



Turners Basketball Champions

### AKE PLEASANT MILLERS FALLS MONTAGUE CENTER MONTAGUE CITY TURNERS FALLS The Montague Report 50¢ also serving Gill, Erving and Wendell YEAR 7 - NO. 23

REPORTER@MONTAGUEMA.NET

THE VOICE OF THE VILLAGES

MARCH 12, 2009

# Many Ways and Slender Means



Geoffrey Beckwith, executive director of the Massachusetts Municipal Association, addressed the Joint Ways and Means Committee of the Massachusetts Legislature on Monday at the Turners Falls High School, as (right to left) Mayor Claire Higgins of Northampton, Princeton selectboard member and President of the Massachusetts Selectboard Association Alan Sentkowski, Deerfield selectboard member Bernie Kubiak, and Montague selectboard member Pat Allen wait their turn to testify.

### **BY DAVID DETMOLD**

**TURNERS FALLS - The Joint** Ways and Means Committee of the Massachusetts House and Senate convened a budget hearing at the Turners Falls High School on Monday, March 9th. Amid calamitous economic indicators and op-ed predictions of a national recession of historic proportions, the committee - or at least most of its Western and Central Massachusetts members - assembled on the stage of the recently renovated auditorium to take testimony from state and local education leaders, local

**BY DAVID DETMOLD** TURNERS FALLS - A cool project is about to take shape on

officials, and members of the public. The meeting lasted for six hours. By the time the general public began speaking, only four of the dozen or so legislators remained on the stage.

The high school auditorium where the hearing took place is an architectural and technical gem, a showpiece of the \$32 million high school/middle school renovation project completed in 2005. In 2007, the state placed the Gill Montague Regional School District (GMRSD) on "underperforming" status. Last year, the GMRSD's finances were taken over by the state Department of Elementary and Secondary Education, after the district failed to reach agreement with its member towns on an operating budget for 2009. On Monday, DESE commissioner Mitchell Chester made his first public appearance in the district.

"I can see why the Commonwealth is the envy of the nation," Chester, nearing the end of his first year as commissioner, told the legislators. "Our parents are engaged, our teachers are delivering the goods, and our student progress is second to

He might have added that the dropout rate at Turners High exceeded 20% for the last two years, while the dropout rate for English as a Second Language students increased to 66% last year.

none."

By the time local parents and residents of the district told the legislators what they thought could be done to improve the delivery of education in the district, Chester had left the room.

GMRSD superintendent Ken Rocke and Bob Pura, president of Greenfield Community College gave opening remarks, welcoming the legislators to Turners Falls. Rocke spoke of the efforts at the GMRSD to turn around the district in tight budget times. "We have taken the legislative and organizational tools available to us and used them to improve education, increase leadership capacity, and move our schools forward while bringing down the costs to our local towns and taxpayers," he said.

Pura spoke about the growing importance of community colleges in an economic downturn, and reviewed the efforts he has facilitated bringing local public school districts together to seek collaborative advantages in purchasing and educating. Pura concluded his remarks by saying, "Beginning in 1980 and deepening during this past decade, the infrastructure of our United States has been underfunded by design and eroded to the point that, as educator Jonathan Kozol

wrote, savage inequalities were the inevitable outcome. Our challenge now, even in this fiscal environment, is to work together to rebuild that infrastructure so as to turn our most recent transgressions of inequity into a future of real and equal opportunity. Public education is, as President Obama said in his address to Congress, 'no longer just a pathway to opportunity, it is a pre-requisite."

Throughout the day, legislators, educators, and local officials returned again and again to the subject of the Obama administration's stimulus package, according which, to Massachusetts Secretary of Education Paul Reveille, making his second trip to Turners Falls in as many months, includes at least \$1.8 billion to support public education in Massachusetts and perhaps as much as \$6 to \$9 billion, if competitive grant opportunities contained in the package are added in. The unknowns of the bill, the tantalizing sums that may soon be available, combined with the fact that such funds will vanish when the stimulus spending runs its course in two years, seemed to both mesmerize and confound the decision making on display in the 2010 budget making

"We're very excited and spending a lot of time on the stimulus bill," said Reveille, as he opened his remarks. But he added, "In 27 months, these funds will disappear, leaving us see WAYS pg 8

them up to school on Crocker Avenue from their former homes downtown. Though many of them have moved in adult years to newer homes on the Hill, a younger generation of downtown children still makes their way up the crumbling, trash-strewn paths to school, in every weather, gripping the cable balustrades when the sidewalks are slick with ice, or walking slowly with their backs bent diagonal to the ground by the weight of bookbags. Sheffield parent Diane Ellis proposed the idea of an artistic makeover of the pathways to RiverCulture coordinator Lisa Davol two years ago, and, after a process of finding funding and advertising the concept to area artists, Gutwein's proposal emerged the winner. Ellis, a resident of Stevens Street, led a see ALCHEMY pg 6



one of the run down concrete pathways leading from the Hill to downtown Turners Falls. After a request for proposals was evalu-Turners ated, the Falls RiverCulture project has awarded a \$4500 contract, which the selectboard signed on Monday, to Sebastian Gutwein and associates of Greenfield, to design and build a 'Woven River' art installation that incorporates natural elements like stone and living trees with historic relics and of course, bricks and mortar, woven together with living willow and a wattle hurdle flowing downhill, to connect the entire pathway project in a fluid representation of the past giving birth to the future. The installation will hang above, take root and be built beside the town-owned pedestri-

Sebastian Gutwein at the site of his planned Art Pathway installation in Turners Falls

on Tuesday, said the installation

was "all about the love for the

past, and bringing the past into

an walkway that connects the curve of 7th Street with High Street, at the intersection of Avenue B.

Gutwein, reached by phone the future."

> That sentiment may resonate well with local residents who recall the walkways that once led

### March 12, 2009

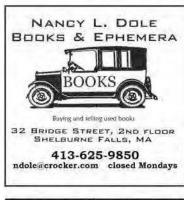
### PET OF THE WEEK Princess



### Moshi

My name is Moshi and I'm a three-year-old medium hair female cat in need of a good home. Far from being of the timid sort, I'm a feisty feline that will rub against you for attention. If you are a person who has a bit of an attitude sometimes yourself, we'd be perfect partners.

Just don't try to convince me to share my life with other cats or with dogs... a cat has her limits, you know. I'm quite enough for anyone to be content with - you don't need other pets to complete your life if you have me! And I'm gorgeous. If you understand princesses, come and visit. I would love to come and grace your castle. For more information on adopting me please contact the Dakin Pioneer Valley Humane Society at 413-548-9898 or via email: leverett@dpvhs.org.





The Montague

Reporter

Published weekly on Thursday,

### **MONTAGUE LIBRARY NEWS** Mother Goose Loose

BY LINDA HICKMAN TURNERS FALLS - Mother Goose on the Loose will be held Saturday, March 21st, at the Carnegie Library at 10:30 a.m. The program is an interactive mix of guitar and banjo music, rhymes, stories, puppets, and other visuals. The free sessions are designed for babies through preschoolers and are performed by Children's Librarian Linda Hickman and musician Michael Nix. Monthly Saturday programs will be held thru April.

For more information call the Carnegie Library at 863-3214.

195 Avenue A in Turners Falls.

On Friday, March 13th, from

11:30 a.m. and 1:30 p.m., staff

from the Dakin Animal Shelter

will be on hand to answer ques-

tions the public may have about

how you can help sustain the

shelter and keep the animals

there safe, warm and fed. There

will be a weekly raffle each

Friday with a prize courtesy of a

local pet store or groomer. Stop

by the GSB office or call 863-

Please drop by and find out

### Homeless Pets Earn Interest at GSB or comfort at the GSB office at

The Turners Falls branch of Greenfield Savings Bank has developed a theme to promote their free gift - a tote bag - available for anyone opening a new checking account between now and April 25th. The tote bag will tote pet food to the Dakin Animal Shelter in Leverett. In these tough economic times, four-footed customers can fall upon hard times with owners who perhaps have lost jobs or housing, or seen their monthly income substantially reduced.

Customers who would like to help feed homeless pets in our area can drop off items of food

4316 and ask any of the friendly staff for more details.

### Wendell People's Pages Planned

Community meeting last fall.

the shelter.

In November, the town of Wendell witnessed a grassroots response to worsening global economic conditions, in the form of 39 citizens turning out for a meeting at the library to discuss ways to make the town and its citizens more selfreliant and mutually supportive.

The Sustainable Community meetings have been ongoing since then, focusing on areas like food self reliance, information technology, energy, education transportation, and the like, with members gravitating toward their areas of interest.

Laurie DiDonato and Molly Kaynor are members of the Care Committee, and they are now in the process of creating a resource directory for Wendell households, which will list information about existing 'helper groups' in town, along with the list compiled by Laura Doughty of individuals who offered their services, commodities and talents at the first Sustainable

Among the 'helper groups' in Wendell are the Friends of Wendell, the Coffeehouse Committee, Good Neighbors, the Free Box volunteers, the Senior Center, and many others like them. DiDonato and Kaynor would like to expand that list. They are looking for folks in Wendell who have skills, tools, supplies, goods, or anything they would like to give, lend, trade or sell. They ask that information be emailed or phoned in before April 1st to either: Laurie at Ididonato@hotmail.com, (978) 544-8270 or Molly at jeide@crocker.com, (978) 544-7864. Please include details such as what you would like to offer, your name (or your business name) as you would like it to appear in the directory, and your contact information - both phone and email.

The Wendell self-help directory of helper groups and individuals (also called "The People Pages") will be accessible on line. The web-

> 10:15 a.m. Senior Business Meeting 12:30 p.m. Painting Wednesday, 18th 8:45 a.m. Line Dancing



This photo, taken several yeras ago, of Ripley's sugar shack on West Chesthut Hill Road in Montague, reminds us that the sweet season is now open us. Thank goodness for maple syrup, and all who make it.

### Apply for Free and Reduced Lunch **BY JIM LOYND**

GILL-MONTAGUE - In these extremely trying economic times, families are often hardest hit when a parent loses their job or faces a reduction in hours.

If a family has had a reduction in income, they may re-apply at any time during the school year for free and reduced price meals. Free and reduced priced lunch and breakfast is a way for families to offset the loss of income and ensure that their school-aged children will receive healthy, nutritious meals.

If you have experienced a layoff or reduction in income for any reason, and you have children that attend the Gill-Montague Regional School District, please complete a free and reduced price meals applica-

site address is yet to be announced.

Kaynor and DiDonato also plan to print and provide a copy of the self-help directory to each household in town (to be updated every year or so). To raise enough funds to do that, local businesses may advertise in the directory and private contributions are most welcome. Contact Laurie or Molly with any suggestions, questions or offers.

tion. You can pick up an application at your child's school, or by calling the food service office at (413)863-7315, or by contacting jloynd@gmrsd.org. All information is confidential.

Jim Loynd is the food service manager for the Gill-Montague Regional School District.

### ROAD CLOSING

The northern section of Barney Hale Road in Gill, from the intersection with River Road to the top of the hill, is closed until further notice due to mud conditions.

**Great Falls Middle School** Students of the Week Grade 6 Hayley Black Grade 7 Malcolm Smith Meaghan Horan Grade 8 Wyatt Bourbeau



#### SENIOR CENTER ACTIVITIES – March 16th to 20th Friday, 20th GILL/MONTAGUE Senior 10:00 a.m. Senior Aerobics

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

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(Every other week in July and August. Wednesday paper fourth week of November. No paper last week of December.) PHONE (413) 863-8666 FAX (413) 863-3050 reporter@montaguema.net Postmaster: Send address changes to The Montague Reporter 58 4th Street Turners Falls, MA 01376

Advertising and copy deadline is Tuesday at NOON.

This newspaper shall not be liable for errors in advertisements, but will print without charge that part of the advertisement in which an error occurred. The publishers reserve the right to refuse advertising for any reason and to alter copy or graphics to conform to standards of the newspaper

Local Subscription Rates: \$20 for 6 months

#### Monday, 16th

10:00 a.m. Senior Aerobics 12:00 p.m. Pot Luck Lunch 12:30 p.m. Bingo Tuesday, 17th 1:00 p.m. Canasta Wednesday, 18th 10:00 a.m. Senior Aerobics 12:45 p.m. Bingo Thursday, 19th 1:00 p.m. Pitch

863-4500 for reservation for Times Medieval Dinner Tournament, Tuesday April 14th. \$78 per person.

11:00 a.m. Easy Aerobics

UPCOMING Gill/Montague

Senior Trip, call 863-9357 or

**ERVING** Senior Center, 18 Pleasant St., Ervingside (Old Center School, 1st Floor), is open Monday through Friday from 9 a.m. to 2 p.m. for activities and congregate meals. For info and reservations call Polly Kiely, Senior Center director at 413-423-3308. Lunch daily at 11:30 a.m. with reservations 24 hours in advance. Transportation can be provided for meals, Thursday shopping, or medical necessity:

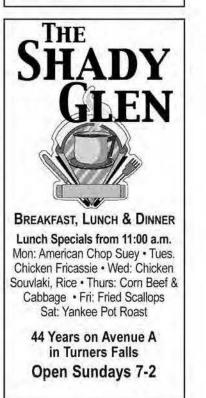
#### Monday, 16th

9 a.m. Exercise 12 noon Pitch Tuesday, 17th 9 a.m. Aerobics

12 noon Bingo Thursday, 19th 9:00 a.m. Aerobics 10:15 a.m. Pool Friday, 20th 9 a.m. Bowling 11:30 a.m. St. Patrick's Day Dinner

WENDELL Senior Center is located at 2 Lockes Village Road. Call Kathy Swaim at (978) 544-2020 for hours and upcoming programs.

The Senior Center will benefit from proceeds of the Wendell Full Moon Coffee House show featuring John Sheldon and Blue Streak on Saturday, April 11th. Seniors willing to create treats to sell at the refreshment table should leave messages with Ginny Schimmel at 544-2924.



### **Gill Elementary School Family Dance**

### **BY ERICKA** ALMEIDA

GILL - "How low can you go?" That was the question on Friday night at Gill Elementary School's annual second Family Dance.

The luau-themed event drew more than 70 families dressed in Hawaiian garb. The dancers ranged in age from a few months old to grandparents of stu-

dents, all of whom could be seen enjoying the music provided by the Dance Party of Greenfield,

The PTO-sponsored event is one of many held annually to bring the Gill Elementary School community together. "It's so wonderful to see the kids playing



Do the Limbo! (I-r) Odelle Kinder-Wells, Nick. Morin, and Meg Donnelly-Minshall at the Gill Family Dance

together outside of the classroom. This dance is all they could talk about all day," said Heather Leaf, parent of a first grader.

Principal Rita Detweiller added, "This is awesome. The kids are having a lot of fun."

Each year the theme of the Family Dance night is chosen by the 6th grade, led by teacher Joanne Rabideau. To choose the theme, "The kids brainstorm, have a debate and hold several votes," said Rabideau. "We consider all of the ages attending, from siblings to adults." Decorating also falls to the Gill 6th graders, with

most of the decorations created by students from all grades and hung throughout the hall.

The Gill PTO's next big Family Fun Event to which the public is invited will be the annual Gill Elementary Carnival held on May 30th.

## Hi-Def Movies Coming to Wendell Free Library

BY DAVID DETMOLD -Thanks to the work of Robbie Leppzer, John "Klondike" Koehler, and Rick Droen, and the fundraising help of the Friends of the Wendell Library, a (possibly first-in-the-state) hidefinition library movie theater has been set up in the Wendell Free Library's meeting room.

"We're very excited," said Leppzer, whose documentary about local protest against the beginning of the Iraq War, The Peace Patriots, will be aired at the library on Thursday, March 19th, the sixth anniversary of the U.S. invasion of Iraq.

"We are looking forward to the new movie theater," which has a ceiling mounted projector, "being a place we can show independent documentary and offbeat features," said Leppzer, an independent filmmaker based in Wendell for many years. He said audience discussion would be encouraged during the film series, which will be called the Wendell Real World Film Series.

Finished in 2005, The Peace Patriots chronicles the beginning of the protest movement against the Iraq war. It is filmed almost entirely in the Pioneer Valley, and follows local residents from

14 to 75 in their private homes, group discussions, speakouts, street protests, and civil disobedience actions blocking the main intersection in Northampton, sitting at the gates of the Westover

Air Force Base, and praying in front of the main entrance to Springfield the Federal Building in the early weeks of the war.

Despite a tendency to go over the same ground for a few too many deeplyfelt interviews, there are great and powerful moments in this film. As a military family chants, "Get Sad-dam!" and "Support our Troops," on their front porch next door to Westover AFB, Montague Vietnam

War veteran Al Miller exhorts the crowd, "Anybody who supports the troops been to the V.A. lately? Walked on the wards and seen the disabled? Seen those exposed to dioxin? Do you support the troops? Then Bring Them Home!"

As area clergy and activists gather in the freezing rain in Springfield, it is hard to hold back tears as Reverend Kelly Gallagher, soft-featured a woman with an air of deep con-

The PEACE

PATRIOTS

Robbie Leppzer's film,

The Peace Patriots will

be shown on March 19th,

Iraq War

viction, breaks bread with the circled citizens and offers this "May prayer: there be bread for those who are hungry, and a hunger for justice from those who have bread."

The few intercut scenes of the bombing of Baghdad

women wailing in the streets, mangled corpses the sixth aniversary of the being dug from the rubble - are effectively juxta-

posed with the strange image of local peace activists, apparently acting on the impulse of the moment, marching into Walmart in Hadley by the hundreds, chanting and carrying peace signs amid the startled shoppers. In a more reflective moment,

### Celebrate at the Discovery Center this Weekend

### **BY DON CLEGG**

GREAT FALLS - A busy and entertaining weekend is on tap for the Great Falls Discovery Center. Starting at 7:00 p.m. on Friday, March 13th, the Friends of the Great Falls coffeehouse series presents a not-to-bemissed appearance by Naia Kete, an 18-year-old singer and songwriter from Shutesbury. Her performance of "Sweet Music," her debut album, is a personal and political soul trip.

"Community is so important to me," said Naia Kete "A lot of what I try to convey in my music is that I feel like it's truly time for the people of the world to unite in order to create peace and joy."

Delicious refreshments are always available at the coffeehouse. There is a suggested donation of \$6-\$12 to support the work of the performer and the Discovery Center; children are free. Doors of the Great Hall open at 6:30 p.m.

On Saturday, March 14th, from 11:00 a.m. to noon, join Department of Conservation and Recreation staff for a brief report on the Silvio O. Conte Wildlife Refuge System, and celebrate the national refuge system's 106th birthday. The Conte Refuge is one of 548 refuges in the National Wildlife System.

The national wildlife refuge system was established in 1903 with Pelican Island in Florida,

a retired social worker speaks to the camera, "I'm 68 years old and I've never marched for anything until this year. But it's time. I've got grandchildren, and they've got to live in this world, and it isn't getting any better."

Leppzer films the local counterparts to the global demonstrations on February 15th, 2003, which involved as many as 15 to 30 million people, trying to stop a war before it started, an unprecedented event in recorded history. Documentaries such as this are essential to future generations (and even our own) attempting to understand what we did right, and what we did wrong, on the march to a war

where President Theodore Roosevelt designated the nation's first National Wildlife Refuge to protect brown pelicans and other native birds nesting there. Five years later the National Bison Range was established in Montana, and is presently home to over 500 bison along with elk, white-tail and mule deer, pronghorn antelope, bighorn sheep and black bear. Numerous Congressional and Presidential Acts have been passed over these 106 years to continue the protection of our lands, endangered species and coastal areas. Stop by and help celebrate the future of our stewardship efforts! Locally produced snacks and refuge informational handouts will focus attention on our sustainable future.

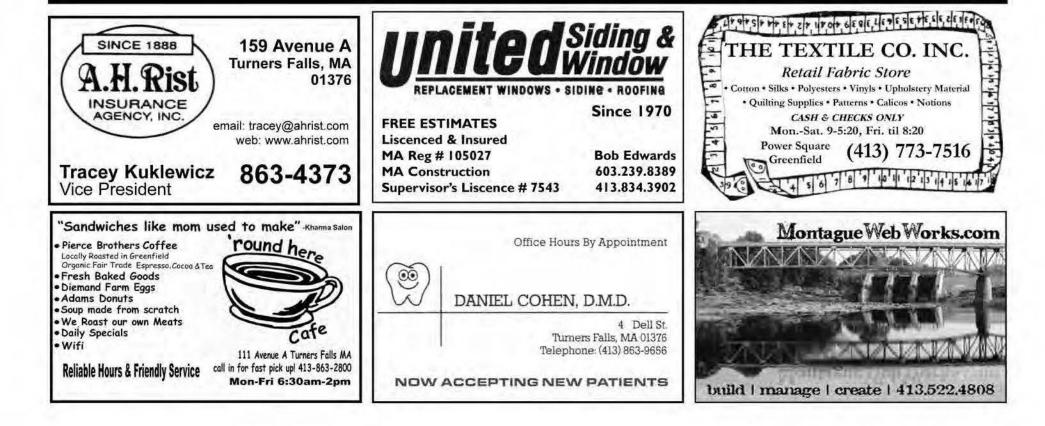
Later in the afternoon of Saturday, March 14th, starting at 1:00 p.m., there will be an open community reception of the new art installation in the Great Hall featuring "Harvesting Yesterday, Cultivating Tomorrow." The multi-media. collaborative exhibit celebrates Willa Cather's My Antonia and explores the history of the Connecticut River Valley and its stewardship over time through literature and art. For information on these and future events, call the Discovery Center at 413-863-3221 or check out greatfallsma.org.

which is still taking the lives of young Americans and Iraqi civilians six years after it began.

Last week, the Wendell Library inaugurated its new high-definition theater with a screening of Planet Earth, from the acclaimed 11-part spectacular BBC nature series.

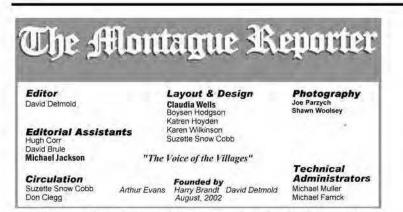
The Friends of the Wendell Library raised at least \$4,000 to set up the theater, Leppzer said.

He encouraged others to get involved in planning future films in the series. To do so, contact Rosie Heidkamp at the library at 978-544-3559 or rheidkam@cwmars.org, or contact Leppzer at 978-544-8313 or Robbie@turningtide.com



THE MONTAGUE REPORTER

March 12, 2009



Excerpts from the speech Superintendent Ken Rocke gave in welcoming the Joint Committee on Ways and Means to Turners Falls High School on Monday, March 9th:

### **Innovation and Collaboration** Provide Excellence in Education

### BY KEN ROCKE

GILL-MONTAGUE - We have a chance today to listen, to provide input, and to participate in this crucial discussion about education and the financing of it.

Many of our districts are still recovering from the cuts in state aid enacted in Fiscal Year 2004. We're grateful this year's approach protects us from those kinds of egregious cuts, and are hopeful that our legislators will endorse and extend that approach in FY '10 and beyond.

Gill-Montague was the first school district to voluntarily vote to join the Group Insurance Commission, in September of 2007. Other Franklin County districts soon followed. This brought down our health insurance rates in FY '09, gave us a rebate from our old self-insured group and we like to call the GIC the 'gift that keeps on giving' - we have just learned that the overall increase for GIC plans for FY '10 is just over 3%. The legislature gave us the tool, and we, the district, have put it to good use.

We also took the difficult but important step of consolidating elementary schools. We took four elementary schools that were inadequately staffed, and consolidated into three schools with better services for students at every level. This consolidation was done at the local level, but was supported by the Department of Elementary and Secondary Education. The result is better educational services for students throughout our schools.

We are also in the midst of a major reorganization of all of our special education services and programs. We have assumed con- midst of the national economic trol of some programs that were outsourced; we are keeping more students in our district, and are doing so for fewer dollars. These three organizational changes are three of the key factors listed in the fiscal report of

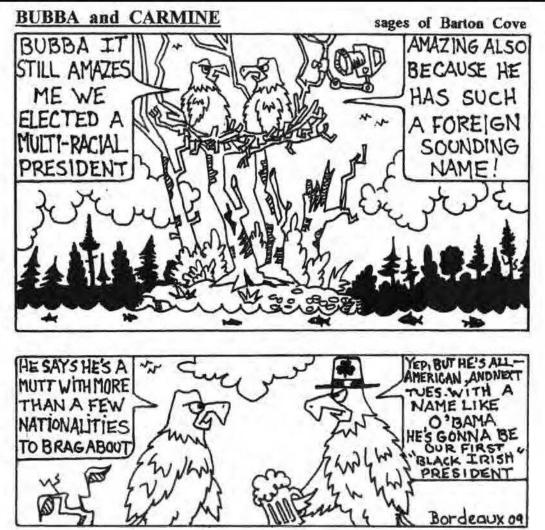
Readiness Project, as schools and districts move to build leadership and achievement capacity while controlling costs.

Another key factor listed in that report - regional educational collaboration - is high on the agenda of all of the school districts in Western Massachusetts. Unlike GIC, however, there is no roadmap, no pre-existing legislative process laid out that ensures the maintenance of high-quality education and the economies of scale that regional service delivery can bring. So, this may take a little longer, but we're working diligently at it.

The districts of Franklin County are banding together to issue a joint bid on school transportation. Our business managers meet together on a monthly basis, sharing information and cost-savings strategies. Our special education administrators do the same. We have formed a Franklin County superintendent's council, and all of the school committees of Franklin County are meeting, and are exploring the formation of a school committee council for Franklin County.

But we know that the Readiness Project, and today's discussion of the financing of education, is not just about money. It is also about education: what it means, how to improve it, and how essential good schools are to continued economic stability and growth. In this case, as has been eloquently pointed out, the moral and the pragmatic coincide. It is smart to invest in our schools and our children, and it is also the right thing to do.

I'm grateful that, even in the crisis, our state leaders Governor Patrick, Secretary of Reveille, Education and Commissioner of Education Chester, as well as our legislators and educational leaders at every level - have seen fit to continue to g 5



DENIS BORDEAUX CARTOON

### THE EDITOR LETTERS TO

## **Run for School Committee**

I've talked to a couple of people who are thinking about running for school committee, but they tell me they think serving on the committee would take too much time. Well, I'm not going to say it doesn't. But I can also say, for the most part, it is time very well spent.

Right now, more than ever, there is a unique opportunity for anyone who cares about our public schools and wants to be a part of setting their future direction. This election comes at a pivotal time for the Gill Montague School Regional District (GMRSD) as we face pressure from the state Department of Elementary and Secondary Education to regionalize and to create efficiencies by combining programs and services with neighboring Franklin County districts. We will see a transition in leadership both on the school committee and with the hiring of

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a new superintendent. And, of course, the fiscal challenges are great. But, with these challenges comes opportunity to prioritize educational programs, in collaboration with our teachers and administrative team, to determine what we absolutely need and want for our students.

Public schools are the very foundation of a town and community. They play a vital role in attracting businesses and families into town and in inspiring community spirit and pride. Anyone who attended Friday night's exciting tournament basketball game in the packed Turners Falls High School gymnasium can attest to that.

able for pick-up in the superintendent's office and are due back no later than 4:00 p.m. on March 27th. There are five open seats, two of which are vacant with no incumbent candidate.

Please consider running for school committee. The GMRSD is an outstanding school district poised to do great things in the coming years, and I encourage you to be a part of it. It doesn't require anything more than a dedication to the schools and a commitment to learning. It's true it will take time, but you won't regret the challenge and personal satisfaction of making a difference in your community.

> - Mary Kociela Montague

Nomination papers are avail-

### Stannard Votes to Shut VY This just in!

In addition to the 35 out of 45 of Stannard, Stannard, popula-Vermont cities and towns we tion 185, located high atop reported on last week that con- Stannard Mountain in the sidered a resolution at town Northeast Kingdom, has no meeting and voted to shut down the Vermont Yankee nuclear power plant by the time its 40year operating license expires in 2012, we can now add the town

Brick House will host a show at

their new performance space on

Saturday, March 14th, begin-

ning at 7:00 p.m. and unwinding

from there, with Motel Matches,

Graph, Strizhi, Ralph Eats

Dynamite, and the Accident the

Led Me to the World. Mood

5:30 p.m., the Brick House will

hold a GCC info session. GCC

music director Mathew Shippee

will be jamming with folks during regular drop-in hours, and

On Tuesday, March 24th, at

music for March Madness.

paved roads, but that did not stop citizens from making it out for annual town meeting last week. The vote to shut down Vermont Yankee was 16 to 11.

We Welcome **Your Letters!** 

Montague Reporter 58 4th St Turners Falls, MA 01376 FAX (413) 863-3050 reporter@montaguema.net

American Dead in Iraq and Afghanistan as of 3/11/09 US FORCES sisies in Iru of chie date 4257 661 31,089

O MARTINE PORT HARE

### Teen Center News

TURNERS FALLS - The joined by an admissions counselor to share info about the opportunities for everyone at GCC.

> A community awards dinner will be held on Wednesday. March 25th at 6 p.m. at St. Kaziemerz Hall, 197 Avenue A to celebrate our community and hear about what programs you want for your children. The Gill-Montague Community School Partnership event will feature a free lasagna dinner, and music.

Call Kara McLaughlin at 863-7310 for free tickets.

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	\$20	<b>gn Me</b> for 26 issu out-of-area		
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## NOTES FROM THE MONTAGUE SELECTBOARD Good News (with a Hitch) for Wastewater Control Facility

### BY DAVID DETMOLD

MONTAGUE - There is some good news for the town's wastewater treatment plant from Congressman John Olver's office, but it did not come without a hitch. WPCF superintendent Bob Trombley told the selectboard on Monday, March 9th, that he had received word the town had received a \$1 million STAG (state and tribal assistance) grant through the efforts of Congressman Olver, to be applied to upgrades at the town's treatment plant on Greenfield Road. That was the sum the town was hoping to receive. However, Trombley said, the terms of the grant require that \$450,000 of the \$1 million be provided in the form of town matching funds, to qualify for the remaining \$550,000 in federal funds.

Town administrator Frank Abbondanzio said the town would try to make the case to Olver's office that the town has already provided its matching share, through its investment in the \$5.6 million combined sewer overflow (CSO) abatement project and treatment plant upgrades now nearing completion. If that approach fails, Abbondanzio said, the town will seek a federal waiver on the local matching funds, on the basis that the town is already carrying a large debt service to pay for the CSO work. The town would also argue that a federal grant for the entire \$1 million would help stabilize the local workforce, particularly at the Southworth Paper mill, by lowering the cost of solids handling through additional treatment plant upgrades.

The town has also applied for \$6 million in federal stimulus funding through Governor Deval Patrick's office, to be used for a variety of additional projects at the treatment plant. Trombley said if that money comes through, the town would have to go out to bid to try and address a number of issues that had to be removed from the current CSO and treatment plant upgrades, when the projected costs exceeded the \$5.7 million the town appropriated. He said solids handling, a new roof for the operations building, correction of the uphill gradient of the influent pipe at the headworks building, parallel screening and grit removal at the headworks, are all projects that could be funded if the stimulus money comes through.

As it stands now, the CSO project and code compliance work at the operations building will be wrapping up more slowly than originally projected, as the contractor waits for delivery of special doors designed to provide fire and explosion protection at the operations building. Instead of an April completion date, Trombley said the project is more likely to be completed in June. But he said the project is still slated to come in under budget by about \$379,240.

Abbondanzio asked why DEP reports from last year showed the CSO flows entering the river still at high levels found prior to the project getting underway two years ago. Trombley said the system has not been tested yet with the new CSO handling features in place: the wet-weather chlorine tank was not completed until the end of last fall, for example. Trombley said the CSO system will have to be operated manually until the automatic controls become operational, after the code compliance work at the operations building is completed. He said the overflow regulator at Greenfield Road, for example, where the level was raised by 16 inches of new brickwork, would be tested next Tuesday, as a "dry run" of the entire CSO abatement system, "to make sure the engineers got their numbers right, and no one gets sewage in their cellar."

The board gave Trombley permission to hire Michael Little as a fulltime operator at the WPCF, at \$16.30 an hour, effective immediately. He has been working on a temporary basis for two months, and appeared to be the most qualified of the recent applicants to fill an opening at the plant. Little's brother, John, and John's son Tim, also work at the WPCF, and the board expressed concern that family disputes not be allowed to interfere with the smooth operation of the facility. Trombley assured the board that would not be a problem. "The atmosphere is very different than it has been," he said. "The old issues no longer exist at the treatment plant."

In other news, Chris Mason, chair of the Montague energy committee, told the board two openings exist on the committee, since Paul Setka failed to get sworn in or appear at committee meetings, and Carlyn Saltman resigned due to a scheduling conflict. Town residents interested in serving on the committee should call Wendy Bogusz at 863-3200, extension 108.

Mason offered to have two members of the energy committee serve on a joint task force with members of the selectboard and other town officials to oversee the process of implementing an energy services contract with Siemens Group, which is working for the Franklin Regional Council of Governments to provide energy conservation upgrades to town buildings and facilities in a number of Franklin County towns and school districts, including Montague. The board accepted that offer, and will have Abbondanzio seek participation on that advisory group from a member of the capital improvements committee, and the highway superintendent, among others.

The selectboard will meet with the Gill selectboard on Monday, March 16th, at 4:30 p.m. at the Gill town hall, to go over the proposed energy services contract between Siemens and the Gill-Montague Regional School District. Members of the energy committee will attend.

The Montague energy com-

### see MONTAGUE pg 14

### **ROCKE** from pg 4

speak about the improvement of our schools and about raising our aspirational level. It is not just students and families that aspire to good education. Schools and communities do the same.

Here in Franklin County, even as we deal with the school financing problem, we continue to expand and develop our vision, our aspirations, for what our schools can and should become.

In Gill-Montague, we are a district ready to blossom. We have put in place, with the assistance of the DESE, and the support of our communities, programs and services to students that improve student achievement, promote better retention in the upper grades, and build on

our professional teachers' abilities to communicate, encourage and teach. We have a new math curriculum, Math Expressions, which is showing great results with our elementary students. We have instituted a 9th Grade Academy in the high school, to provide a team-teaching approach at the freshman level, to ensure that no student is left behind. We've introduced a grant-funded dual-enrollment program for juniors and seniors - targeting low-income, non-traditional learners - with one of our best educational partners, Greenfield Community College.

We're very proud of what we've accomplished, but, like all districts, we're looking ahead at what we can do next, how we can further support our students in their acquisition of learning, of the skills and knowledge they will need to be successful in the increasingly challenging world they will be inheriting.

We are actively exploring introducing additional academically rigorous career and technical programs into our 11th and 12th grade years, so that our students will graduate collegeready, but with marketable skills. Examples include Project Lead the Way, a pre-engineering program of proven value, and a potential Health Careers Academy.

We are already involved in a groundbreaking program called Tools of the Mind, for pre-K and kindergarten, and we think it may offer our students a way of getting ready for elementary schooling which will increase both their joy in learning and their academic success.

We know that similar efforts are going on in all of the schools of Franklin County. What we have been able to achieve has been the result of partnership, of our towns working with and supporting our schools, of the DESE providing oversight and technical assistance, and now, also, the setting of educational vision from the office of the Secretary of Education.

As you consider the difficult issues of balancing adequate funding of public schools with the ability of our towns and our state to support those schools, the kind of innovative and effective educational system that our children need will require a continuation of the kind of support we have enjoyed in the past. This is a great opportunity for our community to see and participate in this process.









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## **Vermont Health Department Proposes Increase to Radiation Limits at VY**

DAWN MONTAGUE

VERNON, VT - Vermont's health department held a hearing this week to take public comment on a proposed rule change which would allow the Vermont Yankee nuclear power plant to release 30% more radiation into the atmosphere during routine daily operations. The hearing was held at the Vernon Elementary School, the elementary school located closer than any other in the country to an operating nuclear power plant.

On the evening of Monday, March 9th, more than 30 people gathered in the gymnasium of the Vernon school, just a few hundred feet from the perimeter fence of the Vermont Yankee Nuclear Power Station. The Vermont Department of Health has proposed amendments to the state's radiological health rule, and this hearing was a state-mandated opportunity for the public to make official, on-the-record comments about the proposal. Several residents of Gill and Colrain testified, in addition to nearly a dozen Vermonters.

The hearing provided a forum for non-Vermont residents to speak to state officials about their concerns with Vermont Yankee, since it is directly across the Connecticut River from New Hampshire and barely five miles from the Massachusetts border.



Kathleen Krevetski testifying. At the desk left to right are Larry Crist and William Irwin.

William Irwin, chief of radiological health at the Department of Health, chaired the event, though he did not answer any questions at the hearing. Dixie Henry, Assistant Attorney General and counsel for the Department of Health, and Larry Crist, director of public health preparedness, were also present but did not speak.

In October 2008, the Vermont Department of Health was urged by the Legislative Committee on Administrative Rules to begin a public review process, following a finding that Department of Health officials had amended the way public exposure to radiation emitted by Vermont Yankee was calculated.

That amendment effectively allows Entergy Nuclear Vermont Yankee to release 30% more radiation into the atmosphere

every year. This change is based on the logic that a person's body only absorbs about 60% of the radiation to which it is exposed. study by Oak Ridge A Associated Universities recommended that the Vermont Department of Health therefore use a conversion factor of 0.60 to calculate biological "dose," a major departure from Vermont's past practice of measuring overall exposure based on the measurements taken by radiation dosimeters mounted on the grounds bordering the reactor.

In recent years, Entergy has been buying up homes surrounding the reactor, allowing the corporation to push back the boundary at which radiation is measured.

Under the previous monitoring method, Entergy Nuclear, the corporation that owns Vermont Yankee, would be in violation of state law if levels of radiation measured at the fence line were in excess of 20 millirem/year. (By contrast, the federal limit set by the Nuclear Regulatory Commission is 100 mrem/year, whereas the Environmental Protection Agency limits exposure to 25 mrem/year.) With the new calculation method, measurements as high as 33 mrem/year would still be legal in Vermont, since using the conversion factor would bring the calculated "biological dose" to 19.8 mrem.

All members of the public who spoke at the hearing were opposed to the rule change. Many argued that using a dose measurement instead of the exposure measurement does not take more vulnerable people into account, such as children and pregnant women. Kathleen Krevetski, a nurse from Rutland, Vermont, stated in a prepared testimony that the new radiation standards "do not follow current state radiation regulations which mandate that reasonable effort must be made to make sure exposure and doses of radiation are 'As Low As Reasonably Achievable,' known as the ALARA principle."

A perceived violation of the ALARA principle was a point those testifying came back to repeatedly, saying that increased levels of measured radiation are due to Entergy's 2006 20% increased power output, from 540 to 650 MW. The uprate resulted in the measurable increase in the radiation emitted by the reactor since 2006.

Another source of increased radiation is Vermont Yankee's new method of nuclear waste storage. In the summer 2008 Entergy began storing spent fuel rods in above-ground portable concrete and steel containers

strength of that dammed power. The wattle wall flowing through from top to bottom "acts as a thread to pull everything together," evoking "the past growing into the future," as a coppiced tree uses the energy of its roots to pump back into the cutting.

Stenciled onto the actual walk, a poem by Greenfield poet Maria Williams-Russell will gradually wear away as pedestrians walk on it, and be renewed with new paint year by year.

Here is the poem:

This is a village We are woven bricks Mudstone and fish Train rails and intention We are arrowhead and industry Water flying over cliff

called "dry casks."

Claire Chang of Gill testified on the subject of the increased power output and the dry cask storage. In an email interview, she explained, "The storage of six dry casks with high level radioactive fuel rods onsite, in 2008, further adds to the amount of radiation every living thing in the area is exposed to. By 2012, there will be an additional 68 dry casks emitting radiation every day."

Many people expressed frustration with the Department of Health, including Clay Turnbull of Townsend, Vermont, who accused the Department of not protecting residents. "Allowing Vermont Yankee to emit higher amounts of radiation," Turnbull said, "is not in the public health interest."

The proposed amendments to the Vermont radiological health rule remain open to public comment. Written comments must be received by March 23rd to be entered into the record. To submit a comment, write to: Dr. William E. Irwin, CHP Radiological Health Chief Vermont Department of Health PO Box 70 Burlington, VT 05402-0070 Or online at: healthvermont.gov/admin/public\_comment.aspx.

We are shad bush and oar Artist and bridge A village A quiet cradle of churches Chestnut and shoal Lantern and flicker We are sewn Brothers and sisters Soil, song and river

Gutwein will begin work on the installation once the ground thaws completely. Volunteers to help weave the wattle fence, out of apple cuttings from a local orchard, plant the crabapple. hybrid chestnut, or shadbush which will grace the ends of the pathway, or involve themselves in other ways, are encouraged to Gutwein

write baswein@gmail.com.

ALCHEMY from pg 1

brigade of students and scouts on Earth Day last year to pick up trash around the pathways. She said at the time she hoped the improved walkways would encourage a two-way flow of foot traffic, with new shops, bakeries, and eateries acting as a magnet to bring folks back downtown again.

Gutwein, a Greenfield resident who grew up in the midwest, has also found downtown Turners to be something of a magnet. "The bones of the town are pretty amazing," he said. He spent time walking and exploring the town as he developed the concept for the pathway installation.

The design is anchored at the

top by a sitting wall, to be made up of rocks from different eras of the area's geologic past. A railroad lantern will hang from a branch of one of the great oak trees that form a natural tripod above the path, with the lantern symbolizing the railroad that once ran to the mills. "The trains killed the river traffic," that made the locks and canal from Montague City to the Great Falls a commercial thoroughfare. "But the same sense of striving for efficiency and moving materials to long distances also led to the displacing of industry to the South and overseas and the changing of Turners Falls," Gutwein said.

Live willow stakes will be woven into an urn at the bottom of the path, "an urn to put your thoughts into and influence the growth of the future." In a synthesis of metaphysics and whimsy, Gutwein imagines bypassers placing "small pieces of paper sort of like a prayer - in the living urn, and next time it rains, the ink and paper would dissolve into the soil, fueling the growth of the future." In case school children and others who use the path do not naturally think of placing written prayers into the willow urn, "A sign will engage unsus-

A concrete wall and brick pedestal will evoke the brute force of the dam that holds back the river, and the industrial buildings made possible by the

pecting gazers to make this sym-

bolic gesture."



#### 7

## NOTES FROM THE WENDELL SELECTBOARD Swem Retires, Block Appointed Highway Super, Slavas Protests Mahar Appointment

**BY JOSH HEINEMANN - As** the Wendell selectboard opened its March 4th meeting, board member Christine Heard was telling town accountant Janet Swem, "We're sorry you are retiring." As an accountant provided by FRCOG, Swem took over the town's books at the beginning of the town center construction projects, brought records up to date, and has kept them in order since. Swem has been the source authority on what accounts may be used for any given purpose. She plans to retire in April.

The board announced they have hired David Bock as highway superintendent, following the recommendation of the highway commission. Bock has been acting supervisor for the road crew since Dan Bacigalupo passed away last year.

Heard reported that a committee, formed as a result of the emergency management meetings held following the December 12th ice storm and resulting power failure in town, had divided Wendell into 27 neighborhoods of 10 to 15 households within walking distance of each other so that, in an emergency, one or two people could knock on doors and find out if all town residents are OK.

Cemetery commission chair Richard Mackey met the board briefly to discuss storage arrangements for cemetery equipment. The cemetery commission has been sharing the use of a storage box with the road crew, but now the road crew is taking up more and more of the space. The attorney he spoke with said the cemetery equipment, if bought with perpetual maintenance money, should be kept separate, and should be locked up.

Selectboard chair Ted Lewis suggested Mackey look into buying another small storage box.

Town coordinator Nancy Aldrich said the planning board was holding a public hearing at 7:00 p.m. on March 17th for a secondary dwelling special permit, and was asking for selectboard comments. The original request by Jonathan and Susan von Ranson was for a guest cabin permit for a section of the barn they are rebuilding on Locke Village Road. The structure is less than five feet from the road right-of-way, but is 150 years old, older than the setback bylaw.

Keller said it would require a variance, but, "That is not our department; we don't need a formal comment." Lewis said, "That's their headache. That's the comment."

Aldrich said that the eightmile round trip to the Wendell Depot posting place she must make weekly, if not more often, for postings consumes time and fuel that could be better spent. She will have to begin charging mileage for her trips there. Faxing material there would work, but the post office forbids use of their fax machine for non-post office business.

Board members suggested it might be cost-effective for the town to buy a fax machine that town clerk Anny Hartjens could keep at her house to get postings to Wendell Depot.

Aldrich said she has received a booklet that suggests forming a 'Complete Count Committee' for the 2010 census, to make sure everyone in town fills out their census form. Lewis said, "A lot of people do not, and it hurts the town," in representation, as far as state aid and road money is concerned. Keller suggested putting a notice in the town newsletter, the senior newsletter and *the Swift River Current*.

Following a request from National Grid, the selectboard scheduled a pole hearing for a new utility pole on Montague Road near Blueberry Lane for their next meeting, on March 18th.

A third-party inspection is required for all underground fuel tanks. Highway commission chair Harry Williston thinks the town has one, which serves the highway garage and fire station. Keller thought that maybe it should be replaced with a modern, above-ground tank. Lewis remembered the tank is about 20 years old and made of plastic, so it should never rot or need replacement. Heard said we should see what the inspector finds and recomdiscontinued roads, and Sears Road was not listed. If Sears Road is determined not to be discontinued, the people who bought the property on Sears Road at the September 20th auction of town property will be allowed to build a house there, and the town may be required to maintain the road.

Finance committee chair Michael Idoine told the selectboard he might have discovered what makes Wendell look so much richer than Orange in the formula the state uses to determine the town's minimum assessment for the Mahar Regional School District. Idoine said it is time to stop looking to Orange to honor the original school contract that calls for towns to pay the same amount for each student attending Mahar, and instead look to the legislature to change the formula.

Idoine said 8½% of the population of Orange is of high school age, and 5% of Wendell's population is of high school age, and in the state formula this difference in school age population

**BY DAVID DETMOLD - It's** 

mud season in Wendell, and this

year it's a doozy. Residents of

Cooleyville Road are parking

their cars at the town common

and walking in, and in other

parts of town, arrangements are

being made to carry in groceries

"Cooleyville, Wickett Pond,

Stone Road, the upper end of

New Salem Road, they are all

closed," said 13-consecutive

term Wendell selectboard chair

Ted Lewis, who has lived

through a few mud seasons. He

seemed unfazed by the current

hubcap-sucking depth of mias-

mic ooze on the town's dirt

one who lives in New England,"

opined Lewis matter-of-factly.

"It's been a hard winter, and the

But for Molly Kaynor, out at

frost is pretty deep."

"This is nothing new for any-

roads.

by foot or on horseback.

causes the state to determine Wendell as being richer.

Idoine said someone should go to the Swift River School Committee and propose they establish a regional school study committee, and that study committee should consider all possible options for Swift River School and Union 28. The new Mahar Regional Superintendent, Michael Baldassare, considers forming a K-through-12 district with the towns sending students to Mahar a high priority, and the Department of Elementary and Secondary Education is pushing for larger school districts, so it would be better for the Swift River School Committee to be planning for the future rather than waiting and reacting.

Finance committee member Jim Slavas said he requested a draft of the Mahar budget from the school committee, and "was stiff-armed." He thought poorly of the school committee's refusal to give a public document to the finance committee of a member town.

Slavas also had a low opinion

## Mud Season in Wendell

regularly, and on a trip to drive her father to a doctor's appointment, she was forced to turn back when she came on a neighbor stuck in the muck.

"We go through mud" – when she's driving her husband's four-wheel drive truck anyway – "we're fine with that, but when it gets above the wheels and you can't open the door..." She stopped just short of complaining.

"All our dirt roads are pretty bad," said highway commissioner Bill Clough. "You can't get out and grade 'em yet. It just makes 'em worse."

Lewis said school buses were prohibited from entering the closed roads, but residents are allowed to go through – at their own risk. "We don't stop 'em going in. If you don't get too many cars you don't pump 'em up too much," he explained.

of the process the Mahar school committee used to select a superintendent to replace Reza Namin, who has taken another job and is leaving in July. Slavas said that if the process used did not violate the open meeting law, it certainly violated its intent. The posted agenda had no mention of appointing a new superintendent, but after Namin's resignation was formally announced, a motion was made, seconded, and voted on to appoint Michael Baldassare to replace him. The measure passed five to three with three abstentions. If an agenda is posted, a significant addition to that agenda during a meeting violates open meeting law. Even if the school committee's action was legal, Slavas argued, it demonstrated a closed attitude on the part of the Orange repre-Mahar sentatives to the Regional School Committee.

Dick Baldwin, Wendell's representative, was not informed of the impending action, as other members of the committee had been prior to the meeting, according to Slavas.

spread a little gravel here and there early on familiar boggy patches and managed to baby the town through mud season without too much fuss. Whether there is a learning curve for his protégés, or whether the depth of the cold winter frost would have daunted even an old hand like Danny, there's no telling now.

Newly hired highway boss Dave Bock was busy most of the day on a washout on Jennison Road, and highway commissioner Harry Williston was sensibly out of town when called for comment. But his wife Dolores summed the problem up in a nutshell.

"It's mud season," she said. "Not much you can do about it."

Turners Falls High School presents The Music Man

ct- mends.

Treasurer Carolyn Manley came in with a map she thought was official, which shows the roads in town, including which roads have been discontinued. On that map, Sears Road is not officially discontinued. Aldrich had searched a file that listed and others like her, patience wears thin around this time of March.

"When we moved out here 23 years ago, I thought the people who complained were terrible." But since Sunday, she has been unable to get her son to school Kaynor said one neighbor had rented a four-wheel drive vehicle to get to work. Another neighbor took it a step further, she said, and rented a motel room in Northampton. She spoke fondly of former road boss Dan Bacigalupo's "dirt road wisdom," whereby he

March 20th & 21st at 7:30 p.m. March 22nd at 1:30 p.m. Tickets: \$8 adults, \$7 seniors and students, on sale now at World Eye Bookshop, Greenfield; the Bookmill, Montague Center; and at TFHS. For more info, call the school at 413-863-7200



WAYS from page 1

to face the structural deficits." And he added, "We'll go off, in effect, a kind of cliff in two years."

But those cautionary words did not dissuade almost anyone who gave testimony - from Lee MacKinnon, Western Mass regional coordinator for Reach Out and Read, a pediatric initiative that works with health care providers to give young parents support and books to read out loud to their pre-school tots, to the three retired teachers from Munson, who came to tell the legislators not to mess with their retirement plans - from defending their own programs and calling for continued state aid at current levels.

school districts from mid-year cuts or projected spending for fiscal year 2010 on state Chapter 70 education aid, \$168 million will still have to be found "to get to a minimum level of foundation state aid" to school districts.

Geoffrey Beckwith, director of the Massachusetts Municipal Association, told the legislators his organization was anticipating "thousands of layoffs" of public employees in Massachusetts, despite the stimulus package. "We have wide budget gaps throughout the state," he said. For the greatest immediate budgetary gain, to hold down spiraling health care cost for public employees, Beckwith called on the legislature to "give cities and towns plan design authority at the



Mike Naughton, Precinct 2, testified on Montague's budget woes. "Montague is in the process of falling off the cliff."

Michael Knapik of Westfield, the ranking Republican on the Ways and Means Committee, asked Reveille, "Could we backfill the general fund with economic stimulus funds? What is the degree of flexibility," in the stimulus bill, to allow the Commonwealth "to get to a level of stability?"

With town and city officials looking on, Reveille answered, "We're eager to garner as much as possible for education." He added local communities would benefit by increased stimulus spending on Title I accounts, money for early childhood education and Pell grants for college applicants, as well as increased spending for special education and MCAS preparation. He noted that even with Governor Patrick's effort to "hold harmless" local

Toward this end, Senator same level as the state," and said the MMA "strongly supports a local option meals tax, and the hotel and motel tax."

> He said local aid to cities and towns has declined \$700 million below fiscal 2002 levels, after adjusting for inflation, with a further cut of \$400 million threatened for 2010. He spoke against a shift in the "target share" for cities' and towns' support of local schools, contained in a littleknown section of the Governor's budget, which combined with cuts in state aid to cities and towns would have "a very negative impact on municipal services," Beckwith said.

> In his remarks, Commissioner had noted the Chester Commonwealth spends about \$13 billion on K-12 education, with 56% of that coming from

local revenues, 38% from state revenues, and 6% from federal revenues at present.

Mayor Claire Higgins of Northampton said, "We appreciate the Governor has held Chapter 70 harmless, but there is no way we can hold the schools harmless." She said Northampton is eyeing a \$3 million cut to the school department, and 12% budget cuts for town departments. Northampton currently spends 61% of its budget on education, and the level of that spending provided by local property taxes has risen from 50% to 60% in the last decade. "There is no way we can afford that with the level of cuts we are experiencing," Higgins said.

Alan Sentkowski of Princeton, the president of the Massachusetts Selectmen's Association, spoke up in favor of maintaining state payments in lieu of taxes on state-owned land (PILOT) at least at their current level, and credited Princeton's former town administrator, Denis Rindone, for getting the legislature to respect their commitment to the PILOT program. He also spoke of the huge impact the December 12th ice storm has had on many central and western Massachusetts communities - his town, which has a municipal light district and 79 miles of roads, had to repair 100% of electrical service and clear 100% of the roads and the continuing effect of that storm on their budgets. Princeton has been authorized to borrow \$5.2 million to pay for clean-up from that storm. FEMA and MEMA do not provide 100% reimbursement, in the best of times.

Bernie Kubiak, of the Deerfield selectboard, said his town has put forward a \$12.7 million budget with a 6/10ths-of-1% increase for the coming fiscal year. But even with that budget, Deerfield is "\$180,000 in the hole and sinking fast," despite cancelling cost-of-living increases for employees, and maintaining no cushion for fuel increases. He said health care costs have been rising at three times the rate of inflation. "Deerfield managed to hang onto local services



UMass President Jack. Wilson said bis five campus system is looking at a possible \$102 million budget cut in FY'10. Mid-year budget cuts have already led to wage freezes, furloughs and the loss of 100 jobs. Though fees have been raised, 500 further layoffs are possible, he said, unless stimulus money offsets some of the lost revenue. (Rear) Commissioner of Higher Education Richard Freeland said community colleges are also being forced to raise fees. "The shift of cost from state to student is growing just as the demand in applications increases,

as parents realize the cost savings of public higher education."

through the last downturn, but there is no guarantee we can do that now."

Pat Allen, of Montague's selectboard, told the legislators, "Our town contributes \$2 million above the minimum foundation level," for local aid to the schools, yet still the proposed GMRSD budget for 2010 contains an \$840,000 increase, "double our new revenues." She said the town is discussing wage freezes and furloughs with employee unions.

"Our reserves will be gone in one or two years at most," said Allen, boxed in by Proposition 21/2 on one side, the DESE controlled school budget on the other, and by box turtles on the Montague Plains, hemming in the town's hopes for an expansion of the industrial base on Millers Falls Road.

Though he departed before local comment could be taken, DESE Commissioner Chester offered these remarks to the legislators. "The investment the General Court has made in the last 15 years has yielded great dividends. Massachusetts test scores are ranked among the highest in the nation, he said, and

a recent international study has compared Massachusetts students favorably in math and science "to the top performers in the world."

Nevertheless, Chester said, 11,000 to 12,000 students fail to graduate with their high school class each year in the Commonwealth, with outsized percentages of students from poor families and students with disabilities among the dropouts. He also said that 38% of students who graduate from high school, after passing MCAS requirements, and who go on to matriculate at public colleges, "end up being placed in non-credit-bearing courses," because, "they don't have the skills higher education expects of them."

Chester's associate commissioner, Jeff Wulfson, remained until the end of the hearing, taking note of comments from the general public.

Among the local residents who testified, Steve Ellis, of Precinct 4, got the loudest applause, calling for a moratorium on school choice for the coming year, and urging the legislators "to consider very carefully

see WAYS page 10



### **Sheffield School News**

### Dr. Seuss Appears for Birthday Party



Pajama Story Hour with Max, Max, Dr. Seuss, holding Jonathan, Spencer, Josh and Kyle at the Sheffield School.

### BY BRIDGET SWEET

TURNERS FALLS - News Flash! Dr. Seuss reads at Pajama Story Hour! Free swimming lessons! Principal Musgrave teaches dance for 21st Century Full Day Learning Program, and 4th graders tour UMass campus!

The Pajama Story Hour held last Thursday night took place in four different classrooms full of parents and children in pajamas, waiting to hear stories read by teachers Lauren Clary, Sharyn Wood, Gail LeBlanc, Amy Bernard, Donna Klaiber, Steve Damon, and Cathy Coutu, joined by reading specialist Laurel Rollins. Six-Dinner Sid, Inga Moore, and Why

Mosquitoes Buzz in People's Ears: A West African Tale, by Verna Aarderma, were two of the much-appreciated tales.

Afterwards, everyone was invited to meet Dr. Seuss in the library. White Christmas lights lined the area, carpeted for youngsters to sit comfortably and listen to "Dr. Seuss" (principal Elizabeth Musgrave) read a rousing version of Yertle the Turtle, that timeless tale of overweening ambition and the common man, or turtle.

Before ending, Musgrave reminded parents of the Read Across America program, which began on March 2nd, the birthday of Springfield's own Theodore Geisel, the real Dr. Seuss. Sheffield is participating in this nationwide program.

"When students read ten chapters or ten age-appropriate books and write the titles down, their teacher will give them ten pennies to put in this tree, and we'll have a big ice cream party after," Musgrave said.

The evening ended with singing 'Happy Birthday' to Dr. Seuss, with birthday cake and hot cocoa for the families.

Musgrave said, "I would estimate we had at least 100 children at the Pajama Story Hour. With their parents, guardians and teachers we were at 200 people - maybe more."

Teachers were heard to remark, "Awesome turnout!" with parents saying, "I'm glad we did it." "He's soo happy to come back to school in PJs!"

Parents picking up their children after school found Turners Falls High School sophomore and director of LAPPS (Local Aquatics Program for Personal Safety) Katherine Kuklewicz offering free lessons for the week of March 9th to 13th.

"Free swimming lessons for Sheffield students [grades 1 to 5] held at the Turners Falls High School pool and free transportation!" Kuklewicz pitched.

Former TFHS student Alice

'Ali' Urban, created LAPPS two years ago from the Mount Holyoke Leadership program. To keep it going, Kuklewicz raised money from Bruce Schwartz, St. Stan's, St. Kaz's, Our Lady of Peace Woman's Group, the Big Y and others contributing toward the snacks, bus fee, and miscellaneous program expenses.

Kuklewicz has sixteen volunteer swim instructors McKenna Brunell, Erin Casey, Sam Colton, Nina Dodge, MaKayla Dolhenty, Kristy Dunbar, Teddy Dunbar, Sarah Foster, Brooke Hastings, Kelli Humphrey, Mark Hudyma, Chris Jennison, Chris McMahon, Sara Pease, Natasha Vaughn, and Nick Woods - to assist her, with 17 Sheffield students attending.

This program was designed for kids that don't have the opportunity to swim or are scared of being in the water, while others are Bluefish members. Kuklewicz's mother, Barbara, added, "No prior swimming skills are needed. Katie teaches different swimming safety skills [bobbing, floating, etc.] in the water."

For more information on this great program, Kuklewicz can be reached at 413-863-2023.

A new quarter started for the 21st Century Full Day Learning Program, and Principal Musgrave is teaching a dance class on Fridays. First and second graders are in one group, while older students are in a second group at the Hillcrest auditorium. Students will gain from Musgrave's twenty years of professional dance experience, and will appreciate the high school's upcoming production of the Music Man even more, when Eulalie Shinn cries, "One Grecian Urn! Two Grecian Urns!"

Fourth graders toured the University of Massachusetts, Amherst campus this week, scouting prospective dorm rooms. They were able to see the National Acrobats of China Company at the Fine Arts Center. Hoop diving and Igarian Acrobatics were some of the exciting programs in this 53year-old company's two hour show.

Afterwards, the students toured the campus to eat bagged lunches in the dining hall. Bellies full, they walked to the 44-year-old Warren McGuirk Alumni Stadium and had a question and answer session with current Minutemen football stars and newly-appointed head coach Kevin Morris. Did the subject of early enrolment and football scholarships for academically and athletically gifted fourth graders come up? We'll have to leave you wondering, as we are out of space for this week's column.

## Turners Falls Suburban Basketball Team Wins Championship!



The Suburban League Champion team: (front row L to R) Zach Wright, Liam Ellis, Nick York, Tyler Charboneau, Jalen Sanders, Keinan Scanlon, and Kyle Jarvis; (second row) Giordan Noetzel, Zach Demars, Alex Carlisle, Josh Garbacik and Emmett Turn; (back row) coaches Steve Ellis and Gary Turn.

### BY STEVE ELLIS

MONSON - On March 8th, the top scorer, Liam Ellis, with two Turners Falls Suburban grades 5 and 6 basketball team defeated its mettle as guards Zach Hatfield 45-44 to earn the Demars and Giordan Noetzel (8 Suburban Green League

first-half lead, tagging Turners' fouls. Unfazed, Turners showed points) drilled 3 pointers, and to wear down the potent The Turners Falls Suburban Hatfield starters. In the closing seconds, Nick York (6 points) made a bullet pass to Tyler Charboneau, whose buzzerbeating jumper sent the teams into the half tied at 27.

Both teams came out of halftime with tremendous defensive intensity, with Turners' Alex Carlisle (4 points) and Emmett playing smothering Turn defense against Hatfield's prolific guard tandem of Christian Smiaroski and David Longstreeth, whom they held to a combined five points in the second frame.

Ellis returned to the floor to score 7 of his 11 points down the stretch, and Charboneau continued his dramatics, draining a baseline three as the half was winding down to give Turners an edge they would not relinquish. Following a final missed shot by Hatfield, the team mobbed the court to celebrate its first Suburban League Championship.

Basketball program is managed by Steve Ellis and is made possible by the Montague Elks Lodge 2521. This program is open to youth from Gill, Montague and Erving and will expand to include both a grade 5/6 and grade 7/8 team next fall. Those interested in more information can contact Steve at steven ellis66@comcast.net.



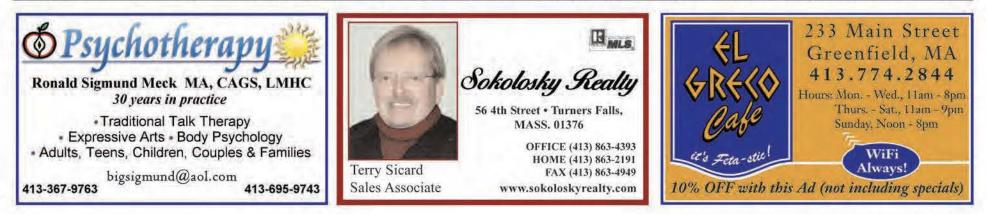


Division tournament championship at Monson High School. The win moved top-seeded Turners to a league-best 18-1 on the season, registering its only loss against second-seeded Hatfield (16-3), with whom it split two regular season games. Hatfield shot out to an early

reserve forward Keinan Scanlon sunk two offensive put-backs and a free throw to narrow the lead.

Turners showed its depth, rotating Jalen Sanders, Zach Wright, Kyle Jarvis and Josh Garbacick into the game, each playing effectively and working





## From Farm to Fuel Tank \$108,000 Grant Awarded to Fund Farm Biodiesel Coop



David Freeman speaks to the crowd about the benefits of farm produced biodiesel at the Great Falls Discovery Center on Friday

BY FARRAH ALEXANDER GREAT FALLS – If you think gas prices were tough on you this past summer when they peaked at over four dollars a gallon for regular, and close to five dollars for diesel, imagine how tough it was on Mike Balawender of Balawender Farms in Cheshire and other local farmers, whose tractors can have gas tanks with a 65-gallon capacity but only get one mile per gallon.

"When I'm working the tractor in low gear, I get maybe one mile a gallon, and then between one to five miles per gallon traveling," Balawender said. "I have five tractors and each burns about 30 gallons a day; that's 150 gallons a day when we're busy at the height of summer. At five dollars a gallon, that's \$750 a day just for fuel."

It's no wonder, then, that agricultural producers and officials gathered on Friday at the Great Falls Discovery Center in Turners Falls not only to announce but also to celebrate a Massachusetts \$108,000 Agricultural Innovation Center Grant for on-farm cooperative biodiesel production in Western Massachusetts. The grant, which will be matched with in kind and cash contributions from the farmers, will allow for the purchase of a custom made mobile biodiesel processor and seed press.

The grant was awarded to Field and Table, a non-profit agri-

cultural and small business consulting collective, which recently relocated to Turners Falls, which will administer the cooperative development effort of the four family farms: David Freeman and Christine O'Brien of Freeman Farm in Heath; Mike Balawender of Balawender Farm in Cheshire, Doug Mason and Nina Marshall of Heath and Tedd White and Lisa Turner of the White Farm in Hawley.

And it seems it couldn't have come too soon for Balawender, who farms 380 acres of hay in Berkshire County.

"I was a little skeptical, but as I reached into my pocket and grabbed my last two dollars to go buy fuel with again, it was getting pretty scary – we were running out of pretty much every option that was available," Balawender

said.

"I have my own reasons for wanting to do this. I don't like going to the gas station and having to pay what they charge you – and they'll hit you with whatever they want to hit you with. If they wake up on the wrong side of the bed the price [may] go up to five dollars – you never know," Balawender continued.

"If everybody gets together and just takes a little bit less, we can get some of these guys out of Iraq. This is the beginning of it."

The farmer-members of the co-op will be growing and harvesting oil seed crops, using equipment purchased with funds from the grant which will enable them to produce biodiesel fuel at significant savings over retail fuel prices.

see **BIODIESEL** pg 11

### WAYS from page 8

what our state's approach to regionalization ought to be."

Ellis said, "These are critical questions for our communities. School choice certainly offers something for parents and students. But it really facilitates economic flight," from "less affluent school districts to more affluent school districts."

Committee co-chair Steve Kulik (D-Worthington) said the Franklin County school districts, who have been meeting jointly for two years to discuss ways they can collaborate to improve education and institute cost savings in the county, could jointly agree to prohibit school choice within the county without any legislative action, should they so choose.

In her remarks, Linda Dunlevy, director of the Franklin Regional Council of Governments, noted that eight out of nine school districts in Franklin County will be going out to bid jointly on transportation for their students this year, a move that should save hundreds of thousands of tax dollars. Nonetheless, Ellis called for caution and clear criteria before districts are induced to merge. "When we start to talk about the mergers of districts," Ellis said, we should not say, "Let's wait til Greenfield fails; let's wait for Gill-Montague to fail, and then join them together. Is there not some possibility that will create more outflow of students, with motivated parents taking their children to surrounding school districts? I haven't seen a plan yet to govern regionalization."

Montague finance committee member and Precinct 2 town meeting member Mike Naughton was also among the local speakers. He told the legislators who stayed to hear the public, "The problems we have in Montague didn't just start with the current financial crisis, but have existed for some time." He credited the Gill-Montague schools for joining the GIC and consolidating elementary schools, but said these steps had not led to assessments the towns could afford.

"I've heard a number of speakers talk about the dangers of relying on stimulus funds because we might fall off a cliff in a few years," Naughton continued. "Well, speaking for the town of Montague, we're in the process of falling off the cliff. Over the past ten years or so we have shifted about 1% a year of our revenues to the education budget, and we have cut back in our other operations drastically."

He encouraged the legislators, as did a number of other speakers, to cease relying so heavily on property taxes to fund local schools and services, and to raise income taxes, progressively. He also told the legislators to make the hard choices now about "what we can afford, and what we have to do without," because there is simply not enough money in state or local budgets to fund "all the wonderful ideas" proponents had spent the day testifying in support of.

Representative Steve Kulik (D-Worthington), who cochaired the hearing with Senator Benjamin Downing (D-Pittsfield), said the Ways and Means Committee chose Turners Falls High School as a venue for the hearing because, "It stands out as a responsible and energy efficient renovation. It's designated as a Green School, one of the first in the state to receive that designation. Also, the Gill-Montague district, as a school district, is going through real struggles right now. I hoped we could use this as an opportunity to see a rural school district and the struggles they have, but also to let the GMRSD show off a little bit. They have great things going on. They have a great facility, committed leadership, good academic outcomes. The committee got to see the National Honor Society students working the cameras [for MCTV, which is broadcasting reruns of the hearing on Channel 17 this week]. This was a chance to showcase all that."

Other committee members attending the hearing included: Rep. Rosemary Sandlin, (D-Agawam); Rep. Christopher Speranzo, (D-Pittsfield); Rep. Robert Hargraves, (R-Groton); Rep. Chris Donelan (D-Orange); Rep. Denis Guyer, (D-Dalton); Rep. Michael Kane (D-Holyoke); Rep. Todd Smola (R- Palmer); and Rep. Robert Rice (D-Gardner).

Kulik said the committee gathered important information at the hearing, including the news from Education Secretary Reveille that federal stimulus money can be made available for local school districts and public higher education in upcoming months to smooth out some of the deficits that will occur, even if the Governor's pledge to level fund Chapter 70 is upheld. He said the legislators needed to pay attention to local officials' plea for a speedy resolution of state aid figures, which are being held up now "because we are trying to really grapple with the depth of our budget deficit right now." And he said the legislature would follow up on local pleas to reform the school aid formula.

Meanwhile, he said the legislature expects to soon pass a municipal relief bill, even before they issue a budget, and Kulik said a bill he has filed to grant health care plan design reform for cities and towns should be acted on soon, and, he hopes, positively.



**BIODIESEL** from pg 10 Biodiesel is a renewable fuel alternative for diesel engines made from vegetable oil. It is the only alternative fuel approved the by Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) and has passed every test of the Clean Air Act. It is non-toxic, biodegradable and contains no petroleum. And, biodiesel burns clean, emitting up to 85% fewer cancer-causing agents, and significantly reducing pollutants that contribute to global warming and smog.

The biodiesel processor will be assembled as a mobile unit, allowing each farmer to process the oilseed crops on their own farm, eliminating the need to build a dedicated remote site and the need to truck to it. Sunflower seeds will be the main crop used. As an added bonus, the by-product, which will be pelletized, is high in protein and can be used for livestock feed, reducing feed costs.

"The on-farm costs are reduced to tilling, planting, harvesting, and storage. The mobile unit eliminates many handling, trucking, construction, and other costs involved in having a processor at one location." Freeman said.

"It's more efficient to move the mobile unit to the crop than to haul the crop over the road to the unit," Tedd White added.

All four farms are within 30

miles of each other.

Like Balawender, White is a dairy farmer. He farms 230 acres of land in Charlemont and Hawley by the Berkshire East ski area.

"The situation for dairy farmers now is very grave. Farmers are receiving less than the cost of production. People might ask, 'How is that possible?' It's because dairy farmers subsidize their own farms family members work on the farm and they do all kinds of other things, [like] sell logs and firewood. And they do without - a lot of farmers don't have health insurance." White added.

"We're going to lose hundreds of farms this year in the Northeast, and we're going to lose thousands in the country this year. [The prices] may have been OK in 1979, but this is 2009 – the cost of steel, machinery, grain, and fertilizer has gone up like a rocket, but the price of milk is about the same as it was when I was three years old," he said.

"We're all interested in clean energy and energy independence, and we want to be part of the solution."

Philip Korman, Executive Director of CISA, (Community Involved in Sustaining Agriculture), is optimistic about the project's implications for the future. "I'm excited to see that it's our tax dollars that are helping launch this, as it should be, whether it's from the USDA, or the Massachusetts Department of Agriculture. When we talk about creative infrastructure projects trying to get off the ground, it really should be our public funds that are helping make that possible," Korman said.

THE MONTAGUE REPORTER

Two recurring questions that come up in relation to the farm biodiesel project are whether any of the fuel will be available to the public, and whether this will have any negative effect on the volume or quality of food crops.

"As of right now, I don't think we can make any available to the public because we don't have a fuel license, we don't pay fuel taxes, and aren't aware of other specifications," Balawender said.

Gary Alibozek of the Historic Susan B. Anthony Farm in Adams, who also attended the meeting, pointed out that food crops will not be affected.

"People brought up that they wanted to utilize plants that couldn't be used for foodhowever, we [farmers] shouldn't be relegated to planting plants that have half the production capabilities of plant types that can be used for food. It doesn't make sense, because you may not have used that plot of land at all," Alibozek said.

### MONTAGUE ENERGY CORNER

### Home Energy Conservation Workshops

CHESTNUT HILL – The Montague Energy Committee's neighborhood home energy conservation workshops will take place this weekend, Saturday, March 14th, at 12:45 p.m. to 3 p.m. at the Maezumi Institute, 177 Ripley Road, just off West Chestnut Hill Road near the intersection with North Leverett Road; and next weekend, Saturday, March 21st, from 9:45 a.m. to

Sat. March 14th & Sat. March 21st noon, at the Montague Center Library on the village commons. mittee's Montague residents are welcome to attend either workshop, which

to attend either workshop, which will focus on saving energy (and dollars) in your home by taking advantage of the MassSave energy audit program, which will pay 75% – up to \$2,000 – for home energy conservation upgrades

For more information on either workshop or the MassSave program, call Sally at 367-0082.

### **Stolen Fire Fighting Equipment Recoverd**

of both Montague and Greenfield was arrested Tuesday, afternoon, March 10th, by the Montague Police Department on the charge of receiving stolen property valued at more than \$250.

The Montague Center Fire Department had reported that several pieces of their fire fighting equipment and gear, valued at over \$11,000, had been stolen from the fire department over the past two months.

On Tuesday, officers of the Montague police department recovered some of the stolen items. The items were in the possession of Detectives Dobosz and Laster as well as Officers Dempsey, Ruddock and Reserve Officer McCarthy, all officers of the Montague police department, obtained and executed search warrants to search search search search search search search search search as a result of the search warrants.

As of Tuesday evening, was being held on \$25,000 bail at the Montague police department. He will appear at the Greenfield District Court for arraignment on Wednesday, March 11th.

This investigation is open and will continue until all of the stolen items are located.

HIGHLIGHTS FROM THE MONTAGUE POLICE LOG	aggravated (pregnant victim). Friday, 3/6	operating a motor vehicle while under the influence of liquor. 8:53 a.m. Report of vandalism at a Green Pond Road address.
Stolen Goods Recovered		

#### Tuesday, 3/3

11:56 p.m. Following a traffic stop, arrested

Charged with operation of a motor vehicle with a suspended license and failure to observe stop sign.

#### Wednesday, 3/4

7:53 a.m. Report of vandalism at a Broadway address. Investigated. 6:55 p.m. Report of vandalism at a Fifth Street address near the Senior Center.

7:36 p.m. Report of neighbor disturbance at a Second Street address. Arrested

#### Charged

with three counts of assault and battery, domestic and assault and battery,

11:50 a.m. Report of vandalism at Montague Center Fire Station. 9:18 p.m. Report of an accident with property damage. Arrested

Charged with operating a motor vehicle while under the influence of liquor and failure to use care starting, turning, backing vehicle. 10:08 p.m. Following a traffic stop, arrested

### on a default warrant.

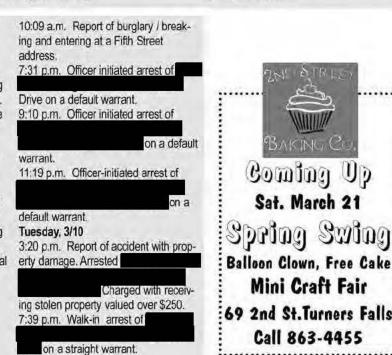
Saturday, 3/7 1:11 a.m. Following a traffic stop, arrested

Charged with speeding in violation of a special regulation, failure to wear a seatbelt and

9:26 a.m. Report of burglary / breaking and entering at a Davis Street address.
12:06 p.m. Report of gang disturbance at a Second Street address. Services rendered.
12:07 p.m. Report of a fight at a Third Street address near ExxonMobil.
Sunday, 3/8
10:28 a.m. Report of vandalism at Old Williams Garage, Williams Way.
8:48 p.m. Report of burglary / breaking and antarian at on Automa A address

and entering at an Avenue A address. 10:35 p.m. Report of a possible suicidal subject at a Farren Avenue address. Subject removed to hospital. Monday, 3/9

9:06 a.m. Report of an unattended death at a NorthTaylor Hill Road address. Investigated.







### Notes from the Gill-Montague Regional School Committee Joyful Classrooms, Lengthy Meetings

**BY ELLEN BLANCHETTE -**GILL-MONTAGUE School committee members took a tour of the Hillcrest School in Turners Falls Tuesday evening, March 10th, and then adjourned to the cafeteria to hear a presentation by Principal Christine Jutres about the goals and achievements of the newly reconfigured primary school that serves pre-K and kindergarten students.

Jutres described some of the initiatives in the school, which she described broadly as the ingredients of "joyful classrooms." These include being vigilant about skills building, developing a love of reading and writing, along with daily, purposeful discovery, and practice with numbers, patterns and geometry.

To demonstrate how this all works with young children, Jutres invited teachers at the school to present some of the

Friday, March 13

materials used in the classroom to school committee members, asking them to explore their uses. This led to some general levity in the meeting room as committee members tried out various materials themselves. Emphasizing the concept of joyful learning, the teachers explained that purposeful play is how children learn. The materials used and the instruction that goes with them are meant to utilize children's natural abilities.

Another part of joyful classrooms for early childhood learning is the importance of building a social climate based on respect and reflection through structures that emphasize the self-regulation of behavior. Elementary curriculum coordinator Chip Wood presented the committee with information on "Tools of the Mind," a program that develops in pre-K and kindergarten students an abil-

MCTV Afternoon/Evening Schedule 3/13-3/19

visit www.montaguema.net for complete schedule

12:00 p.m. Carlos Anderson Gospel

**Choir Celebration** 

ity to control their own behavior, allowing them to learn without distraction.

The visit to Hillcrest was a continuation of the series of presentations by school principals and department heads to the school committee, as the budget process moves forward. Instead of just presenting budget numbers, administrators are trying to demonstrate educational goals and achievements to the school committee and the public.

The school committee meeting continued until 11:00 p.m.

At the budget meeting last week, TFHS principal Jeffrey Kenny presented some of his school's accomplishments, stating all current 12th graders have passed the MCAS and are on track to graduate. Kenny said it was clear the district is doing well with students who stay in school, but he emphasized the impor-

4:00 p.m. Enjoy The Ride Share the

tance of addressing the drop-out rate as a top priority for the school and the district.

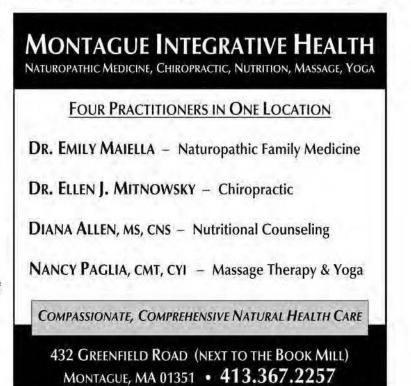
Both Gill and Montague have decided to hold their town meetings in June instead of May to allow more time for budget development. G-M superintendent Ken Rocke has emphasized delaying the budget process until the towns and district know more about the stimulus money coming from Washington. At each meeting this week, he has said state representatives have recommended to him to hold off on making any budget decisions until they know more.

The caution is that school committees will make cuts or lower assessments too early, and will not be able to go back and increase their budgets after stimulus money becomes available. Rocke said the state is busy trying to expedite the release of stimulus funds but needs to make sure the letter of the law is complied with. One sticking point is the requirement that the stimulus funds not be used to replace local funding, which would simply reduce the cost to the community instead of increasing the overall amount of funding available for educational services.

Committee chair Mary Kociela said a final school budget will be presented on March 31st. At a joint meeting Wednesday night in Turners Falls of Gill and Montague town officials and members of GMRSD school committee, Montague finance committee member Jeff Singleton suggested the school committee present its budget without figures for the town assessments included.

In discussing this, several members on both sides thought this was a sound idea. Rocke stated he would be in favor of this if it were possible, his hesitation being that it would need to be legal and perhaps would require a vote of town selectboards. The idea would be to present a school budget that included costs and revenues, leaving a line instead for the gap between these two numbers. In past budget years, this gap was assigned by default to town assessments. Singleton suggested that by leaving the gap unassigned for now, the state might be encouraged to look at the situation in such a way as to help both the towns and the schools meet their budgetary needs.

Department of Elementary and Secondary Education commissioner Jeff Wulfson will be attending the GMRSD school committee budget meeting on March 17th. For that meeting, Kociela said the committee has scheduled an hour for discussion relating to the state's fiscal oversight of the school budget process, and related issues.



### 8:00 a.m. State Joint Ways and Means 1:30 p.m. Why or Why Not Nuclear Committee 2:00 p.m. 9-1-1 People, Facts & Stories 2:30 p.m. Bernanke 3:30 p.m. Breast Cancer PSA 4:00 p.m. Police Station Tour 5:00 p.m. TFHS vs New Leadership 7:00 p.m. GMRSD 3/10/09 Saturday, March 14 8:00 a.m. Exploring New Worlds in New England 8:30 a.m. Eaton Do Ryu 9:30 a.m. Dodging The Bow 11:30 a.m. Discovery Center: Northern Bats 12:30 p.m. On The Ridge:Gun Owners Action League 1:00 p.m. Over The Falls: The Coming of The Train 2:00 p.m. Poetry Music Jam for Montague Reporter from the Vou 3:00 p.m. Power Canal Draw Down 3:30 p.m. Preachin the Blues 4:30 p.m. Proud to be a Mason 5:00 p.m. The Looming Crisis in Oil Depletion 7:00 p.m. TFHS vs New Leadership 9:30 p.m. TWB Sky Awareness 10:30 p.m. Underground Railway Concert Sunday, March 15 8:00 a.m. Town Forum - Unity Park Hearing 9:30 a.m. Transport Taxes 11:00 a.m. Tiny Tim

Power? 4:30 p.m. Police Station Tour 6:00 p.m. Over The Falls: The Coming of The Train 7:00 p.m. Physician Focus Atrial Fibrilation 8:00 p.m. School Regionalization Forum Meeting 9:30 p.m. Seabrook 1977. 11:00 p.m. Seneka Falls Monday, March 16 8:00 a.m. Senior Self Defense 10:30 a.m. State Joint Ways and Means Committee 4:30 p.m. TFHS vs New Leadership 6:30 p.m. Gov\_Budget\_08 6:41 p.m. Mass Access 7:00 p.m. Select Board (Live) 9:30 p.m. 2009 Worlds Largest Concert 10:30 p.m. Discovery Center Fossil Tracks Tuesday, March 17 8:00 a.m. Naturalist Laurie Sanders 9:00 a.m. On The Ridge:Gun Owners Action League 9:30 a.m. Carlos Anderson Gospel **Choir Celebration** 11:00 a.m. Common Man Concert-Tim Van Egmond 12:30 p.m. Discovery Center Birds of Prey 2:00 p.m. Discovery Center Improtance of Pollinators 3:00 p.m. EatonDoRyu Juni

Road 5:00 p.m. Fabulous Maurice 5/19/08 6:30 p.m. GMRSD Budget Meeting 11:00 p.m. Falls Table Margaret Fitzpatrick Wednesday, March 18 8:00 a.m. Songs For Wee People 9:00 a.m. Sustainable Energy 10:00 a.m. State Joint Ways and Means Committee 4:00 p.m. Tapping Maple Ridge 5:00 p.m. The Spirit of Lake Pleasant 7:00 p.m. The Western MASS Democrat 7:30 p.m. They Are Still There 8:30 p.m. Police Station Tour 9:30 p.m. TFHS vs New Leadership 12:00 a.m. Encore Body Art#13 12:31 a.m. Encore Body Art #10 1:01 a.m. Encore Body Art Halloween Thursday, March 19 8:00 a.m. UN Panel 10:00 a.m. White House Chronicle#1007-1008 11:00 a.m. Why or Why Not Nuclear Power? 2:00 p.m. The Western MASS Democrat Senator Stan Rosenberg 2:30 p.m. Over The Falls: The Coming of The Train 3:30 p.m. Peoples Harvest 5:00 p.m. Common People Celtic Harp 6:30 p.m. Health Hill: Transfat 7:00 p.m. Select Board 3/9/09 8:30 p.m. State Joint Ways and Means Committee





### JESSICA HARMON ILLUSTRATION **BY FRED CICETTI**

LEONIA, NJ - Q. Is it true that you can get Legionnaires' disease from gagging on a drink of water? This has got to be bogus.

While this sounds like an urban myth, it is true.

Most people become infected with Legionnaires' disease when they inhale microscopic droplets containing water legionella bacteria. If you choke or cough while drinking, you can get water in your lungs. If the water contains legionella, you may develop Legionnaires' disease, which is a form of



CLAUDIA WELLS ILLUSTRATION

BY BRIDGET SWEET TURNERS FALLS - The countdown for spring has officially begun! Hopefully. May the Ave stay clear of salt and snow banks, at least by May. The foot traffic seems to have increased with jaywalkers and puddles of melting dog poop, perhaps a sign of things to come.

Arnie Houle's AB Auction Plus had planned an auction for pneumonia.

Legionnaires' disease primarily affects the lungs. However, it can cause infections in wounds and in other parts of the body, including the heart.

Those who are especially vulnerable to Legionnaires' disease are older adults, smokers, heavy drinkers and people with weakened immune systems.

If not treated, Legionnaires' disease can be fatal. Immediate treatment with antibiotics can usually cure Legionnaires' disease.

Legionella bacteria also cause Pontiac fever, which is like influenza. Pontiac fever usually clears on its own in a few days.

Legionnaires' disease got its name from American Legionnaires who were cele-

### THE HEALTHY GEEZER: Legionnaire's Disease

brating the nation's bicentennial in the summer of 1976 in Philadelphia. Hundreds became very ill and 34 died from the disease. The infection was traced to a hotel water system. It took almost six months to identify the bacteria that caused the illness.

This type of bacteria existed before the Philadelphia outbreak. More Legionnaires' disease is being detected now because doctors look for it whenever a patient has pneumonia. It is difficult to distinguish this disease from other forms of pneumonia; so many cases still go unreported.

The legionella bacteria usually are found in water; they grow best when the water is warm. So, legionella is often found in hot tubs, plumbing, water tanks,

whirlpool spas on cruise ships and large air-conditioning systems.

A few people have contracted Legionnaire's disease after working in the garden or using contaminated potting soil. It's also possible that the disease may spread when earth containing the bacteria is stirred up at large construction sites.

Like many microorganisms, legionella bacteria can attach to the insides of pipes, faucets and showerheads. Then they form a "biofilm" on the surfaces. As water flows past, it dislodges some of the biofilm and spreads bacteria throughout the water system.

You can get Legionnaires' disease in your home, but most cases have occurred in large buildings; there's a theory that extensive systems permit bacteria to grow and spread more easily.

Legionnaires' disease is a sporadic and local problem. It often occurs in hospitals and nursing homes where the bacteria can spread and the residents are vulnerable to disease. There is no evidence that the disease is transmitted between people.

Legionnaires' disease is common in the United States. About 25,000 cases of the illness occur each year and cause more than 4,000 deaths. The fatality rate is similar to that of other forms of pneumonia, which is about 15 percent.

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

## last Saturday, but moved it to this Saturday, March 14th, in hopes of warmer weather. Bidders, come early to preview

the merchandise from 3 to 6 p.m. and mind your step. At 6 p.m. the auction will begin. Good luck Arnie and all you bidders, and May I say, Caveat *Emptor* until the auction barn is empty! Which is not to say Cave Canem, although you might want to do that too, at least until the sidewalk sweepers get busy.

With luck, moving gingerly across the Avenue, Norman and Elaine Emond will soon find business owners to rent their 1,080-square-foot prime retail space at the corner of Fourth and Avenue A. Sweet B. hears tell of one gentleman who has

## Watch Your Step, Spring is Almost Here

**SWEET TALK ON THE AVENUE** 

already made his interest known in opening a bodega in the space, and plans to visit the Franklin County Community Development Corporation soon for advice on that venture. We miss La Boringuena! Arriba, arriba! Emond can be reached at 413-863-8677 for more inquires from prospective lessees. Hurry up, before someone grabs it first!

Nate Donovan at A.H. Rist Insurance of 159 Avenue A got the company to donate two tickets for the April 19th Red Sox vs. Baltimore Orioles game at Fenway Park to benefit the Montague Public Libraries Music and Movement programs. His son attends the programs regularly and loves every minute. Dad wants to keep

#### vehicles racing in area. Stood by, nothing found at this time. Sunday, 3/8

Report of wounded 10:54 a.m. deer in the West Main Street area. 2:30 p.m. Assisted owner of loose dog in capturing same. 4:34 p.m. Assisted Northfield police with breaking and entering on Four Mile Brook Road.

Monday, 3/9 12.40 a.m. Assist Montaque these weekly song and performance programs going, after they lost supporting state funding. The drawing for the Sox tix will be held March 12th at the Miller Falls Public Library. Yikes! That's today! Get your gloves ready if you are the chosen one!

The lucky winners might want to use Zipride to get to Fenway. Kristina Dickinson and I met at the FAB-ulous 2nd Street Bakery (with their handsomely new monogrammed door) to discuss the latest Zipride news. Dickinson, under the weather, proudly distributed bumper stickers and magnets upon arrival. Tea in hand, she eased my skepticism about the web-based ride share program.

She told me Zipride is not affiliated with Zipcar Company. Zipride is a privately funded company that aims to bring hitchhiking into the 21st Century. It is used at a dozen local colleges and universities, like Smith College. Dang-it, if it's good enough for Smith, we might give it a try in Turners.

Newcomers to the ranks of Zipriders who are older than 18, (that'll be Sweet B next year!), can set up a User Profile, try the ride share service, then post feedback ratings and experience points. Dickinson reiterated that she is personally involved in protecting drivers' and riders' feedback information.

Based right here in Montague, Zipride is a completely free ride-matching service for one-time trips and regular commutes. If you drive and would like to split the cost of gas with someone, register for the service and search for "Rides Wanted," at www.zipride.com.

The New England Board of Higher Education will begin using Zipride this May. The Alumni of Smith College and Sustainability Northeast Association already participate.

Dickinson, who founded the rideshare service, is helping Wendell's Sustainability Group 'Go Green' this month. She said, "If a hundred Wendell residents sign-up for Zipride by the end of March, we will donate \$100.00 to the Wendell Public Library." Newsletters will be mailed out to Wendell residents this week.

Exciting times for libraries, drivers and Red Sox fans, even with March storm clouds and distant rumors of bank failures. Let the robins fly in, the snow banks disappear and the dog poop be scooped! Ta-ta for now

### **HIGHLIGHTS FROM THE ERVING POLICE LOG** Loose Dogs, Suspicious Kids

#### Wednesday, 3/4

10:15 a.m. Report of loose black lab on Route 2 near police station. Located same and returned to owner.

12:18 p.m. 911 misdial from Rose Ledge. Confirmed all okay. Thursday, 3/5

traffic lane of Route 2 at the bypass. Located same and advised environmental police. 6:05 p.m. Two-car accident with personal injury on Route 63 at Forest Street. Erving fire and Baystate Health Ambulance

8:20 p.m. Report of suspicious activity at a Gunn Street address. Checked same, all okay.

#### Friday, 3/6

4:00 p.m. Report of a dog running in traffic on Route 2 near the Orange town line. Unable to locate

5:00 p.m. Report of an owl in a

### responded

11:32 p.m. Report of suspicious kids at Freight House Antiques. Checked area, gone on arrival. Saturday, 3/7

12:00 p.m. Officer to a Central Street address regarding loose dogs.

11:15 p.m. Motor vehicle complaint on Mountain Road. Several police with a suspicious vehicle at International Paper Company. Moved same along off of private property.

1:15 a.m. Loud noise disturbance in the area of Old State Road. Male party yelling. Located same and advised to stop.

#### dears!

Coming next: Sweet B doubles her pleasure and doubles her fun with twice as much luxury discount clothes shopping the new doublewide at Salvation Army!



## JEP'S PLACE: Part CXIV

**Night Rider** 

14



BY JOSEPH A. PARZYCH GILL - Where the street lights illuminated the road, I rode feeling comparatively safe. But the street lights ended at Factory Hollow, and inky blackness engulfed the road. My pulse beat faster and my pedal rate increased.

A faint breeze stirred, making the leaves rustle in the underbrush beside the road. The

rustling seemed to increase from time to time. When I stopped, the rustling stopped, like that of an animal keeping pace - a curious squirrel or a restless rabbit, perhaps - certainly not a lynx or mountain lion. That would be silly.

I rode on up a hill where the woods thickened. My eyes grew acclimated to the dark and 1 could make out limbs of branches overhanging the road where a creature could easily lie in wait. My heart beat faster and my breathing grew louder, making it difficult to distinguish it from an animal panting.

The hill grew steeper and my breath became ever more labored as I made more and more effort to keep going. The bicycle went slower and slower. Sweat began to run down my armpits and I began to breathe harder and harder.

I was past the place where I usually got off to push my bike and walk, but the night air had given me additional energy. I pushed harder and harder on the pedals. The bike chain stretched and didn't mesh quite right with the sprocket. It went 'cronk, cronk' - every time I pushed down on the pedals. I looked up at the tree limbs as I slowed, knowing that soon I had to get off the bike and walk.

Then I saw it. Concealed in the overhanging trees, a dark shape loomed ahead on a tree limb. I could barely make it out, but it looked exactly like the black panther in the movie, tensing his body, ready to spring. A burst of adrenalin surged though

Department

of the town's two recycling

truck in question is past retire-

with Turners Falls Hydro LLC

for \$550 per year to provide elec-

tricity to the Strathmore Mill's

sprinkler system. The private

company, which operates the

The town signed a contract

The

ment age.

Environmental

my body. 'Cronk, cronk, cronk, cronk' - faster and faster, up over the crest and onto a relatively flat section where I sped away, leaving the panther far behind, probably gnashing his fangs in frustration.

When I got home, still damp with sweat, I felt a certain confidence in myself for having braved the night, alone. I had a snack of the cereal and milk I'd stashed in the barn, and went to sleep in the hay mow.

When I next saw the rest of the group, they asked if I'd been scared to ride home that night. alone.

"Scared? What of? I'm no sissy - like you guys."

I knew then that I would never be "one of the gang" but would be a self-reliant individual like Magrini. I began spending more time with my friend Ray, who

section of the mill complex, had been providing the electricity to the sprinklers since October of 2007, Abbondanzio said.

said, "Potentially, we could get paid back by the owner [John Anctil, Swift River LLC], but since there are issues of solvency," the town will have to bear the expense for now, to keep the mill complex secure.

The town clerk reminded residents that nominating papers are available for town offices, including a three-year selectboard seat, and 20 open seats, including openings in every

lived in the adjoining town. And I decided to apply at Mount Hermon.

At times, I also spent time with another friend who had an interest in cars and the here-andnow. He thought me a little strange for wanting to attend Mount Hermon. My talk of college left all my classmates cold, and they mocked me by calling me "Professor" for having such ambitions. They looked forward to quitting school and getting a job to earn money to buy a fine

Raymond and I had loftier aspirations, though I often felt we were daydreaming and wondered if our dreams would ever materialize. With my marks down, the chances of being accepted at Mount Hermon, or college, seemed slim.

- Continued Next Week

precinct, for town meeting. Nominating papers must be returned by Thursday March 26th.



#### MONTAGUE from pg 5

mittee will hold the first in a planned series of home energy conservation workshops on Saturday, March 14th at the Maezumi Institute on Ripley Road at 12:45 p.m. and on Saturday, March 21st at the Montague Center library at 9:45 a.m. Information will be provided on home energy audits, and the Mass Save program, which saves qualifying homeowners 75% off the cost of home energy conservation work up to \$2,000, and zero-percent financing for improvements beyond that. All Montague residents are invited to attend either of these workshops, and neighborhood coordinators for future home energy conservation workshops are needed. To volunteer to help organize a workshop in your neighborhood, or for more information, call Sally Pick at 367-0082.

shops going throughout town," said Mason.

The board granted public gathering permit requests for the Montague Center Congrega-tional Church to hold an Easter sunrise service on the village common on April 12th, and to hold the annual Montague Old Home Days event there on August 14th and 15th. Mark your calendars!

The board approved a request by the Soldiers Memorial trustees to hold a parade and ceremony on Memorial Day, stepping off from 2nd Street at 10:15 a.m. on Monday, May 25th, "to honor all veterans."

The board signed a memorandum of understanding with the Department of Conservation and Recreation to provide snowplowing and sanding services at the Great Falls Discovery Center in exchange for use of the Great Hall for town functions, for another year.

### REPORTER CLASSIFIEDS CALL 863-8666, FAX 863-3050

BUSINESS FOR SALE - Plow Frau & Bow Wow is a VERY successful "clean-out, hauling, and snow plowing" business. Community oriented, environmentally friendly, FUN, interesting, and unique. Please call Sita for details: (413) 834-7569

"We hope to keep these work-

CARPENTRY - No Job Too Small - General Carpentry and home repairs. Custom shelves a specialty. Call David, (413) 863-9296.

CLASSIFIEDS: \$6 FOR 20 WORDS (15 ets/extra word) **RUN SAME AD TWICE, THIRD WEEK FREE** MONTAGUE REPORTER 58 FOURTH STREET TURNERS FALLS, MA 01376

hydro generator in a subdivided Wednesday, 3/4 phone. 5:39 p.m. Single vehicle accident on Mountain Road, no injuries, report taken. Thursday, 3/5

7:55 a.m. 911 call from Main Road resident, checked all o.k. Friday, 3/6

8:01 a.m. Barking dog complaint on Hickory Hill Road. 1:32 p.m. Fire alarm on Mount

Hermon campus, checked with fire department. 1:50 p.m. Court process served on

River Road. 6:15 p.m. Assisted Erving police department with motor vehicle acci-

dent. 7:03 p.m. 911 misdial on Barney Hale Road, child playing with

trucks, to cut down on diesel emissions. The town is presently discussing whether to retain its curbside recycling program; the

of Protection awarded a grant of up to \$10,000 to Montague to retrofit the older

Selectboard chair Allen Ross

### **HIGHLIGHTS FROM THE GILL POLICE LOG** Serving The Public

11:30 p.m. Court process served on French King Highway.

Sunday, 3/8 4:41 p.m. Assisted Erving police

department with alarm. 5:33 p.m. Assisted with medical

emergency on French King Highway. Monday, 3/9

### 2:01 a.m. Arrested

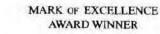
Charged with assault and battery. 6:35 a.m. Court process served on Main Road

4:18 p.m. Court process served on Hill Drive.

4:31 p.m. Court process served on Walnut Street.

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**ARTS & ENTERTAINMENT** 

#### FRIDAY, MARCH 13th

Friends' Coffee House, Great Falls Discovery Center, Turners Falls: Naia Kete, singer song-writer. "Sweet Music" is a personal/political soul-trip, as grounded and articulate as it is emotive, ever powered by the guitar and voice of this blossoming young visionary. Doors open at 6:30. Donations appreciated! 7 to 9 p.m.

Celtic Heels School of Irish Dance Performance at the Shea Theater, Turners Falls, 6 p.m. (413) 863-2281. Adult \$10/\$8 child 6-17, \$2 under 5. www.CelticHeelsDance.com

Rt. 63 Roadhouse, Millers Falls: Heroes, local favorites, classic and modern rock & roll. \$5 cover, 9:30 p.m.

Deja Brew, Wendell: Blame It On Tina, 8 to 10 p.m. Wendell's fav's, Jen Spingla, Bob Rosser and of course Tina.

At the Rendezvous, Turners Fall: Night Train with Dels Andujar, 12XU, and B-Coming . No cover, 9:30 p.m.

### FRIDAY & SATURDAY,

MARCH 13th & 14th Pothole Pictures, Memorial Hall,

Shelburne Falls: Looney Tunes Cartoon Festival! 7:30 p.m.

#### SATURDAY, MARCH 14th

Great Falls Discovery Center, Turners Falls: Celebrate Our Refuge System's Birthday! Celebrate the future of our stewardship efforts! 11 to 12 p.m.

Also at the Discovery Center: Community Reception 1 to 3 p.m. in the Great Hall: "Harvesting Yesterday, Cultivating Tomorrow" uses words, pictures and objects to invite reflections on the land in the Conn. River Valley and its steward-







World Music Dance Party with The Pangeans at the Wendell Full Moon Coffee House, Wendell Town Hall on Saturday, March 14th. Open mic at 7:30 p.m., Pangeans at 8 p.m. www.wendellfullmoon.org

ship through time.

Shea Theater, Turners Falls, PaintBox Theatre directed by Tom McCabe presents: The Great Race of the Tortoise and

the Hare, 2 p.m. An adaptation of the classic folk tale involving both the audience and on-stage actors in a non-stop hour of fun and laughter. For reservations or info call 863-2281, (413)www.theshea.org.

Lovin' Liz Benefit, 6 to 10 p.m., St. Kaz Society, Turners Falls. Friends of Elizabeth "Liz" Bickford, of Greenfield hold this benefit. Liz works in the **Baystate Franklin Medical** Center cafeteria, and recently diagnosed with cancer. "Food, lung Friendship and Music to celebrate Liz." Raffle items include quilt, Red Sox tickets, and hand-braided rug. Donation request \$20.

Rt. 63 Roadhouse, Millers Falls: D.I.X. rock & roll. Bill Dyer, Paul Interlande New Band, \$5 cover, 9:30 p.m.

Full Moon Coffehouse, Wendell: World Music Dance Party with The Pangeans, Latin Jazz, Samba, Calypso, Reggae, Afro-Beat, Funk and High-Life. Open mic at 7:30, Pangeans, 8 p.m. \$6-\$15. Benefit for the Chicken Coop School in Orange. www.wendellfullmoon.org.

Brick House Show, Turners Falls: Motel Matches, Graph, Strizhi, Ralph Eats Dynamite, The Accident that led me to the world. 7 to 10 p.m. \$5.

Deja Brew, Wendell: Richard Chase

community founded in Taize', France in 1942, Join us at 6 p.m. to learn songs with Joe Toritto, free.

Scandinavian Dance at The Montague Grange, Montague Center, 3 to 6 p.m. Music for traditional couples dancing played by Marilyn Butler, Andrea Larson and friends. Joan and Jim Savitt teach dances of Follinge, Sweden. Open request dancing follows. All levels of experience

are welcome! \$8 donation suggested.

Deja Brew, Wendell: Acoustic Open Mic, all are welcome, 8 to 10 p.m.

Bookmill, Montague Montague Center: Autonomous battleship Collective presents Asa Irons and Mother of Fire. 8 p.m. \$7.

At the Rendezvous, Turners Fall: Family Dance, Dance Dance Revolution 4 to 7 p.m. Open Mic Comedy Night, 8 p.m.

#### MONDAY, MARCH 16th

At the Rendezvous, Turners Fall: Bingo Night Big fun, zany prizes, annoying emcee, 8 to 10 p.m. free.



The Last Furrow; photograph by Frances and Mary Allen taken hetween 1901-1903. Part of the Pocumtuck Valley Memorial Association collection on display in Harvesting Yesterday, Cultivating Tomorrow at the Great Falls Discovery Center. Opening reception on Saturday, March 14th from 1 to 3 p.m.

#### **TUESDAY, MARCH 17th**

Route 63 Roadhouse, Millers Falls: St. Patrick's Day Party, 7 p.m.

At the Rendezvous, Turners Fall: Insh Beer Tasting, 8 p.m. Celtic/roots rock with Paddy's Ramblers at 9 p.m.

Deja Brew, Wendell: Nexus, 9 to 11 p.m. Special OPENING for St. Patrick's Day! Join Rick, Jimmy, Leftie and Wendell's own Bob Rosser for an evening of excellent harmonic rock!

Between The Uprights, Turners Falls: St. Patrick's Day Party-open at noon with a free corned beef lunch till 3 p.m. Curly Fingers Dupree Band & Michael Collins Irish Whiskey Girls, 9 to 11 p.m.

### WEDNESDAY, MARCH 18th

#### THURSDAY, MARCH 19th

Great Falls Discovery Center, Turners Falls: Noticing Nature, hands-on nature , 10:30 to 11:30 a.m. Join Dawn Marvin Ward for stories, songs and activities, all designed for young children and the young-at-heart. Black bears, brown bears, teddy bears! With the arrival of spring, the bears begin to wake up. Bring a special bear of your own to show. Free.

Montague Business Association March Thirsty Thursday, 5 to 7 p.m. at the Rendezvous, Turners Falls. Meet and greet with no obligations.

Jazz at DiPaolo's, Turners Falls: Doug Hewitt & Mitch Pine; guitar & piano, 6:30 to 9:30 p.m.

Deja Brew, Wendell: Wallin' Dave Robinson, Tammy Filault & Company, 8 to 10 p.m. Blues based roots music.

#### FRIDAY TO SUNDAY, MARCH 20th to 22rd

Turners Falls High School presents The Music Man. With "Seventy Six Trombones" leading the way, students from Great Falls Middle School and Turners Falls High School march to the stage, presenting the 1957 classic. More than 40 students rehearsed for nearly 12 weeks in preparation. Features song, dance, and very funny moments. At Turners Falls High School, Fri. & Sat. at 7:30 p.m. and Sun. matinee at 1:30 p.m. Tickets: \$8/\$7 for seniors & students.

#### SATURDAY, MARCH 21st

Coop Concerts presents All Cooped Up a CD release concert, 7 p.m. In the community room at All Souls Unitarian Church, Greenfield. Tickets sliding \$5-\$15. Info: Michael Nix (413) 772-0328.

The Bobby Darling Show, a unique performing musical act performs at the French King Bowling Center to help benefit Erving Fire & Police departments emergency training programs. \$20 per person. Info: (413) 423-3047

#### **DEADLINE MARCH 21st**

Montague Art Movement (M.A.M.) Call for artists for an exhibition on May 3rd during Montague Center May Day Celebration. Open to

town of Montague residents only (Lake Pleasant, Millers Falls, Montague Center, Montague City, Turners Falls). Original fine art only. (drawing, mixed media, painting, photography, printmaking, sculp-ture) Contact Claudine: (413) 367-2687/claudine\_trudi@yahoo.com.

#### **THROUGH MARCH 29th**

Hallmark Museum of Contemporary Photography: New Orleans photographer Josephine Sacabo, featured in Gallery 56, displays work from three distinct projects on exhibit: "A Geometry of Echoes," "The Nocturnes," and "El Mundo Inalcanzable De Susana San Juan."

Also on display, work by Susan Bozic: The Dating Portfolio in Gallery 56. Museum hours: Thurs-Sun, 1 to 5 p.m.





15

LOONEY TUNES CARTOON FESTIVAL An all-new program of classic shorts--not a repeat of last year! Bugs, Daffy, Elmer Fudd, Road Runner and the entire ACME gang return! NR. Color. 90 min. Music before movie at 7 p.m.



6. RACE TO WITCH MOUNTAIN PG in DTS sound DAILY 7:00 9:30 FRI, SAT, SUN 12:30 3:30 7. THE READER R DAILY 7:00 9:30 in DTS sound FRI, SAT, SUN 12:30 3:30



Saturday, 3/14, 9 - 11 p.m. Acoustic Folk/Singer Songwriter: Richard Chase Group Sunday, 3/15, 8 - 10 p.m. Acoustic Open Mic--All Welcome

Open St. Patrick's Day, 3/17 with Nexus, 9 - 11 p.m. 978-544-BREW 57A Lockes Village Road Next to the Wendell Country Store



FRI: 3/13 | 9:30 Night Train w. DJs Andujar, 12XU, and B-COMING (eclectic vinyl)

SAT: 3/13| 9:30pm | \$2 St. Paddy's Caribbean Adventure (Islands-meets-Irish Dance Party) |

SUN: 3/8 Family Dance w. Dance Dance Revolution! | 4-7PM | Open Mic. Comedy Night 8PM | FREE

MON: 3/9 | 8pm | FREE BINGO! BIG Fun! ZANY Prizes!



440 Greenfield Rd, Montague MA 7 Days / 8am - 11pm (at least) (413)367-9666

Group, 9 to 11 p.m. Acoustic Folk Singer.

At the Rendezvous, Turners Fall: St. Paddy's Caribebean Advendure. \$2 cover, 9:30 p.m.

#### SUNDAY, MARCH 15th

Taize' Service held at the Second Congregational Church , Greenfield, 7 p.m. Learn chanted prayers for peace with songs from Taize', the ecumenical

Deja Brew, Wendell: Knitting & Crafts Night, 7 to 10 p.m. Any craft/skill level welcome.

Super Fun Bowling Club, French King Entertainment Center. Fun in a non-competitive setting, all ages welcome. 80's Night! Bust out the skinny tie and the shoulder pads for this bowling blast from the past! 7:30 p.m .www.superfunbowling.com.

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





# IRÍSH Sketchbook MUSIC IN THE GLEN

### **BY DAVID BRULE**

**DONEGAL** – If ye are at all like myself, as the calendar dates start marking off the countdown to the 17th of this month, ye feel the need to get back by hook or by crook, by Aer Lingus or by armchair, to that distant Emerald Shore. And if you've at all paid attention to these articles over the years, you'd know that once I've lingered a day or two in Clare, I find that's just long enough, as Seamus Heaney puts it:

"...along the Flaggy Shore, when the wind And the light are working off each other, As big soft buffetings come at the car sideways And catch the heart off guard and blow it open."

Well, right after getting the wind into my lungs in the ancient Burren, I'd be off up the winding tar road to Sligo and to Donegal beyond. Sometimes I drift up there in a roundabout way to the northwest corner of the Republic, other times it's a beeline I'm making to escape the tour buses, the shamrockery and the jig-dancing leprechauns.

Way up in Donegal, it's rare enough to see a tour bus, and there's definitely nary a one off the main road. So it's the small roads for me, the bóthar, officially, a road the width of a cow standing sideways and measured from tip of nose to tip of tail, roads where you often have to argue with the sheep as to which one of you should move out of the way first. Up you go to the Glen, its full name being Gleann Cholm Cille, the Glen of the Dove of the Church. You may remember I've spoken of this truly Irishborn saint (St. Patrick, you must know, was not born in Ireland!) Good Colmcille started out on his saintly ways here in these parts, before he got himself into trouble and exile. A fairly common fate of high-spirited Irish, I might add.

Our glen of Colmcille is tucked away as small valleys are wont to be, and is easily overlooked, although songs have been written about it and poems dedicated to it. But I'm always up here, not only for the Gaelic isolation and untouched beauty of it all, but also for the music. Here you would find a wondrous fiddler, a true Irish national treasure by the name of James Byrne, a sweet simple man and a fiddler with no equal. I'll get back to this Fiddler in the Glen in a bit.

For the isolation I'm talking about, to get deep into it, you need to drive though the small village, which doesn't take long. A short 200-yard main street with a church, a grocery store, and three pubs which you have to avoid if you're going to get anywhere at all this day. You drive out to the north of town by passing the empty golf course (not only a victim of overly grandiose plans to attract golfing tourists way up here, but also victim of the gales that are constantly causing golf balls to hook and sail far over the cliffs into the crashing sea below).

You soon arrive at a fork in the road in a grove of small



oaks. If you bear right it'll take you all the way to another hidden valley where Ardara is tucked away. If you bear left where the faded sign indicates the road to Port, then it'll lead you up through a treeless valley dotted with occasional cottages. The bóthar has become a bótharín, a road big enough for only little cows you would suppose, and once you leave the few cottages behind, you are winding along and alone, down a long twisty road through an empty landscape, on the way to the deserted fishing village of Port.

All is rocky outcropping and rolling peat covered hills and moors here, as far as the eye can see. The bog road follows the stream valley down to the cleft in the cliffs at the sea edge. Four stone huts, in ruins, their stone

walls slowly tumbling down to the rocky ground from which they came, make up the deserted hamlet. Men having gone out to sea from here, to fish on the churning North Atlantic, finally gave up their centuries-long struggle years ago and faded away.

The place is now abandoned to a few birds, the lonely rocks, and occasional visitors like myself. It is too melancholy for many, but I come time and time again, for the wildness and the isolation of it all. However, a few hours in this place is usually all it takes to be ready for some human company and the friendly warmth of any one of those three pubs I mentioned to you earlier.



voice, can express the feelings that are in your mind or draw inspiration from the surrounding empty hills such as these. I try a merry jig that fades away, and more slow stately waltzes and airs are drawn forth, as if from the landscape. It's definitely high time to get myself to a pub.

After that short stop, I'm up the road to town ten miles away, and before long in the evening I'm snug in the pub called Biddie's Crossroads, enjoying the fiddling of our man James



whom I mentioned earlier, when he gives me a sign. He asks, "Now weren't you the Yank who was driving out on the road to Port in the little red rental car? And did you bring the 'whistler' you were playing out on the road?" Decidedly, news travels fast in these parts, and I went out to the car to get my "whistler," what they call a fiddle around here.

That was my introduction to the fiddler from this glen, and we remained musical acquaintances for years. The epitome of the Donegal fiddler, he was born in a cottage with no electricity in the wee valley through which I had just driven to get to Port, and he had learned his music from his father and having and turf-cutting, his fiddle always not far away hung on a hook on the kitchen wall, dusty with rosin. He often played with the whole family, his wife and three mischievous daughters, who made the kitchen or the pub ring with the wild reels, the Donegal highlands, and the exquisite slow airs. When James played he had a distant look on him, his eyes were far away, a look you get if you've stayed out in deserted Port too long, all the while his fingers chasing each other over the strings with a mind of their own.

Once the session gets roaring, the custom up here is for everyone to take a turn, to do their piece to entertain the others. Old gents from out of the hills come to do their bit of a poem, there's a heart-wrenching song about the martyred Michael Collins, an off-color music hall tune from a visiting bawdy middle-aged Dublin woman, some fancy step-dancing from the local teacher, who later actually had us all outdoors and dancing Kerry sets in the very crossroads at Biddie's! And the night goes on. The shades are drawn and the doors locked so that no one can come in, but inside the craic is mighty, the fiddles are aglow with the jigs and the reels as the pints come around, and the smiles get deeper.

Well then, this is where I go, when March comes around, to The Glen far away, the three pubs and the wild music. And as for you, if you've got a craving to get away to Ireland before it's too late, and if you've got an ounce of adventure in you, you'll get up to the hills of Donegal and drop in at Biddie's where there's surely a fiddler near the fireside, a glass of Jameson's, where a pint of stout is your only man! A song and a hearty laugh are never far away.

and a second sec

On the way back, at two miles an hour up the long road, in a sheltered curve behind a mountain of turf, I stop to take out my fiddle, tune it up and see what it sounds like in such a lonely place like this. The violin, so much like the human uncles, and played with all the legendary fiddlers from towns nearby: Johnny Doherty, Francie Byrne, Con Cassidy, Tommy Peoples.

A slightly built man, yet stocky enough, weathered face from the years of farming and

- James Byrne 1945-2008

