



BIG BOX REVIEW

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The Montague Reporter

YEAR 9 - NO. 23

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THE VOICE OF THE VILLAGES

MARCH 10, 2011

Godin to Retire as Turners Fire Chief



DETMOLD PHOTO

Ray Godin - fire at St. Anne's Rectory, January 12th, 2009

BY DAVID DETMOLD - Chief Ray Godin is retiring after 34 years with the Turners Falls Fire Department. His last day on the job will be July 30th.

Godin started as a call firefighter in 1977, became a full-time member of the

department in January of 1985, got promoted to captain in 1989, and was promoted again to chief in 2000 when Rich Morin retired.

He has seen a lot of changes over the last three

see **GODIN** pg 10

Spring is Sweet at Sugarbush Farm



LIZ CARTER PHOTO

Bill Facey began boiling sap this week at Sugarbush Farm

BY LIZ CARTER

WENDELL - Ladies and gentlemen, I have the honor this week of bringing you some of the best good news the world has to offer. Spring has sprung.

On Monday afternoon, the antique wood-fired evaporator at the base of the woodlot at Sugarbush Farm in Wendell was fired up for the first time this season.

As evening fell, farmer

Bill Facey, his son and fellow farmer Jim, and friends and neighbors gathered in the sugarhouse to take in the warm, sweet air.

Young visitor Aaron Bowling, who sometimes helps the Faceys around the farm (and gets paid in syrup for doing so) said of the syrup cooling in the pans, "I would drink it!"

You have to collect a lot of sap for the evaporator to function. The liquids in all

the stainless steel pans above the flames must always be an inch deep, and the sap is reduced to one-fortieth of its volume as it's boiled down to syrup.

This is why the steam rising from this beautiful post-and-beam sugarhouse is a sure sign of spring. It means the maple trees have judged the climate kind enough to send up their sap in earnest, getting ready to

set buds and come back to life.

Thus, a glimmer of hope that this long winter will soon come to an end. "We were out there tapping this year in four feet of snow," said Bill Facey. "And the sugar content was 4%. I've never seen it over 3%." Sweet!

Because there were many freezes as the sap began to rise, the cold see **SPRING** page 12

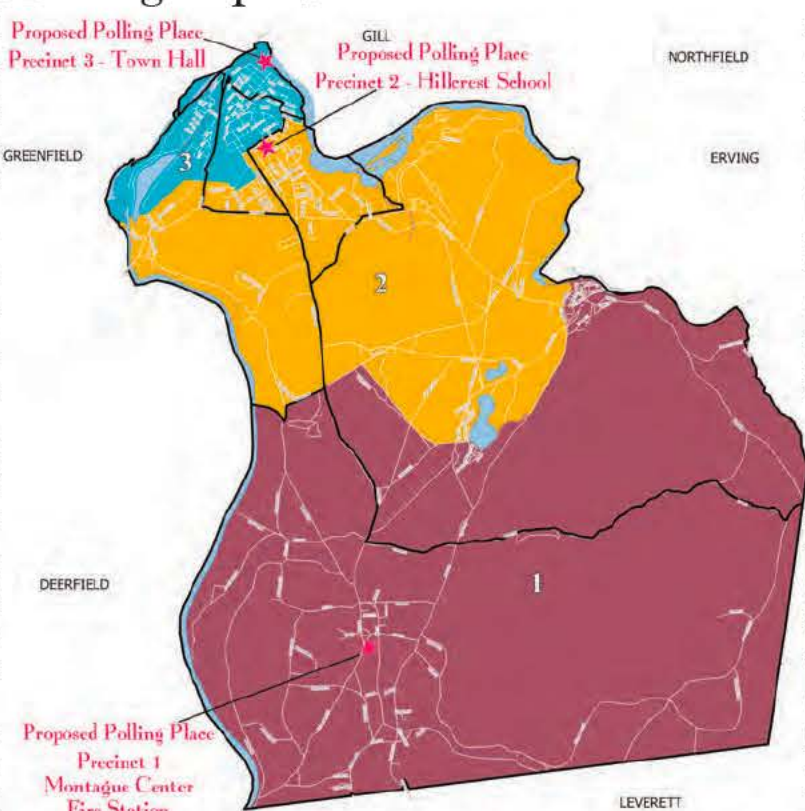
Montague May Shrink Number of Polling Places, Reduce Town Meeting Representation

BY JANEL NOCKLEBY

Town clerk Deb Bourbeau wants the town of Montague to reduce the number of voting precincts from six to three to save money.

With new census population numbers about to become official, Bourbeau discussed with state electoral officials the idea of redrawing and reducing the number of town precincts. Half the number of precincts would mean half the number of poll workers to pay for each election. Simply changing from six precincts to three would save the town up to \$1600 in poll workers' salaries per election, she said.

Bourbeau said now is the best time to consider redrawing precinct boundaries, reducing the number of precincts, and perhaps even reducing by half the number of elected town meeting members. At present, the six precincts of town each elect 21 representatives, seven each year



Town clerk Deb Bourbeau has proposed reducing the number of precincts - as shown in the above map - from six to three, as a cost saving measure.

for three year terms, who are empowered to vote on town affairs, budgets and bylaw changes at annual and special town meetings.

Historically, though some precincts like Montague Center's Precinct 1 have maintained full rosters of town meeting

members, other parts of town, like Montague City's Precinct 6, have had to beat the bushes year after year to find enough candidates to run for town meeting, or have allowed seats to remain empty, leaving those neighborhoods underrepresented compared to other parts of town. This year, for example, two of the seats in Precinct 6 were never filled because no one could be found to run

for them, Bourbeau said. Additionally, Bourbeau said it is becoming increasingly difficult to find poll see **POLLING** pg 3

Our Own Thoreau

David Brule's *West Along the River*

Reviewed by **CHRISTOPHER QUEEN**

MILLERS FALLS - The Flat - Even occasional readers of the *Montague Reporter* will recognize the sensual and spiritual acuity that pervades the nature writing and rural anthropology of David Brule, teacher, linguist, bird-counter, story-teller, fiddler, essayist and president of the Reporter's volunteer board of directors.

In *West Along the River: Stories from the Connecticut River Valley and Elsewhere*, Brule offers 70 of his most piquant rambles along local rivers, woods and hills, memories of holiday gatherings in the old homestead in the Erving-side neighborhood known as The Flat, trips to Fenway Park, narrative postcards from Paris, Brittany, and Ireland, and a primer of French Canadian family names in the Pioneer Valley: it's LetourNEAU,

not LeTOURneau, don't you know? If you missed any of these adventures when they appeared as columns in the Reporter, you may now savor them as a powerful, visionary whole.

Longtime denizens of Millers and Turners Falls, Erving, Gill, Leverett and Wendell will feel right at home in these essays, learning about their neighbors, living and long-deceased.

Brule recounts his sudden descent into a world of stone spears and lightning-formed glass talismans while burying the family dog under a backyard lilac planted by this great-grandfather Judah. The venerable objects dated back to 4,000-5,000 BC, a time when hand-held devices were a lot more critical to survival than cellphones and TV remotes.

After years of Peace Corps service in Africa and see **BRULE** pg 9

PET OF THE WEEK Cattitude Supreme



Emily

My name is Emily and I'm a three-year-old female domestic short hair cat in need of a good home. If you're a true cat person, you know what I mean when I say I have Cattitude. I am loving and love to be loved. I have opinions and will let you know them. I am a truly awesome love-muffin with people I love. I'll get in your lap and purrrrrrr while you scratch my head, and then I'll have had enough. This is a Cattitude special advanced skill. Not all cats are this sophisticated. I require an equally sophisticated human, a human who speaks my language. I believe we will recognize one another when we meet. I will be your only animal. To find out more about adopting me, please contact the Dakin Pioneer Valley Humane Society at (413) 548-9898 or via email at info@dpvhs.org.

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MONTAGUE LIBRARY NEWS

Montague Public Libraries Program Updates

BY LINDA HICKMAN
MONTAGUE - The weekly Music and Movement series with Tom Carroll and Laurie Davidson is being held at the Montague Center Library on Thursdays at 10:00 a.m. during March - June. Young children of all ages and their parents or caregivers are invited to the free programs. Registration is not required. The series is sponsored

by the Franklin County Family Network and the Friends of the Montague Public Libraries. The popular Homeschooler series on Wednesdays at 1:15 p.m. at the Carnegie Library has been extended through April 13th. The new theme is Animal Adventures and is designed for children of all ages. For more information call the Carnegie Library, 863-3214.

WENDELL LIBRARY NEWS

Teens & Tweens Workshop, Beekeeping Film & Talk

• *Drawing & Painting for Teens & Tweens* - A free drawing and painting workshop for teens and tweens will be held on Sundays, March 13th and 20th at the Wendell Free Library, from 3:30 to 5:30 p.m. Eve Lynn Goodhind, from Leverett Crafts and Arts, will teach a two part workshop on drawing and painting. Learn how to see something in a way you can draw, refine sketching techniques, and practice mixing paints, culminating in something you can take home and hang on your wall. No experience needed. Attending both sessions is encouraged. For teens and tweens ages 10 to 19.

• *The Challenges of Beekeeping in Western Massachusetts* - Dan and Bonita Conlon will discuss beekeeping and show their film, *A Day in the Life of a Honeybee Farm* at the Wendell Free Library on Friday, March 18th at 7:00 p.m. The Conlon's own and operate Warm Colors Apiary in South Deerfield. The free program is sponsored by the Wendell Agricultural Commission; honey and beeswax candles will be available for purchase. Dan Conlon is the president of the Massachusetts Beekeepers Association. For more info call the library at (978) 544-3559.

WENDELL AND LEVERETT LIBRARY NEWS

Tougas to present King Philip's War

On Thursday, March 17th, at 7:00 p.m. (and again on Sunday, March 20th at 7:00 p.m. at the Leverett Library) author Michael Tougas will give slide presentations on the war between the colonists and Native Americans in 1675-76. Tougas is the author of the acclaimed *Until I Have No Country* (A novel of King Philip's War), and co-author with Eric Schultz of *King Philip's War: the History and Legacy of America's Forgotten Conflict*.

The first part of the presentation will discuss the Indian way of life, colonial settlements, and the events leading up to the war. The second part covers the battles and the strategy during this

cataclysmic war, which on a per capita basis was the bloodiest conflict in our nation's history. Slides include battle sites, period sketches, historic markers, maps, and suggestions for visiting roadside history.

The war began as a skirmish between the Wampanoag and the English near Plymouth. It ended with many New England settlements, both native and European reduced to ashes. Many key battles took place in what is now Western and Central Massachusetts yet we, the current inhabitants, know so little about it. The conflict, which at several points nearly went in the natives' favor, ended with the

SENIOR CENTER ACTIVITIES - March 14th - 18th

GILL-MONTAGUE Senior Center, 62 Fifth Street, Turners Falls, is open Monday through Friday from 9:00 a.m. to 2:00 p.m. Congregate meals are served Tuesday through Thursday at noon. Meal reservations must be made one day in advance by 11:00 a.m. The meal site manager is Kerry Togneri. Council on Aging Director is Roberta Potter. All fitness classes are supported by a grant from the Executive Office of Elder Affairs. Voluntary donations are accepted. For more information, to make meal reservations, or to sign up for programs call (413) 863-9357. Messages can be left on our machine when the center is not open. Tuesday afternoon painting classes with David Sund will resume on March 15th. Wednesday afternoon Bingo has been cancelled until further notice.

Monday, March 14th
9:00 a.m. Foot clinic by appointment
10:00 a.m. Senior Aerobics
10:45 a.m. Chair Exercise

1:00 p.m. Knitting Circle
Tuesday, March 15th
10:30 a.m. Yoga
1:00 p.m. Painting Class
Wednesday, March 16th
10:00 a.m. Aerobics
1:00 p.m. Quilters
Thursday, March 17th
9:00 a.m. Tai Chi
1:00 p.m. Pitch
Friday, March 18th
10:00 a.m. Aerobics
10:45 a.m. Chair Exercise
1:00 p.m. Writing Group

ERVING Senior Center, 18 Pleasant St., Erving (Old Center School, 1st Floor), is open Monday through Friday from 8:30 a.m. to 2:30 p.m. for activities and congregating meals. For information and reservations, call Polly Kiely, Senior Center Director, at (413) 423-3308. Mealsite Manager is Jim Saracino. Lunch is daily at 11:30 a.m., with reservations 24 hours in advance. Transportation can be provided for meals, shopping, or medical necessity. Please call the Senior Center at (413) 423-3308 to find out when the next blood



Turners Falls - Now that the "No Loitering" sign is gone, people like Meg, seen here on the bench at the Turners Falls Post Office,

can rest awhile and bask in the sunshine on a fine spring day.

- Joseph A. Paryzych

Historic Bridge Facts

PROVIDED BY ED GREGORY, OF GREENFIELD - from documents relating to the original construction of the Gill-Montague Bridge in 1937-38.

- High water threatened once again during early February of 1938. The final large steel span is now being erected, and the high water is giving the steel erectors a cause for concern. This span, reaching to the Gill shore, is suspended only by the falsework. The spring freshet is bringing down large sheets, and menacing chunks of ice.
- Balancing on the piers is more than 1,000 tons of steel. Ice floes and raging water pass beneath the bridge skeleton. Once again, the construction effort is spared. The connection between Turners Falls and Gill is complete as the steel reaches the Gill abutment.
- With the framework now in place, and the most anxious concerns laid to rest, final securing of the steel is underway.

More bridge facts next week!

colonists as victors. More than 800 colonists and 3000 Native Americans were killed.

Devastated by disruption, disease and famine that attended the conflict, the native people of southern New England were violently removed from their ancestral lands by the colonists and sold into slavery or relocated to marginal lands. This war set the stage for how the European settlers would deal with future conflicts with native people throughout North America.

The presentations are given in conjunction with the Book Connect program at the Wendell and Leverett libraries.

"As a child, my number one best friend was the librarian in my grade school. I actually believed all those books belonged to her."
~ Erma Bombeck

Great Falls Middle School Students of the Week

- Grade 6**
Hattie Harvey
- Grade 7**
Jenna Putala
- Grade 8**
Stephanie Robertson

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pressure clinic will be held.
Monday, March 14th
9:00 a.m. Tai Chi
10:00 a.m. Osteo-Exercise
12:00 p.m. Pitch
Tuesday, March 15th
8:45 a.m. Chair Aerobics
10:00 a.m. Senior Business Meeting
12:30 p.m. Painting
Wednesday, March 16th
8:45 a.m. Line Dancing/Zumba
12:00 p.m. Bingo
Thursday, March 17th
8:45 a.m. Aerobics
Friday, March 11th
9:00 a.m. Bowling
11:30 a.m. Lunch - St. Patricks Day feast

WENDELL Senior Center is located at 2 Lockes Village Road. Call Nancy Spittle, (978) 544-6760 for hours and upcoming programs. Call the Center if you need a ride.
Sunday, March 13th
7:00 p.m. The Wendell COA Film Series presents *The Band's Visit* with the short feature *Maple Farming* by Wendell's own Laurel Facey. Free. All ages welcome.



JESSICA LARVIN ILLUSTRATION

Local Briefs

COMPILED BY DON CLEGG - What is our state government doing to create jobs, keep money in our state, and improve the environment? Come hear David Cash, undersecretary for policy in the Massachusetts Executive Office of Energy and Environmental Affairs, talk about Governor Deval Patrick's vision of the future, and the groundbreaking **Clean Energy and Climate Plan** on Monday, March 14th, at 7:00 p.m. at 114

Main Street in Greenfield. A former high school teacher, Cash is an engaging speaker. This program is free, handicap accessible and refreshments will be served. The snow is melting and soon the **community garden plots** in Wendell will pop out from under the snow. The gardens have plenty of sun and good soil, rarities in Wendell. There are open community garden plots still available. Applications are available in several locations in town including

the library, senior center, or by contacting the garden committee at the Wendell town offices, Morse Village Road, Wendell, 01379, call 978-544-2306, or email ledgehouse@gmail.com. The *Montague Reporter* is offering another of their periodic and by now nearly legendary **free workshops**, lead by veteran investigative journalist Wes Blixt, at the Montague Reporter offices, 58 4th Street, in Turners Falls on Sunday, March 13th, from 4:00 p.m. - 6:00 p.m. Refreshments, and hopefully heat, will be provided. Anyone who would like to try their hand at community journalism is welcome; call 413-863-8666. The Thrive Project in Turners Falls will hold a free **informa-**

tion and enrolment session for anyone interested in learning more about Mass Health insurance coverage, on Monday, March 14th, at 37 Third Street, Turners Falls from 7:00 p.m. to 9:00 p.m. Massachusetts state law requires everyone to have health insurance. Presently Massachusetts has 98% citizen enrolled in health care which is the highest participation in the nation. Learn what you need to do to apply to Mass Health and keep your coverage active. Licensed social worker Heather Tower will be on hand to answer questions, help participants get started on initial on-line applications, complete renewals, and make first connections with a doctor or dentist. For more info,

call 413-863-6340. The First Annual Franklin County **Spring Parade** will be held Saturday, April 9th, at 1:00 p.m. in Turners Falls, on the Hill. To get the planned route of the parade or to register your group, organization or business, contact Michael Nelson at michaelnelsonmba@aol.com. The Franklin Area Survival Center Thrift Store, 96 Fourth Street, in Turners Falls will be holding a 50% off sale on all **winter clothing**, accessories and boots during the month of March. The re-sale of items in the Thrift Store goes towards the purchase of food for the pantry. *Send items for local briefs to: reporter-local@montague-ma.net.*

POLLING from page 1
workers. Reducing the number of precincts would help alleviate both those problems.

Bourbeau proposed redrawing the districts in the following way. Precinct One would include Montague Center, most of Millers Falls, and southern Lake Pleasant; Precinct Two would include the southern part of the hill area of Turners Falls, western Millers Falls, northern Lake Pleasant, and Montague City; Precinct Three: downtown Turners Falls, the Patch, and a portion of the hill area in Turners Falls. As proposed, the new polling places would be at the Montague Center Fire Station for Precinct One, Hillcrest School for Precinct Two, and town hall for Precinct Three.

Given the many no-shows and excused absences, usually only 68 to 70 town meeting members generally show up to town meeting. Reducing the number of elected town meeting members to 63, from the present 126 seats, would mean, "You're really going to get a smaller group, and they would be more reliable," Bourbeau said, in a follow-up phone call.

Montague abandoned open town meeting in favor of elected precinct representatives in the early 1960s.

Selectboard members Pat Allen, Mark Fairbrother, and Chris Boutwell agreed an opportunity for public comment was needed before official precinct and town meeting membership proposals were made to the selectboard or to annual town

meeting on May 7th.

Expect a meeting for public comment soon, since the deadline for adding warrants for the next town meeting is March 24th.

Bourbeau made it clear that she thinks changes to Montague's electoral system would be good, save the town money, and demonstrate to residents that "we're tightening our belts" during difficult economic times. With only three precincts, only three state mandated ADA compliant voting machines would be needed, saving the town an additional sum each time machine ballots need to be programmed.

Only one handicapped person in town currently makes use of the ADA machines, which the state has mandated at each precinct for the last four years. That person, who is legally blind, would have been forced in years past to rely on a friend or relative to read the ballot to her and help her fill out her vote, giving up the right to privacy, the town clerk said.

Although the state - at present - pays for programming the ballot for the ADA machines for all state elections, "That could change at any time," Bourbeau said. She added the town is required to pay for programming the ADA machines for all town and special elections, at a cost of \$2500 or more each year.

Otherwise, the overwhelming majority of voters in Montague continue to use the time honored hand cranked ballot boxes to cast their votes, which are counted by hand by poll workers, in a ritual

as old as democracy itself. Some of the people who count the ballots are volunteers - such as finance committee members and others who help out from a motivation of civic pride - but the majority of poll workers get paid for their long day of labor watching over the polls.

In other news the president of the board of directors for Arena Civic Theater, Catherine King, presented a letter of complaint to the selectboard about problems with parking during last fall's Franklin County Pumpkinfest, in hopes the date for the 2011 Pumpkinfest could be changed so as not to conflict with the theater company's performances at the Shea Theater.

King described how difficult it was for audience members for ACT's production of *Annie* to find parking last year, because parking areas at the Great Falls Discovery Center and near the Shea Theater that had been roped off and reserved for *Annie* theatergoers were actually overrun by Pumpkinfest attendees.

King explained ACT's production schedule requires very specific dates in October.

Pumpkinfest coordinator Michael Nelson reported that Pumpkinfest vendors and entertainment has already been scheduled for October 22nd of 2011, and said that date could not be changed, based on feedback from participants.

The selectboard decided to not require Pumpkinfest to change its date, but instead suggested a compromise that included Pumpkinfest leader Michael Nelson work to ensure that Shea

patrons could access the Arena Civic Theater's performance by having sufficient manpower available to guarantee parking for the Shea. Nelson agreed.

King said if the date of Pumpkinfest could not be changed for 2011, then the theater company would review whether or not their fall performance should continue to be held at the Shea Theater.

Water pollution control facility superintendent Bob Trombley reported the town of Erving's selectboard has proposed a new figure of approximately \$64,000 for Montague to pay Erving each year for use of its treatment plant on the Erving side of Millers Falls. Last fall, Erving had proposed an annual fee of approximately \$200,000 per year.

In 2010, an agreement between Erving and Montague governing shared costs for capital improvements at the Erving side treatment plant was rediscovered. The contract states that Montague must contribute to capital costs at the treatment plant in Erving side proportionally to the amount of flow Montague sends beneath the Millers River to that plant. That percent is now nearly 50% of the treatment plant's flow. Erving, without consulting Montague, undertook and financed a \$5.6 million upgrade to the treatment plant, a project that reached completion just before the decades old agreement between the towns came to light. However, one stipulation of the agreement held that Montague needed to be notified of project spending before it occurs, a

clause that was not observed. The Montague selectboard agreed on Monday to schedule further meetings between the selectboard, lawyers, and engineers to determine what if anything should be paid to the town of Erving for the recently completed renovation, and whether or not a new Montague sewer project should be undertaken to pump sewage from Millers Falls to the Montague treatment plant instead.

Town administrator Frank Abbondanzio reported the Hampshire Council of Governments is proposing to include the town of Montague - along with Montague residences - in a municipal aggregation of electricity, at reduced rates to the town and possibly for individual residents also. Selectboard members approved considering the resolution, while noting the official language needed for a town meeting warrant would have to be developed by March 24th. Other area towns including Leverett and Gill are also considering the proposal.

The selectboard approved the use of Peskeompskut Park on September 24th from 10 a.m. to 5 p.m. for an Art Jam event. Joe Landry described the event as an opportunity to listen to music and make art.

Additionally, the selectboard approved waiving the false alarm fee for two citations at the Great Falls Discovery Center from last November and December, since the cause of the false alarms was due to rodent activity in the building, most likely squirrels.

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Democracy is Not a Spectator Sport

People are facing bombs and bullets, torture and jail as they stand up for democratic rights in the Middle East and Africa. We watch their protests with our hearts in our throats, tuning in each night for the latest news. Yet here in our own towns, these same democratic rights are taken for granted, left to a few to uphold on behalf of the many, and allowed to languish.

Has democracy ever found a more free and pure expression than the open town meeting of New England?

In Wendell, planning board and school committee seats are going begging, while Franklin County is under attack from Boston for cherishing too many small schools, and the local committees that govern them. Empty seats on town boards are advertised at every selectboard meeting in Gill. Too many positions in too many towns are filled by the same candidates year after year, who run for reelection with no opponent to debate the issues in front of the voters, or represent fresh viewpoints.

Now in Montague, as a cost saving measure, the town is considering shrinking the number of precincts, putting polling stations further from many voters, while at the same time – maybe – shrinking the number of people elected to represent those voters at Montague's representative town meeting.

People should turn off their social networking devices and their newscasts from Libya long enough to consider what these moves portend for democracy in our own community.

First of all, how does an elected town meeting member in a neighborhood of Montague really represent the views of his or her constituents? At present, 26 people, a good many of them married to another town meeting member from the same precinct, and a fair percentage made up of town employees from one department or another with a vested interest in the budget process, are elected – or written in with as few as two or three votes – to represent a precinct with about 1500 residents. The

proposed change would have them represent about 3000 residents. How would their constituents even know their names, much less tell them their views?

Precinct meetings are rarely held to gauge opinion on any issue, and when they have been held – as in Precincts 1, 2, 4 and 5 in recent years – these caucuses have been attended almost entirely by elected town meeting members themselves. (A meeting on proposed budget cuts held at the Grange in Montague Center a few years ago was an exception.)

One former precinct representative who lived in the Patch in Precinct 6 went so far as to canvass his neighborhood, leaving flyers with his name and number on every door, and inviting residents to call him with their concerns – an otherwise nearly unheard of effort.

In general, elected town meeting members represent their own views, and their own views alone. If they happen to constitute a representative slice of opinion from among the general population, that is pure happenstance. Too often, they represent the status quo, town hall, town departments, and a scattering of activists of various stripes who are willing to spend a beautiful Saturday in May deciding how the tax dollars of the entire town are spent.

Former town moderator Fran Dolan, long a familiar and inspiring presence on his daily walks along the Avenue, or at the Shady Glen, was fond of saying, "The day we switched to elected town meeting was the day democracy died in Montague."

It came down with a severe case of hardening of the arteries at any rate.

As Montague considers changes to its present electoral system, let's have a townwide referendum and see whether voters feel town meeting represents them well through the current elected town meeting, or whether they would like to be able to once again represent themselves at open town meeting. The towns around us – other than Greenfield – do it that way. What could be more democratic than allowing



KAREN WILKINSON ILLUSTRATION

each person a voice and a vote on any issue that comes before the town?

The argument the town can save about \$1600 a year and have an easier time finding enough people to staff the polls is being advanced as a reason to cut back on the number of precincts and polling places. Those arguments should be weighed against the great likelihood that the already dismal percentages of voters who take five minutes out of their day to vote in annual elections will drop further in direct proportion to the distance they will have to travel to reach the polls.

Montague is a Green Community. Shouldn't public policy be to keep the polls within walking distance of the great majority of our residents, as we work to reduce needless use of carbon fuels? And shouldn't we work to increase the involvement of citizens in their own self-government, rather than place polling stations further from their village centers? Could more effort be put into identifying willing volunteers to staff some of the polls, if cost cutting is the main object?

Democracy is a noble ideal. Deny it long enough, and people will take to the streets and die for it. But live with it long enough, does the message then become, "It's not worth the effort. Let someone else exercise my rights for me"? We certainly hope not.

Wendell Special Town Meeting Moves Forward on School Repair

BY JOSH HEINEMANN - In a special town meeting lasting an hour and a half on Wednesday, March 9th, almost 30 Wendell citizens approved the ten articles on the warrant unanimously, with the exception of the highway commission's request for \$30,000 for a chipper. Because that money was to come from the stabilization account, a two thirds majority was required to approve the purchase. The hand count was 14 in favor, 10 opposed, with some in the hall abstaining. The highway department will not get a chipper this year.

A similar request was turned down at the last annual town meeting, because there was no one in the hall to defend it. But this time, both highway commission chair Harry Williston, and road boss David Bock were on hand to support the proposal.

Williston said the highway department spends \$1000 a week, usually three weeks a year, to rent a chipper. For a week's rental, the road crew loses almost a whole day of use, because the nearest rental outlet is in Gardener, and both fetching the chipper and returning it require a three hour round trip.

A new chipper should last 20 to 25 years.

Town administrative coordinator Nancy Aldrich said New Salem bought a used chipper for \$20,000, but New Salem is not likely to want to share it because the need for a chipper usually hits both towns at the same time.

Owning a chipper would save the highway department the trouble of stacking debris by the road until enough has been gathered to justify a week's rental, and then having to handle the debris twice. It would simplify the job, say, of a half day's chipping after a strong windstorm.

Bock said the road crew gets many requests from residents and from the community garden for mulch chips, and from the playground for chips to provide a soft landing under play structures.

The finance committee recommended against the purchase, citing the payback time and questioning how this expense would

fit in with the other capital expenses of the highway department, for dump trucks or a bucket loader. If a rented chipper needs repair, that's a problem for the rental company.

Voters unanimously approved taking \$50,000 from stabilization to pay Wendell's share of a \$100,000 project manager and an engineer for repairs on the Swift River school building. The state Municipal School Building Authority (MSBA) has federal money to reimburse that expense, at 69.9%, and the money would be returned to the town by the MSBA relatively quickly. Total estimated repair cost is \$1.3 million, of which Wendell's share would be \$230,000.

Town treasurer Carolyn Manley asked if the state had written a letter of commitment for reimbursing the town's payments. Swift River principal Sheila Hunter said they had sent a letter to the superintendent promising to do so. Manley said, "Don't lose that letter."

The building needs a new roof and a new boiler, at least. Under the state's Green Repair program, roofing materials will be more environmentally sound than the materials in place now, and the roof repair would include strengthening the support system and providing brackets so that solar panels can be installed at a later date. The extent of heating system work needed will not be known until the engineer inspects the current system.

The meeting quickly disposed of the remaining items, including a number of previous year bills.

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Greenfield Planning Board Closes Hearing on Big Box



The schematic design of a proposed Big Box store on the French King Highway presented by Ceruzzi Properties

BY DAVID DETMOLD - The Greenfield planning board began deliberating February 22nd on a special permit for Ceruzzi Properties, of Fairfield, CT to build a 135,000-square-foot combined grocery and discount retailer on the French King Highway. If approved, the project would be the largest commercial development in Franklin County, 62% bigger than Greenfield's Home Depot store.

Eight months of public hearings came to a close on Thursday, February 17th, in a final session attended by about 80 opponents along with perhaps a dozen supporters of the proposed development, at which abutters sharply questioned the scale and potential fiscal and traffic impacts of the Big Box store, not only on Greenfield but on other established businesses in Franklin County. Though Ceruzzi has declined to name its potential tenant, the developer's own fiscal impact analysis states the store will generate upwards of \$50 million in annual sales at the French King site, in a county already ringed by Walmarts in Hinsdale, NH, Orange, Hadley and Northampton.

On February 22nd, after closing the hearing, planning board chair Roxam Wedegartner told her colleagues, "There are some things we have to agree on here. It is a 135,000-square-foot building. There are certain realities to designing a 135,000-square-foot building that prevent them from having a pitched roof, and so forth."

But it is the size of the project - which peer review studies for the planning board have said will

be the determining factor in both fiscal and traffic impacts to the surrounding community - that has been the focus of most of the abutter and opponent criticism throughout the public hearing phase.

As Greenfield resident Amy Clark told the board on February 17th, "I really want a Big Box store too, and the store I want is exactly the one proponents have said time after time they already go out of town to shop at. The developer has said that a smaller store means an almost equivalent drop in the amount of traffic we can expect along High Street. We can all win if you use your authority to do what's best for Greenfield and approve the building of an 80,000-square-foot discount store on the French King property."

But Bob Sunderland, director of the Greenfield YMCA, believes bigger is better for business in Greenfield.

"When thousands of Franklin County people get in their cars every week and head out of Franklin County, they don't spend their money in Greenfield. Greenfield voters have faith in you to do the right thing. Average families are struggling. Forty percent of single mothers in Greenfield are living at or below the poverty level. They don't have the energy to come to meetings. They need the 250 jobs and the \$7 million payroll," the developer promises to bring to town.

"They want to save gas money," by shopping locally for discount goods, Sunderland said. "They want to shop in Greenfield. Your decision will have a very positive impact on

the lives of families in Franklin County."

Greenfield resident Wanda Muzyka-Pyfrom asked the board to read her letter into the record, and agreed with Sunderland that, "The advantages of building the largest store possible would far outweigh the disadvantages." She wrote, "The proposed location is perfect for visitors coming from Route 2 and I-91 without having to go down High Street. Yes, some people will drive through town, but why wouldn't downtown business people want to have more people coming through Greenfield to shop and eat? Greenfield could become a destination for people throughout Western Massachusetts and people from other areas who are passing by on I-91 and Route 2."

She added, "Local people will continue to support the downtown businesses that offer good service, good products, and competitive prices, and a new, large retail development will bring new people into town to shop in Greenfield... This will help all residents through increased employment, revenue and taxes, cleaner air and more time at home with our families instead of driving long distances to buy basic necessities."

All the other speakers who testified at the public hearing on February 17th spoke in opposition to the Big Box store, at least at the size proposed, starting with Amy Clark, who said, "Once a young mother has brought all the kids into the Big Box store to purchase those ubiquitous socks that are unavailable elsewhere in town, it is highly unlikely she is going to put all the kids' ski jack-

ets on and strap all five kids into car seats and head to Magical Child to purchase one birthday party gift, when there is a toy department right there. It is highly unlikely she is going to load everyone back into the station wagon to go to World Eye when there is a book department right there... But what if she does? The developer and the local editorial board cannot have it both ways. They cannot say shoppers will support our downtown stores, but that we will not have a problem with traffic on High Street."

Milan Dragicevich, a High Street resident, said even with traffic volume as it is today, "I can't turn left into my driveway without doing a U-turn to bring my kids home."

He said, "The High Street corridor, as I'm sure you know, is a neighborhood where families are raising their children, where kids cross the street to play at Beacon Field, where tax-paying homeowners deserve, I believe, the basic principle of the peaceful enjoyment of their homes. Would you expect any less for your homes?"

Patty Marcus said, "The debate over this proposal has been largely about the size of the project, the grocery component, and the mysterious tenant."

Marcus, who works at her brother's store, Bicycles Unlimited, on High Street, said, "Traffic congestion is considered an adverse impact because it creates pollution, interferes with the free access of neighborhoods, slows down commute times, increases the accident rate, and decreases the value of residential

property in heavily congested areas." The developer's traffic consultant has estimated 10% more vehicles per day on weekdays (1,035) and 20% more vehicles on Saturday (1,525) on the High Street corridor.

"The addition of a grocery component to this project will contribute to the adverse impacts," said Marcus. "We have already heard from the owner of Foster's Market that a grocery component would likely compromise the economic stability of Foster's. Foster's Market is an important institution in a neighborhood with many people who do not drive and would find themselves without an accessible grocery store. Foster's provides stable jobs with 100% health care benefits for their employees. They pay taxes to the town of Greenfield."

She continued, "We have heard the town planner and the selectboard chair of Montague express their concerns for the long-term stability of their only grocery store, Food City, also serving a large population of people without cars... Since we have a Stop and Shop on the same block as the proposed store, we clearly do not need another grocery store in the area."

John Ward, of Gill, who co-owns the Solar Store in Greenfield, chastised the planning board for limiting the right of the public to speak.

"Allowing the developer to sandbag, turning 20 minutes of information into a two hour presentation, then telling abutters and concerned citizens they have had ample time to speak in the past

see WALMART page 11

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NOTES FROM THE ERVING SELECTBOARD

Good News on New Growth

BY KATIE NOLAN - Assistant assessor Jacquelyn Boyden surprised selectboard members with the news the town should see about \$100,000 in new revenue growth in FY'12, rather than the \$40,000 in new growth estimated previously. Boyden attributed the rise in new growth to increased assessments resulting from upgrades at electric company facilities.

The Erving selectboard used its first two meetings in March to review departmental requests for FY'12 and interview department representatives about their budget requests and plans for the future. Most of the departments presented budgets level funded from FY'11, although several requested slight increases.

Paul Prest presented a level funded budget for the highway department for

FY'12. He also asked for \$5000 as a capital improvement request for a new snow plow and frame for the department's 2003 Ford.

Prest also said the town would need to spend \$500,000 over the next five years for work on River Road, Moore Street, North Street, and High Street, including sidewalks, catch basins, and paving. Prest told the board the 1999 Freightliner would need replacing in 2014 or 2015, at a cost of approximately \$200,000, and the 2003 one and a half ton truck would need replacing in 2015 or 2016.

Polly Kiely told the selectboard the council on aging has developed an estimate of \$26,800 a year to operate the new senior center. Heat, light, telephone, and cable costs for the current building are paid by Union 28, which rents the second floor of the building. Other than the operating cost for the new building, the council on aging proposed a level funded budget for FY'12.

The board of health budget, presented by Cyd Scott on March 3rd, showed an increase of \$570 for the health agent fee. Both selectboard chair Andrew Goodwin and selectboard member Eugene Klepadlo asked if the board of health had inquired about the reason for the increase, and asked Scott to check whether the Franklin Regional Council of Government (FRCOG)

services would be cost effective. At the March 7th meeting, the selectboard directed town administrative coordinator Tom Sharp to call FRCOG to get an estimate of the cost for its health agent.

Chief Bud Meattey discussed the fire department's capital improvement plan, with FY '12 requests for a \$450,000 fire truck, \$6000 for turnout gear, \$5000 for self-contained breathing apparatus (SCBA) air bottles, \$5500 for large diameter hose, and \$10,000 for a gas multimeter.

Goodwin said, "We need another \$100,000 for Church Street, we have to take the fire truck out this year."

After discussion with the chief, the selectboard recommended reducing the capital expenditures for FY'12 to the turnout gear and large diameter hose. Meattey agreed the department could wait a year to request the other capital items. Meattey explained the SCBA air bottles expire after 15 years, and Goodwin suggested replacing one-third of the SCBA bottles every five years. Klepadlo, a fire department lieutenant, recused himself from the discussion on the fire department budget.

Speaking as a citizen, however, he suggested the capital expenditures recommended for FY'13 and FY'14 might be purchased with a grant.

see ERVING pg 13

Goodwin Decides to Run; Three-Way Race in the Offing for Selectboard

BY DAVID DETMOLD ERVING - A three way race is shaping up for selectboard in Erving, with a surprising turnabout this week.

In November, citing a busy work schedule and the need to spend more time with his family, selectboard chair Andrew Goodwin, of Swamp Road, announced he would not be seeking a second term. But on Monday, Goodwin said his wife, friends, and other residents have urged him to reconsider, and he would be in the running for another three year term.

"I like serving the town," said Goodwin.

In the meantime, former selectboard member Jeff Dubai, of Mountain Road,

and assessor's assistant Jacquelyn Boyden, of Northfield Road, have both turned in papers for the selectboard seat, setting up a three-way race in the upcoming town elections. Polls will be open in the town hall from 10:00 a.m. to 8:00 p.m. on Monday, May 2nd to decide this and other townwide posts.

Dubay lost out to Eugene Klepadlo by a vote of 90 to 135 in a three way race for selectboard last year, in which Ellie Clark also ran and picked up 53 votes. Dubai was also ousted from his long-time position as the chair of the planning board in 2010.

Dubay, who came in third in 2010 another three way scrum for that posi-

tion, has also taken out papers for another run for planning board this year.

Carole Lyman, who was the top vote getter in that race in 2010, stepped down from the planning board shortly thereafter, as did Annmarie Gilbert. Michael Shaffer, of State Road, and Betsy Sicard, of Forest Street, were appointed to fill those openings. Shaffer and Sicard will be on the ballot for two year and one year seats on the planning board, respectively, in May.

Planning board chair William Morris, of Ridge Road is running again for one of the three year planning board seats, but Timothy Mackin, of North

see GOODWIN pg 14

NOTES FROM THE LEVERETT SELECTBOARD

Flooding Closes Route 63

BY DAVID DETMOLD - The water was up to the wheel wells of cars commuting to work down Long Plain Road (Route 63) by 8:00 a.m. on Monday, after Sunday's steady downpour caused the Long Plain Brook to overflow its channel and flood sections of the state highway south of the railroad overpass by the Friends Meeting House, down to the intersection of Depot Road. A section of Depot Road was also flooded.

By 3 p.m., the Mass Department of Transportation had closed Route 63, but highway boss Will Stratford said the

worst of the flooding had begun to subside by that time, and by nightfall the road was clear again.

At Tuesday night's meeting, about a dozen residents from the affected areas of Bull Hill Road, Depot Road, and Long Plain Road showed up at the selectboard meeting demanding some action to what has been a perennial flooding problem in that area.

"For the last eight or ten years, this has been a problem," Stratford said.

Residents say the source of the problem is threefold, and Stratford and the selectboard agreed. First of

all, the brook's channel is clogged by undergrowth, and needs to be cleared out. Secondly, a beaver dam has caused a pond behind the Friends Meeting House that saturates the water table upstream of the flood prone area, and when a heavy rain comes the pond quickly overflows the dam, forcing the clogged brook to jump its banks and head for the highway. And lastly, culverts beneath Depot Road and Bull Hill Road are undersized to handle the press of water that comes at them when the brook floods, causing those two roadbeds to act as

see LEVERETT pg 8

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NOTES FROM THE GILL-MONTAGUE REGIONAL SCHOOL COMMITTEE

A Policy of General Disagreement

BY ELLEN BLANCHETTE - In the midst of a general discussion on how to form a policy subcommittee that had descended into bickering, Jennifer Waldron said, "We can't agree on anything, and that's why we can't get anything done."

Jeff Singleton interrupted her. "I disagree," he said.

The discussion around filling the positions of a policy subcommittee lasted over 35 minutes, and is just one current example of how difficult it is to find consensus on this school committee.

One of the main concerns mentioned in the Department of Elementary and Secondary Education's recent District Review of the Gill-Montague district was that the members of the school committee do not seem able to work together cooperatively to accomplish what needs to be done to improve the school district, which is one of just four districts in the Commonwealth saddled with Level 4 'needs improvement' status.

The problem was on display Tuesday night as the school committee took up the issue of filling a post on the policy subcommittee. Some members have been opposed to subcommittees, saying they prefer the "committee of the whole" to deal with everything in public. Meetings of subcommittees are public, posted as required by law, but they do not draw the interest of media or the

public the way regular school committee meetings do.

Michael Langknecht said subcommittee reports are frequently offered verbally, with no minutes and no written reports to refer to later. He said he is opposed to subcommittees.

Formation of a policy subcommittee was approved 6 to 3 in October of last year, but with only one member, Sorrel Hatch, volunteering to serve on it, the subcommittee was never actually convened.

At the meeting this week, superintendent Carl Ladd asked for the policy subcommittee to be filled, so he could stop filling the gap left by the school committee's inaction on policy making.

Last year, Ladd formed a task force to develop a policy on life threatening food allergens. The task force held public meetings, reported back to Ladd and the superintendent then developed the policy, which he then submitted to the full school committee for approval. They school committee quickly approved the policy.

Likewise, Ladd developed the state mandated policy on bullying, on social networking, and other issues he felt should have been addressed by the school committee. Now, Ladd said, "It's time for the school committee to do its work," rather than leave the development of policy to the superintendent. Ladd said the district is constantly in receipt of policy rec-

ommendations from the Massachusetts Association of School Committees. He said he felt it was important to have a subcommittee to address new policy proposals as they come up, and to make recommendations to the full school committee.

Briefly it seemed there was agreement to Ladd's directive. The initial charge for the subcommittee in October was for it to review the entire policy manual to make sure the district was in compliance with past decisions.

However, this did not meet the superintendent's request, nor did it appeal to the school committee. Singleton, while saying he didn't like subcommittees because they had a tendency to create cliques, said since six people had voted to form the subcommittee, so there should be a few more members willing to fill the posts. An acrimonious conversation developed around the purpose of the subcommittee, at which point Waldron said, "We can't trust each other enough to form a committee."

Marje Levenson of Montague said, "We should do it all in public, one step at a time, and make it go forward." She felt it was better for the full committee to deal with each policy matter as it came before them, referencing transparency and the need to do things in public. Ladd suggested there may be questions requiring more information gathering before the full

committee could act intelligently. Joyce Phillips agreed, saying a subcommittee may need to seek expert opinion, which takes time and does not fit into the framework of a regular school committee meeting.

After more back and forth, and some willing volunteers, the school committee finally failed to find agreement to form a standing subcommittee, and decided to wait until a policy came forward that required attention, and then to form a subcommittee specifically to deal with it. **MCTV**

Montague Community Television board president Anne Harding, station manager Robin Mide, and producer Don Clegg came to talk about the possibilities and benefits of the public access station collaborating with students and the district. There seemed to be complete agreement and interest on the part of school committee about the services MCTV was offering.

Harding proposed workshops for students and staff on the use of video and editing equipment at the studio, with an introduction to hardware and software, along with professional development training for district staff. She suggested the station could tape sporting events like basketball games.

The MCTV representatives asked for ideas on collaboration with the schools, and suggested the district could take advantage of the public access station's events calendar and public service bulletin board. The station would also be interested in broad-

casting special events such as the prom, or school musicals.

Ladd said students have been working on videos, and would appreciate the opportunity to show them on public television.

Clegg said, "The community likes to see what's going on in the schools."

Mide said, "When kids go to college and want a sports scholarship they need a video," suggesting MCTV could provide that opportunity for students by recording sporting events.

GIC

The school district just approved a contract with the unions that included health benefits. Now there has developed an issue over the split that employees pay for their share of health insurance. This was raised at a recent meeting of the negotiating subcommittee, made up of Jeff Singleton, Marje Levenson and Jennifer Waldron, with members of the Public Employee Committee along with superintendent Ladd and Lynn Bassett, district business manager.

Singleton said Tuesday night he was surprised at the animosity expressed at the meeting towards committee members, who wanted to discuss reducing the current school district's 90% share for employee health insurance.

The subcommittee (not a permanent subcommittee, but a temporary one) suggested a change to an 80% contribution for the district toward employee health care, increasing employee's share of the premiums from 10% to 20%.

Gill-Montague

Education Association president Karl Dziura reminded the school committee the school employees had switched from the Franklin County Regional Schools Health Group (FCRSHG) in 2008 at the request of the school district. He reminded the committee that annual costs for health insurance with the FCRSHG had been increasing annually by double digits at the time. In FY'08 alone, the premiums for the district went up between 18% and 40%, depending on the plan, Dziura said.

The district realized over \$500,000 in initial savings, and \$450,000 more from the FCRSHG dissolution, Dziura said.

Dziura continued, "The district now benefits from hundreds of thousands of dollars in savings annually as a result of the employees joining the GIC. Insurance cost increases have remained well below state averages ever since, and are projected to do so in the future. The choice to move from the FCRSHG was made as a cost-saving measure for the district and as such it was and is extremely successful."

While this move saved the district a significant amount, it also ended up costing employees additional amounts, especially the first year, said Joyce Phillips.

"Offering incentives that result in cost savings is a common technique," said Dziura. He pointed out that town employees were given salary increases to offset their change from a 90/10 split to a 80/20 split see **GMRSC** pg 14

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FROM THE MOUTHS OF BABES

Hecuba at the New England Youth Theater



DETMOLD PHOTO

The cast of New England Youth Theater's Hecuba

BY DAVID DETMOLD
BRATTLEBORO - Tragedy may befall a country, but more powerfully it befalls a family first, and never more devastatingly than in the series of horrors that bore down upon the first family of Troy in the person of the aged queen, reduced to slavery after the sack and pillage of her once great city, in Euripedes' play *Hecuba*.

The New England Youth Theater in Brattleboro breathes new life into this 2500 year old drama, first staged by the great Athenian tragedian in 424 BCE, as the Peloponnesian War began to go badly for Athens.

When it was first performed, the events described in the play were already more than seven centuries old, if the dates given by the Greek mathematician and geographer Eratosthenes for the fall of Troy are to be believed.

LEVERETT from pg 6
dams, backing up water onto adjoining fields, flooding nearby basements, and undermining the integrity of the roads themselves.

A selectboard file from April 2008, details a similar chain of events, and contains a letter addressed to the state Department of Conservation and Recreation and the state highway department seeking corrective action.

Bull Hill Road resident Ed Kamansky said, "The last time, we just let this drop." But selectboard chair Rich Brazeau pledged concerted action to get the various state agencies, the town board of health, and highway depart-

ment working together to solve all three problems at the same time, by removing or lowering the beaver dam, working with private landowners to clear the clogged brook channel, and installing adequately sized culverts (pitched in the correct direction, unlike the present culvert on Depot Road).

Historians and critics have called Euripedes' *Hecuba* a commentary on mob rule, the breakdown of social institutions during wartime, and if that is so it has peculiar relevance for an America where the search of

library patrons' reading material and the denial of fair trials to captives are once again upheld as patriotic acts. But the suffering and the cruelty of the fate dealt to its protagonists are even more keenly felt as we watch the heroic struggles of the oppressed citizens of Iran, Egypt, Zimbabwe, the Ivory Coast, and elsewhere.

There is a strange irony in hearing the words Euripedes gave to the ancient queen Hecuba, who has learned grief as only a mother can - watching her son Hector's body dragged three times around the walls of Troy - spoken instead by the fresh-faced youth of Brattleboro.

"Woe succeeds to woe; time will never cease henceforth to bring me groans and tears." For an old woman enslaved by the caprice of war and forced to bury her own children, these

words ring true. For youngsters in the bloom of life, such sentiments seem jarring, at first blush, and we can only hope in their case they are lines to be learned and just as soon forgot.

Speaking of lines learned, NYET's Eric Bass, who directed this hauntingly staged, brilliantly lit, effectively costumed production, decided, for whatever reason, to allow Hecuba multiple personalities, with no less than three young ladies playing the lead at different points in the play - Eve Pomazi (pliant like steel), Bonnie Hart (enjoying her role perhaps a bit too much to convey unbearable loss), and Wynona Meyer (triumphant in revenge).

Agamemnon, the conquering king of the Greeks and Hecuba's master, was also played by two different young men of very different character at different points in the one act play - Jason Guerino (cool as a cucumber) and Archer Parks (a bit taken with his own majesty).



ED KAMANSKY PHOTO

Water backed up at the culvert on Bull Hill Road on Monday

This device allowed more youth to shine in the spotlight than would otherwise have been possible, and may have had the not insignificant side benefit of allowing them each to concentrate on memorizing and delivering fewer lines. But it deflected one of the main sources of strength in this Greek drama - the catharsis aroused in the audience by empathizing with the suffering and terrible triumph of the protagonist.

If each Hecuba had been able to personify the grief and rage the enslaved queen must embody for her audience, then the impact might have been heightened by successive lead-

ing ladies. But the young players had difficulty, each in their own way, projecting an emotional state that is necessarily foreign to their youth, and, particularly when the lead first changed hands, this caused the audience to lose - at least for a moment - their connection to the tragedy unfolding.

Still it was a performance worth watching for the sum of its parts, and its refreshingly vital reimagining of the source material. Here is one production where the Greek Chorus itself assumed an eerie power, with black shrouded youth roaming the boards like shades, raising the hair on the back of your neck and almost succeeding in upstaging the stars. At least until Maeve Campman, in the role of Polyxena, delivered her spell-binding, shattering oration welcoming death.

And lines such as these never felt more compelling than when issuing from the mouths of babes: "Ah! there is not in the world a single man free; for he is either a slave to money or to fortune, or else the people in their thousands or the fear of public prosecution prevents him from following the dictates of his heart."

This is, finally, a brutal, savage play, rendered not one whit more tender by the age of its players. Alas, the same could be said of the revolution in Libya, this week, and next...

New England Youth Theater's production of *Hecuba* continues for a final weekend, March 11th - March 13th at 100 Flat Street in Brattleboro, with shows at 7 p.m. on Friday and Saturday, and a matinee on Sunday at 2 p.m.



Water backed up at the culvert on Bull Hill Road on Monday

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RECORDS OF STE. JEAN BAPTISTE SOCIETY STUDIED

BY SARA CAMPBELL
TURNERS FALLS – For all who took an interest in the recent performance of *Piecework – When we were French*, at the Shea Theater, here's an update on historical records pertaining to Turners' French Canadian community:

Until Shari Strahan took an interest in the records of the historic Societe Ste. Jean Baptiste, founded in Turners Falls in 1881, there probably wasn't anyone living who knew the club began with 10 napkins, 18 teaspoons, 24 soup spoons, 34 beer glasses, and a mortuary drape.

The records of the local cultural society, which came to light when the current owners of the Rendezvous on Third Street reno-

vated the building, are being inventoried and reviewed by local genealogists. Ledgers are being reviewed to glean tidbits of town history, such as names of dues-paying members, applications for membership that include past residences, and benefits paid to the sick or families of the dead. Prospective members were required to have a statement of good health from a doctor, and to be vouched for by a member.

One of the early membership lists, from 1898, includes many familiar names that can still be found in and around Turners Falls: Brazeau, Chaillé, Cloutier, Dubé, Disotel, Forest, Godin, Girard, Hamelin, Laramie, Maquin, Mainqui, Martineau, Morinville, Richard, Suprenant,

Tardif, and Vincelette.

The rules and ceremonial scripts were printed for the members in French, because one of the primary purposes of the organization was to preserve the French Canadian culture. A sub-group was charged with helping members become U.S. citizens.

The society featured a pool table, unlike the modern Rendezvous. Receipts for all transactions were carefully recorded in the ledgers. A lease from the Hibernian club notes the society's use of the Hibernian Hall. There are records of events, notably the 50th anniversary celebration of the society in 1931, including the menu, speakers, and the price of the band.

When the first step of deter-

mining what kinds of records are contained in the old books is complete, some of the pages will be digitized and translated and made available to researchers. The records of deaths

and other events may be of use for family members in compiling their family histories, or the cultural history of the town.

This project is funded in part



CAMPBELL PHOTO

by the Montague Cultural Council. Look for updates at genealogygathering.blogspot.com. For more info, contact rememberingancestors@yahoo.com.

BRULE from pg 1

study in France, Brule returned to his family's nineteenth-century farmhouse on the banks of the Millers River to reconnect with a heritage that began, not with Judah and Elizabeth Smith and their kinfolk, but with the Sokoki and the Pocumtuck peoples and their forebears.

"We wouldn't be here if not for the river," he writes. "The site drew the Native peoples here more than 12,000 years ago, long before the first white settlers appeared. Then, even after, the Great Falls drew generations upon generations of immigrants to farm and work in water-powered factories. For some of us now, this river runs through our veins. It's a constant, a place to come back to, a thread running through our lives."

Brule's ancient history stretches back through periods when the very course of the rivers shifted as the water broke new ground, leaving early waterfalls dry and gouging deeply into the Narrows north of Barton Cove. Skating out among the

fisherman on three feet of winter ice, the author recalls the 10,000 dinosaur tracks collected from Barton Cove by Prof. Edward Hitchcock of Amherst College in the 1840s, and the shattering of the native Americans' "truce grounds" by the dawn massacre of sleeping women and children by Captain Turner in 1676.

"Regardless, the sweep of history here might as well be the sigh of the wind through the pines. You can't help thinking that if there are sacred places in our Hidden Landscape, then something must be going on out here. There's a certain light, a sound in the trees, the lay of this prehistoric land, the lonely booming of the frozen river that gives the solitary hiker a sharp sense of being in the presence of a benign ancient force."

To read these essays at the turn of the year, as our heavy, frozen yards and woods begin to loosen under brightening skies, is to feel connected in every sense. Looking back, way back, we want to believe that the Sokoki and Pocumtuck were our

parents too. But we know that we have descended from Captain Turner and his murderous men as well. Observing the Millers River from Brule's back yard is to learn to count the birds: juncos and sparrows, cedar waxwings, the baseball-costumed orioles and blue jays, woodpeckers, ravens, eagles, red-tailed hawks, and the tiny, golden-crowned kinglet. And it is to remember that the Millers was a murky channel for toxic waste and human sewage only forty years ago, (Brule is also the president of the Millers River Watershed Alliance.)

David Brule is our own Henry Thoreau. It's hard to tell which one wrote the following passages: "The water's surface is sun-dappled in the late morning, stones golden just below as we glide over them. Kingfisher rattles at the bend, Osprey wings over and pivots in the air on sharp pinions, spotting a lazy sucker lying near the surface. The river's Old Man — Great Blue Heron — rises up reluctantly and flies upstream, giving us a

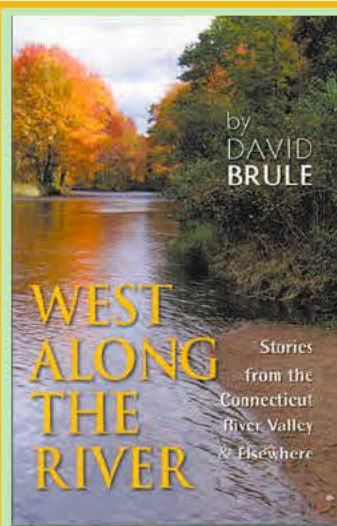
wide, wary berth."

And this: "All day the sun has shone on the surface of some savage swamp, where the single spruce stands hung with usnea lichens, and small hawks circulate above, and the chickadee lisps amid the evergreens, and the partridge and the rabbit skull beneath; but now a more dismal and fitting day dawns, and a different race of creatures awakes to express the meaning of Nature here."

Commenting on the latter pas-

sage, activist Bill McKibben recalls that Thoreau taught us to love the Earth at a time when "most of the civilized world regarded the forest and the mountain with distaste; but in his wake came Whitman, Burroughs, Muir and a thousand other writers, and right behind them came a million people toting backpacks."

David Brule's *West Along the River* — a shining addition to this literature — beckons us to get off the porch and join the ramble.



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West Along the River will be available at the Great Falls Discovery Center and at **The Montague Reporter** office in Turners Falls, and at the Franklin Grocery in Ervingside.

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from **GODIN** pg 1

decades in the way the department trains and equips its members to handle the dangerous job of protecting the villages of Montague City, Turners Falls and Millers Falls from fire.

"The changes are like night and day," said Godin this week. "When I first got on the job, we wore three-quarter length boots and rubber coats. The personal protective equipment was nothing compared to what it is today. We used to ride on the back step of the trucks with strap on belts. It was a dangerous practice back then. But we're better protected, better equipped than we were back in '77."

He added, "The job is still the same - you have to go after the fire and get at it."

Godin recalled some of the fires he helped to fight over the years, and there have been some bad ones. Among the worst was undoubtedly the arson fire at the Crocker Building on June 26th, 1997, set by a 15-year-old girl from Springfield named Sylvia Cruz, bent on settling a drug dealing score with a squatter in a third story apartment in the unsecured building.

Godin recalled that he arrived on the scene at about 3 a.m. that morning, as acting chief, because Morin was on vacation. In an interview conducted on the tenth anniversary of that fatal blaze, Godin said he pulled up in the Turners ladder truck, got out to survey the scene, and found people hanging from the third floor window ledges on Avenue A and on the 2nd Street side, with the building fully involved.

With smoke shrouding the building, glass shattering from the windows, and flaming debris raining into the street, Godin saw a man named Joe Novak hanging by one hand from the window ledge on the Avenue A side, 40 feet up. He turned to order his truck into position to rescue him, but the Turners ladder truck had already proceeded around the corner, responding to cries that people were hanging from the upper windows on that side.

"As our ladder truck turned onto 2nd Street, Greenfield literally pulled up behind," said Godin. Novak, a body builder with forearms "like Popeye," as one downtown resident put it, clung to the ledge on the third floor for half an hour, before

being rescued by a firefighter from Greenfield named Michael Winn. The Greenfield truck's ladder could not reach high enough for Novak to climb down unassisted, so Winn climbed up to him, reached out and grabbed him and rolled Novak across his body, bringing him onto the ladder and down to safety.

On the 2nd Street side, Peter Jacob and a Tibetan immigrant named Palden Sangpo were not so lucky. Jacob held on by his fingertips until the fire came too close to the window. He let go and landed feet first on a thin mattress he had tossed out the window earlier, which people in the street had positioned beneath him to break his fall. He suffered multiple fractures, but survived. Sangpo, a dishwasher at the Shady Glen who had been saving up money to bring his family to America from Dharamsala, India, was also unable to hold on to his window ledge until the Turners truck got into position to rescue him. He died in the fall.

As acting chief, Godin made the tough call to pull two firefighters - Robert Escott and Leon Ambo - out of the third floor where they had been working to hold back the fire until the ladder trucks could get into position, to give the tenants clinging to the outer ledges a few more minutes of breathing space. Escott recalled pushing the fire back up the stairs from the second story, and pushing it down the hall on the third floor, trying to buy time until Novak could get on the ladder. "We stayed in there until we needed another air bottle," recalled Escott ten years after. There was confusion on the street as to whether another tenant might still be trapped on the third floor, but as it turned out, there was no one left in the building, and Godin's decision to keep the firefighters out of the building from that point on was a wise one.

"When you're used to being on the hose, on the first truck, when you're out on the street taking command of the situation and all that goes on, it gets a little unnerving," said Godin, looking back. But that's a chief's responsibility.

Mark Holley, chair of the Turners Falls fire department's prudential committee, said his committee will be advertising the position for fire chief this

month. "We're not going to limit ourselves to either internal or external applicants," said Holley, who added that the committee plans to contract with an assessment center, "to help us assess the categories we feel we're looking for in a chief." For example, Holley said, "technical ability on the fire ground," is one category applicants will be judged by, and the assessment center will help the committee design real world tests to determine an applicant's technical ability.

Holley said the prudential committee hopes to interview candidates by the end of April, and have a new chief hired by the middle of July, to allow Godin some time to work with the new chief before his retirement date.

Godin noted the department does have a history of hiring from within. "Richie was promoted from within; his predecessor, Murph Togneri, was promoted from within. I believe we'll have people applying from within the department and one or two from outside the department have already told me they are interested in applying," he said.

Holley said Godin is making above \$73,000 a year, at this point in his career. "I expect there will be a savings for the taxpayers of the district," when a new chief is hired, Holley added.

Godin said during his 34 years with the department he has seen tensions lessen with the Montague Center fire department, but acknowledged they had flared up again recently over the Turners Falls department's proposal to add an ambulance service. The Montague Center department blocked that proposal, moving to retain their current relationship with the Baystate Ambulance Service, despite the Turners Falls department's claim that an ambulance dispatched from Turners Falls would arrive quicker to any village in Montague than an ambulance dispatched from Greenfield.

"I personally feel we'll have to revisit that issue in the next few years, due to the economics and the changes coming to EMS delivery in the county," said Godin. "I think it would be a good move for the department and the people in town as a whole."

In addition to continual changes in equipment and

regulations, firefighters today have to train to deal with hazardous materials and technical rescues, as well as rescues from confined spaces, in ways firefighters never had to deal with when Godin first got on the force. He pointed to the procedures needed to rescue a spelunker from a cave in Leverett last year as an example of how those new procedures might pay off.

Looking back on his long career, Godin said other notable changes include the merger with the Millers Falls fire department (which used to cover both sides of the river in Millers Falls). "We merged the two districts 15 or 16 years ago and we now cover right up to the Wendell line." And he said the close proximity of the police station in their new safety complex on Turnpike Road - as well as the close working relationship between himself and police chief Ray Zukowski, has allowed both departments to put old rivalries to rest and focus on cross training exercises and other ways to more efficiently and effectively provide emergency services to the community.

Asked what he would be glad to leave behind when he retires, Godin said, "Some of the people we have to deal with on code enforcement issues. I won't miss that. I won't miss some of the small town politics, or the trivial day-to-day management stuff."

On the first point, Godin said the code book for fire prevention has tripled in size since he started out. He said most of those changes are for the good. But the town's housing stock is 30 years older than it was when he started out, and though a lot of the properties have been upgraded, others still pose a real problem and a danger to surrounding buildings. He mentioned the Strathmore Mill, now owned by the town, in this context.

"But many others have been upgraded," said Godin, who complemented the work the Franklin County Housing and Redevelopment Authority has done in renovating the Moltenbrey Building on Avenue A and 3rd Street (scene of a serious fire when it was still a flophouse owned by Paul Goulston, before the FCRHRA took the property over and redid it top to bottom seven years ago), as well as the Cutlery Block.

It was Goulston who owned the Crocker Bank Building when it burned in 1997. A lawyer representing the family of Palden Sangpo won a \$1.3 million settlement for the negligence leading to the pain and suffering of Sangpo's death. With that money, Sangpo's family was finally able to come and settle in America.

Goulston and his building manager, Paul Gravel, "failed to have working fire detectors in the building," said the family's lawyer, Thomas Lesser of Northampton, in an interview in 2007. "In fact, they had deactivated the alarm" on the night of the fatal fire.

"I feel I have had a decent working relationship with the people in town hall on code enforcement issues," said Godin, "especially the building department and the board of health. There are a lot of buildings out there that still need work. But you can only go so far."

He called the renovation of the Crocker Bank Building, spearheaded by the FCRHRA in concert with Historic Massachusetts, "a beautiful example of a public/private partnership."

"I love my job. I truly do. I don't miss the 2 a.m. call for a car leaking gas on 4th Street, but getting out of bed and going to a fire, I love it. What's the saying? 'The hours are terrible, the working conditions suck, but it's probably the best job on the planet.' A lot of the career guys feel that way. I'm real pleased to have been able to spend my entire career doing it."



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from WALMART pg 5 and they just say the same things over and over again is not due process. The only thing that has been transparent has been the bias of some members of this board."

Responding to planning board chair Wedegartner's comment on January 17th that one of the board's purposes in conducting the special permit review is to determine the number and type of jobs to be created, resident Madeline Cantwell asked, "How can you consider the number and type of jobs being created when they haven't told you who the tenant is? Are they full time jobs? Quarter time? Benefitted?"

Cantwell asked the board to limit lighting at the proposed store, particularly late at night, force the developer to use building materials that "won't look like garbage in a couple of years," move the parking to the back of the store so the site won't "look like a desert of cars," require the store to close in the middle of the night, create an escrow account to pay for the demolition of the building at the tenant's expense if it remains

closed for more than one year, rule out a grocery component, require the developer to build a sidewalk all the way to the store from High Street, and protect the French King Highway from further commercial sprawl to uphold the design criteria of the commercial overlay zone.

Finally, Cantwell said, "Shrink the store. You can guide this community to a compromise, one that I and many others here can support. You may see us, unfortunately, as opponents rather than as we are - allies. We want our community to be able to get what it needs, and we want you to protect Greenfield with real long-term vision. Shrink the store. Make it 80,000 feet and we won't just support you - we will thank you... for being partners and advocates and stewards of our town."

Susanae Glovacki, who moved with her husband and children to Madison Circle from Conway Street six years ago, said, "I hope you can adjust the size and the nature of this project so that our current grocery stores, and other businesses, can have a fighting

chance. And so that we can all continue to enjoy the very livable, coming-back-to-life Greenfield that we love."

As the planning board began deliberations on February 22nd, Wedegartner instructed her board to pay attention only to submittals by the developer, peer review analyses commissioned by the planning board, and the testimony of Greenfield department heads.

This prompted a written response from anti-Walmart activist Al Norman on behalf of the abutters, in which he wrote, "The idea that during deliberations only the applicant would be given the chance to respond, and that board members can only ask questions of the applicant, and seek no information from the abutters based on their submitted responses, leads us to conclude that this process is reflective of a predisposing bias in this matter, and that the chair is trying to 'guide' the discussion to a pre-determined conclusion, rather than encourage the free exchange of information.

Norman continued, "There is more than one party in this

case. The abutters are fighting for the quality of life in their neighborhood, for the preservation of residential land values, and for the peaceful enjoyment of their property. They should be consulted as needed, not ignored. These homeowners are relying on the planning board to consider their property rights, and the impacts on their property. There is no reason why during deliberations the chair and board members cannot pause to ask the abutters to respond to a given statement or issue. They have more on the line than the developer. This is where they

live." The planning board will continue its deliberations on the proposed Big Box store on Thursday, March 17th, at 7 p.m. at 114 Main Street, in the planning department office.



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HIGHLIGHTS FROM THE MONTAGUE POLICE LOG

Peace Disturbed, Loud Noise

Tuesday, 3/1
9:16 p.m. Arrest of [redacted] for operating a motor vehicle with a suspended license.

Wednesday, 3/2
11:34 a.m. Missing person on Avenue A. Services rendered.
4:08 p.m. Neighbor disturbance on Third Street. Advised to contact police if repeated.
10:37 p.m. Loud noise disturbance on South Prospect Street. Referred to other agency.

Thursday, 3/3
12:57 a.m. Loud noise disturbance on South Prospect Street. Services rendered.

2:33 p.m. Trespassing on East Mineral Road. Area search negative.
8:07 p.m. Arrest of [redacted] for domestic assault and battery.

Friday, 3/4
2:06 a.m. Domestic disturbance on Fourth Street. Services rendered.
5:07 p.m. Arrest of [redacted] for unlicensed operation of a motor vehicle and speeding.

Saturday, 3/5
4:51 p.m. Loud noise disturbance on Third Street. Services rendered.
6:56 p.m. Arrest of [redacted], for disturbing the peace.
9:15 p.m. Loud noise disturbance at Montague Grange. Services rendered.

Sunday, 3/6
1:39 a.m. Loud noise disturbance on G Street. Services rendered.
2:33 a.m. Loud noise disturbance on Old Sunderland Road. Services rendered.
1:37 p.m. Officer wanted at Between the Uprights at Second Street and Avenue A.
3:31 p.m. Arrest of [redacted], for assault and battery on a 60+ year old person or disabled person with injury, intimidating a witness, subsequent offense of disorderly conduct, and subsequent offense of disturbing the peace.

Monday, 3/7
12:41 a.m. Suspicious person by Unity Park. Services rendered.
3:15 p.m. Juvenile disturbance on Turners Falls Road. Advised of options.
7:44 p.m. Officer wanted regarding child custody on Randall Road. Advised of options.

Tuesday, 3/8
1:56 a.m. Domestic disturbance on Second Street. Services rendered.
11:17 a.m. Arrest of [redacted] on a straight warrant.

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Eagles Get Busy on Barton Cove

means an egg or two has been laid. In past years this much looked for event has generally occurred between March 4th – 6th. It is interesting to watch closely to be able to document these dates. We know it takes 35 to 37 days of incubation to produce a small fuzzy gray chick, sometimes followed three to five days later by a second hatchling.

I can see the nest clearly from a telescope in my kitchen until the leaves appear, then we must rely on evidence from the transport of fish for frequent feedings by both parents.

Once again this year we do not have a working camera mounted above the nest to let us watch daily activity. Efforts are underway to replace the old camera.

In the meanwhile, I have become recognized as the “eagle lady,” and the best available source of news about nest activity. I get asked about the eagles in the library and the grocery store. I am happy to know there remains

a strong interest in replacing the camera for the local television access coverage via MCTV Channel 17 in Montague and GCTV Channel 15 in Greenfield, and many surrounding towns. Reviving the eagle camera would be especially important for our schools to foster education and participation from our younger generation.

More eagle news in the weeks to come.

SPRING from pg 1

weather did some of the work separating the maple sugar from the water in the sap. As the temperature dropped below freezing again and again, the water froze out of the sap in buckets and holding tanks around the farm, leaving the remaining liquid dense in sugar.

Many of the sugar maple trees on the property are linked up with sap lines—plastic tubes that direct sap from the trees into holding tanks. But the Faceys also collect sap manually from about sixty buckets hung on taps around the farm. “The nice thing about the sap lines is you don’t get too much rainwater in the sap,” said Bill’s wife, Laurel Facey. “So you don’t have to boil as much. Some people say buckets are better, but we don’t see that. It’s less boiling time, and it’s cleaner. With the sap lines you get straight sap from the trees.”

“It’s a passion,” explained Bill Facey. “When I was a kid, I worked with a neighbor who did syrup.”

The sugaring operation at Sugarbush Farm produces about 100 gallons of syrup a year, and the short sugaring season takes follow through all year long. Bill Facey built the sugarhouse from trees he cleared from his land. The sap lines, buckets, and evaporator have to be cleaned at the end of the season. Each of the more than 600 taps around the farm is drilled by hand. Once the

Fish Passage Numbers at Turners Falls Gatehouse

Kim Noyes, school environmental coordinator for First Light Power’s Northfield Mountain Environmental Center, has sent updates on the counts for three anadromous species of fish at the Turners Falls gatehouse fish ladder over the past few years.

Critics have linked the rebound of shad passage in 2010 to the May 1st maintenance outage at Northfield Mountain, which they claim reduced fluctuation in river flow allowing for easier passage for spawning shad.

Counts for 2008:
3,982 American Shad
32,029 Sea Lamprey
10 Atlantic Salmon (Released)

Counts for 2009:
3,813 American Shad
7,237 Sea Lamprey
8 Atlantic Salmon (Released)

Counts for 2010:
16,768 American shad
6,352 Sea lamprey
8 Atlantic Salmon (Released)

BY PAT CARLISLE

GREAT FALLS - Our Barton Cove eagle family has been busy since mid January re-arranging nest material. Now, at the beginning of March they are often lucky to be left a few fish from the ice fishermen’s catch.

An immature eagle entertained last week as it wrestled a fish that appeared to be caught in an ice flow, with gulls and crows watching nearby.

Constant nest sitting usually

HIGHLIGHTS FROM THE GILL POLICE LOG

Traffic Accident, Arrest for Break In

Monday, 2/28

7:20 a.m. Accident on Main Road. Asplundh Tree Service truck vs. Waste management Disposal truck. No injuries. Minor damage.
10:50 a.m. Report of tractor trailer unit striking Gill-Montague Bridge Jersey barriers. Assisted SPS with correcting situation.

12:10 p.m. Tree across West Gill Rd. Assisted DPW in removing same.

Wednesday, 3/2

7:45 a.m. Building check requested of business on French King Hwy, all secure.

1:20 p.m. Report of past vandalism at Barton Cove. Investigated and referred subject to Environmental Police.

3:20 p.m. Reported Truck tailgate in road, in area of Factory Hollow. Officer removed same.

4:00 p.m. West Gill Road resident reported receiving bounced check for service rendered.

8:30 p.m. Parking complaint on Walnut Street. Citation issued.

Thursday, 3/3

4:10 p.m. Officers assisted Children Services in removing children from a residence on Main Road.

4:50 p.m. Parking complaint on Walnut Street. Citation issued.

Friday, 3/4

9:25 a.m. Arrest report filed for past breaking and entering in 2005 at Oak Street residence. [redacted] charged by DNA testing.

9:40 a.m. Arrest report filed in Juvenile Court for past breaking and entering on Walnut Street.

3:10 p.m. Parking complaint on Walnut Street. Citation issued.

4:10 p.m. Assisted Bernardston police with a domestic situation on Gill Road.

Saturday, 3/5

11:05 a.m. Female party walking in roadway across the Gill-Montague Bridge. Refused to walk on sidewalk due to icy conditions.

2:20 p.m. Assisted Northfield police with section 12 subject.

Sunday, 3/6

3 p.m. Juveniles reported threat via text messaging.

syrup is boiled down, it has to be bottled and sold. Wood has to be put away to keep the evaporator fired up, to boil the sap down to syrup.

Asked why he opted for the extra work of a wood fired evaporator, instead of one powered by oil, he said it was because, “That’s what sugaring is to me.”

“I’ll work on it forever,” said Jim Facey, who helps his father year-round at Sugarbush Farm. “It’s fun; it’s good exercise.”

Sugarbush Farm also produces about 3,000 bales of hay and four beef cows per year, and also sells farm harvested pine boards.

When he’s not working on the usual farm chores, Bill Facey might be found doing machinery work, or restoring a Model A Ford. “I like a variety of all the things, that way you don’t get bored or burnt out,” he said.

Facey said he purchased Sugarbush Farm, just over the Montague line off Mormon Hollow Road, 43 years ago.

“I was just looking for a place to live, and this became available, and it was a farm. I’ve always been interested in farming, and so I started to farm.” Ten years after retirement, he still works on the farm nearly every day, from dawn until dusk. “You got to keep moving,” he said. “Farmers never

quit.” Don’t worry, winter isn’t as tough as Bill. Spring is about to run it out of town, and this first sign of victory already tastes so sweet.



Food Coordinator “Office Hours”

WENDELL - On Saturday, March 12th, from 10:30 a.m. - 12:30 p.m., local food coordinator Liz Carter will hold “office hours” at the Wendell Free Library.

This week’s conversation will focus on “Labor and the Not-for-Profit Farm.” Contact Liz Carter at liz.k.carter@gmail.com or (360)797-4034 for more info.

Countdown To Closure

And a Green, Nuclear Free Future

Monday, March 21st, 7:00 p.m.
Centre Congregational Church,
193 Main Street, Brattleboro.

March 21st is exactly one year before the scheduled shutdown of the Vermont Yankee nuclear power plant. This event will feature speakers Dr. Arjun Makhijani and James Moore. Music provided by the Green River String Band. All are welcome. Suggested donation of five dollars. No one will be turned away.

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JESSICA LARKIN ILLUSTRATION

BY FRED CICETTI

LEONIA, NJ - Q. My wife just turned 70 and her hearing isn't what it used to be. Do you have any suggestions to improve my communication with her?

About one in three Americans over 60 suffers from loss of hearing, which can range from the inability to hear certain voices to deafness.

Presbycusis, one form of hearing loss, occurs with age. Presbycusis can be caused by

changes in the inner ear, auditory nerve, middle ear, or outer ear. Some of its causes are the aging process, loud noise, heredity, head injury, infection, illness, certain prescription drugs, and circulation problems such as high blood pressure.

Tinnitus, also common in older people, is the ringing, hissing, or roaring sound in the ears frequently caused by exposure to loud noise or certain medicines. Tinnitus is a symptom that can come with any type of hearing loss.

Hearing aids can help your wife. It's important to explain that a hearing aid will not restore normal hearing. With

practice, however, a hearing aid will increase awareness of sounds and what made them.

A hearing aid magnifies sound vibrations. Larger vibrations are converted into signals that are sent to the brain.

There are limits to the amplification a hearing aid can provide. In addition, if the inner ear is too damaged, even large vibrations will not be converted into signals.

If your wife's hearing is a problem, she should get it checked by her personal physician. If her hearing is diminished, the doctor will probably refer her to an otolaryngologist or audiologist.

An otolaryngologist is a physician who specializes in treating the ear, nose, and throat. An audiologist is a health professional who conducts hearing tests to define your loss. Many otolaryngologists have audiologist associates in their offices.

Meanwhile, here are some tips that can help you get your words across to your wife:

- Be patient.
- Avoid background noise when conversing with your wife.
- Enunciate well without distorting your speech.
- Make sure she can see your face before speaking.
- Be expressive. Hand ges-

tures and facial expressions are clues to what you're saying.

• When talking, try to position yourself four to six feet from her.

• Ask your wife to repeat what you've said to make sure you're communicating accurately.

• Speak at a normal tempo. Not too fast; not too slowly.

• Speak more loudly, but don't shout. Shouting distorts your words.

• Don't mumble.

• Make sure you don't drop the volume of your voice at the end of a sentence.

• If you are misunderstood, try rephrasing what you said.

• Avoid chewing or covering your mouth.

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

from **ERVING** pg 6

Both Klepadlo and Meatney said the fire department could use help writing grant applications.

Police chief Chris Blair said he would need additional funding over FY'11 because the candidates for the vacant officer position were all "very experienced" and would start near the top of the pay scale.

Although Blair requested no increase in firearms training or general training line items, the selectboard recommended increasing these items by a total of \$4000 in order to meet new state requirements for firearms certification, and to allow for officer training in computer crime investigation.

Blair said he would like to move away from using part-time officers as primary coverage, and instead staff the department with four full-time officers. "Crime has no time, has no boundaries,"

he remarked.

Now, there are three full-time positions: chief, sergeant, and the vacant officer position. Part-timers cover when the full-timers are not working, at a cost of approximately \$20,000 per year.

Environmental supervisor Art Pace said the FY'12 wastewater treatment plant budget request was higher than FY'11 because of increased costs for chemicals and electricity. The total requested was \$679,575 (\$448, 596 for town of Erving costs and \$230,979 for town of Montague shares use of the Ervingside treatment plant, and pays a percentage of its operating costs, based on the amount of flow Montague contributes from Millers Falls; at present, about 50% of the flow.

Selectboard chair Andrew Goodwin asked if there were any potentially cheaper sources for chemicals, and Klepadlo asked if

chemicals could be obtained in larger amounts than the 50-pound bags currently used.

Pace said larger containers would increase handling costs, and that treatment plant storage facilities were too small to store large amounts of chemicals. Selectboard member Jamie Hackett suggested checking with the FRCOG to see if chemicals could be bought as part of a group purchase. Sharp was asked to check into that possibility.

Pace said he hoped to reduce chemical use by making process changes. He said he also hoped to save money by scheduling fewer trips for sludge disposal. On the revenue side, Pace asked the selectboard to approve an increase of one cent per gallon for receiving third party sewage at the POTW. The selectboard approved the rate increase, but asked Pace to monitor the effect on third party sewage income and

report back.

Matthew Kolodziej of the recreation commission presented a request level funded from FY'11. Selectboard members asked about the request for \$5000 for park maintenance, when maintenance spending between 2007 and 2010 had been much lower. Kolodziej said little maintenance had been done in past years, and the commission had to catch up with necessary upkeep in the parks in FY'12.

Kolodziej told the selectboard he wanted to make "a formal pitch" for building space for the recreation commission, "for either the current senior center or the library." He explained the library is interested in moving to the current senior center once the new center is finished.

All three selectboard members said they were not aware of any plans for moving the library.

Sharp said library director Barbara Friedman had looked into getting a library grant from the state for renovating the current senior center building for library use.

Treasurer Margaret Sullivan, said her requested budgets shows only a slight increase over FY'11. Sullivan is also requesting \$5000 for two computers and associated software for the treasurer and water department, as a separate capital expense.

Sullivan told the selectboard the town should have been saving about \$300,000 per year toward retiree health benefits.

Goodwin said there would be

a separate article on the town meeting warrant to move catch-up money from free cash to retiree health benefits. He said future annual costs would be raised and appropriated annually.

Boyden reported the assessors request is level funded with FY'11, except for a step raise for the assistant assessor (Boyden). Separate town meeting warrant articles will request money for revaluation and appraisal of the Northfield Mountain Pump Storage facility, the main source of Erving's property tax revenue.

At their February 24th meeting, the selectboard denied a request from the senior center building committee for \$250 to rent a van to take committee members for a site visit to a "twin" senior center recently completed in Kingston, MA. Sharp presented a request for reconsideration at the March 3rd meeting, where Hackett remarked, "I don't see any necessity of doing that. The only thing I see coming back from that is a whole lot of change orders."

At the March 7th meeting, building committee chair Boyden presented the case for funding the trip. She said, "It isn't a useless field trip." She explained committee members and the meal site manager would be able to see the practical layout of the building and the configuration of the kitchen.

The selectboard voted unanimously to allow the building committee to rent the van.



HIGHLIGHTS FROM THE ERVING POLICE LOG
Deer, Flooding, Accidents

Tuesday, 3/1

6:35 a.m. Injured deer on Route 2 roadway near railroad trestle. Removed.

10:40 p.m. Annoying phone calls at River Road residence. Under investigation.

Wednesday, 3/2

7:32 a.m. Tractor trailer lost a wheel on Route 2 near French King Bridge. Driver off of road, making own arrangements.

1:30 p.m. Two car crash at Erving Elementary School. Report taken.

1:32 p.m. Noise disturbance

on Mountain Road. Spoke with upstairs neighbor. Agreed to turn it down.

Thursday, 3/3

4:35 p.m. Report of female walking in and out of traffic on Moore Street. Located same. Found to be okay, was heading to bowling alley to catch a bus.

Friday, 3/4

7:30 p.m. Report of deer in roadway in Farley. Searched area. Animal was gone.

Saturday, 3/5

12:15 p.m. Loose and running dog on State Road.

Spoke with owner. Advised of bylaw.

6:30 p.m. Report of suspicious person walking on French King Bridge. Was sightseeing. All set.

Sunday, 3/6

6:32 p.m. Unattended motor vehicle at French King Bridge. Subject walking dogs.

Monday, 3/7

6:05 a.m. Flooding on Route 2 near Farley. Mass highway department on scene.

7:05 a.m. Report of flooding near Erving Paper Mill.

7:32 a.m. Report of deer struck in roadway on Route 2 near Erving Paper Mill. Checked area, animal gone.

7:40 a.m. Car vs. deer acci-

dent on Route 2 near old BBQ. Deer ran into woods.

11:31 a.m. Report of malicious destruction of property and larceny on River Street. Under investigation.

3:29 p.m. Water in the basement at Maple Avenue residence. Assisted Erving fire.

5:06 p.m. Two car crash with injuries on Route 2 near Maple Avenue. Under investigation by state police.

6:41 p.m. Car vs. sanding truck crash. Mass state police handled same.

8:15 p.m. Report of two vehicles racing on Millers Falls Road in Northfield. Stationary at Route 63. No contact made.

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GO GREEN FAMILY

Episode 48: The Community Challenge—The Results

BY JEANNE WEINTRAUB-MASON

MONTAGUE CENTER — “I’m going to miss these families,” WGBJ host Sam Lively thought to himself. He watched as Scott Mason directed GGF family members to their seats on the panel. When the last one had taken her seat, Sam nodded to the camera crew, and Scott began:

“I’m Scott Mason, of Montague Clean and Green. We are about to hear from the Go Green Family panel at the Western Massachusetts

Sustainable Energy Summit. With us today are members of the three families — recently, all of them have been working for a greener planet by volunteering in community groups, taking part in church activities, and even starting new organizations.” He held up a green form for the audience to see.

“After we finish the panel, we will pass around these ballots, asking you to vote for the family member you think has had the greatest impact in building a more sustainable world.” Scott explained. “We’ll with Billy Tinker, whose family lives in Gill and who recently completed a deep energy retrofit. Billy—I hear that you’ve been leading a Low Carbon Diet group that’s looking at ways to reduce their carbon footprints.

How’s that working out?”

“Pretty good, I guess,” Billy began. “Our family’s already done a lot of the things in the book—looking at our transportation, insulating our house and so on, because of the GGF challenges. Most everyone else in the group is just starting to think about these things—they ask me a lot of questions. We just did the “Cool Community” section last week, and we decided to meet with members of the Gill Selectboard and Building Committee to talk about adopting a stretch code.”

“For those who don’t know, could you explain what a stretch code is?” prodded Scott.

“It means Gill could set a stricter building code than the State of Massachusetts for people that build new homes.

Contractors would need to use thicker insulation, more efficient heating systems and so on. The homes with the stretch code would use 40% less energy than if the contractor just followed state building code.”

“Next is Gerry Bartlett—I understand you’ve just started a new organization related to climate change. Tell us about it,” Scott said.

“Sure. My brother-in-law, Brian, convinced me of the need for an organization to support climate change refugees. We’re calling it the International Climate Change Association for Refugees, or ICCAR. Brian and his family left Australia because

they felt that environment could no longer provide the resources—specifically water—needed to sustain life. ICCAR will provide a forum for refugees like Brian and his family to network with each other and access resources to help them relocate. We’re also planning to establish a lobbying arm, to pressure governments to adopt climate change regulations, and to put plans in place to relocate refugees. At the moment, most governments refuse to even admit that climate change refugees exist.”

Continued next issue...

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ANSWERS to last week's
Hometown Crossword Puzzle

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GMRSC from pg 7
at the same time Gill-Montague employees switched to the GIC. The town employees chose not to enter the GIC.

In 2008, school district employees were offered assurances that with large savings in health care costs, they would see salary increases too, Dziura said. But with the economic downturn, the Gill-Montague Education Association accepted a 0% cost of living increase in FY'10 and again in FY11. Dziura added that last year, due to the economic decline, the GIC suffered losses and passed those on to the employees, who now have an additional \$750 deductible added to procedures and hospitalization

GOODWIN from page 6
Street, has not indicated yet whether he will be a candidate for re-election for the other three year seat. If Mackin runs, there will be most likely be a three year race for two seats on the planning board between Dubay, Mackin and Morris.

Dubay was turned out of office last year after leading the successful defense of the planning board's aquifer protection bylaw against a proposal by Eric and Ralph Semb, owners of the French King Bowling Alley, to build a gas station and drive through restaurant within the protection zone of the town's water supply.

Rich Peabody, the genial Old State Road resident who has served the town as moderator for many years, will face a challenge from Matthew James of Ridge Road for that position, and Bill

LeMieux, of High Street, (if he chooses to run again) will face a challenge from Christopher Stacy, of French King Highway, for the office of tree warden.

Marcia Bernard, who led the library trustees through a period of consolidation and growth for the town's public library, is stepping down this year, and Greg Grueling, of Lester Street is as yet unopposed to take her seat for three years on the library board. Incumbents Mackensy Bailey, of Mountain Road, and Jarod Boissonneault, of West High Street, have so far drawn no challengers to retain their three year seats on the school committee.

Nominating papers for the town election must be turned in by Monday, March 14th, at 5 p.m. For more information, call 422-2800 x 100.

costs.

Dziura emphasized the initial agreement was made in good faith. The three year contract was could have been renegotiated this year, but the district chose not to do so and agreed to roll it over for another three years. Now, Dziura said, the Education Association and all employees and retirees expect the district to live up to their end of the bargain.

Superintendent Ladd said after the meeting, “I believe everyone can agree that rising health care costs are crippling both public and corporate sectors. The problem is exacerbated in the public sector due to current collective bargaining rules and precedents. I am sure most everyone would

agree that public sector employees should have health insurance. What seems to be the crux of the matter at this moment in history is whether plan design should be subject to collective bargaining. It is not for federal employees, nor most private employees.”

Singleton said he is aware the district is late in asking for changes to the employee benefits agreement, but felt it was better to make the changes slowly over time rather than all at once when the new contracts are negotiated in 2014. He said the subcommittee members were asking the employees to increase their premium share by 2.5% each year for the next four years, beginning in 2012.

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Rendezvous, Turners Falls: *Benefit for Four Winds School in Gill* from 4 to 7 p.m. featuring The Maneuvers, Michael Stamm, O'Malley's Tears.

Rendezvous, Turners Falls: *TNT Karaoke*, 8 p.m. Free.

Greenfield's Market: *Juxtapositions: Poetry and Images and Sounds*, Poet Mary Clare Powell exhibit, reading, and music, 4 to 5 p.m.

WEDNESDAY, MARCH 16th

The Brick House, Turners Falls: *Mental-Drift & Phantom Erratic* present a deep listening concert of sound-experimenters from the four directions: *Tumble, Green Hill Builders, Servitor, Angst Hase Pfeiffer Nase*, 8 p.m.

THURSDAY, MARCH 17th

Deja Brew, Wendell: *St. Patty's Day, Bombogenesis*, bluegrass, new acoustic with some good old Irish drinking tunes thrown in, 8 to 10 p.m.

Burrito Rojo, Turners Falls: *Shag*, 7 p.m.

Rendezvous, Turners Falls: *Paddy's Ramble*, Celtic, roots, rock, 8 p.m. Free.

Great Falls Discovery Center, Turners Falls: *Keeping the Oceans Shipshape*, a talk on marine conservation biology, 7-9 p.m. Free.

FRIDAY, MARCH 18th and 25th
SATURDAY, MARCH 19th and 26th
Shea Theater, Turners Falls: Country Players present *London Suite*, 8 p.m.

FRIDAY, MARCH 18th
Rendezvous, Turners Falls: *Lenny's Lounge*, 7 p.m. Free.

Deja Brew, Wendell: *Josh Levangie & The Mud, Blood & Beer Band*, singing all your Johnny Cash favorites, 9 to 11 p.m.

Mocha Maya's, Shelburne Falls: *Salvatore Baglio and Bird Mancini*, experimental indie pop rock, 8 p.m.

SATURDAY, MARCH 19th
Barton Cove, Gill: Join *Northfield Mountain naturalist Kim Noyes* 1 to 3 p.m. for this two mile leisurely hike. Participants aged 10 and older will observe the first flower of spring, search for nesting eagles and explore the rich geologic, natural and cultural history of Barton Cove. Pre-registration is required for this free program by calling 800-859-2960.

Rendezvous, Turners Falls: *Rockit Queer*, the dance party, 9:30 p.m.

Burrito Rojo, Turners Falls: *Shockazoba*, 8 p.m.

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Wendell Full Moon Coffee House, Old Wendell Town Hall: *Primate Fiasco*, Richard Lent, Fingerstyle solo guitar, and Joe Laur, original songs and guitar, 7:30 p.m.

Leverett Town Hall: *Sue Kranz and Ben Tousley* will bring their uplifting voices and sweet harmonies to the Echo Lake Coffeehouse, 7:30 p.m.

Mocha Maya's, Shelburne Falls: *T.Jay*, pop rock/jazz/funk, 8 p.m.

Montague Grange: *Gender role free contra*, caller Paul Wilde, music by Jeff Kaufman on mandolin and piano, Alice Kaufman on fiddle, Rick Kaufman on double bass, 7 - 9 p.m.

THURSDAY, MARCH 24th

Rendezvous, Turners Falls: *And the Kids and the Pirates, Zombie Nurse*, 9 p.m. Free.

Deja Brew, Wendell: *Greg Klyma*, country, folk, Americana, storyteller, 8-10 p.m.

FRIDAY, MARCH 25th
Rendezvous, Turners Falls: *Span of Sunshine, The Ambiguities*, Free, 9:30 p.m.

Deja Brew, Wendell: *Barrett Anderson*, renegade blues, 9 - 11 p.m.

Mocha Maya's, Shelburne: *Rupert Wates*, acoustic jazz, 8 p.m.

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3. RANGO PG DAILY 12:00 3:00 6:30 9:00
4. THE ADJUSTMENT BUREAU PG13 DAILY 12:15 3:15 6:45 9:15
5. RED RIDING HOOD PG13 DAILY 12:15 3:15 6:45 9:15

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THROUGH SUNDAY, APRIL 3rd
Great Falls Discovery Center, Turners Falls: *Told and Retold: Art Exhibit by the Pocumtuck Valley Memorial Association/Memorial Hall Museum*. Art created by Northfield Elementary School students.

THROUGH SUNDAY MARCH 27th
Barnes Gallery, Leverett: *Peace Talk: Art by the Children's Voice, Exhibit of Iraqi Children's art*. Reception on Sunday, March 6th 4 to 6 p.m.

THURSDAY, MARCH 10th
Deja Brew, Wendell: *Free Range*, Classic rock and dance music, 8 to 10 p.m.

Rendezvous, Turners Falls: *Patty Carpenter and John Weeks*, jazz-america-blues gumbo, 8 p.m. Free.

FRIDAY, MARCH 11th
Great Falls Discovery Center, Turners Falls: Coffeehouse *Ronald Meck*, who sings traditional Celtic and folk ballads. His son Adrian, joins him for toe-tapping jigs and reels, 7 to 9 p.m.

Deja Brew, Wendell: *Richard Chase Group*, acoustic driven originals, 9 to 11 p.m.

Rendezvous, Turners Falls: *Jones Trio with Snapdragon Dance Company*, 9:30 p.m.

Shea Theater, Turners Falls: *Benny and the Jets*, Elton John Tribute Band - National Touring Company, One Show Only, 8 p.m.

Mocha Maya's, Shelburne Falls: *The Fine and Dandy Trio*, Americana folk 8 p.m.

Route 63 Roadhouse, Millers Falls: *Ultimatum*, 9:30 p.m.

Turners Falls High School: *Come as You Are: A Musical Comedy*, 3/11 at 7 p.m., 3/12 at 3 & 7 p.m.



Ben Tousley joins Sue Kranz to bring their uplifting voices and sweet harmonies to the Echo Lake Coffeehouse, 7:30 p.m. at the Leverett Town Hall on March 19th.

FRIDAY, MARCH 11th until SUNDAY, MARCH 23th
New England Youth Theatre, Brattleboro: NEYT presents Euripides' epic seaside tragedy, *Hecuba*. Friday & Saturday evening at 7 p.m. with Saturday & Sunday matinees at 2 p.m. www.neyt.org.

SATURDAY, MARCH 12th
Arts Block Cafe, Greenfield: *Sweetback Sisters*, 9 p.m.

Route 63 Roadhouse, Millers Falls: *Rock 201*, 9:30 p.m.

Deja Brew, Wendell: *John Sheldon & Blue Streak*, 9 to 11 p.m.

Rendezvous, Turners Falls: *Third Annual St. Paddy's Caribbean Adventure*, Island-Irish Dance Night with an actual sandy beach, 9:30 p.m. Free.

Shea Theater, Turners Falls: *Celtic Heels*.

Mocha Maya's, Shelburne Falls: *Adam Bergeron*, pianist, 1 p.m.

The Elevens: *Dadaist John Landino* will be appearing with his band, *Satan's Answering Machine*, 9 p.m.

SUNDAY, MARCH 13th
Deja Brew, Wendell: *An Irish Session*, Amanda Bernhard, Jonathan Hohl Kennedy & Friends, 8 to 10 p.m.

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What's in Store for the former Maple Valley School?



Aerial view of the former Maple Valley School, from the Way Point Realty website

JONATHAN VON RANSON WENDELL - To the ear - a hard-bitten, skeptical ear, at least - it might sound like entertaining fiction, but here's a story told this week by Jayme Dwan-Clem, a night cashier at Wendell Country Store:

"It was a slow night," she said, off-duty, standing near the bread counter on a recent morning. "There were two of them, one a Chinese man and one a white guy, both of them had come from Hong Kong. They were both in their 40s, very well dressed. They said they had bought Maple Valley and were going to open a school there starting this summer."

Ms. Dwan-Clem's 'twas-a-dark-and-stormy-night tale could give pause. Plus it's subject to errors of memory since it happened several weeks ago. But she went on.

"The first year, they said, they'd bring in students from China and do sort of an English as a second language thing. The second year they'd start taking American and other students and gradually begin making the school more international, a regular private school.

"They were friendly; they said they wanted to be involved with the townspeople - offered to teach Chinese to Wendell townspeople free of charge! They said they'd be bringing their students here to the store."

The credibility of this story is bolstered by information from Charles Cooper, convener of Wendell Works, a citizens' group

that has been in discussion with Maple Valley's owner, Twoey Brayson. Cooper said Brayson told him in early February that a Chinese school was "in negotiation, possibly buying the place."

The school property, perhaps the largest potential business in Wendell, is listed on a real estate website as having eight buildings totaling 48,710 square feet - including a gymnasium or fitness center, athletic fields, a commercial kitchen and cafeteria, media center, computer labs, vocational shops, and single occupancy dorm rooms. The website lists 70 boarding students as the capacity, plus day students. The school, which formerly housed and educated students with records of sex offenses or behavioral problems, has been vacant for nearly two years, in a poor real estate market. Now it may be sold.

Questions, however, are many. EnviroHealth, a business that designs and installs air filtration, pollution control and other environmental systems, recently located at the campus. An employee, Dan Mascroft, said, "We like it here." If a new school opens at the former Maple Valley, will this firm remain at the campus?

How about the goals of the newly formed citizens group Wendell Works - is it possible their effort to secure use of the Maple Valley gym, the commercial-grade kitchen, or other space at the former school as studio, shop or office space for small businesses, could still come to fruition if a new school moved

in?

Answers to those questions, or about any purchases or long-term rental agreements, are out of the country temporarily with Brayson. This big, bluff, Long Islander is the property owner who has led several tours of the facility involving Wendellites, including this reporter. His office said he'd be back later in March.

Cashier Clem didn't get any contact information for the visitors who stepped out of the February night and regaled her with plans as a certainty.

Paul Richmond, a member of Wendell Works and a former convener of the group known as Wendell Sustainable, has been involved with the Maple Valley question since the school's closing in spring of 2009. At that time, there were discussions about possible reuse of the campus at meetings, and online. Suggestions flowed - for a youth hostel, charter school, crafts collective, conference center, elementary school with senior housing and senior involvement, renewable energy systems factory, food processing facility, small business incubator... virtually all with a locally-supportive and eco-minded "Wendell" spin.

This week Richmond said he'd been in contact with the boss of EnviroHealth about that company's planned use of the property. "He said they'd be using the facilities for bringing in their customers for conferences or seminars for the weekend," Richmond said. "He seemed to think Wendell's interests - gym, kitchen - were compatible with theirs."

Any school that locates there is its own story and will have its own needs. Still, "Little Wendell can hope," said Cooper. "If the property were tied in with a solid venture, maybe they wouldn't want to use their gym 24/7. We would hope to negotiate so Wendell residents could use it from time to time. The fact that

we're identified as a presence, as people negotiate, may benefit us. Obviously we've been operating with no budget here - it's amazing they called us back. But it worked. If in any remote way, the folks of Wendell can have any say in the use of this huge property there have been some benefits."

In case there is room to maneuver, selectboard member Jeff Pooser has a hard-headed perspective about the possibilities: "The kitchen and gym are of interest," he said. "There's an opportunity there for something to happen. But it's basically a boarding school - the dorms are camp-y, with bunks; the rooms are small. Talk about yoga centers, retreat centers, senior hous-

ing - how many seniors do you know who want to sleep in a walk-in closet? Sure, you can knock down walls, but there's cost to that."

Maple Valley hovers today as both a hope and a fear. Some residents have expressed the feeling that the facility is "too big for this town." Neighbors of the school remember problems with runaways, and at least until 2005 the institution was involved in a struggle with the Wendell board of health over septic system issues. Residents care greatly what happens there. "In this time of no jobs, it matters whether it's providing them," said Richmond - and also "whether it's building community."



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