sheffield sixth graders," to assist with Field Day, LaRue said. Principal Chip Wood of Sheffield chose twenty-three sixth graders to help the Hillcrest students. They were: Britney, Ciarra, Dallas, Hannah, Heather, Kelli, Rylen and Tanisha from Mrs. Steiner's class; Abi, Angel, Brooke, Cameron, Cory, David,



Participants at the Hillcrest Field Day enjoy the parachute.

Hannah and Jayna from Mrs. Diani's class; and Brandon, Bri, Briana A., Katelyn, Kim, Meredith and Shannon from Mrs. Gunnison's class.

All the volunteers seemed happy, willing and ready to work with the students by 9:30 that morning, under LaRue's instructions. The role models cheered on the students, even in the hot sun. Rylen said, "Everybody wins at this game," as she worked station #6 - the Great Potato Race, which involved moving a potato downfield with a foam rubber hockey stick. Hillcrest students responded well and listened to the chosen volunteers.

Hillcrest principal Christine Jutres said the day "was really successful, with good parent turnout, a nice end to the school year. It was good the preschool

was involved. Field day is a custom the school kids look forward to." Jutres was extremely grateful to all who participated, and wanted to thank all of the volunteers, staff and students.

Preschool teacher Amy Socquet led her preschoolers through each area. Para-professionals and parents were available to play with her students. "This is the first year preschool is included, and we are very excited," said Soquet. They seemed to want to try each station. "The stations were fun and challenging (for the preschoolers), and they tried really hard to complete it," one mom said. Bernie Trott was seen holding his preschool son, Brody, while jumping over the obstacle course. Clapping was heard throughout the field when Soquet's class was at a station.

The potato sack race was challenging and fun. Many students fell down, laughing, tripped up by the burlap sacks. The Chinese chopstick relay was another favorite. There, the children carried rubber chicken or fish on rhythm sticks to the 'pot' represented by a hula hoop, put it in to 'cook,' and then carried it back to the starting line. Bill and Betsy Burnham enjoyed this station particularly.

Kindergarten, first and second graders scattered to their chosen exercise stations, as the adult or volunteer to student ratio was 2 to 11. LaRue said, "At Gill Elementary School, we honk a horn to switch stations. Here they don't." This indicates the teacher's rules work. For example, first grade teacher Gloria Funkhouser, instructed her students, "to be kind and be safe."

One elated boy ran by shouting, "Awesome! That was awesome!" Four students who won potatoes at the Great Potato Race carried them proudly and showed them off to everyone they knew. Many received praise from their peers when completing a station, whether they won or not, and their smiles shone. "I loved it all!" said Gina, a second grader in Mrs. Oakes' class.

By 11:15 a.m., Jutres called out, "Olly-olly," and the students turned their attention to her. They received popsicles! One staff member even ran home to get more. Trash was collected, and not one wrapper was left on the ground.

All of the students returned to their classrooms to prepare for Family Lunch by 11:30 a.m. Preschoolers ate in their classrooms. Parents who were unable to attend Field Day arrived for Family Lunch. Everyone ate outside on blankets with their bag lunch or after they received their hot lunch. Hopefully Field Day 2008 at Hillcrest will be just as much fun.

## Montague Center School Celebrates EIC Program

BY BRIDGET SWEET

Educator and naturalist-residence at the Montague Center School Colleen Kelley of the Hitchcock Center for the Environment in Amherst, and the Hitchcock Center's executive director Julie Johnson, came to Montague Center on Wednesday, May 30th to celebrate the graduation of the third graders, the first class to have completed four years of study of the Sawmill River in the school's grant funded Environment as Integrating Context (EIC) curriculum, and to let all the students show off the knowledge acquired during their study of the river this year. Parents and siblings watched proudly on the hot afternoon.

Principal Christine Jutres began the informational assembly with a warm welcome for Kelley. Kelley called each student as a scientist. Kindergarteners were zoologists as they studied animals along the Sawmill River. First graders were limnologists as they studied the pond. The second graders were botanists as they studied plants along the watershed. Lastly, the third graders were lab scientists as they studied the Sawmill River, testing the quality of the river water and learning how to conserve it for future generations of plants and animals.

The kindergarteners stood in line with their homemade binoculars on and read into the

microphone at the front of the community room. Kindergarten teacher Karen Wartel assisted them as they describe a variety of animals. They closed by identifying which animal they drew and pointed to their artwork on the quilt. Kelley said their quilt will be displayed at the public library and at the Hitchcock Center over the summer.

Next, Maureen Jorgensen and Chanda O'Keefe's first graders spoke. They learned about crayfish, leopard frogs, bull frogs, dragonfly larva, whirligig beetles, snails and more. The students carried around their vibrant watercolor pictures after they shared.

see EIC pg 10

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## NOTES FROM THE WENDELL SELECTBOARD

## Wendell Tries to Wrap Up Business for Fiscal '07

BY JOSH HEINEMANN - The Wendell selectboard opened its May 30th meeting with the approval of the open space committee's request to appoint Tristram Seidler, of 66 West Street to fill out the committee's roster. Seidler has a PhD in Ecology.

The town took a payment of \$9,525 from the Massachusetts Technology Collaborative grant to pay for the solar panels on the new library. The grant was earned when Wendell had the highest percentage of town electric customers of any town in the state to sign up for the innovative Greener Watts program, which adds an approximately 2 cents per kWh surcharge to a subscriber's electric bill, with the money dedicated for renewable energy.

The Massachusetts Department of Conservation and Recreation (DCR) is paying Wendell \$17,548 for DCR land within the town, a separate revenue from state PILOT money.

Board chair Ted Lewis said Wendell still gets the lowest payment per acre for DCR land of any of the towns in the Quabbin watershed.

The selectboard received a letter from the Massachusetts Historic Commission that said the construction of a new pavilion at Ruggles Pond, adjacent to the parking lot, has no adverse effect on the existing pavilion. The older pavilion, a Civilian Conservation Corps project, is in the state register of historic places.

The town's new law firm, Kopelman and Paige, asked in a letter to the selectboard how the board wants to deal with the June bill for attorney services. A bill for services given up to June 13th could be submitted and signed for payment at a selectboard meeting within the current fiscal year, or the entire month could be paid for in July of the next fiscal year.

Selectboard member Dan Keller said it is still conceivable the town could close on the new

building construction in the town center by June 19th, and move the short-term building construction loan into the lower interest USDA loan. But the town still owes money to Handford Construction, and to subcontractors; the payments have not been made because the bills have not been submitted. Paperwork has been one of the worst aspects of Handford Construction's work. Handford recently lost its sixth project manager since construction began, and filling in the new project manager on details will most likely complicate matters. In the event the closing does not occur in this fiscal year, town treasurer Carolyn Manley is trying to negotiate a short term loan to be paid off without penalty to cover the town's borrowing, until the USDA loan is made final.

The board discussed possibilities for the lock box that is used for payments made to the town when no one is in the offices. It is mostly used for non-cash pay-

ments, but money taken in at the WRATS and some other cash payments go into it. Lewis said it could be bolted to the floor, or to the wall. Board member Christine Heard objected that the big black box is too ugly. Keller suggested that the door to the tax collector's and treasurer's office be kept locked and have a slot for payment. A new lock box is to be installed outside the office building near the light pole, facing the walk.

Hope Riley wants to sell her property on Lady Slipper Lane to her tenants, and because the property is under Chapter 61 protection, the town has right of first refusal. Lewis questioned how the town could exercise that right without first knowing the price. Keller said that a call to Riley's lawyer might get the price, but added that the town already has property that it does not know what to do with. He said he was in favor of letting Riley and her tenant close in June as they hoped,

and the selectboard waived their right of first refusal.

Keller gave a short building update. The town office flooring has popped up in a few new places, but the new person repairing them knows what he is doing, and is working directly with the town. Except for the stone amphitheater, and paving of the parking lot, the site work at the library is done, and still in progress at the office building. Volunteers are scheduled to patch leaks in the library's stone foundation, and other volunteers are assembling the shelving that was brought from Suffolk University. Work on the heating controls is now being treated as a warranty item.

Heard asked if the selectboard gets to comment on all the contractors and subcontractors, or only on Handford Construction.

The meeting went early into executive session to discuss litigation.

## EIC from page 9

Kelley told the audience their students' pictures, along with an attached still life photo of the species, will be made into post-cards! One student in Jorgensen's class even hugged Kelley after he finished.

Amy Calkin's second graders shared information they learned about plants along the watershed. Some students sketched a plant they researched, and included a real leaf from a specimen to go with their sketch. Other students shared information from their research along the Sawmill, where they found plants such as: elderberry, timothy, milkweed flower, with black birch and sycamore trees. Not to mention poison ivy. They had taken the last of their three field trips that very day, and the second graders seemed proud, while hot and fatigued.

Sheri Leh represented Wendy Mieczkowski's third grade class.

This class displayed their passion for the Sawmill River, alternating their presentations with a question-answer technique.

One student asked, "How healthy is the water in the Sawmill River?" Another answered with scientific data of the Dissolved Oxygen (D.O.) content and the potential Hydrogen (pH) of the Sawmill.

On the third graders' May 16th field trip, for example, the air temperature along the river was 76 degrees F, the water temperature was 63 degrees F, the D.O. was 5 and the pH was 5.5. Out of 152 bugs captured, 149 were healthy, another indicator of the Sawmill River's water quality. Other students explained how and why the D.O. and pH counts are important to understanding the health of the river.

The third graders happily informed the crowd they have constructed science kits to take home to conduct future river water testing.

Kelley said, "Since the EIC program is four years old, these third graders are the first to have gone through each year of studying the Sawmill River." The students seemed excited to make Montague Center School history.

Pat Allen, chair of the town of Montague selectboard, with Julie Johnson and Colleen Kelley passed out certificates to the fifteen third graders along with Johnson and Kelley. The certificates said:

Saw Mill River Stewards  
The Hitchcock Center  
and the Town of Montague  
Would like to thank  
(student's name)

For completing an intensive study of the Sawmill River watershed through field-based research, community projects and scientific exploration. (The student) has demonstrated commitment to protecting this natural resource today and for future generations. May 30, 2007

The assembly ended with a

PowerPoint video, showing the four grades working hard at the Sawmill River, complete with melodious background music on a river theme.

After the student presentations, Johnson explained, "The Hitchcock Center is located in Amherst, and is a non-profit environmental educational center that serves all of the Pioneer Valley. They give classes from Holyoke to Heath. The Hitchcock Center's purpose is to foster understanding and awareness of the environment, along with developing environmentally literate citizens." The EIC program is taught with a hands-on learning approach. The Hitchcock Center offers workshops, institutes and consultation services for all teachers. Teachers learn to instruct quality educational programs in earth, life and physical sciences while integrating language arts, social studies and math. The Hitchcock Center's web address is [center.org., where you can learn more about their programs and summer camps.](http://www.hitchcock-</a></p>
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Kelley explained that the Montague Center School is one of four schools in Massachusetts certified in the EIC program. The teachers were trained at the summer institute to instruct in this program. "The students learned about their natural system, the Sawmill River, and how it interacts with the social system, the town of Montague." Her favorite part about the EIC program is how the whole school learns and the students can teach others. The EIC has been funded by the Environmental Protection Agency, the Massachusetts Environment Trust and Captain Planet for the past four years.

Congratulations to the students of the Montague Center School! May the Sawmill River continue to thrive with the protection and advocacy the E.I.C. has taught you.

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**BUDGET** from pg 1

said Precinct 5's Jean Hebden, walking into the meeting at 8:30 a.m. "Something's wrong here."

Speaking to Article 13, the GMRSD budget request, shortly before the meeting broke for lunch at noon, Precinct 2's David Jensen said, "We have a problem that we've seen coming for quite a while," involving sharp budget increases coupled with enrollment declines. "We've got to spend more money to educate fewer students. That's a tough sell: 'Let's spend some more money to get less service for less students.'"

Jensen went on, "The school committee is looking at contraction." Rather than closing a school - specifically Montague Center School, as leafletters out front of the high school were advocating - as a way out of the problem, Jensen called the 80% to 90% of the schools' operating costs that are personnel related "the crux of the problem."

He offered the following analogy: "It's like telling someone, 'You're overweight and it's affecting your health. Do something about it.'" In that situation, Jensen said, closing Montague Center School would be like, "Cutting off your arm to lose weight: it's the simplest way to do it." But the patient won't necessarily be pleased with the result.

Nonetheless, the drumbeat to close Montague Center School was steady throughout the morning, punctuated with intermittent rebuttals from defenders of the 86-student school at the southern end of town.

Precinct 3's Barry Levine began by complimenting the GMRSD for "the excellent job they do in these difficult times. He then asked about the more than \$400,000 increase in charter school and school choice out tuition in the last year - from \$850,553 to \$1,250,701 - and school committee chair Mary Kociela explained the GMRSD was losing this money as more students choose to leave the district.

Levine followed up. "We must have excess capacity for students at Sheffield and Hillcrest, with the sixth graders transferred to the middle school. Why are we not closing Montague Center School in favor of bringing these students to other schools in the town that already have capital assets?"

Kociela fielded his question, saying, "This has been a difficult issue. The school committee has struggled with it. To some it's so obvious. Montague Center needs so much work. In trying to speak for the school committee, there is a real passion throughout the town for what people want to see for school buildings and school configuration. It's still on the table. What you say is true. There are other ways of configuring school buildings. At the same time, we have been forced to look at all other ways we can cut the budget."

Precinct 4's Ed Voudren asked what the school committee planned to do about the underperforming status of Sheffield, and outgoing superintendent Sue Gee assured him there was money in the budget to update reading programs to help struggling students, and to challenge high achieving students as well. "We are addressing [the No Child Left Behind mandate] with new programs and new materials and we are beginning to see [test score] improvements in children in grades 4 and 8, who are starting to move toward proficiency. I'm very proud we've been able to do that in the face of morale problems and layoffs."

Voudren followed up, saying the Montague Center School building is valued at \$2.7 million. "If Montague Center is to be closed... if we sold it, would we be willing to give that money to the reserve fund so we could close budget gaps in the future? I've been around this town a long time, and I don't think the lean times are going to miss us in the future."

Precinct 4's Rich Kuklewicz supported Voudren's idea, say-

ing, "I would support a trust fund," allowing the town to spend the interest from the sale of the Montague Center School on district needs in perpetuity.

Deb Radway rose and identified herself, "Precinct 1, childless, taxpayer," and said, "I support my community school and I wear my heart on my sleeve." She wanted to know, "Is the cost of mothballing a school included in the highway department budget?"

In his capacity as building inspector, Jensen answered it would cost around \$20,000 annually to keep a closed school building heated, secured, and in repair.

Jeanne Weintraub of Precinct 1 referred to the May 21st non-binding referendum to close Montague Center School, which failed by a 4 to 1 margin in Montague Center, while passing by a similar margin on the Hill in Turners Falls, carrying town-

wide 57 to 43 percent. "It was a close vote. It demonstrated there is tremendous support for this school, which has strong parental involvement and higher test scores. If the school district is concerned about quality of education and reversing school choice losses, closing a school with higher test scores is not the right way to go about it. If you close schools, enrollment will decline and you'll continue the

see BUDGET pg 12

**ARMEN** from pg 1

With the passage of this resolution we will join with a total of one hundred and nineteen towns and cities in New England that have passed resolutions to speak out against genetically modified crops. Article 30 on the town meeting warrant calls for three points:

First, we want mandatory labeling of all genetically engineered foods and seeds. We want to know what it is we are eating and demand a choice as to whether to consume genetically modified organisms or not.

In the U.S., roughly 60-70% of processed foods on grocery shelves are likely to contain biotech ingredients. People want to know what is in their food for good reason. Since these new kinds of crops began flooding the market in 1996, the FDA has not required long-term, independent scientific testing of them. What's more, the FDA has ignored its own scientists' warnings about the dangers of biotech food, and it has allowed the biotechnology companies to do their own safety research with little oversight. This means the foxes are guarding the henhouse!

Right now we are serving as a giant test population for genetically engineered foods, without our consent, and with no control group. After the food contamination scares of late, do we trust the USDA to tell us that our foods, though virtually untested, are safe?

Second, we want to protect farmers both here and abroad by calling for the assignment of strict liability to the corporate manufacturers, rather than to farmers, of genetically engineered crops. One alarming aspect of genetically modified organisms is that corporations own the patents to many of our food plants, because they have made slight changes to their DNA.

To illustrate the danger of this, here is the story of a conventional canola farmer in Canada named Percy Schmeiser. Mr. Schmeiser had been farming canola with his wife for almost 50 years. They had developed a canola strain for their own use that was productive and well suited to the environment. A neighbor started growing biotech canola in an adjacent field. The seed blew over to Schmeiser's field and contaminated his crop; a lifetime of work was destroyed. To add insult to injury, Schmeiser was then sued by Monsanto for patent infringement!

Third, we are calling for a moratorium on the further growing of biotech crops until there is credible and independent scientific evidence that these products are not harmful to our health, the environment, and the survival of family farms. This point is critical because once these new genes are released into the environment, they can contaminate the gene pools of highly valued plants and animals. Once this

happens we can never go back and clean up the mess, as we can with environmental contamination by chemicals or radiation.

As a beekeeper, I am concerned about contamination. Many biotech plants are infused with their own pesticides, which then express themselves throughout the plant, including in the pollen and nectar. Honeybees often take over a hundred pounds of nectar and a hundred pounds of pollen back to the hive to be stored. If this pollen and nectar has toxicity it can build up in the hive, causing collapse. This, along with a new genetically engineered class of pesticides derived from tobacco called Imidacloprid are suspects in colony collapse disorder.

I worry that biotech organisms have not been studied by independent scientists and that they are being dumped on us simply to make enormous profits. They pose dangers to our local environment, our right to know what we are buying and eating, and our right to farm sustainably. Despite industry claims of benefits to all, only large corporations gain through genetically engineered organisms. We risk losing control of our food supply, which has been in the cultural commons since the dawn of agriculture.

Together, we can make our voices heard through this town meeting resolution.



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**BUDGET**

continued from page 11

the spiral.

But Les Cromack, also a member of the Precinct 1 delegation, and the chair of the town's capital improvements committee, responded that closing Montague Center would save the school district \$150,000 annually, and would avoid \$896,000 in deferred maintenance costs in the next five years. "This is money that would pretty well cover all capital improvements projects in Hillcrest and Sheffield. We would then have a complex that would take us into the future."

He allowed, "Montague Center is the best school in the system. I know that. However, we have to bring the other schools up to the level of Montague Center."

Going into the meeting, a number of town meeting members complained of a lack of direction on the budget gap from the appointed finance committee or the elected selectboard. Finance committee chair Jeff Singleton waded into the

debate, and selectboard member Allen Ross soon joined him; each offered a plan for a way forward.

On the budget gap, Singleton said, "We don't have a good proposal. There are things the school district has not done, and should do. But town meeting does not want us to shrug and say we don't know what we're going to do. We can't bankrupt the town. We can't have major cuts in the schools. We have to solve the part of the problem that is ours."

The finance committee had passed a motion to offer the GMRSD \$6,825,257, a figure \$740,815 less than the amount the schools asked for. That is the figure town meeting eventually approved. Singleton said the remaining gap should be bridged in part by tapping town reserves, in part by budget cuts in town departments and at the schools. But he insisted \$300-\$400,000 should come from the state, which he blamed for creating a structural school deficit for localities to deal with. He said, "We should tell our state representatives we need the rest

**"If we had to cut the entire \$863,000, that would result in 24 or 25 teacher layoffs," Superintendent Sue Gee told town meeting, referring to the schools' budget gap for Gill and Montague. "It is literally impossible to cut 25 teachers. We'd have no teachers left for our elementary**

in Pothole money." He advocated, "creating a five-year plan between the school district, the town, and the state to solve this problem."

"My personal feeling is if the state says 'No,' they should come and find out how they would run this district,"

Singleton said.

For the selectboard, Ross said, "We need to come up with a relatively short term solution to keep the state from running our school system. We should remember, our town has a 250 year history. We have an opportunity to survive the short term crisis we are in. We'll turn out to be a better town as a result."

Ross suggested the schools should seek more cuts, "without decimating the district or closing two schools." Meanwhile, the town should help close the gap by going back to reserves for "\$100,000 or more." Additionally, he said, "A small override is necessary to get us through this period. It might get voted down. I'm familiar with the history of overrides."

He said the school committee will have to "make a vote to close Montague Center School. Enrolment is dropping. We've got to make Hillcrest and Sheffield highly functional, computer savvy schools. That might provide the political capital to pass an override."

He said the town and schools were "generous to employees

on health care and benefits. There has to be a freeze for one or two years on various aspects of benefits and wages." He called for the wage and benefit freeze to be shared equally by town departments and school employees.

Precinct 1's Robin Sherman, Montague's former town planner, said she had been exploring the job market around the state and found Montague's salaries competitive, and Montague's benefit package "very generous."

Precinct 4's Steve Ellis made an emotional appeal for parents to reverse the district's annual million dollar loss to school choice and charter schools. "I think it's time for people who are choosing their kids out of the district to bring them back. The worst aspect of the school closing argument is the threat of taking kids out of the district.

"This is so important; I'm shaking right now. We are making critical decisions. If we're a meeting of five villages, we send our kids to district schools,

continued next page

*School committee chair Mary Kociela gave the following speech in defense of the GMRSD's '08 \$7,566,072 budget request to Montague's annual town meeting on Saturday, June 2nd.*

# The School District Needs to Buy More Time

BY MARY KOCIELA

**GILL-MONTAGUE** - If ever there was a question as to the central role the school plays in our town and in the community, you need only attend the TFHS senior awards night and graduation ceremony. I had this distinct privilege on Thursday and Friday evenings. It was a joyous occasion marked by academic achievement, community service, local memorial scholarships and very proud families and students.

The school committee comes before you today with a request that is much too big. I know that, and yet it represents a less than level services budget, with more than one million dollars we have already cut. The budget we began with back in January contained priorities. Not fluff, but priorities that we need in order to meet Department of Education standards dictated by our External Quality Assessment audit and Annual Yearly Progress review, priorities we need in order to continue to graduate

confident, aspiring young adult citizens in the town of Montague.

However, the budget before us no longer contains these priorities. We know the town is facing its own fiscal crunch and we must be realistic. This budget will, however, allow us to at least maintain most of what we currently have.

We have been working diligently to maintain vital programs and staff, to create new programs to retain special education students within the district, and to lobby the state to change the funding formula and increase funds for public schools. All in the face of decreasing state aid, and fixed costs and unfunded mandates that continue to inflate each year, turning level funding into funding cuts.

The school district needs to buy more time. I know some of you will say time is out; the school committee should have closed a school. I promise you, we will continue to do this difficult work. But, there is a reason that our district agreement



*Mary Kociela*

requires eight out of nine votes to close a school, and there is a reason people believe so passionately on both sides of the issue. This is not the school committee's unwillingness to make a decision. It is the school committee's earnest effort to make the right decision. The fact is this budget problem runs much deeper than any school closure. To meet this gap we would need to close two schools, and then

some.

Time is running out, and I say the time is now. Every district is experiencing the same downward spiral, and because of this we are seeing a shift in willingness to look at new options. Options that include sharing resources between neighboring districts, possible regionalization of school administration, sharing of services such as SPED transportation costs, and identifying possible new initiatives in the district that will make us unique. Many of these options are unprecedented, and they will not happen overnight.

Please consider all of the options before you and please consider the effect on the town if we are unable to maintain a viable school district. A few short years ago, we were forced to cut 24 teachers and along with them went programs that parents want, such as art, music and athletics. That same year we lost 140 students to school choice, which translates to approximately \$700,000, almost equal to the current bud-

get gap. We still have not recovered from these earlier cuts, and any additional cuts at this time will be detrimental.

I believe it is ultimately cost effective to invest in our schools. We have made a commitment to work with town officials on a five-year plan and to work creatively as a team to find solutions. We will also continue to operate a school district that you can be proud of, one that supports its staff and teachers and promotes student achievement with a well-rounded curriculum that inspires student musicians, artists and athletes.

As school committee members we are elected to advocate for our schools and that is what we must do. We believe that a community needs a thriving school system to remain vital. You have already done much to support the schools and we thank you, and we must ask you to do more.

*Mary Kociela is the chair of the Gill-Montague Regional School Committee.*

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**BUDGET**

continued from p.12

and we work together to make that happen.”

But Weintraub said, “Parents look for the best quality of education for their children. The reality is, they look around them and see what is available. School choice is with us to stay; we can’t wish it away.”

**Montague Center Roof**

After passing the amended GMRSD budget figure, and leaving the schools \$740,000 in the red for ‘08 (with the presumption that all parties will be back for a special town meeting in a few weeks to somehow resolve the problem), town meeting then approved a motion to spend \$158,000 to put a new roof on the Montague Center School.

Precinct 5’s Mike Farrick said, “We need only look at the Railroad Salvage building to see how necessary keeping a roof in good repair is.” With unanimous support from the capital improvements committee, the measure passed easily, over the objections of some who said the town should wait to see whether the school was still in use next year before installing a new

roof.

**Tech School Budget Approved**

The town meeting also approved a request by the Franklin County Tech School to expend \$683,384 to meet the town’s share of the Tech School’s ‘08 operating budget. FCTS school committee member Richard Kuklewicz, also a Precinct 4 town meeting member, said Montague is sending one extra student to the Tech School this year, where Montague will contribute 71 of the 478 students from nineteen member towns. The Tech School also educates 32 tuition paying students from non-member towns.

As always, Kuklewicz was congratulated for the clarity of his budget presentation, although some members compared the discretionary acceptance of Tech School students, who must apply under a quota system from member towns, to

the indiscriminate enrolment policy the GMRSD must apply.

Singleton wondered if the Tech School was “cherry picking” students to the detriment of member towns, but Kuklewicz and Precinct 6’s Leslie Brown, the Tech School coordinator of special education and admissions, defended the school’s policy. Brown said, “I wish we could take all the qualified applicants that apply. We can’t, partly out of concern for the impact on some of the smaller towns in our district.”

Kuklewicz said acceptance at



Turners Falls Airport manager Michael Sweeney fielded questions about a dispute with Native Americans regarding a stone formation on a hill near the path of the runway extension at annual Town Meeting on Saturday. More about the dispute below.

the Tech School was based on an interview process, a student’s grades, and a determination whether the student will be “a good fit for the school.”

Town meeting also approved spending \$13,065 to pay for a student from Montague to attend the Smith Vocational School in Northampton, to take courses not available at FCTS. The student’s parents have agreed to provide transportation.

**Clearing the Way for a New Police Station \$4 - \$5 Million Debt Exclusion Vote Anticipated in September**

The meeting approved discontinuing the closed section of Montague Road next to the fire station, to make way for the planned construction of a new police station there. The meeting also appropriated \$235,000 to purchase 25 acres of land from the Archdiocese of Springfield abutting the fire station, contingent on the passage

of a subsequent debt exclusion vote to construct the police station. That vote should take place after a special town meeting planned for August.

Chief Ray Zukowski estimated the new station would have a total area of 11,800 square feet, as compared to the station’s present footprint in the basement of town hall: approximately 1500 square feet, with an 8000 square foot garage. He said the architect is drawing up plans to include geo-thermal heat for the new facility, which should pay for itself within seven or eight years and then provide cost savings for the life of the building. Zukowski said with the present favorable bidding climate, the cost of building the new station may have dropped from \$300 per square foot to \$270 per square foot, but he still warned of a \$4 to \$5 million price tag.

Precinct 4’s Ellis, while supporting the concept, asked Zukowski if there was any non-service related square footage that could be dropped from the project to reduce the price tag. Another member of the Precinct 4 delegation, Chris Boutwell spoke of his constituents’ traffic concerns, particularly during arrival and departure hours at see **BUDGET** pg 14

# Native Dispute with Airport Commission Discussed

BY DAVID DETMOLD

At Saturday’s town meeting, members agreed to borrow, in anticipation of reimbursement from federal and state grants, \$3,750,000 for the reconstruction and extension of the runway at the Turners Falls Airport.

Referring to objections raised recently by some New England tribes about the airport commission’s plan as it impacts an ancient stone formation they consider sacred on a hill near the proposed runway construction, Precinct 2’s Art Gilmore asked, “What happens with the Indians? Are you going to move [the runway], and if so, what happens to the money?”

Airport manager Mike Sweeney said none of the money would be spent until the government grants are awarded, and those grants would not be awarded until the issues being raised by the Native American tribes are resolved.

Precinct 2’s Mike Burek asked why the dispute with the

Native Americans had not been brought up earlier in the process.

Sweeney: “The Native Americans have been constant parties to this for the last four years. As plans have gone forward, we have consulted with the UMass Archeological Services and the state historical commission [about the Native Americans’ concerns]. There is no question about multiple sites of archeological significance at the airport.”

But Sweeney said the site in question, which airport commission chair Brian Carroll referred to as “a pile of rocks... on top of a hill,” was in dispute as to its cultural significance and its age and origin.

“The scientists have an opinion,” Sweeney said, “and the Native Americans have an opinion. This is an FAA decision. It was determined by the FAA, based on available scientific evidence, that [the site in question] was not of Native American origin.”

Sweeney said the Native Americans have asked for a review at the federal level, at the National Trust for Historic Preservation, and that is where the matter is now being handled.

“If in fact [the site] is what they think it is, we’ll try to protect it,” said Sweeney. “There are four or five other sites that have been identified, and it’s our responsibility to protect them.” While the federal review is in progress, Sweeney said, “Our goal and commitment to our predecessors on the North American continent is to protect [the site] until it is deemed to be otherwise.”

Anne Jemas, of Precinct 2, asked if the airport commission had developed a ‘Plan B’ for handling the runway extension project if the hilltop site is determined to be of sacred significance. Sweeney said there is no ‘Plan B’.

Asked how the Montague selectboard’s written *Document of Cooperation and*

*Peace* with the Narragansett Tribe of May 19th 2004, which contained the pledge to “increase mutual vigilance for historic preservation and deepen our appreciation for the rich heritage of indigenous peoples,” would affect the town’s airport commission and its deliberations over the disputed site, selectboard chair Pat Allen answered, “We certainly did agree with the Native Americans. They have been in and talked with the board about this. We did ask several more questions. Is this a completed study? It has not finished going through channels. They [the Narragansetts] have resolved to go forward with other Native American groups so things like this could go forward without coming to an impasse. We’d like to be supportive. If it is too late to effect a change [in the runway expansion plans], in the future we’d like to be as supportive as we can and get all the information in advance instead of finding some of these things out at the

11th hour.”

Airport commission chair Brian Carroll said, “This pile of rocks sits on top of a hill. The issue is not that the airport commission wants to remove a pile of rocks. This hill needs to be moved as a part of safety measures at the airport. We’ve looked at all the other options to see if there are possible ways of avoiding this hill.”

Selectboard member Al Ross recalled the Reconciliation Ceremony with the Narragansetts as “personally moving,” but said the statement signed by the board, “did not formally commit me to support all the difficult questions that might come up. That is not a burial site. There are ways to mitigate it that will respect some of the history of their presence in the area.”

Selectboard member Patricia Pruitt added, addressing Sweeney, “If the National Trust for Historic Preservation decision is that site is a site worth preserving, then we will need a ‘Plan B.’”

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# BUDGET

continued from pg 13

the high school and middle school at the intersection of Turnpike and Turners Falls Road, where the new station is planned.

Precinct 5's Jay DiPucchio invited Boutwell and any residents with concerns to attend Thursday evening meetings of the police station building committee at the fire station (5:30 p.m.) where, he said, all such concerns would be addressed.

## Norma's Park Funded

The town meeting approved spending \$4,250 for the purpose of renovating Norma's Park in Lake Pleasant. This motion was approved by the first unanimous vote of the day.

Earlier in the meeting, Montague Parks and Rec director Jon Dobosz made a successful last-minute pitch to amend his department's budget by adding \$7,500 to hire part-time summer help. Dobosz persuaded the meeting to add the funds, equal to the amount taken from his budget at last year's town meeting, to keep the cost of summer programs down in the face of a hike in the state minimum wage.

Town meeting provided the department of public works \$69,689 for lease payments on a recycling truck and sewer vactor truck, \$25,000 for the first year of a five-year lease on a backhoe, and \$10,000 to repair fuel pumps at the DPW fuel depot. Superintendent Tom Bergeron said the old fuel pump was being held together by duct tape.

Selectboard member Ross suggested using gorilla tape instead. Bergeron replied gorilla tape is more expensive than duct tape. "That wasn't in the budget this year."

The meeting gave approval to a \$75,000 discretionary fund for Bergeron to use for major equipment purchases and repairs, with finance committee and selectboard approval. The superintendent said this fund would not be available for repair of certain signs in town that have been noted as being in a state of poor maintenance.

The town authorized the DPW to use \$386,400 for repair of roads and other local transportation projects in anticipation of receipt of that amount of state Chapter 90 funds.

## Impeach the President

After taking care of road repair, the town meeting got down to the matter of impeaching the president and vice president of the United States.

Town moderator Ray Godin began the deliberation of Article

petitioners, Precinct 1's Weintraub.

This ruling did not sit well with Gilmore, who upbraided Godin, a former student of his, vociferously from the floor. Gilmore tried to protest the procedure whereby a proponent would get to make a five-minute

thought this was an appropriate thing for us to be voting on, because the residents of the town of Montague are footing the bill for over \$2 million for the war in Iraq [editor's note: according to the National Priorities Project 'Cost of War' website (nationalpriorities.org), Montague taxpayers had spent more than \$10,900,000 as of Saturday, June 2nd on the war in Iraq], which is a war that many of us feel was entered into by our president under false pretenses, and a war that the great majority of the American people no longer support. Meanwhile, our town is struggling to pay for education, police, fire, and libraries, and other basic services. So I see this as directly related to the business of the town.

"So far, Congress has failed to act to limit the powers of the presidency and end the war in Iraq. As citizens we have the right and the responsibility to hold the president and the vice president accountable for their actions."

The resolution contained several whereas clauses, citing George W. Bush and Richard B. Cheney's conspiracy to intentionally mislead Congress and the American public regarding the threat from Iraq in order to justify a war, electronic surveillance of American citizens without warrant, the torture of prisoners, and their indefinite detention without right to legal counsel, all in violation of the Constitution of the United States of America. Godin read the entire resolution into the record.

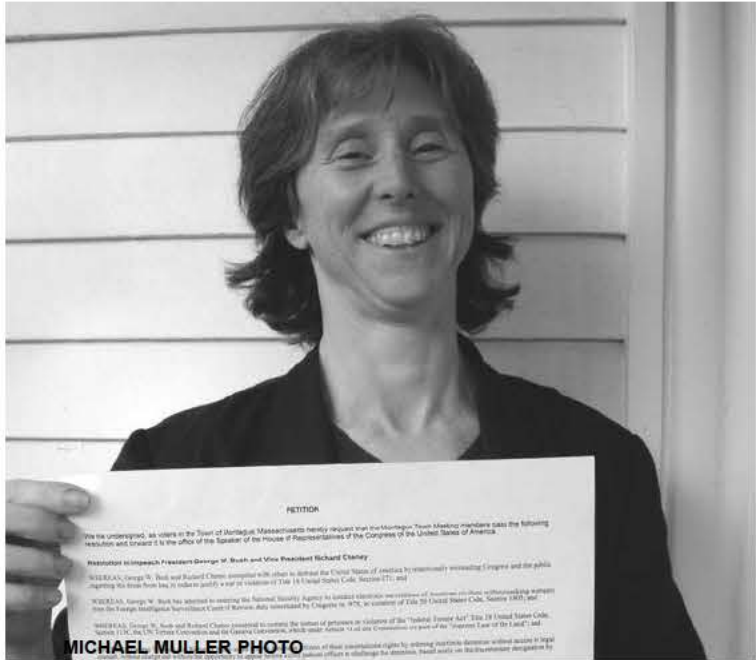
Weintraub mentioned that the Franklin County towns of

Ashfield, Buckland, Charlemont, Colrain, Heath, Leverett, Leyden, Rowe, Shutesbury, Warwick, Wendell and Whately have all passed similar impeachment resolutions, joining over 40 Vermont towns in doing so. The Greenfield City Council, citing pressing matters like trying to balance the budget, recently voted down the measure.

After Weintraub spoke, Godin called for a voice vote. With the outcome in doubt based on the strength of 'Yeas' and 'Nays', Godin asked proponents and opponents of the measure to stand. When the votes were counted, the town of Montague had voted 48 to 25 to call for the impeachment of president George W. Bush and vice president Richard B. Cheney.

The town clerk must now "certify to the Speaker of the House of Representatives, under the seal of the Town of Montague, a copy of this resolution," which will also be forwarded to Montague's senators and representatives in the United States Congress "to cause to be instituted in the Congress of the United States proper proceedings for the investigation of the activities of George W. Bush and Richard B. Cheney, to the end that they may be impeached and removed from office."

Article 30, calling for a ban on genetically modified foods, also passed on a standing vote, after the moderator had initially called the measure defeated on the voice vote. The final tally was 56 - 16. Godin apologized to the meeting. "I stand corrected," he said.



Precinct 1's Jeanne Weintraub stands on her front porch with a copy of the petition she circulated to place the impeachment article on the annual town meeting warrant. The resolution calling for the impeachment of George W. Bush and Richard B. Cheney passed 48 to 25.

29 by saying, "My personal view is that town meeting is the business meeting of the town and solely the business meeting of the town. I can legally move the question after presentation has been made."

But Godin said he had received more phone calls about the petitioned article on impeachment than he had on any question since the town proposed cutting the town nurse's position. He left it to the town meeting members to decide whether they wanted to debate the question or not. Precinct 4's Anne Jemas, who favored impeaching George Bush and Richard Cheney, spoke in favor of allowing the meeting to debate the question, as did an opponent of impeachment, Precinct 2's Art Gilmore. "As a veteran, I think I have a right to debate this myself," Gilmore said.

But when it came to a vote on whether to hold that debate, town meeting split evenly down the middle, 40 to 40. At which point it was left to the moderator to cast a tie-breaking vote. "I'm going to go with my original inclination and vote 'No,'" said Godin, who then allowed only a five minute presentation by one of the warrant article's original

speech in favor of the motion, with no one speaking against, but Godin ruled him out of order.

As a number of members got up and walked out of the meeting, a point of order questioned whether a quorum of the 126 members was still present. Godin had the room counted and declared a quorum.

Weintraub delivered the following remarks.

"I brought this before the town of Montague, and I

## Town Meeting Members Represent You

In Montague, town meeting is made up of elected delegations representing constituents from each part of town. There are six precincts, each of which has 21 elected members who are responsible for enacting bylaws, acting on matters of town finance and other matters that may come before them on behalf of the town. The boundaries of the six precincts are drawn to allow town meeting members to represent geographic areas with roughly equal population, as follows: Precinct 1: Montague Center, Precinct 2: Lake Pleasant and Millers Falls, Precinct 3: the Hill section of Turners Falls,

east; Precinct 4: the Hill section of Turners Falls, west; Precinct 5: downtown Turners Falls, and Precinct 6: Montague City and the South End, or Patch section of Turners Falls. Precinct representatives serve for three years. For a complete list of their names, addresses and phone numbers, go to [www.montaguema.net](http://www.montaguema.net) and look for a link on the left that says "Town Meeting Members."

At annual town meeting on Saturday, June 2nd, 91 of the 126 town meeting members showed up to conduct the business of the town. Twenty-two members were excused, by

calling the town clerk's office ahead of the meeting and noting their inability to attend.

There were thirteen members who failed to show up or call ahead to excuse themselves. Here are the names of the no-shows: David Bennett, Precinct 2; Julia Bowden-Smith, Precinct 5; Denise DiPaolo, Precinct 5; George Emery, Precinct 1; Gregory Garrison, Precinct 6; Addie Rose Holland, Precinct 6; Kathleen Hyson, Precinct 3; Nicole Kapise, Precinct 5; Don MacPhail, Precinct 3; Carlyn Saltman, Precinct 6; Betty Waidlich, Precinct 2, and Jon Waidlich, Precinct 2.

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## FIRE from page 1

In late summer of 2002, the owner of 1 Ferry Street was reportedly in financial trouble, and considering closing the building. By fall of 2002, there was no heat in the building, and the fire sprinklers were drained. On November 7th of 2002, the fire department issued an order to Jones to remedy the situation, by removing combustible materials or bringing fire prevention systems up to code. Mottor said the Easthampton department turned to the state fire marshal's office for help in backing up their order. In November of 2002, the state fire marshal ordered Jones to correct serious code violations at 1 Ferry Street due to the fire load in the building. "This condition creates an immediate danger to fire department personnel and the neighborhood."

Subsequent to that order, "the entire facility fell into disrepair," Mottor said. He said Jones "rented the building dirt cheap, and stuck the owner with the mess, which ended up costing her the building." The fire department issued an order to the mill owner, Jeanne Moore, to remove the fire load from the building in August of 2003. Due to her financial circumstances, she could not comply with the order.

During the next few years, Mottor said, certified letters sent to Jones were returned unanswered. He had left town. "He was kind of a slippery character, to say the least."

When the mill was purchased by Peter Ward, of Worcester, in May of 2005, Mottor's department was back in Housing Court in June of that year, still seeking to enforce compliance for previous clean-up orders against Jones.

"The people who ended up buying the complex ended up inheriting Jones' mess, and they've been extremely cooperative in getting rid of it."

William Hewitt, a business tenant at a nearby Easthampton mill, called 1 Ferry Street "a toxic waste dump of paper products," after Jones absconded.

A few miles to the south, in Holyoke, fire chief David LaFond also had a file on Jones close at hand. "Jerry Jones, son of a gun, I first became aware of him in September of 1995. I've had him to deal with my whole career."

As LaFond recalled, "He had bought a building on 2 Berkshire Street," known as the Livingston Mill, which LaFond described as a six or seven story building, about 80 by 200 feet.

"He had a great set-up. He was collecting waste paper from all of the paper mills in Holyoke and condensing it into pellets to sell as fuel."

LaFond said in September of 1995 Jones had hired "a kid at \$8 an hour to shovel pellets into a boiler" to heat a portion of the mill. With the fire door open, the fire got out of the firebox

and started a fire around him. The kid jumps in a cab and takes off." When the Holyoke department was called in to put that fire out, LaFond said, he began a long and fruitless effort to seek remedial action against Jones and force him into compliance with fire safety codes.

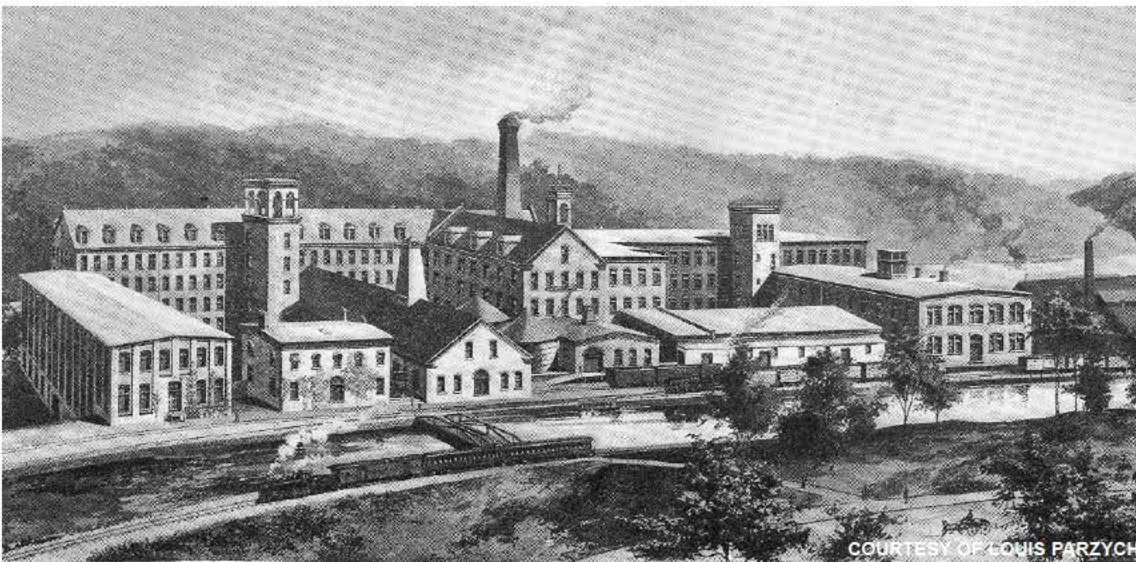
Meanwhile, Jones was moving so much paper product that he leased another mill, on the South Hadley side of the river, at 60 Jackson Street. LaFond said he inspected that mill at about the time of the fire at

exterior doorways patched inside with a piece of plywood. She removed it and found a gaping hole extending down to the basement. She said, "A firefighter could fall through here and get killed." She gets mad and orders him to jail."

Jones spent two or three months behind bars in Holyoke, interrupting the efforts Turners Falls officials to bring Jones into code compliance at the Strathmore. Then, lawyers working pro bono for Jones sprung him from jail, LaFond

he had extinguished the fire, the worker left the premises, and the fire continued to smolder. By 9:34 p.m., Brunelle said, the fire personnel responding to the call found visibility poor in the basement, and had difficulty finding the source of the fire due to heavy smoke.

Six days later, the fire alarm, which failed to activate on Thanksgiving eve, was working properly again, giving notice to the fire department of a fire in the basement of the same building. Again, a worker caused the



An old illustration of the Keith Paper Company, which became the Strathmore Mill

Jones' Berkshire Street mill, and found, "Large quantities of scrap paper stored haphazardly, not up to code." Both inside and at an outside lot at the South Hadley mill, LaFond recalled seeing paper product piled, "exceeding lot and building limits, with no clear aisles of separation. He was taking paper in and stacking it very high, with no separation, no fire breaks, creating dangerous conditions for workers or equipment to get between. We're talking very dry waste paper, highly combustible," LaFond said. He added, "We had a series of arson fires at the outside lot, in one of which a firefighter was injured."

After an accidental fire destroyed an empty mill and took six firefighters' lives in Worcester in 1999, LaFond enlisted the aid of the Massachusetts Attorney General's office in an attempt to force Jones to bring his mills into compliance with safety codes. But he never succeeded.

In particular, at the Livingston Mill, LaFond said, "That paper stayed there for years and years." It was not until 2003, after Jones was already in control of the Strathmore Mill and involved in lengthy court negotiations with Jensen and Godin over code compliance issues in Montague, that LaFond was able to bring Jones back to Holyoke, to face Superior Court Judge Constance Sweeney over his repeated failure to comply with LaFond's orders to clean up his property.

"He pleaded that he had no money," LaFond recalled. The judge accompanied Jones and LaFond on a tour of his Berkshire Street mill. "As we're going through the building, Sweeney found the floor to one

said. He has made himself scarce in Holyoke since then.

The Livingston Mill has since been bought by a Romanian immigrant, said LaFond, who is working hard to clean it up.

LaFond said one of the Holyoke city solicitors who was working on the case, commented afterward about Jones, "You can't get a pound of flesh if there is no flesh." When he heard about the fire at the Jones' new headquarters in the Strathmore, LaFond said, "I have a motto. It goes like this. 'If it's identifiable, it's manageable. If it's predictable, it's preventable.' We knew this was going to happen."

Asked to comment on Jones' pattern of code compliance issues at mills in other Western Massachusetts cities and towns, Jennifer Meith, spokesperson for the Department of Fire Services, said, "Our department is familiar with Mr. Jones in other matters at other properties that were handled at the local level with our help, when needed." Meith said the state fire marshal's investigation into the cause of the Strathmore Mill fire of May 26th is "active."

The fire that burned down Building #10 was actually not the first fire at the Strathmore in recent months, according to Turners Falls firefighter Todd Brunelle. The Turners department responded to a 911 call from a security guard at Swift River Hydro, in the mill's former power plant, on the night before Thanksgiving, 2006, at 9:34 p.m. about smoke in the basement of Building #2, where Jones kept his living quarters on the fourth floor. According to Brunelle, "a worker removing a pipe earlier that day set fire to paper pulp in a trench in the bottom of the building." Thinking

fire, this time in the course of salvaging a stainless steel tank, approximately four feet tall, by cutting it apart from inside with an acetylene torch. The hose to the acetylene torch was draped over the top of the tank, and when the worker cut through the side of the tank, he cut through his own acetylene hose, causing an explosion that activated the alarm at 11:54 a.m. on November 28th.

These accidents were portents of things to come. On Sunday, May 6th, in what one of Jones' temporary workers, Michael Crabtree called "a final push" to salvage copper at the mill, Jonathan Tanzer of Turners Falls, another temporary hand working under Jones' immediate supervision, cut through a live 13,800 volt transmission wire, nearly electrocuting himself. Electrical inspector Richard Kuklewicz said, on Monday, May 21st he became aware of the incident of the cutting of the live transmission wire. "At noon on May 22nd, I met with Captains Zellman and Bartus at the fire department, and reviewed what they knew at that time about the incident, and viewed photos of the victim. It was apparent that a very serious arc fault event had taken place."

Kuklewicz said, "The photos I saw [of Tanzer] were very disturbing. The person was seriously injured. I saw serious burns to the face, neck, and arms." Kuklewicz said, before leaving on a business trip the following day, he worked with Jensen to issue a stop work order for Jones, to cease all salvage operations at the Strathmore. That stop work order was to have been delivered on Monday, May 28th, but the fire intervened.

"I had talked with David Jensen on Wednesday about the

seriousness of what I saw, and to report to proper safety authorities, OSHA, and the state. It was a very serious event. The person could very easily have lost his life."

Since the fire, Kuklewicz, Godin and Jensen have teamed up to issue a number of orders to Jones, culminating in his trip to court on Wednesday, June 6th. He is under orders by Kuklewicz to hire an electrician to do a thorough inspection of all circuits and wiring, test all wires in areas subjected to heat or water, and review the test results with Kuklewicz "before we will begin to allow the utility to restore power to the facility." Without power, there is no functioning alarm system, and Godin has ordered Jones to restore the alarm system, and to hire a licensed contractor to test and reactivate the sprinkler system throughout the ten Strathmore buildings that survived the fire. Godin joined Jensen in ordering the mills' windows and doors secured. Jensen has also ordered Jones to cease living in the building, in violation of Section 5.2.12(a) of the Montague Zoning Bylaws and the Massachusetts Building Code. He also ordered Jones to repair holes between floors and through firewalls, repair roofs of Buildings #1 and #11, remove all paper products in non-permitted areas of Buildings #2, #4, #5, #6, and #8 in their entirety and Building #1, floor 3, "per previous pre-trial agreements." He also ordered Jones to clean up all debris left over from the fire within 45 days.

According to Jensen, Jones, see FIRE pg 17

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**IDOL**

continued from pg 1

to work within the disco genre for her first selection. She chose the funk-infused "Brick House" by the Commodores, and immediately succeeded in connecting with the audience by assigning the task of shouting out, "House!" on her cue. Happy to oblige, the audience remained keen throughout her performance, only missing their cue once.

Tobey maintained great energy and stage presence, despite falling into the trap of overusing the lyric monitor. The song didn't do her vocal range justice, but she clearly demonstrated a vast improvement in audience contact.

Erin Richman, of Westminster, followed Tobey into the spotlight, wearing a flattering 70's inspired dress and sparkling smile. Richman's disco choice was "On the Radio" by Donna Summer. I don't think she could have picked a better song to fit her vocal range and style; she was clearly comfortable and her poised confidence was captivating. When faced with the awkward musical interlude she took the opportunity to leave the stage and tempt the audience to join her in displaying their best disco moves.

Next up was Vickie Stankiewicz, of Hadley, who decided on "Hot Stuff," also by Donna Summer. Dispensing with her usual self-assurance, she informed us she'd only had a day and a half to prepare her song, never a good sign. She managed the numerous musical breaks by relying on her years of stage experience, providing comical entertainment with farcical dance numbers and exaggerated expressions. She was vocally adept and the audience enjoyed her playfulness.

Alana Martineau, of Turners Falls, followed with her Donna Summer selection, "Last Dance." Martineau started as she had the previous week, understated, almost demure. As



*Phil Simon of Simon Says Booking and Publicity, reacts to Alana Martineau's performance of the Beatles' "Oh, Darling" as judges Kimberley Morin of GCC and Bill Jamieson of All Access Talent Agency look on admiringly. They had found their new idol.*

the music changed tempo, she turned on the electricity, bringing her signature stage presence and power to her confident vocals. The song has a lot of difficult changes and a broad vocal range, but Martineau handled it skillfully, nailing them all.

Last up for the compulsory disco round was Teresa Dailey, of Charlemont. Once again Dailey seemed unsettled by her genre obligation and she left her stage presence and audience interaction behind. As she began singing, "I'm So Excited" by the Pointer Sisters, I was struck by how ironically unexcited she appeared to be. Although she improved over the course of the song, she lacked her previous control and confidence.

The evening's intermissions brought some fun surprises. Last year's Valley Idol, Abraham Oyola, of Charlemont, returned to remind us why he'd won, with a spot-on rendering of the Black Crowes' "Hard to Handle." Last year's emcee, Nick Danjer of WHAI 98.3 and the Shea Theater board of directors, was also back for a cameo, joining Peck on the stage for some fun banter and a serenade of his top karaoke pick, "Tequila," by the Champs. He'll wisely stick to his day job.

Round two opened the song selection to contestant's choice. The finalists had the challenge of choosing a song that would

highlight their vocal quality, vocal range, stage presence, showmanship and their ability to make that choice. They also needed to show something more - mere singing ability and confidence wasn't enough with a group this talented. For this last round, the contestants had to turn on the star power. The judges had a difficult job ahead of them; you couldn't ask for a more diverse group of contenders.

Teresa Dailey started things off this time with "Ain't No Other Man," by Christina Aguilera. This song highlighted Dailey's vocal range and she turned in a much more dynamic performance, but she seemed to go flat and lose the melody at times. She was successful in singing a very impressive vocal run in the middle of the song, but overall lost ground in the rhythmic complexity. While the judges critiqued her, she seemed impatient and abrupt; perhaps nerves won out after all.

Vickie Stankiewicz was on her heels with "I Don't Want to Miss a Thing," by Aerosmith. Though this was a surprising song choice for the Joplin-inspired competitor, Stankiewicz turned in a vulnerable performance that was appreciated by the judges and worked hard to diversify the song's repetitious end. What seemed missing was Stankiewicz's characteristic

showmanship; her laudable energy just wasn't there.

Third finalist was Erin Richman with "Someone to Watch Over Me," originally by George and Ira Gershwin. Richman matched her elegant appearance with an elegant performance, her pleasant, tender vocals continued to be confident and strong. Enchanting once again with her sunny smile and gentle demeanor, she didn't miss a note vocally or physically.

Next to last came Alana Martineau. Martineau surprised me by choosing "Oh Darling" by the Beatles. With her vocal power and stage experience, I thought she'd choose a flashier song. She began to sing and her voice was smooth and easy. From that simple, effortless start she began to evolve, adding bluesy twists, increasing to soulful, gutsy passion, literally falling to her knees as her voice began to take possession of the room. Abandoning all restraint, she built to an explosive vocal crescendo that shook the building and brought the audience to its feet. The judges, initially speechless and unable to come up with any points of critique, agreed this was the performance they'd been looking for from Martineau.

Arguably the hardest working contestant, Martineau continues to impress by constantly raising her own bar. Yet in spite of her exceptional vocal ability, she remained humble, always nervous when approaching critique and never the queen accepting praise as her due.

With the final performance of the evening, Jen Tobey took the stage. Apologizing for her previous performance she began her

own selection, "Silver Springs" by Fleetwood Mac. She began with a competent vocal, but her presentation seemed restrained compared to previous nights' performances. She stepped into the audience to find her grandmother during the musical interlude, and when she returned a discernible change occurred. She began to dig into the song and transformed it into her own, finishing with wrenching, penetrating, personal vocals. When talking with the judges afterward, she credited her "cool Gram".

The audience waited on pins and needles as the final scores were tallied. The Shea volunteers did a nice job of keeping us entertained and finally the results were in. Finalists were announced, 5th place to 1st, as follows; Teresa Dailey, Vickie Stankiewicz, Jen Tobey, Erin Richman, and our new Valley Idol, Alana Martineau!

With gracious modesty, Martineau accepted her \$1,000 prize and also the \$250 Audience Favorite award. (Martineau entered hoping to win both to enable her to send her daughter to Ja'Duke's "American Idol" camp this summer). Each finalist was given an attractive trophy and Martineau proceeded to hug each contestant with sincere good will. All reciprocated in kind except Stankiewicz, who proceeded to leave the stage rather abruptly. The others exhibited what looked like genuine camaraderie and perhaps the start of some lasting connections. Hopefully we will be seeing them all in the finals next year; they were a pleasure to watch.

If you missed the Valley Idol competition or would like to see it again, you can purchase videotapes by calling MCTV at 413-863-9200, and asking for Dean or Robin. The cost is \$15 per recording and a percentage of the purchase price will be donated to the Shea Theater. If you're looking for more exciting live performance at the Shea Theater, be sure to see the "Wizard of Oz" coming in July!



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**THE HEALTHY GEEZER**

# You Owe It to Yourself to Quit Smoking

BY FRED CICETTI  
LEONIA, NJ -

[Last in a three-part series on smoking.]

If you smoke, you owe it to yourself to quit. And I believe you have an obligation to try to help others to quit. I'm doing my part by offering this unusual series of columns. No scolding or exaggerated scare tactics. I'm giving you just the facts in a chain of bulletins.

You can stick these columns on bulletin boards and refrigerators. I recommend giving them to a smoker you love.

Here are more:  
Cigarette smokers die younger than nonsmokers. Smoking shortens lives by about 14 years.

In the more than four decades since the first Surgeon General's report, smoking has killed an estimated 12 million Americans.

Tobacco use remains the leading preventable cause of death in the United States, causing nearly 440,000 deaths each year.

Because of exposure to

environmental tobacco smoke ("second-hand smoke"), an estimated 3,000 nonsmoking Americans die of lung cancer every year.

Tobacco use accounts for about one third of all cancer deaths in the United States.

Smoking causes almost 90 percent of lung cancers.

More than 7 million current and former smokers suffer from chronic obstructive pulmonary disease (COPD), the name used to describe both chronic bronchitis and emphysema. About 85 percent of COPD deaths are caused by smoking.

About 80 percent of all smokers would like to quit.

Among US adults, cigarette smoking has declined from about 42% of the population in 1965 to about 21% in 2005.

It's never too late to quit. It doesn't matter how old you are or how long you've smoked.

Within minutes of smoking the last cigarette, the body begins to restore itself. After two weeks, circulation and lung function improve. A year after quitting, the risk of coro-



JESSICA HARMON ILLUSTRATION

nary heart disease is half that of a smoker's. At ten years, the lung cancer death rate is cut in half. At fifteen years after quitting, the risk of coronary heart disease is that of a nonsmoker's.

Some smokers can just stop "cold turkey." Others need help with drugs and behavior modification. Relapse rates are the highest in the first few weeks; they go down substantially after about three months.

One study found that the greatest reductions in cigarette

use were achieved when smoking became more expensive and alternative recreational activities were provided.

Nicotine replacement therapies (NRTs) are medicines that relieve a smoker's nicotine withdrawal symptoms. NRTs are available as patches, gums, inhalers, nasal sprays, or lozenges. NRTs should be used with behavioral modification.

Bupropion (Zyban) is a prescription antidepressant that affects brain chemicals involved in craving nicotine.

Varenicline (Chantix) reduces the pleasurable effects of smoking and helps reduce nicotine withdrawal symptoms.

If you want to quit smoking and need help, contact one of the following organizations:

American Cancer Society, 1-800-227-2345, www.cancer.org; American Heart Association, 1-800-242-8721, www.amhrt.org; American Lung Association, 1-800-586-4872, www.lungusa.org; National Cancer Institute, 1-

800-422-6237, www.cancer.gov; Centers for Disease Control and Prevention Office on Smoking & Health, www.cdc.gov/tobacco; Smokefree.gov, 1-800-784-8669, www.smokefree.gov.

If you have used tobacco, you should have regular oral exams by your physician or dentist. These exams will detect changes that could be cancer or a precursor of cancer.

Cancer and other conditions of the lung have the following symptoms: a new cough, a change in cough, coughing up blood, hoarseness, difficulty breathing, wheezing, headaches, chest pain, loss of appetite, weight loss, general fatigue, and repeated respiratory infections. However, many lung cancers have no apparent symptoms until they are advanced.

If you have been a tobacco user or continue to smoke or chew, it's critical that you get regular medical attention.

*If you have a question, please write to fredcicetti@gmail.com.*

**FIRE** from page 15

made representation in court that he lacks sufficient funds to comply with these orders.

According to tax collector Patti Dion, Jones has "never paid a dime" in property or sewer taxes on the Strathmore Mill, since he took ownership of it in December of 2002 under the shell corporation Western Properties, LLC. Jones is now three years in arrears on taxes in the amount of \$165,254.60 to the town of Montague. The town is in the process of taking the Strathmore Mill for back taxes

owed, a process Dion estimated would take approximately six more months.

In addition to a million dollar lien placed on the mill in Tanzer's behalf, Dion said Mackin Fuel also has a \$6,000 lien on the Strathmore. Jensen said on Tuesday, when he was in the midst of a three-way discussion at the mill with Jones and John Anctil of the Swift River Group, a prospective buyer of the Strathmore who hopes to establish a film and television production studio and school there, the Franklin County Sheriff's Department arrived to serve Jones with yet another lien, on behalf of a

worker purportedly injured some time ago at his mill in Holyoke.

Down the canal at Southworth, paper making has resumed after a four day hiatus caused by the collapse of a sewer line that ran beneath Building #10 to the pretreatment plant the mill formerly shared with Strathmore. Company president David Southworth said his manufacturing plant had lost a quarter of a million dollars in downtime and repair as a result of the fire at Strathmore on May 26th. "Business insurance will cover some of that." He said further repairs will be needed

to his mill's sewer system in the months to come.

Southworth's mill has been operating 7 days a week, 24 hours a day, and recently added 10 more jobs at the Turners facility. Southworth said his workers noticed nothing unusual on the night of the fire, and that there are few windows facing the Strathmore side. He made his surveillance cameras available to fire investigators.

Southworth speculated that the fire in the neighboring mill started "either by spontaneous combustion, as an electrical fire, or it could have been started by somebody..."

Selectboard member

Patricia Pruitt, who had pushed for the town of Montague to acquire the Strathmore for \$300,000 in 2005, calling it a key property for the future of the town, reflecting on the past the town has arrived at with Jones in the wake of the fire.

"If we had followed through and bought it, we might have removed Jerry Jones from the picture, and we wouldn't be here today with this fire." She defended the work of the town's code enforcement officers. "I think they have done their job. Holyoke had to drag him out of town and jail him. He's a tough customer."



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

## Horses

**BY JOSEPH A. PARZYCH GILL** - Prince, the family horse, died not long after moving to Gill. Poor Prince was more pauper than prince. Pa bought him when the family sharecropped onions in Montague before moving to Gill.

Pa bought horses from jockeys. These jockeys were not the ones who rode race horses. These were smooth talking horse traders who were skillful at concealing defects in horses.

When I was quite young, Pa took me and my godfather, Mr. Cislo, to places that had long

sheds filled with horses tied up in stalls, open at the rear. Some horses were sturdy, well-groomed, muscular steeds, and others, old nags one stop from the glue factory, sway-backed, hooves overgrown, teeth worn down or missing, watery eyes, some so skinny their ribs stood out like a xylophone under their ratty coats. Pa wanted to replace poor old Prince, now lying buried in a field at home.

My brother Stanley was 13 when he had hauled coal from Cold Brook Farm in Montague, with Prince hitched to a wagon. It was about ten miles to our farm in Gill.

"The horse was big like the

Clydesdales that haul the Budweiser beer wagon," Stanley said. "He had big feet, like them, with white stockings, but he didn't have no shoes, and the hard road hurt his feet, so he couldn't go very fast. He just plugged along."

Stanley set out early each morning and got back late afternoon, taking the entire day to make one trip.

"The steep hill going down into Turners Falls scared me just to look at it," Stanley said. "I was just a kid and scared to go down; afraid the wagon would get away and tip over and wreck. But I was more afraid of Pa. So, I stuck a big stick through the spokes like I seen him do, and let the wheel skid down the hill, hoping the stick didn't break. Who-ee, what a ride! It scared me every time."

Later, when Prince died, Stanley said he felt terrible because he was sure he'd worked the poor horse to death.

Pa had given Stanley orders to harrow a field while he was working at the paper mill. Stanley harnessed up Prince, and hooked him to the harrow.

"The horse was old, and he acted sick," Stanley said. "He'd pull the harrow a little way and stop. I'd whip him and he'd pull the harrow a little way and stop again."

After a while, Prince barely moved when Stanley whipped him. Stanley figured, at that rate, he was never going to get the field harrowed before Pa got home. Afraid Pa would thrash him. Stanley reasoned he had to get that field harrowed, one way or another. Pa didn't ever want to hear excuses; he just wanted to see the work done.

"I cut a branch from a thorn tree growing on the edge of the field. The thorns were big and sharp, an inch or two long. When I whipped the horse with the thorn branch, he really jumped and dragged the harrow


a ways before he stopped. Each time I whipped the horse he'd jump and go a little way less, and stop. I whipped him, again and again, over and over. And I kept on whipping him with that thorn branch until the field was harrowed."

Next morning, when Stanley went out to the barn, Prince was lying in his stall, dead.

"I could see the thorns stuck in his back - broken off where I'd been hitting him. It was awful - I'll never forget it."

- Continued Next Week

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**MONTAGUE HISTORICAL SOCIETY NEWS**

The Montague Historical Society, incorporated in 1969, has been collecting, preserving and displaying items showing the pattern of life throughout the history of the five villages of Montague. The collection was housed in personal homes until the Masonic Society donated space for the Society's use. Recently the building was sold and converted to condos. Many efforts have been made to secure a new site for the Society, but to no avail.

After showing the collection to Montague Grange member Michael Muller, we discussed the possibility of having the Grange house our artifacts. Much work and discussion

needs to occur to determine whether this is a place which can preserve all types of articles, as well as be accessible. The use of the Grange would be a great way to have meetings, displays and be more available to the public.

On June 21st, at 7 p.m., the Historical Society will meet at the Grange to examine this idea. Archivists, Historical Society members, Grangers and the general public are all welcome to attend and give input.

Historical Society officers include: president Jeff Singleton, curator Mary Melonis, and resident Montague History researcher Lillian Fiske.

**HIGHLIGHTS OF THE WENDELL POLICE LOG**

**Party on Thompson Road**

**Monday, May 7th**  
 Medical emergency on Old Stage Road, juvenile female transported to FMC via Orange ambulance.

**Friday, May 25th**  
 Resident on Wickett Pond Road reports trespassers on neighboring property.


**Saturday, May 26th**  
 Party on Thompson Road, partygoers dealt with and fire department called to put out bonfire.

**Sunday, May 27th**  
 Disturbance on Mt. Laurel Drive, handled by Athol state police.


WILD CONCERT WEDNESDAY:  
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# ARTS & ENTERTAINMENT



JACK COUGHLIN ILLUSTRATION

**FRIDAY, JUNE 8TH**  
 Concert at the Bookmill, Montague Center: *Homegrown String Band*, Swinging rhythms of old-time string music. 8 p.m. \$10/\$12.

Rt. 63 Road House: *Curly Fingers Dupree Band*, 9:30 p.m. Come to dance.

**FRIDAY & SATURDAY, JUNE 8TH & 9TH**  
 Pothole Pictures, Memorial Hall Theater, Shelburne Falls presents *An Inconvenient Truth*. 7:30 p.m.

**SATURDAY, JUNE 9TH**  
 The Changing Face of Turners Falls: a Community In Transition. History, panel discussion begins 10 a.m. at the Shea. Afternoon at the Great Falls Discovery Center, 1:30 to 3 p.m. The geology, history through architecture and the art scene. Free, everyone welcome.

Concert at the Bookmill, Montague Center: *Stillhouse Jammers*, High lonesome bluegrass with 'smokin' fiddle & banjo: [www.stillhousejammers.com](http://www.stillhousejammers.com) 8 p.m. \$10/\$12.

Rt. 63 Road House: *Loose Change*, come to dance! 9:30 p.m.

**SATURDAY & SUNDAY, JUNE 9TH & 10TH**  
 The Great Northern Tier Geocaching Tournament. Over 50 new caches at each event - hiking, biking, water caches and prizes. For novices and pros, families, teams and individuals. The Franklin County event is based in Greenfield. 773-9393, 773-5463.

**SUNDAY, JUNE 10TH**  
 Deja Brew, Wendell: Singer/songwriter - *Nicole Berke w/Jesse Cafiero* 7 to 9 p.m.

**MONDAY, JUNE 11TH**  
 Live Jazz at Ristorante DiPaolo, Turners Falls, 6 to 9 p.m.

**TUESDAY, JUNE 5TH**  
 Common People Concerts on the Gill common. 7 p.m., free. Sponsored by the Gill Cultural Council. Tuesdays through August. Info: [demons\\_of\\_gill@yahoo.com](mailto:demons_of_gill@yahoo.com).

**WEDNESDAY, JUNE 13TH**  
 Music at the Brickhouse Community Resource Center, Turners Falls. Uke of Spaces, TumbleCat Poof Poofy Poof, Jeremy Latch & Friends, Flaming Dragon of Middle Earth, and maybe a surprise! 6 p.m. - 9 p.m. \$5. (cover for touring band & to benefit Brickhouse) 863-9576.

Great Falls Farmers Market Corner of 2nd Street and Avenue A, next to



Former New Orleanian traveling swamp punkers, Uke of Spaces from Belfast, ME join local bands at the Brick House on June 13th from 6 to 9 p.m.

the Discovery Center, Turners Falls. 3-6 p.m. Wednesdays thru October.

**THURSDAY, JUNE 14TH**  
 Orange Farmers' Market Featuring local produce, plants, baked goods and crafts. Support local agriculture - you'll be delighted with the results! At Butterfield Park, East River Street, Orange. 3-6 p.m.

Coop Concert featuring *Kathy & George Chapman, Julia Burrough and Katie Clark and the Green River Band*. Three 40-minute gigs each night from the Franklin County Musicians' Cooperative. Bring a picnic dinner, blanket/chair and enjoy the music. At Greenfield Energy Park, Greenfield. 6-8 p.m.

Deja Brew, Wendell: *Free Range* - classic rock. 8 to 10 p.m., no cover.

**FRIDAY, JUNE 15TH**  
 Deja Brew, Wendell: *Franco Funicello* - Indie Pop Rock, 9 to 11 p.m., no cover.

**FRIDAY & SATURDAY, JUNE 15TH & 16TH**  
 Artists invited to Matthew Leighton's Studio, 9 Mill Street, Greenfield, 9 a.m. to 5 p.m. to take materials to create a work in his memory. The memory pieces will be exhibited in the fall at Artspace. Artists may also take materials for their own art creations. Recycled materials in every texture, shape and type are abundant at the studio. These are the things that Matthew had collected over the years for his assemblage work. If you are interested in participating call Artspace at 772-6811.

**HOT SPOT TEEN CENTER**  
**MONDAYS** - Drop-in, 3-6 p.m.  
**TUES & WEDS** - Ongoing Music Project, 3-6 p.m.  
**THURS** - Drop-in, 3-6 p.m. & Movie Night, 6-8 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

**FRIDAY TO SUNDAY, JUNE 15TH & 17TH**  
 Arena Civic Theater presents An Evening of One Acts: *Hedda Gabler Has Left the Building*, a one-act comedy by local playwright Jessamyn Smith and several short works by Richard Ballon. At the Shea Theater, Turners Falls. Friday & Saturday 8 p.m. & Sunday 2 p.m. 863-2281

**SATURDAY, JUNE 16TH**  
 US Air Force Band of Liberty, Colonial Brass Concert Playing traditional favorites. Greenfield Energy Park, Greenfield. 6 p.m.

New England Ringers Premier community handbell ensemble performance. Sunderland Congregational Church, corner of Routes 116 & 47, Sunderland. 7 p.m. (978) 851-3024

Concert at The Bookmill, Montague Center: *Mawwal*, Spirited Middle East-inspired world folk & groove. 8 p.m. \$10 - \$12.

Echo Lake Coffee House, Leverett Town Hall. Singing CIA Agent George Shrub and satirical songster, Dave Lippman, bring the Counter-Intelligence Cabaret! Get ready for high-end pop parodies and some very wise cracks. \$12 - \$10 seniors. 7:30 p.m.

Deja Brew, Wendell: *Blame It On Tina* Folk Rock, 9 to 11 p.m., no cover.

Monthly gathering of the Five Rivers Council 2 to 5 p.m. at Lupinwood, 172 Highland Ave., Greenfield.

[www.fiveriverscouncil.org](http://www.fiveriverscouncil.org)  
**SUNDAY, JUNE 17TH**  
 Deja Brew, Wendell: *Adam Bergeron*-Classical Piano, 7 to 9 p.m., no cover.

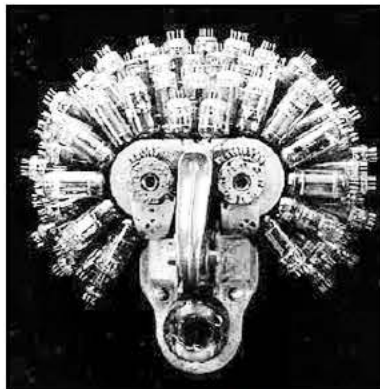
**UNTIL SUNDAY, JUNE 17TH**  
 Exhibit: John Willis' and Tom Young's "Recycled Realities and Other Stories". Haunting and surreal series of black and white images at Erving Paper Mill. Also images from "View from the Rez" and "Timeline". Hallmark Museum of Contemporary Photography, Turners Falls. Thursday to Sunday 1-5 p.m. 863-0009.

**MONDAY, JUNE 18TH**  
 Live Jazz at Ristorante DiPaolo, Turners Falls, 6 to 9 p.m.

**THURSDAY, JUNE 21ST**  
 Fairy Boats Magical morning begins by reading Tracy Kane's Fairy Boat and building a boat for the fairies to use on the pond at Northfield or to take home. Northfield Mountain Recreation Area, Route 63, Northfield. 9 to 11:30 a.m. For ages 4 and older. 800-859-2960

**BEGINNING THURSDAY, JUNE 21ST**  
 Hallmark Museum of Contemporary Photography hosts a two-week Benefit Exhibition and Print Sale, through July 1st. Reception **Saturday & Sunday, June 23 & 24**, 1 to 5 pm. All are welcome. Print sale proceeds will be donated to aid the international humanitarian medical organization, Doctors Without Borders/Medecins san Frontieres.

**FRIDAY, JUNE 22ND**  
 Concert at The Bookmill, Montague Center: Traditional Celtic Summer Solstice with *Katherine First*. Masterful musicians play jigs, reels, danceable tunes, lively fiddling of Katherine First, and an ensemble that includes Buddy Downey on guitar and vocals, Paula Moore on Irish harp, and Tim Donahue on concertina. 8



Matthew Leighton's sculpture Ariel. Artists are invited to create memorial sculptures. See June 15th listing for more info.

**SATURDAY, JUNE 23RD**  
 Benefit concert for the Montague Veterans Memorial featuring the *Commander Cody Band*; *Lonesome Brothers*; *Dad, Come Home*; and *Nexus*. At the Schuetzen Verein grounds, Gill. Cash bar, food. 5 p.m.,

\$20. Tickets available at the Turners Falls Fire Department, Montague Police Department & World Eye Bookshop.

**Memorial Hall Theater**  
**POTHOLE PICTURES**  
**June 8th & 9th 7:30 p.m.**  
**An Inconvenient Truth**  
 This Oscar-winning documentary eloquently, thoughtfully weaves science with Al Gore's life-long commitment to reverse the effects of global climate change. A rallying cry to protect the earth we all share. Directed by Davis Guggenheim. 2006, PG., 100 min., Color.  
**Music before movie 7 p.m.**  
 Fri. *Kellianna*-Goddess inspired folk music **Sat.** *Seth Glier*-piano/vocals  
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1. HOSTEL PART 2	R
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2. SURF'S UP	
PG in DTS sound	
DAILY 12:00 2:15 4:30 7:00 9:00	
3. PIRATES: AT WORLD'S END	PG13
DAILY 12:00 3:30 7:00	
4. SHREK THE THIRD	PG
DAILY 12:15 2:15 4:15 6:45 9:15	
5. MR. BROOKS	R
DAILY 12:15 3:15 6:45 9:15	
6. OCEAN'S 13	
PG13 in DTS sound	
DAILY 12:30 3:30 6:30 9:30	
7. KNOCKED UP	R in DTS sound
DAILY 12:30 3:30 6:30 9:30	

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**Upcoming at the Discovery Center**  
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<b>THURSDAY, JUNE 7TH</b> Nature in Danger? Books that made a difference: Rachel Carson. Celebrate the pioneering contributions of famed conservationist Rachel Carson at our exciting discussion group. We will be linking with the USFWS online book club and setting up discussion times throughout the summer. Free and open to the public. 7 p.m. <b>FRIDAY &amp; SATURDAY JUNE 8TH &amp; 9TH</b> Sense of Wonder: Early Summer	Explore the activities and beauty of wild things in honor of conservationist Rachel Carson. For all ages. Free and open to the public. 2 to 3 p.m. <b>SATURDAY, JUNE 9TH</b> Turners Falls Program; Pioneer Valley Insitute and partners present: The Changing Face of Turners Business and Industry. 10 a.m. - 5 p.m. <b>TUESDAY, JUNE 12TH</b> Seed Scenes: Garden Series for	Children. Seeds are amazing little 'packages' that really are quite magical to watch come alive. Includes story and hands-on activity. Geared towards preschool aged children. 10 a.m. <b>THURSDAY, JUNE 14TH</b> Friends Annual Membership Drive. Join the Friends for a fun night of getting to know your neighbor and what we do here at the Center. Includes refreshments, special guest speaker Laurie Sanders. 5:45 - 8 p.m.
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**Great Falls Discovery Center - 2 Avenue A, Turners Falls - [www.greatfallsma.org](http://www.greatfallsma.org)**

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ANDERSON PHOTO

# Watch for Strolling Heifers!

Showing thus, their *bravoure*, or *bravura*, as the trampling bovines swiftly run by while everyone clears quickly off their way!

In case you wonder why the name, I mean, why call a cow a heifer, I will tell you. Heifer is a title applied to a young cow, under three years of age who has not yet borne a calf. In French, they are called *genisse*, the one who will bear.

You will notice how they are well cared for. You know the way I mean, gently treated, sort of a family pet, who almost dines at the table! Plus, beautifully groomed, like maidens, with flower wreaths, for the parade!

The amazing part about this special yearly event in Brattleboro is the involvement we witnessed of a festival actively involving the whole community.

Even Senator Bernie Sanders participated in the celebrity milking contest!

It feels as if the whole population has given their all to the occasion. At the helm and behind the scenes, an energetic organizer - Orly Munzing - is all one needs!

This spontaneous celebration was also geared to pay *homage* to Vermont's pastoral agricultural heritage. From established farmers to young farmers-to-be, everyone is bringing their own dedica-

tion. This simple joy was shared by all of us, at different parts of the town, and especially on the common where festive tents warmly received visitors coming from all the neighboring states.

Next year, don't miss this fun and glorious pageant!



FLORE PHOTO

BY FLORE

**BRATTLEBORO** - No need to travel to Northern Spain to take part in the traditional running of the bulls. A similar, if slower-paced event, takes place each year much closer to us, in Brattleboro, VT. Know: this past weekend was the sixth spectacular annual excursion of the Strolling of the Heifers!

Guess the number of estimated visitors? 50,000!

Counting and including the little folks, honest, it was at least that many on Saturday, June 2nd.

Plus, not to be neglected, 100 flower-bedecked bovine beauties...

In Brattleboro, the heifers went curiously strolling down Main Street, held loosely by their devoted owners by tender tethers. In Pamplona, however, the bulls run wild, carrying on their backs tags that only the daring try to catch and pull.

## Elegant Orioles Return to Cold Brook Farm

BY FRAN HEMOND

**MONTAGUE CENTER** - A flash of orange in the catalpa tree. The orioles are here. Colorful and romantic, the orioles hang their pendant basket nests on many Montague trees and delight onlookers with their 'rock-a-bye-baby' approach to infant care.

The orioles of the 2007 season have been building in the weeping willow next to the pond. The basket is out on a sheltered limb where it will sway with the breeze. Years ago they regularly appropriated a high limb of an elm tree here at Cold Brook Farm. The tree also accommodated an old fashioned swing, the good kind, a rope with a wooden seat. Little kids imagined they were swinging out over the pond from a world of green magic, with a rocking cradle above.

The male birds are orange

and black, smaller than robins, but larger and less twittery than warblers, so the viewer has a good chance to spot them. The female is handsome, too. She



has added a soft yellow to the tan that helps conceal many species of nesting birds.

This is the Baltimore Oriole of earlier days, now called Northern Oriole in the newer

bird books since in mid-America they have hybridized with Bullock's Oriole of the West. To some of us in New England, they will remain the Baltimore Oriole, flaunting the black and orange colors of Lord Baltimore who settled our famous Maryland city in the seventeenth century.

They are not alone in the weeping willow. Brown creepers find the insect quotient satisfactory as they spiral up the trunk, and will probably come back tomorrow. A hairy woodpecker drums away on the nearby catalpa, the red-wing blackbird stops off on occasion, the cardinals fly over the pond, and the robins below are patiently hopping along, stopping and listening for worms. Food and shelter and bringing up the kids is the order of the day in June. The orioles do it with elegance.

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