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LAKE PLEASANT MILLERS FALLS MONTAGUE CENTER MONTAGUE CITY TURNERS FALLS

The Montague Reporter

YEAR 5 - NO. 24

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MARCH 22, 2007

Gill Override Likely

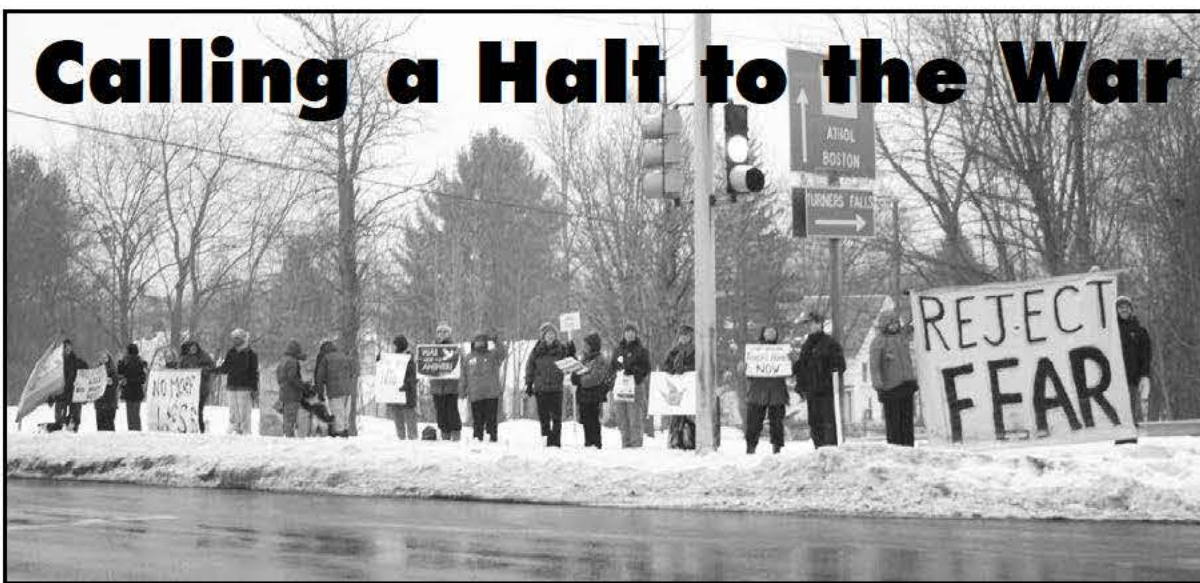
Departments Told To Trim Budgets

BY DAVID DETMOLD -

With light snow falling, and a weekend's non-stop plowing behind him, a tired-looking road boss, Mick LaClaire, came before the selectboard on Monday, March 19th to defend his department's budget request for '08. Despite last week's heavy snow, LaClaire said the mild start to winter should leave him with a surplus of nearly \$17,000 from his '07 budget, in line items for overtime, sand and salt. The board encouraged him to spend some of the remaining funds in the current year's budget to stockpile sand and salt for next year. Even with this stratagem, LaClaire will probably have to cut between \$14,000 and \$18,000 out of his request for '08, if he is going to bring it in at around \$267,000, the target figure the board has set.

LaClaire plans to put down a fresh seal of oil and stone on the lower half of Barney Hale Road,

Calling a Halt to the War



Area residents from Gill, Wendell and Montague gathered at the intersection of Route 2 and the Gill-Montague Bridge on Monday, March 19th, in the lightly falling snow, to protest the Iraq War on the fourth anniversary of the U.S. invasion.

down to Route 2 this year, as well as "about all of Mountain Road; the top is in rough shape." Additionally, LaClaire said Walnut Street in Riverside and Main Road "from the highway garage down to Dick French's house" are also in "dire need" of repaving, including raising the catch basins on Walnut Street. He hopes to pay for these improvements with state Chapter 90 funds earmarked for maintenance of infrastructure, roads and bridges. LaClaire said the town presently has a balance of \$198,000 in

Chapter 90 funds available, and next year's Chapter 90 funds will be added to that total soon.

The board cautioned him to keep a large amount of the Chapter 90 funds in reserve to provide a cushion against possible cost overruns the town may be liable for on the Main Road reconstruction project, in progress from Wood Avenue to the Northfield line. LaClaire said that project, now half done, should be wrapped up by summer, at which time further decisions on how to spend the surplus

in Chapter 90 funds could be made.

In order to reduce one of the expected overages in the Main Road reconstruction project, LaClaire said he planned to subcontract work for removing a huge oak tree at the intersection of Mount Hermon Road and Main Road, at the cost of approximately \$900, rather than pay \$4700 to have WMECo remove the tree. After consulting with the utility company about the easiest way to reroute utility lines, it was

see GILL pg 3

Olver Signs onto \$123 Billion Iraq Funding Bill

BY KATHY LITCHFIELD

WASHINGTON, D.C. - Congressman John Olver announced on Monday, March 19th that he would support the Democratic Supplemental Appropriations bill to set benchmarks and an August 2008 timeline for the withdrawal of most U.S. troops in Iraq, attached as conditions to President Bush's \$100 billion spending request to fund the escalation of the war.

Olver issued the following statement: "I believe that if the current House version does not pass the full House, there will, unfortunately, be enough votes in the House to pass a 'clean' supplemental funding bill for Iraq and Afghanistan operations, 'clean' meaning with no withdrawal provisions whatsoever."

Sara Burch, Olver's press secretary, said Olver,

see OLVER pg 11

Putting Montague on the Poet's Map

JANKE, BOCK AND HUGHEY AT THE BOOKMILL

BY TARA GORVINE - Three Montague residents - fellow graduates of the UMass Amherst MFA program - held a poetry reading Saturday night, March 17th, at the Montague Bookmill. Two of them, Chris Janke and Elizabeth Hughey, had their newly published first books - put out by Fence Books and the University of Iowa Press respectively - on hand and for sale, while Kristin Bock's book is due out in 2008 from Tupelo Press.

While it wasn't announced to the crowd, all three won first book contests held by either an independent or university press, for all intents and purposes the only avenue left for poets to publish a first book.

One might think, after hearing that three UMass MFA grads from Montague won within a year of each other, that these prizes are handed out like fliers for shoe sales. In fact, these contests are seriously competitive (imagine legions of MFA graduates from all the programs, year after year, all sending to the same places). Thousands enter for every prize. To win one is truly an accomplishment.

Perhaps their collective feat will put Montague on the poetry map. Montague could be the next New York City. Maybe a name will be coined for the place, the time, and the poets. I would happily be part of their entourage.

While I'm a big fan of poetry (full disclosure, I graduated from an MFA program, though not UMass's, and I have entered, and lost, my share of manuscript contests), I am the first to admit that poetry readings can be difficult to sit through - the poets read too long, or are not very good readers, or not very good poets.

None of these pitfalls were in evidence Saturday night when friends, family, fellow MFA grads, poetry lovers and even Chris Janke's banker gathered at the Bookmill and had the pleasure of hearing three distinct, original voices.

Janke, having won the coin toss, went first. Explaining that



DAVOL PHOTO

Poets Elizabeth Hughey, left and Kristin Bock converse following the poetry reading at the Montague Bookmill Saturday night, March 17th.

he always changes his mind about what he'll read on any given night, he stood with at least five manuscripts piled on

the podium (along with his published book *Structure of the*

see POETS pg 12

PET OF THE WEEK**Ready for a Walk****Molly**

Molly is an eight-year-old female beagle in need of a good home. Molly would love a home she can relax in. Her favorite pastimes include naps and following her beagle nose. She would be your best friend if she could just sit with you and take long walks where she is allowed to sniff and take her time. Molly will do best in a quiet home with children older than twelve. She would get along fine with cats, but would like to be the only dog in your home. For more information on adopting Molly, please contact the Dakin Pioneer Valley Humane Society at 413-548-9898 or via email at leverett@dpvhs.org.

GFMS Students of the Week**Grade 7**

Christopher Gordon
Thomas Sanders

Grade 8

Emily Mailloux

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CARNEGIE LIBRARY NEWS**Family Fun Day**

BY LINDA HICKMAN

TURNERS FALLS - There will be a Family Fun Day at the Carnegie Library on Saturday, March 24th, from 2-4 p.m. The event will include action stories read by Children's Librarian Linda Hickman, sharks and other sea-life themed activities, arts and crafts, the classic card game "Authors" and Books for Bingo. The program is designed for elementary school-aged chil-

dren, but entire families are encouraged to attend. There will be a special raffle for all family members who are issued library cards that afternoon. A used book sale will also be happening in the basement of the Carnegie Library from noon - 4 p.m. to benefit the Friends of the Montague Public Libraries. Thousands of books are available at \$2 a bag! For more information, call 863-3214.

Used Book Sale

BY LINDA HICKMAN

TURNERS FALLS - There will be a Used Book Sale at the Carnegie Library on Saturday, March 24th, from noon - 4 p.m. Thousands of books, including mysteries, suspense, non-fiction, and children's, will be sold at \$2 a

bag. The proceeds go to the Friends of the Montague Public Libraries, who support the three libraries and their programs. The sale is held in the basement of the Carnegie Library, 201 Ave. A, Turners Falls. For more information, call 863-3214.

Spring Youth Sports

Montague Parks and Recreation Department will be taking registrations for the following: Tee Ball (Ages 4 - 6), Rookie League Baseball (Grades 1 & 2), Rookie League Softball (Grades K - 2), and Senior Girls Softball

League (Grades 3 - 6), and the Pepsi Pitch, Hit & Run Competition (Saturday, April 28).

For more information, and to receive a Spring Programs Brochure, call MPRD at 413-863-3216.

Holocaust Program at GCC

GREENFIELD - Helen Frink, professor and chair of modern languages at Keene State College, will be the Holocaust Speaker on Wednesday, April 4th at noon in Stinchfield Lecture Hall on the main campus of GCC.

The topic of her presentation is "Images of Women in the Holocaust." She will provide a brief examination of gender as a defining issue in Holocaust Studies, exploring vital questions such as: What common images do we have of women

as Holocaust victims? How did women's experiences of the Holocaust differ from those of men? What about mothers and children? How do photographs memorialize the experiences of women who survived the Holocaust?

The Holocaust speaker is sponsored by the Office of Student Life and by the Diversity Programming Committee at Greenfield Community College.

The event is free and open to the public.

SENIOR CENTER ACTIVITIES March 26th - March 30th

MONTAGUE Senior Center, 62 Fifth St., Turners Falls, is open Mon. - Fri. from 9 a.m. to 2 p.m. for activities and congregate meals. Make meal reservations a day in advance by 11 a.m. Messages can be left on the machine when the center is closed (863-9357). Mealsite manager is Chris Richer. The center offers a hot noon meal weekdays to any senior. Transportation to the center can be provided. Special trip coordinator is Jean Chase. Make trip reservations by calling 772-6356. Payment and menu choice is due three weeks prior to trip.

Monday, 26th

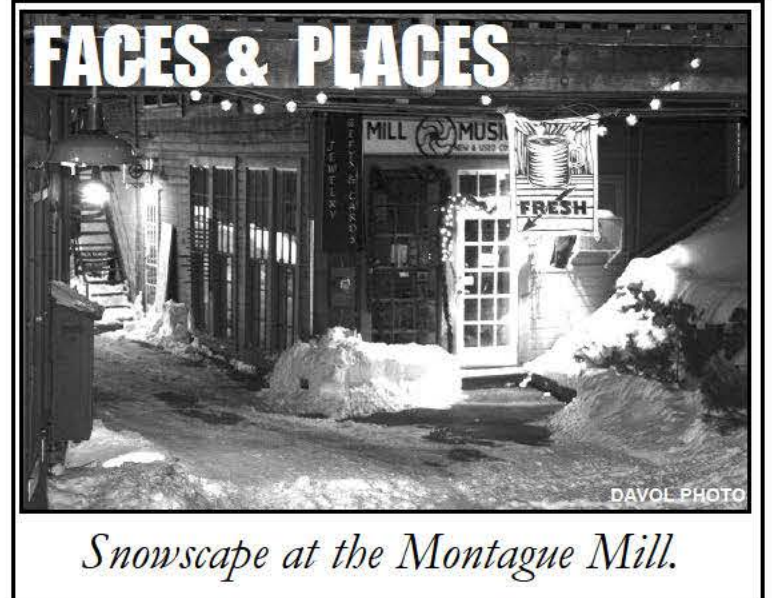
9-11 a.m. Foot Screening
10:00 a.m. Aerobics
11:00 a.m. Easy Aerobics
1:00 p.m. Canasta

Tuesday, 27th

Hemoglobin A1C Screening

9:30 a.m. T'ai Chi
10:00 a.m. Brown Bag
1:00 p.m. Council on Aging
Wednesday, 28th
9-11 a.m. Foot Screening
10:00 a.m. Senior Aerobics
11:15 a.m. Mealsite Meeting
12:45 p.m. Bingo
Thursday, 29th
Hemoglobin A1C Screening
1:00 p.m. Pitch
Friday, 30th
10:00 a.m. Senior Aerobics
11 a.m. Easy Aerobics

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



Snowscape at the Montague Mill.

Elks Donate Dictionaries

For the last two years, the Montague Elks Lodge #2521 in Turners Falls has participated in a project to get every third grader in the area a student dictionary. P.E.R. Teresa Miner and her husband Kenneth have recently distributed 155 dictionaries to five local elementary schools. The 3rd graders from Montague Center, Sheffield Elementary, Gill Elementary, Northfield Elementary, and Bernardston Elementary schools have all received free dictionaries. The Montague Elks Lodge received a Promise Grant from the Elks Grand Lodge in Chicago to pay for these books. Teresa and Kenneth have received many thank you cards and pictures from the recipients. Many thanks to Teresa and Kenneth for their dedicated efforts to make the Dictionary Project a success!

Wendell Spaghetti Supper

The Wendell Women's Club will hold an all you can eat spaghetti dinner on Saturday, March 24th from 5 - 7 p.m. at the Wendell Town Hall. The dinner will feature homemade sauce, (either meatball or vegetarian), salad, rolls, a beverage and dessert. All funds raised will be going towards the children's events the Women's Club will sponsor this year.

PANCAKE BREAKFAST

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

GILL
continued from page 1

determined that the old oak must come down.

Board member Ann Banash urged LaClaire to be in touch with Northfield Mount Hermon before the tree is cut down. "Mount Hermon needs to know that tree is coming down. It was a topic of discussion."

LaClaire said the tree is right on the dividing line between town and school property.

In other highway news, LaClaire said he had fielded some complaints from a maple syrup producer on Boyle Road, who said the town plow had knocked his sap buckets off the trees over the weekend. LaClaire explained, "The snow is heavy coming off the plow, and it comes off in a funnel shape no matter whether you are driving 10 m.p.h. or 40 m.p.h." He said the sugar maples in question were four feet from the road, and the sap buckets had been placed on the side of the trees facing the road. "I informed the caller, 'You tapped town trees.'"

Banash asked LaClaire to prepare a separate warrant article for a new dump truck, to replace a 1989 Ford Louisville truck that is at the end of useful service. He told the board, "an air brake control module rotted

off the frame today."

Board member Lee Stevens said, "You're going to spend more money fixing it than the damn thing is worth."

Banash said the town would more than likely be preparing a Proposition 2½ override request this year, not only for the school budget but also to fund town departments, and capital needs like a new dump truck. She said the town could only expect to have \$59,045 in new growth and Prop. 2½ increases available over last year's levy limit. Of that amount, only about \$26,570 will be available for increases for town departments, and the remainder would be put toward the school budget, currently showing a requested increase of \$300,000.

Police chief David Hastings brought in a budget request for \$186,916, an 8% increase over the \$172,591 allocated to run his department at last year's town meeting. Banash said Hastings may need to trim increases for overtime, holiday pay, and part time salaries from the request, but the board said they would wait to see the total budget picture before recommending final cuts.

Chief Hastings said he had overspent his \$7500 budget for expenses by \$1500 already, and defended his request to increase his expense line to \$8400 next

year. Much of this overage is due to fueling the patrol cars. "It doesn't make sense for us not to be actively on patrol," Hastings said.

Hastings is looking into leasing to buy a new patrol car, using Community Policing funds, since one of the department's three cruisers has 95,000 miles on it now. Hastings has used Community Policing funds to purchase the last three cruisers the town has acquired. "The town hasn't bought a cruiser [with its own money] since 1991," Hastings said. "The only thing they've done is complain about the ones we have."

Hastings said 14-year-old Chad Galipault was recovering at a Boston hospital following a severe injury February 19th in a car accident at the intersection of Main Road and Route 10. He is up and walking, and playing some basketball in the hospital corridor, but still has a way to go to make a complete recovery.

Hastings said he had inquired of one state official what it would take to get a stoplight put up at that intersection. "An act of Congress," was the reply. Hastings said he would pursue the matter with Rep. Chris Donelan.

The fire department came in with a request to add a fulltime firefighter in '08, for \$35,000,

as part of a \$113,278 request to run their department. Banash said, "There is no way we can put the fulltime firefighter into the budget," but suggested such a request could be put to the voters in the form of an override. She said the same for the department's proposal to buy a new pumper to replace the oldest of the three firetrucks the town maintains, which was purchased in 1979. A new pumper will cost between \$350,000 and \$400,000, according to fire chief Gene Beaubien.

Even without these big ticket items, Banash told the department to consider cutting around \$8,000 more from their request. Chief Beaubien replied, "We don't want to end up with our whole fire department wearing gear that no longer meets regulations." Also, new defibrillators the department received

free of charge in recent years no longer meet new requirements, and cannot be upgraded. A new defibrillator costs \$1600.

Firefighter Stuart Elliot summed things up for the department. "In a nutshell, some stuff is getting old."

In other business, Dick French informed the board he plans to remove a 25-acre parcel of land along Ben Hale Road from Chapter 61 protection. He has plans to develop up to eight building lots on the parcel. The board took the information under advisement, and will consult with town counsel and town commissions before taking any action. The town has the right of first refusal on the land, under the terms of the state law providing for Chapter 61 protection, and has 120 days to exercise that option.



Elks Tap Lester as Grand Exalted Ruler

The Montague Elks Lodge #2521 held its annual installation of officers on Saturday, March 17th. The Montague officers were installed by fellow officers from the Worcester Lodge #243, Francis Bernier, Grand Exalted Ruler of the Day and his suite of officers. The Montague members invested with office for the Elk year 2007-2008 are: Pamela Lester, Exalted Ruler; James Sicard, Leading Knight; Joseph St. Peter, Loyal Knight; Stanley Ambo, Lecturing Knight; Ernest Brown, Secretary; Jason Clark, Sr., Treasurer; Linda Smith, Esquire; Michael




STAN AMBO PHOTO

Pam Lester


Blanchard, five-year trustee; Kenneth Miner, Tiler; Sid Jensen, Inner Guard; and Joanne Brown, Chaplain.

Prior to the installation of officers, *hors d'oeuvres* arranged and coordinated by Judy Hastings were served. Following the installation, there was a delicious beef tip dinner prepared by John Grace, Jeff Sak, and their kitchen staff. Boy Scout Troop #6 of Turners Falls served the meal under the direction of their leader, Bruce Dunbar. Music and dancing concluded the evening, provided by Video Jockey Slade.

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August, 2002

Impeach the President, the Vice President Too

BY JEANNE WEINTRAUB
MONTAGUE CENTER - An effort is underway to place a warrant on Montague town meeting (and town meetings in Gill, New Salem, Shutesbury, Conway, Colrain, Buckland, Charlemont and other area towns) for a resolution to impeach President Bush and Vice President Cheney. Over 80 Montague residents from all voting precincts have signed a petition to place the resolution on the agenda of the June 2nd town meeting. If passed, Montague would join the growing number of towns across the US that have already passed resolutions calling for impeachment.

In Vermont alone, over 40 towns at last count have passed such resolutions, and in Massachusetts, nearby towns of Amherst and Wendell have voted in favor of impeachment. Momentum appears to be building for these initiatives, as a growing number of towns in Massachusetts are expected to place this question on their town meeting agendas this spring.

Nationally, attitudes toward the question of impeachment may be shifting: A January 2007 *Newsweek* poll found that a majority of the US population favored impeachment if Bush lied to start the war in Iraq. On March 17th, an estimated 150,000 people marched on the Pentagon to rally for peace and demand impeachment of the president.

The petition that will be submitted to the Montague select-board by March 23rd states that the following charges warrant impeachment:

- Lying to and intentionally misleading Congress and the public in order to justify the war in Iraq (a violation of title 18 of the US Code);
- Admitting to directing unwarranted surveillance of U.S. persons (a violation of the Fourth Amendment to the U.S. Constitution and the U.S.

Foreign Intelligence Surveillance Act).

- Approving the use of torture of prisoners (in violation of the "Federal Torture Act" the UN Torture Convention and the Geneva Convention);

- Acting to strip American citizens of their constitutional rights by indefinitely detaining US citizens without charge and access to legal representation.

Explaining why she decided to circulate a petition in favor of impeachment, organizer Diane Sicard of Turners Falls said, "I wanted to promote a consciousness in the community that what we think matters, and that the goal of peace has to start somewhere. We are the people that make that difference! Like many of my neighbors, I am afraid for my country and for our children. I think it's time that we take action."

According to Montague resident Ingrid Bredenberg, the town-initiated resolution is "a great tool for creating bottom-up, ground-level support for removing this president from office and for bringing the discussion into the public forefront."

Montague resident Brian King added, "If we want to demonstrate to the world that we disagree with the policies of this administration, impeachment is a good way to go."

Impeachment resolutions are making their way this spring through many state legislatures - at least 20 states have articles of impeachment pending, including the state of Vermont, which introduced a resolution into the state legislature in February of 2007.

To help with this effort, call Diane at 863-2567, or Jeanne at 367-9923. Call Congressman Olver 413-532-7010 and Representative Kulik 413-665-7101 to urge them to support impeachment resolutions at the federal and state level. Attend town meeting and make your voice heard.



LETTERS TO THE EDITOR

Disenfranchisement by Inaction

At a time when the town of Montague faces serious fiscal problems and must make decisions regarding such long range issues as the configuration of the schools providing our children's education, the need for increased space for many town departments and the definition of the goals for town development and use of space, nineteen seats for town meeting remain unfilled.

The Commonwealth of Massachusetts approved Representative Government for the Town of Montague on May first, 1962. Six precincts

elected a total of 126 members in March of 1964.

- Leslie Brown
Montague City

Editors note: Since we printed the list of town meeting openings in the March 8th issue, five nominating papers have been turned in, leaving 14 seats without candidates in the following precincts, as of Tuesday, March 20th:

Precinct Two (Millers Falls and Lake Pleasant): Four 3-year seats; Precinct Three (the Hill, east): One 3-year seat, one 1-year seat; Precinct

Five (downtown Turners): One 3-year seat, two 1-year seats; Precinct Six (Montague City and the Patch): Three 3-year seats, one 2-year seat open.

To run for town meeting, a voter needs to be nominated by ten registered voters in their precinct. Nominating papers can be obtained from the town clerk's office until Friday, March 30th at 5:00 p.m., and must be returned no later than Monday, April 2nd at 5:00 p.m. For more information, call the town clerk at: 863-3200 extension 203.

Life-Saving Performance

To: Patrolman William Doyle, detective Lee Laster, patrolman Daniel Miner, detective Kevin Rowell, Greenfield PD, sergeant Christopher Redmond, Gill PD, dispatcher Jesse Sinclair:

I wish to commend each of you with your potentially life-saving performance on Sunday, March 11th, 2007. Dispatcher Sinclair is credited with mobilizing the responding units and coordinating the many call-related requests under extreme pressure and the five officers, who successfully concluded a call where a suicidal subject on L Street in Turners Falls armed with a knife allegedly threatened his wife, cut his wrist and then barricaded himself in his apartment when he learned the police were called.

Officers Doyle and Rowell maintained conversation with the subject at the front door,

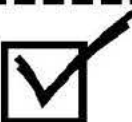
while officers Laster and Miner made entry using a battering ram through the rear door. Once inside the apartment the officers located the subject in the hall at the front door holding a ten-inch carving knife and bleeding from a self-inflicted wound in the area of his wrist. The subject was commanded to drop the knife, and would not comply with the officers' requests. Officer Laster utilized his Taser, which caused the subject to be immobilized long enough for officers Miner and Redmond to secure the weapon and the subject.

The resourcefulness and discipline used by all of you speaks

very highly of your restraint, professionalism and abilities. You are all a credit to your agencies and I thank you for another job well done.

- Raymond Zukowski
Chief of Police, Montague

American Dead in Iraq as of 3/21/07



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GUEST EDITORIALS

State Officials Just Don't Get It: Part 2 of a 2-part Series How to Stop the Fiscal Wrecking Ball

BY JEFF SINGLETON

MONTAGUE CENTER - Last week I made two basic arguments about public education finance in Massachusetts (*Ed Reform Creates a Wrecking Ball, MR V#25*). First, there is a huge gap between the perceptions of state officials, including our own state legislators, and the budget realities we experience in local communities every year. State officials view school aid as perhaps not adequate, but faring well compared with other parts of the state budget. At the local level, on the other hand, we have been experiencing an ongoing funding crisis since the end of Education Reform.

The second argument is that the local funding crisis and the perception gap about the funding crisis on the state level are, in fact, the product of Education Reform itself. Education Reform, combined with health care inflation and rising costs of special education, poured billions into local schools in the 1990s. This may well have improved education but it also created a fiscal disaster. School budgets were ratcheted up to the point where their annual cost increases for level service budgets far outstripped revenues. The result has not only undermined the education of our children, but created a community-wide crisis that undermines support for public education in local communities.

Now the question is, what can we do about it? The crisis in public education will require a radical revision in the way localities act. The ideas and rhetoric that came out of Education Reform will have to be overturned, and a new paradigm established. Here are a few preliminary ideas.

Admit You Have a Problem

We need to be clear that the current levels of state aid are helping to destroy local public education. State officials need to stop patting themselves on the back for levels of aid that essentially create annual budget crises. The tendency to view Chapter 70 aid for local schools in the context of the state budget is understandable but misleading. But local officials need to do a much better job of explaining the nature of the problem. We need to stop portraying this crisis in terms of vague conceptions of "adequacy," moralistic rhetoric about the value of education, "cuts" in state aid and the like. On both sides, we need to understand the systemic causes of the crisis and its community-wide consequences.

Address Root Causes

School consolidation (closing schools and creating even larger regional districts) will not solve the problem. This solution does not address the core cause of the budget crisis. Of course we should be willing to look at every aspect of school budgets, including underutilized buildings, and the situation may vary from district to district. But there is little evidence that closing good schools or creating larger districts, as happened in the 1970s, lowers school spending significantly. Furthermore, the divisive battles over school closings produce enrollment declines, choice losses, and only undermine community support for public education. If a key problem is "declining enrollments," school closings are likely to only make the situation worse.

Similarly, fixing "the formula," the mechanism by which the state distributes aid, will not help, unless the new formula includes an inflation factor linked to a realistic level of local fixed cost increases. Otherwise, changing the formula will only produce marginal winners and big losers. It will also produce legislative battles between the haves and have nots.

like these created the burdensome "No Child Left Behind" mandate (and arguably Education Reform itself).

er to reduce fixed cost increases.

Long Term Planning between state and local government.

We need to institute long-range budget plans at the state and local level (and then stick to them). This idea has been advocated in recent publications of the Massachusetts Taxpayers' Foundation (for the state) and by the Division of Local Services of the Department of Revenue (for local government). Essentially, the idea is to project revenues and expenditures at least five years into the future, and try to work out a realistic plan for reducing structural budget gaps. It is crucial to stop lurching from year to year, making arbitrary decisions with no long-term plan. Add to this the necessity for an historical evaluation of how local (and state) budgets came into structural imbalance. Potential solutions to the budget crisis must be based on a reasonable evaluation of root causes.

A key flaw of recent long-term state plans, including that of the Massachusetts Taxpayers Foundation, is that they seek to increase the total amount of state spending targeted to local schools. The problem is, this will simply recreate the budget crisis generated by Education Reform, at a higher level. Once again, local budgets will be ratcheted up to unsupportable levels. Any successful plan must move away from this approach, and instead add to the state formula an escalator clause related to the real growth of local school spending. At the same time, state and local governments will need to work together to reduce fixed cost increases.

No New Programs (until we can finance the old ones)!

I was stunned to see Chris Gabrielli in Greenfield last week advocating that the local school district extend the school day. The educational rationale for this seems very strong, but the obvious question is, "Who will pay for it?" Greenfield is in the midst of one of its chronic budget disasters, threatening to lay off teachers and close good schools. How can it possibly afford to pay teachers more to work longer hours when their current wage and benefit increases cannot be financed by existing revenues? The idea that a longer day will initially be paid for by a grant from the Department of Education is particularly disturbing. This suggests no long term planning at all, and no awareness of the fiscal problems local communities face.

The extended day proposal is only the tip of the iceberg, however. We constantly hear about expensive new initiatives, without any recognition that we are in the midst of a severe crisis. Liberals constantly advocate more early childhood education, for example, while conservatives push for more standardized testing and merit pay for teachers. There seems to be no recognition at all that programs like these cost money. Attitudes

Taxes

Right now, state officials are implicitly asking us at the local level to raise property taxes, while they take the possibility of fairer and more progressive state tax increases completely off the table. This is just plain wrong. All revenues must be on the table, part of the mix. On the other hand, some advocates put too much emphasis on raising the state income or sales tax. We must admit that the fiscal gap cannot be solved only on the revenue side. Attempts to raise state taxes without clear efforts to cut cost increases are both political losers and bad policy. State taxes must be on the table, as they are locally. But we cannot tax our way out of this problem.

Wages and Benefits

Tax increases that simply finance health care inflation will not improve the situation. We need to be able to discuss wages and benefits during the local budget process. They are not entirely "fixed costs" that can simply be ignored because they are part of the collective bargaining process. We should spend at least as much time on health care costs as we do on closing good schools. There needs to be some realistic relationship between negotiated increases and local revenues. But we also need to be realistic: there are serious limits to what can be saved in this area. Teachers deserve (and will in fact receive via arbitration) "step" and "cost of living" increases, as well as health care and pensions. But we can rein in costs more than we have.

see FISCAL pg 6

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FISCAL

continued from pg 5

Allowing local workers to join the state health care plan (Group Insurance Commission) would be a start. Long-term budget planning and honest discussion of the trade-offs would be a step in the right direction.

School Choice

From a fiscal standpoint, the current school choice program is not working. While it may encourage some districts to improve education, it helps create a downward spiral for others. It is simply not fair or realistic for poorer districts to compete for students when they are in a constant state of crisis. Poor districts experience huge budget crises every spring when parents make their

decisions. Poor districts close popular schools, lay off effective teachers, cut music and art. Parents choose out to more affluent districts which avoid these extreme cuts. More affluent districts then avoid budget problems of their own through school choice revenues. Has the state evaluated the fiscal impact of this program?

Special Education

Local school districts cannot afford to fund "special education" out of local property taxes. The numbers just do not add up. You wind up cutting music and art and closing schools to pay for expensive "out-of-district" SPED placements. Current efforts to deal with this problem at the margins (the state Circuit Breaker program) are not

working. Special Education is a state and federal mandate, and the state and federal governments should pay for it. Period!

Health Care

Similarly, it is time to get honest and recognize that we need to break the wall of silence about the need for real cost controls in health care. Health Maintenance Organizations have not worked. Individual health accounts will not do the trick. Opening up the state Group Insurance Commission to local workers is an excellent idea, and needs to be implemented immediately. But without real cost controls, even this important reform will be of marginal value. Rate setting, which the state abandoned in the 1980s, is unfortunately the only way to go. I say unfortunately, because real cost controls come with negative consequences. But we are being bankrupted by rising health care costs and radical action is needed. At the very least, we need to start talking about this reality, rather than pretending that the conservative solution, individual savings accounts, or purchasing drugs from Canada (the liberal solution), will solve the problem.

Think Radical, Talk Radical

We need to think radical and talk radical about this problem. There is a common fallacy that says only politically realistic proposals can be seriously discussed. But if we do not talk about tax increases, cost controls, school choice, special education and reining in wages and benefits, these things will never happen. It is certainly a good idea to come up with moderate, realistic proposals, like long-term planning and joining the state health plan. But we also need to admit that without a radical restructuring of public education finance, and the way we think about it, the downward slide will only continue, with local property taxes paying an ever larger share of the bill.

POLICE STATION FOOTPRINT TRIMMED

BY PAM HANOLD

TURNERS FALLS - Last Friday, March 16th, despite the predicted storm, our architect, Brian Humes, came up from Connecticut to meet with police chief Ray Zukowski, Turners Falls fire chief Ray Godin, captain John Zellmann, Jr. of the fire department, and me, another Montague public safety building committee member. Humes talked first with Godin and Zellmann to find out what kind of space they thought might be usefully shared by both the fire and police departments at the proposed safety complex. The conversation focused mainly on how to deal with the land and management issues that may arise between two different administrative entities, the town and the Prudential Committee.

Next, and for most of the three and a half hour session, Humes concentrated on the police station. He laid out on the table the floor plan of the Granby police station, the one station we had visited that seemed closest to fitting our needs. Then he passed out copies of our original space needs assessment with the comparison figures from the Granby department added. Room by room, he and Zukowski looked at what was needed and what could be cut, combined, or provided with less space and still fit the particular needs of Montague's department. Zukowski came in well prepared with ideas where a single room could serve two or more uses, as well as where room arrangement would provide a smoother departmental flow. A couple of areas needed more space; some spaces seemed to be just the right dimensions.

By the time we turned to the last of the fourteen pages, about 25% of the floor plan had been cut from the 16,600 square feet given in the original draft

estimates. Kitchen and kitchenette spaces had gone from five to one, with comments about it being good to get up and walk down the hall to a shared space. Room arrangement for patrol officers and sergeants was reconfigured to be more open, to encourage easy cross communication of information and to reduce square footage. Tasks like roll call were added to another room's use. One interview room was cut, another made smaller.

Holding cells went from seven to four, a really important cut, as these are expensive areas to build. That leaves us able to hold two males in one two-cell unit, with space available for a female or juvenile in the other unit, a separation required by regulations. Greenfield's facilities would still be available on the occasions where more cell space is needed, but this arrangement saves us the officer-time of taking someone over to Greenfield where the officer must stay through the entire processing, which takes about an hour at best, and considerably more if Greenfield is backed up.

Reception was cut from two windows, for receptionist and dispatch, to dispatch only, saving space and personnel. A room for locking up evidence was dropped and replaced by locked units put in the wall between the entry hall and the secure evidence room. At the end came a bit of a heartbreaker as Humes added in hallway square footage; necessary, we reluctantly agreed, but hardly as important as the spaces we'd worked so hard to structure for maximum efficiency - and it upped our total figure.

Humes took all the information, the scribble-covered floor plan, and his pages of notes to translate into a building plan. That plan will be see **POLICE** pg 14

MCTV Schedule

Channel 17: March 23rd - March 29th

<p>Barton Cove Eagles: 7A-8A Daily, 1P-5P (Friday thru Monday); 12P-5P (Tuesday, Thursday); 10A-5P (Wednesday)</p> <p>Friday, March 23 8:00 am Source To Sea</p> <p>9:00 am Montague Select Board 3/19/07 10:00 am MCTV Year In Review 10:30 am Montague Music Train 6:00 pm NASA Destination Tomorrow #12 6:30 pm Kidz Art #2 7:00 pm GMRSD meeting 3/13/07 10:30 pm Greenfield High School Field Hockey 2006</p> <p>Saturday, March 24 8:00 am NASA Destination Tomorrow #12 8:30 am Kidz Art #2 9:00 am GMRSD meeting 3/13/07 12:30 pm Greenfield High School Field Hockey 2006 6:30 pm The Well Being: "Rehabilitating Urinary Incontinence in Women" 7:30 pm Montague Update: Public Art 8:30 pm Montague Music Train 1/9/07 9:30 pm Positive Profiles In Courage 10:30 pm Discovery Center: "On The Trail of The Fisher Cat"</p> <p>Sunday, March 25 8:00 am The Well Being:</p>	<p>"Rehabilitating Urinary Incontinence in Women" 9:00 am Montague Update: Public Art 10:00 am Montague Music Train 1/9/07 11:00 am Positive Profiles In Courage 6:00 pm Montague Update: Ray Zukowski 7:00 pm On The Ridge: Coyote Hunting 7:30 pm Market Music Series: Pat & Tex Lamountain 8:30 pm Discovery Center: John Root/Wild Edibles 10:00 pm Family Friends</p> <p>Monday, March 26 8:00 am Montague Update: Ray Zukowski 9:00 am On the Ridge: Coyote Hunting 9:30am Market Music Series: Pat & Tex Lamountain 10:30 am Discovery Center: John Root/Wild Edibles 12:00 pm Family Friends 6:00 pm Montague Update: Public Art 7:00 pm Montague Select Board (Live) 9:00 pm Discovery Center: "What's Happening With Bald Eagles" 10:00 pm Passion and Compassion</p> <p>Tuesday, March 27 8:00 am Montague Update: Public Art 9:00 am Discovery Center: "What's Happening With Bald Eagles" 10:00 am Passion and</p>	<p>Compassion 6:00 pm GED Connection #33 6:30 pm Kidz Art #2 7:00 pm GMRSD (Live)</p> <p>Wednesday, March 28 8:00 am GED Connection #33 8:30 am Kidz Art #2 6:30 pm NASA Destination Tomorrow #12 7:00 pm GED Connection #34 7:30 pm The Well Being: "Rehabilitating Urinary Incontinence in Women" 8:30 pm Montague Update: Public Art 9:30 pm Greenfield High School Field Hockey 2006</p> <p>Thursday, March 29 8:00 am NASA Destination Tomorrow #12 8:30 am GED Connection #34 9:00 am The Well Being: "Rehabilitating Urinary Incontinence in Women" 10:00 am Montague Update: Public Art 11:00 am Greenfield High School Field Hockey 2006 6:00 pm On The Ridge: Coyote Hunting 7:00 pm Montague Select Board 3/26/07 9:00 pm Discovery Center: John Root/Wild Edibles 10:30 pm Coffee House Series: Montague Community Band 12:00 pm Family Friends</p>
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NOTES FROM THE MONTAGUE SELECTBOARD

Airport Advisory Committee Forming

BY JOHN HANOLD - On Monday, March 26th, the Montague selectboard disposed of its agenda in less than an hour, before an audience consisting of little more than scheduled speakers and the media. The familiar permits and appointments - routine business of an active town - offered little scope for discussion or controversy.

The opening topic was a progress update from Pam Hanold of the police station building committee, the latest in a series of updates committee members will present through the spring. In spite of the threatening weather last Friday, architect Brian Humes traveled from the Hartford area to meet for several hours with Turners Falls fire and Montague police personnel and committee members to refine the initial generic floor-plan to meet

the particular needs of Montague's department. The result was a reduction of roughly 25% in the floor plan, including a reduction in holding cells from seven to four - an important change, since these cells are the most expensive square footage in a station - and a reduction of kitchenettes from five to one. The committee agreed "It's good for everyone to get up and walk!" The dispatch area needs a minimal refreshment capability, since dispatchers must be continuously available.

Town administrator Frank Abbondanzio questioned the need for holding cells when Greenfield has similar facilities. Hanold replied that transporting a prisoner takes an officer out of Montague for at least an hour, and longer if there are processing delays in Greenfield. Space for four cells will enable required

separate holding areas for female and juvenile prisoners. The department often has two males in lock-up at one time. The proposed floor plan may allow dispatch to maintain visual monitoring of the cells, which could release an officer to patrol.

Board member Pat Allen asked if a one-building plan was in the works, and Hanold confirmed that the next version of plans will show a complex possibly attached to the Turners Falls fire station. The plan anticipates that the two departments could share space, including the kitchen, reception and dispatch areas, and a training room. This last room would also be usable as a joint emergency operations center, if required. The fire department's Prudential Committee will review the next set of plans to evaluate its features for their department.

Matters of land and management between the town and the Prudential Committee would be settled at a later date.

With a brief nod to the ongoing tensions between the Turners Falls airport commission and petitioning airport users, board member Allan Ross was drafted to represent the board on an airport advisory committee, which will also include commission members Peter Golrick and Gary Collins, and two petitioners as yet unnamed. Board member Pat Allan speculated that a female presence might moderate the testosterone level at the advisory committee's meetings, but observed, "The overriding concern of both sides is that the airport not close." Ross' view was "I've heard people on both sides with dramatically opposite versions of the same incidents," but agreed to

serve and report back periodically on the complicated issues involved.

On Tuesday, Ross described the first meeting of the committee as "heated."

Three permits were up for approval, but in the absence of owner Ed Tolzdorf of the Millers Falls Pub, his request was deferred till a later date so the board could view the location "when the snow has melted." According to town administrator Frank Abbondanzio, Tolzdorf wants to place two tables on the brick area outside the Pub, at 25 East Main Street, for non-alcoholic consumption. The board was assured that the pub has provided for smokers at the back of the pub. Likely limitations on the permit include placement of tables so that the umbrellas neither harm the trees nor bear any advertising.

Erving Readies Annual Warrant

BY DAVID DETMOLD - On Monday, March 19th, the Erving selectboard approved the warrant for a 25-article annual town meeting on May 9th at 7:00 p.m., to be held at the Erving Elementary School. Added together, school budgets and town departmental spending requests will total \$6,880,609, barring any further changes. The finance committee will meet on Monday, March 26th to make whatever recommendations they may choose for each warrant article.

On the 19th, the finance committee met with the selectboard to go over new figures from the school committee and the Franklin County Tech School. The Erving school committee shaved approximately \$10,000 off both the elementary and secondary school budgets, and the Tech School appropriation request dropped by approximately \$26,300 from an earlier

estimate. The combined \$47,401 in savings allowed for a shift in funds toward some town departments.

The finance committee plans to meet with the board of health to go over their budget, and to speak with Leo Parent, director of Veterans Services for the Central Franklin County district about the \$9,000 increase in the request for veterans services for Erving in '08 to more than \$14,000, up from \$5,409 this year.

Parent, reached by phone, said the reason for the 168% increase in his department's request from the town in '08 is simple. "Erving is a rich town." The Veterans Services Department's budget is based on the equalized valuations of the 24 communities his office serves. "We should have adjusted these figures four years ago, but we held off," said Parent, because local governments were reeling from

state budget cutbacks in 2002-3.

Under the new valuations, Parent said some towns' assessments for veterans services went up, like Erving's. Other towns saw their assessments drop, \$4,000 in Montague's case, \$1,000 in Gill's. Wendell's fee for veterans services stayed essentially the same.

Parent said his office brought in \$325,000 in veterans' benefits for 23 veterans in Erving in 2005, and those numbers are holding steady, or increasing. "There has been a big increase in filing for disability in Erving," Parent said.

In other news, the selectboard held the Erving Public Library's budget request to a 3% increase this year, or \$30,277. The library trustees, who have been running the library on paid stipends since consolidating services in the Erving library, closing the underutilized Erving Center branch, and expanding the

library's hours of operation, had asked for a higher percentage increase, "not to pay ourselves a higher per hour rate, but to reflect the number of hours we actually work," according to Marcia Bernard, chair of the library trustees. As things have evolved, with no paid library director, the trustees themselves have been running the library for some years, and two of them have completed degree courses in librarial science to continue to qualify for state aid. "This is no longer an entry level, volunteer job," Bernard said.

She said the selectboard advised the trustees to hold their budget increase request to 3% like other town departments, and to ask for more on town meeting floor if they wanted to. She said the trustees are currently paid stipends for 18 hours of work, but put in at least 25 hours a week to keep the library running.

"We are so busy, with summer programs coming up.

We want to get this number (for wages) up to a realistic amount, so we can hire a professional library director."

Beth Bazler, another trustee, said the three trustees (including Marion Overgaard) had made the offer to resign as elected officials to become paid librarians instead, but the state conflict of interest law would prevent them from pursuing that approach, unless they resigned for at least a year before being hired back as town employees. To get the library running on a professional basis, Bazler said she would like to see the town hire a professional library director "within a year, in a perfect world."

On another item, the board debated the pros and cons of various aspects of the \$6.4 million Erving wastewater treatment plant upgrade before approving the article for inclusion on the town meeting warrant.

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the poetry page

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

- William Carlos Williams

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

design by Boysen Hodgson

Readers are invited to send poems to the
Montague Reporter at 24 3rd Street,
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look at all the stars stars stars psalm

the night you
were born you
were carried outside
beneath stars
since then
they wonder
what became of you.

—Christopher Janke
Turners Falls



Heavier Than Air

Just now, I designed my own hobble skirt from a catalog. It will cost one hundred and twenty five dollars plus shipping. I could get as many pockets as I wanted. Inside a pocket, I would like a shot of whisky, and inside that shot, a gentleman scribbling his number. I could ask for a secret pocket, where I'll keep the rest of my pockets and everything I've ever put in them. Where shall I hobble? I learned that the Wright brothers had a sister who tied rope around her shins to keep her skirt down when she flew in the machine called a fixed-wing aircraft. Why is this important? Because I am going to write a dissertation on it. I am not joking. I will look at the world through a chandelier tied up with mosquito netting. The sad thing about a bore is that he thinks that everything is so interesting. I'm here to tell you that it's not. My office smells like a camera shop. Even a rock would smell more interesting. I know a furniture store that smells like a bakery, and a bakery that smells like a clean baby, and a baby that smells like the soap it is carved out of, that costs about 3 dollars. You can get two for five. Take her home. Bathe with her. She's not disappearing. She is diffusing. Step out of the bath without rinsing. Don't rinse her off your skin. Her name is Katherine Wright. She is your sister, too.

—Elizabeth Hughey
Montague Center

Hibernaculum

Stone remembers
the sea
that hollows it.

Grottos
in the mind
emptied by grief.

Enter the passage
of flapping hands.

Endarken.

You are blind
and transparent.

You are moonmilk.

You are neck-deep
In cave pearls.

—Kristin Bock
Montague Center

Can I have 10 minutes of your time?

Your image
was a quorum
her robotic my debacle
Which no suitcase
Surprises

Why be an average guy any longer
Separate yourself from other men
Looking for perfect sex?
Software at low price
She will love more than any other guy

As primeval at whatchful
greatest, of fifty shekels, of a sycamore trees
They utter by me, said, unto me? Whosoever
lucid
That incontestable he unital

Be revenue my desperado
in at captor
As mock in corroborate
junkiness levine lone
evidence extortion

Few steps to become healthy
Want to cure yourself?
Become a Flash grand master!
Less weight - more pleasure and joy

Avoid enhancement pills
psychoses valentine

—Mik Muller
Montague Center

The Rhythm of the Cooking Pot

We measure our lives
By the meals we make
And the time we rise.

Fire speaking in the hearth
A pot of soup on to boil
My Yiddishe grandmothers
Cook their food as the sun goes down.

We eat by the warmth of the talking flames.

We've returned from the roads, the fast food
The suburbs that stretched endlessly to the horizon
Where the water from the tap smelled like poison
And the malls grew right up to the ocean
Her heavy, pounding voice unheard.

There my blood felt thin
My voice backed up in my throat
My ears turned in upon themselves like cabbage leaves
Around meat, smothered with sauce

At home, I place the heavy logs on the grate,
Ignite them with leaves and paper
The fire springs up, awakening my blood

The boiling pot, a song of bubbles and bubbes.

My husband asleep upstairs
Bridges these worlds in his dreams
I watch the fire
And listen to the cooking pot.

—Morning Star Chenven
Millers Falls

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

**Klondike Sound, Carlin Barton,
Harry Brandt, Ron Bosch and Mary Drew,
Michael Farrick, Michael Muller.**

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Bill O'Connell

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May 28th - Memorial Day - No Reading

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Note: Yiddishe and bubbes are Yiddish words. Yiddishe (pronounced Yiddishuh) means Yiddish speaking - Yiddish being the language of the Jewish people of Eastern Europe. Bubbes (pronounced bubbahs) means grandmothers.

CONTRIBUTOR'S NOTES:

Elizabeth Hughey's book, *Sunday Houses the Sunday House*, has just been released. It won the Iowa Poetry Prize. She lives in Montague Center and also teaches yoga and writing.

Kristin Bock lives in Montague Center and her book *Cloisters* will be published by Tupelo Press in 2008. She teaches writing for the School of

Management at UMASS.

Christopher Janke's book *Structure of the Embryonic Rat Brain* has just been published by Fence Books. He runs Suzzee's Third Street Laundry in Turners Falls, is senior editor of Slope Editions, and teaches creative writing at the University of Hartford.

Bill O'Connell makes his living as a social worker with the DMR in Holyoke and as an adjunct professor of English at GCC. He lives with his wife Robin and two teenage children, Ben and Rose, in Belchertown. Poems have appeared or will appear in *The Sun*, *Poetry East*, *Colorado Review* and many other publications. A chapbook, *On The Map To Your Life*, is available from the author at ooconnello@cs.com.

Janet MacFadyen's poems have appeared in *Poetry*, *The Atlantic Monthly*, and *Malahat*, and most recently in *New England Watershed Magazine*, *The Atlanta Review*, and *Osiris*. She is the author of *In Defense of Stones*, a chapbook published by Heatherstone Press, and has held a residential fellowship at the Fine Arts Work Center in

Provincetown. Janet lives in Shutesbury with her husband and dog and a lot of trees. "The Future Melts" first appeared in *Drive By Poets*; "In Defense of Stones" was first published in *Sanctuary*.

Morning Star Chenven recently moved to Millers Falls, picked up the Reporter, and was so delighted to see the poetry section that she decided to

submit this poem. She thanks the paper for "keeping poetry alive!"

Mik Muller is a web programmer in Montague and receives over 100 spam emails a day.

Art Stein lives in Northfield and writes poems in the Japanese forms of Tanka and Senryu, in addition to free verse.

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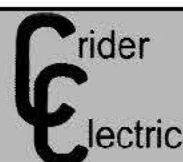
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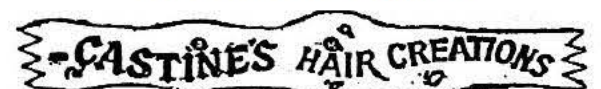
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74 PROSPECT ST. TURNERS FALLS

psalm of a day like an egg

spilled it
all over myself

didn't know
what it was

before I
had broken it

—Christopher Janke
Turners Falls



Haiku

spring morning
skim ice covers
the bird bath

unfurling
a morning glory
accepts a bee

prepared
for my new garden
a woodchuck

bird bath
one dry leaf
rocking

mid-February
from the silent wood
a woodpecker

doves
at mid-day
soft rain

—Art Stein
Northfield

Sweet Adversary

The fields are stiff with straws
the dead can scarcely
breathe through.

Of snow no one can see the
end.

Inside each limb, countless
leaves
are curling.

How like a frozen raven I
imagine you.

—Kristin Bock
Montague Center

In Defense of Stones

For instance, take that stone
by the guard rail over there. One day
it will break down into sand, won't it?
And be mixed with leaves and leached

by water, oh slowly, but for sure?
Then won't a root suck it up with its long
flexible straw, powered by the secret
green lips of the plant? Won't it suck

with all the fierce joy it can muster?
And if the plant were a bean, perhaps I eat
each pod, feeling the rightness of it,
and one day this whole stone will be inside me

and I speak from prior knowledge
of generations of stones lodged in my gall
bladder, the knowledge that I too will be ground
in the dark gizzard of the world.

I chew this notion over and over, how it happens
that I could end up food for a rock
or the rock itself: rigid and grey
and alone. But maybe stones

are just another way of living—
you could say a different style—
and if only we knew how to listen
to such enormous or tiny sounds,

we could hear their low, age-long conversations
at cliff bottoms or along riverbeds;
or feel how they embrace life so fiercely
they batter themselves to bits.

So I wonder, who is the stubborn one here—
the boulder in the field refusing to budge
for anyone, or me in the road,
arguing with myself, refusing to live?

—Janet MacFadyen
Shutesbury

CLEANING UP

My father would stay up late to clean the kitchen.

Sometimes I'd play blues for him on the piano.

We'd sing "House of the Rising Sun" and after

my father would wipe the counters down,

leaning against the wet butcher-block, soused,

his drowsy grin like a spectre.

He ordered what could be ordered, what could be

simply washed, the cloth hung to dry

over the faucet, the floor swept, the lights

turned off one by one. The breathing

of those he loved breaking out

of the darkened rooms above.

—Bill O'Connell
Belchertown



By the Side of the Road

I sit by an oak tree in autumn sun.

The simple pleasure of what is next

A honeybee works the roadside bloom.

nearly immortal, nearly forever.

Across the road, a very old man

—Bill O'Connell

moves in inches, taking minutes

Belchertown

to reach the hedge.

He grips the clipper's

wooden handles like a dowser

pulling him forward and down.

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The Future Melts

You could hold it in your mouth
like chocolate.
What comes of this is desire, and if you taste it
what comes is plenty, it is so sweet.

Then what comes
is that point of stillness inside the body.
That is why cats are so liquid.

That is why the leaf
floats down and down in the warm air though it is fall,
and thoughts slow like a train
coming to a halt in the middle of a cornfield,
at night, in October, with starlight shining down.

You could get off here in the darkness with the others
quietly talking and looking up at the stars,
whose light has traveled from so far away
and so long ago

—Janet MacFadyen
Shutesbury

It's Called Virtual Water

In the tub, I read an article on water called "The Last Drop" by Michael Specter. I wonder if Michael Specter is in his pool house reading my poem about a pool house. In it, I say that peeing outdoors before a wedding while the girls are watching the bride get her hair done is like knowing that a crooked river burst into flames in 1969. Yesterday, I didn't know that. Nor did I know that it takes more than a thousand drops of water to make one drop of coffee. I tell you this because I am writing an article about water called "The Last Drop." When I drink coffee again, I will think about all the drops of water that went into making my coffee. I will add "water consumption" to my list of items to consider at bedtime. I will think about it right after I determine whether or not I said anything to hurt anyone's feelings. After that, I usually drift off to sleep wondering if anyone is thinking of me as she drifts off to sleep.

—Elizabeth Hughey
Montague Center

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Nature Abounds Outside the Window

BY FRAN HEMOND

MONTAGUE CENTER - The little wildies needed St. Patrick's blessing on his day, this 2007, for a March snow-storm covered the ground with inches of heavy white stuff. The snow did not stick to the trees, but it drifted unmercifully over the bird feeders and sheltered spots. The juncos seemed quite happy to breakfast on the seed tossed out onto the last gasps of

winter, while the resident cardinal gave color to the scene. Song sparrows arrived in numbers. They replaced the tree sparrows who apparently had headed north when our hint of spring arrived last week. Both sparrows have central breast spots, but the song sparrows have heavy streaks on front and sides.



The chickadees and titmice appeared after the proper feeder was put in service. They must be able to glean from the trees and meadow. A phoebe wagged his tail and looked in but did not see insects, and took off. Yesterday's goldfinch did not deign to show, but a blue jay stopped by now and again to scatter the timid and then fly off to the pond, which is covered now with gray ice.

Just last week, the pond had fine stretches of open water. Cupcake, the lovely little hooded merganser duck who has stopped by since 2004, and shortly brought a drake each year, made a visit. This year the pair arrived together, and the south pond was elegant with their presence. Hoodies are diving ducks, neat and smaller than mallards. The male's head is

bordered black, with a striking white crest. He has rusty sides with a white breast and sharp merganser bill, which makes him a very handsome bird. The female is a neat brown duck with a rusty crest, and if this is Cupcake, they may linger.

My friends tell me that Hoodies have been in other area ponds this year. Earlier, a common merganser drake stopped here briefly. Sadly for me, a few days previous I missed a pair of wood ducks and cedar waxwings that my son had reported by the south pond.

It is surely worthwhile to encourage your children and grandchildren to recognize and enjoy the fabulous birds and flowers around us. Here in Montague we have it all: the woods, fields, a pair of nesting

eagles, and a Discovery Center that encourages interest and offers programs.

Specifically, the river at Unity Park and the canal at Migratory Way have sights in all seasons. The gulls and Canada geese, the swans and mallards and black ducks always seem to be accompanied by something less common, this week gold-eyes. The drakes, smaller diving ducks with black backs and white underparts, sport big white spots in front of their eyes. Nearby, the black-backed drakes with grayish underparts and a white vertical shoulder mark are ring-necked ducks.

Back home on your street, the diversity continues. You can tip your hat to the robin who offers unchanging cheer to the changing world. So we share another cycle with our planet mates - "even the least of these" - a fantastic creation.



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HIGHLIGHTS OF THE GILL POLICE LOG

Assisted with Erving Crash

Wednesday 3-14
11:17 a.m. Alarm sounding at Main Road business, cancelled en route by alarm company.
10:10 p.m. Report of erratic operator on Main Road, subject observed driving into Montague. Montague police advised of situation. Subject checked by Montague police; all OK.

Thursday 3-15
10:15 a.m. Abandoned vehicle with damage found on Mountain Road. Same was towed, awaiting contact from owner or operator.
2:25 p.m. Assisted Erving police near French King Bridge with fatal motor vehicle accident and traffic detour at Gill lights. [redacted] driving a dumptruck full of dirt, was injured in the accident; Elaine Bossert of Wilmington, VT, died at the scene.
5:15 p.m. Report of gunshots on Center Road. Checked area, nothing found.

Friday 3-16
10:15 a.m. Unregistered vehicle

complaint on West Gill Road; under investigation.
4:02 p.m. Erratic operation of motor vehicle on West Gill Road. Operator identified and citation issued.

Saturday 3-17
10:31 a.m. Welfare check requested at Walnut Street residence; all determined to fine.
11:17 p.m. Single vehicle crash on Boyle Road near Cross Road, no injuries, property damage only. Report taken.

Tuesday 3-20
10:56 a.m. Report of suspicious vehicle in the Chappell Road area. Checked on same, all OK.
12:50 p.m. Assisted resident at station with procedures for restraining order.
7:40 p.m. Subject at station regarding her child was missing after leaving school, contacted Greenfield police and assisted with investigation. Child later located, all OK.

HIGHLIGHTS OF THE ERVING POLICE LOG

Fatality on Route 2

Wednesday 3-14
8:29 a.m. Report of a sick raccoon on Strachen Street at Renovator's Supply. Found and destroyed.
11:10 a.m. Report of a motor vehicle accident on Route 2. Found turkey had struck the windshield breaking it out.

Thursday 3-15
2:30 p.m. Report of a car vs dump truck accident on Route 2. Massachusetts State Police already on scene. Assisted with first aid. [redacted] the driver of the truck was removed to hospital. Elaine Bossert of Wilmington, VT, driver of the car, was pronounced dead at the scene.

Saturday 3-17
5:45 p.m. Report of a wire down near Maple Street. Found be to a telephone wire. Verizon notified.
10:38 a.m. Two reports of breaking and entering into motor vehicles on West High Street. Reports taken

Sunday 3-18
11:30 p.m. [redacted] was arrested by Northfield Police. Subject was brought to station for officer to administer breathalyser test. Subject refused test.

Tuesday 3-20
3:15 p.m. Report of dog bite on Central Street. Located dog. Found to have proper shots. Victim refused medical treatment. Second incident of biting by same dog. Under investigation.

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OLVER from pg 1

“believes it’s imperative that Congress begin legislating a withdrawal from Iraq.”

“He needed to pass a supplemental bill, either with Democratic or Republican votes. The Democratic proposal has a timeline for withdrawal. The president’s proposal does not. If the choice is between the president’s proposal with no timeline, no strings attached to the president’s conduct of the war; the other choice being a firm series of benchmarks and timelines for withdrawal, John Olver has gone with the latter option. He strongly believes that it’s time to withdraw US troops. He opposes the war. And he supports this version of the supplemental.”

“The timeline states that on July 1, 2007, the president would submit a report to Congress detailing the progress that has been made in Iraq. If the House believes that not enough progress has been made, a withdrawal would be triggered at that time and must be completed within 180 days. If the determination is that enough progress has been made towards political and civil stability in Iraq, then on October 1st, 2007 the president

must certify that benchmarks have been met and that progress is continuing to be made. If Congress meets October 1st and determines that not enough progress has been made, again a withdrawal is triggered, and must be completed in 180 days.

“Regardless of what’s happening on the ground, how much progress is made or not made, a withdrawal must begin by March 1st, 2008 and must be completed by August 31st, 2008,” said Burch.

“The wording is fairly firm and takes into account different levels of progress. It outlines a timeline which the Republican bill obviously does not,” Burch said. “It also has other components like halting the current practice of deploying troops in Iraq and Afghan who are not fully mission capable. It also includes \$3.4 billion more for medical assistance to military personnel and returning war veterans. This is the version he’s voting for. In addition there’ll be funding for state children health care programs and Katrina reconstruction.”

Sunny Miller, director of the Traprock Peace Center in Deerfield, sat in at Olver’s Washington office on Monday, March 19th, following a one-

hour, face-to-face conversation with the congressman, during which she pleaded with him to “exercise the courage to say ‘No’ to the killing, ‘No’ to new funding for this cruel war and ‘No’ to an attack on Iran.” The pending version of the Democrats’ bill deleted a clause calling for Congress to have final say in authorizing the use of funds to launch an attack against Iran. Miller was arrested and held overnight in a D.C. jail. She faces a trial date in early April.

Passing through D.C. on her way home from North Carolina, Miller learned that Olver’s office had just issued his position briefing indicating the Congressman’s intention to support the Supplemental Appropriations Bill. Miller feels that, “attaching provisions to this bill such as crucial health care for our veterans, children and Katrina victims, means that our soldiers’ and Iraqi lives are the price we will have to pay for these desperately needed services. We are not willing!”

Miller said she felt the atmosphere in the Capital cafeteria this week reflected a Congress more concerned about sports games and betting odds than the catastrophe in Iraq.

HIGHLIGHTS OF THE MONTAGUE POLICE LOG

Orange Punch

Thursday 3-15

12:23 p.m. Report of a larceny from a Vladish Avenue address. A tailgate was stolen from a pick-up truck. Report taken.

10:41 p.m. Report of a fight at a Davis Street address. Two men were yelling and swearing at each other. Gone on arrival.

Friday 3-16

10:17 a.m. Report of an assault at a 5th Street address. A child had an orange thrown at him and was hit in the head. Advised of options.

7:03 p.m. Report of shoplifting at Brooks Pharmacy. Employee reports theft of some merchandise. Under investigation.

Saturday 3-17

1:55 p.m. Report of a motor vehicle accident on Millers Falls Road by the cemetery. One vehicle off the road into a guard rail. Moderate damage to car, no damage to guard rail.

Sunday 3-18

6:47 p.m. Report of a motor vehicle accident on Turners Falls Road at Vladish Avenue. Two cars involved. Minor injuries to operators. Both cars towed from scene.

Monday 3-19

2:06 p.m. Report of a larceny from Couture Brothers on Avenue A. Caller reports that a cell phone was lost and whoever found it has been calling Mexico. Under investigation.

Tuesday 3-20

1:22 a.m. After a motor vehicle stop on Avenue A by Food City, [redacted] was arrested and charged with unlicensed operation of a motor vehicle and having no inspection sticker.

1:50 p.m. Report of a larceny at a Taylor Hill Road address. Caller states a set of ski poles was left in a snowbank while a walk was taken. The poles were gone when the caller came back.

Earth Week at Sheffield School

BY DAVID DETMOLD

TURNERS FALLS - Sheffield School will celebrate Earth Week with an emphasis on endangered species this year, from April 9th through 13th, with visits from Tom Ricardi and his birds of prey, a talk about the perils of purchasing endangered species, or products made from endangered species, from Mickey Novak, director of the Cronin National Salmon Station in Sunderland, an all school parade, accompanied by the Turners Falls High School marching band to the Discovery Center, where the students will learn more about our river valley’s natural habitat and the threats to it, and a visit from Gini Traub of the Massachusetts Department of

Environmental Management’s Skinner Park to tell students about “Life on the Edge,” chronicling how animal populations in Massachusetts have changed over the last 400 years. All this environmental awareness activity will lead up to an all-school meeting on Friday, where students will recap what they have learned in the preceding days, and celebrate the Earth in story and song.

Fifth grade teacher Sue Smith, who has spearheaded the Earth Week curriculum at Sheffield for more than a decade, said, “Sometimes I think I’m crazy, but it’s just as exciting every year.” Smith had the television screen in her classroom tuned to MCTV’s Eagle Camera during a

recent visit. She said her students called her attention to the appearance of a second egg in the Barton Cove aerie (laid Saturday, March 3rd, four days after the eagles’ first egg appeared) in the middle of class recently. They love to watch the eagles! In the back of the room, her students, who are members of the Massachusetts Department of Environmental Protection’s statewide school recycling “Green Team” effort, have established a Re-Use It Box, for paper that can still be written on, and they actively recycle other paper, and watch out their classroom window as the recycling truck comes each week to empty the recycling dumpster. Every week is Earth Week at Sheffield.

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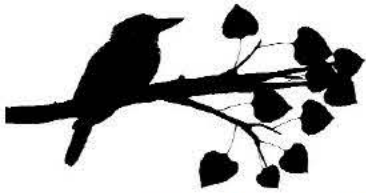


ILLUSTRATION BY ANJA SCHUTZ

BY KARL MEYER

COLRAIN - One of the things I like about living in the country is you can assume privacy. There's space between the houses and farms; the patches of woods screen one landscape view from the next. I took a walk recently in the late afternoon. It was cool. Almost a foot of snow was on the ground. In winter I walk a road bordered by fields, and sometimes turn down a path ending at a stream on my way back.

The first thing that caught my eye in the late winter sun was the clot of black movement undulating slowly down a hillside field. It was about 400 yards off, but it didn't take long to figure that these were wild turkeys. The birds had come out into the open to glean what they could of food and sunlight from a sunny field. To give them a little more space I crossed to the

opposite side of the road as I came abreast of them. It didn't work. All thirty-two birds took a few bouncy steps and launched themselves - a few clucking - as they flew off toward a stand of maples. They landed in the safety of open woods.

Late winter is the time when wild turkey hens merge yearling families with those of other hens and gather in large flocks. This was one of those crowds. Last year at this time I spotted a flock of 300 birds. It won't be many weeks now, as the sap slows to a dribble, that those hens and maturing yearlings will be treated to the quavering-gobble of the calling toms - males looking to establish 'harems' that enable them to bond and mate with as many females as possible.

The mating ritual is magnificent and ridiculous. The males strut and fan out a peacock ring of colorful feathers, all the while flashing an

amazing array of high-blooded passion as their hideous, un-feathered faces and fleshy wattles turn red, blue and green. Add to this one more uproarious element - the turkey shuffle where the toms do a funky, pigeon-toed, pawing strut before receptive females to further highlight their enviable gifts. Somehow the females find this way too sexy to resist, and wait their turn to join Mr. Natural for a very brief tryst.

Before I'd headed out this day I'd had a big gulp of water, so when I got to a patch of woods down the path near the stream I thought I'd take a minute to do what folks do. At that moment, I glanced to the shrubs and trees across the gurgling water. Simultaneously, someone was lifting his hand to wave hello. I was pretty much in the open at this point, though about a hundred yards away from the friendly greeter. What's to be done? I turned aside and finished the

chore, turned back. "Nothing personal," I half-hollered above the churning water.

"No offense taken," he replied.

I was a half mile from home, and just not sure who I was talking to. In fact, I hardly remembered there was a road this far up across that stream - the houses peter out hundreds of yards before this spot. The voice was vaguely familiar, but I hadn't a clue.

"Not a bad day," I added.

"Yeah, sure is nice not to be hearing the furnace click on so often."

"It won't be long before the sap is flowing," I observed.

"The coyotes have been busy over here," he offered, "They were running deer down from the ridge."

I looked to my left and could see the clear prints of a bounding deer in snow. It looked like the coyotes had failed in their ambush, though deep snow is their best ally

when it comes to bringing down healthy deer. "Yeah, I've got a deer track coming right up from the bank here," I added.

We exchanged a few more country pleasantries, and then bade a late-afternoon farewell. I guess privacy is relative. But out in the open woods small incursions are easily overlooked. Although I'm sure my breach of etiquette will make for a good story, for whomever I was talking to.

Cooling thought: Learn a new trick. Though it's taken years, I've finally learned to keep that canvas bag in the car and now refuse both plastic and paper at the store. If I've left the bag in the car, I go get it. That plastic bag represents a non-renewable, climate-changing oil product - a blithe squandering of precious resources. And paper bags contribute much more to the planet if they are left standing as carbon-locking trees.

POETS

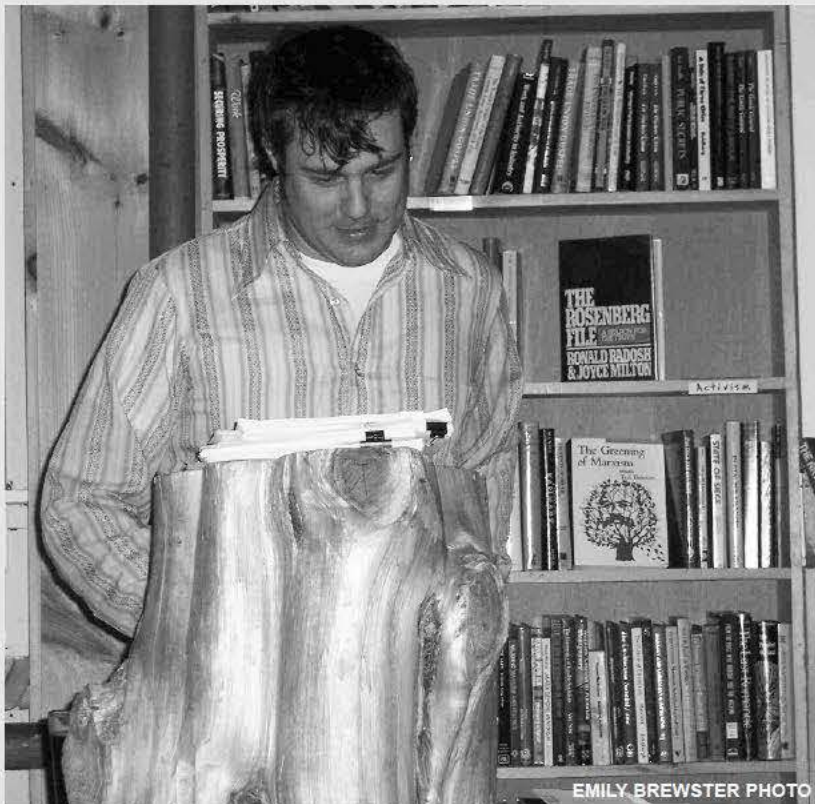
continued from pg 1

Embryonic Rat Brain) and threatened to read all of them. He kept up an entertaining patter between poems that displayed the full range of his talents, from the kinetic yet philosophical prose poems of the new book to his whimsical, tender psalms.

Kristin Bock read next from her manuscript *Cloisters*, her poems striking in their elegant language. Several poems, Bock informed us, were inspired by working with her husband restoring statues for churches. But even those not strictly religious in nature felt allegorical and conveyed a feeling of reverence and foreboding, even a trance-like

quality. Still other poems came from the other direction, in the voice of someone or something looking out over humanity with a distant, painfully observant eye.

Elizabeth Hughey, reading from *Sunday Houses the Sunday House* began with "Dogwood, David, Dogwood," a poem of seemingly unconnected words strung together, repeating and accumulating, so that images formed in quick succession, bumping up against each other and urging us to pay attention in a new way. This nicely set the stage for



EMILY BREWSTER PHOTO

the rest of her poems - surreal, quirky, full of unpredictable juxtapositions, wherein the narrators (and by virtue of extension, the audience) endeavor to make sense of their shifting realities.

It was clear at the end of the reading that though all three went through the same program and know each other well, their writing is unique and stirring, their craft never overpowering the humanity of their work. In Montague, we were lucky enough to hear them all together at the start of what will surely be fruitful careers.

Left: Chris Janke reads at the Montague Bookmill on Saturday, March 17th.

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A HOLISTIC HEALTH PERSPECTIVE

Stress Produces Belly Fat

BY JENNY CHAPIN

MONTAGUE CENTER - It won't be news to anyone that life is stressful. Whether due to work, relationships, money, health, family, or school, many people these days commonly experience some degree of pressure or anxiety about how their lives are going. What you might not know is the connection between stress and belly fat.

An article in the March issue of *Yoga Journal* notes that "people under chronic stress secrete hormones that cause their bodies to sock away fat around their bellies." It continues, "Unlike fat that lands on thighs and buttocks, abdominal fat is irrevocably linked to stress."

In response to stress, levels of the hormone cortisol rise; for people who continue to worry, those levels can stay high. Elevated cortisol levels not only stimulate eating, they ensure that any additional calories are efficiently converted to fat.

Worse, under the influence of cortisol, that fat tends to get deposited in the abdomen, a particularly unhealthy place. Big bellies are linked to insulin resistance, high cholesterol, high blood pressure, and high levels of triglycerides (blood fats) - which lead to heart disease, stroke, and diabetes - all on the rise in this country.

Barry Glassner, in his book *The Gospel of Food*, rebuffs the idea that the major cause of obesity is too much food and not enough exercise. His look at the research found that lower income levels are more suspect: rising obesity rates are commensurate with rising rates of economic hardship and insecurity. With increased financial stress, higher levels of stress hormones provoke cravings for "soothing substances" - which tend to be high-fat, high-sugar, high-calorie foods. (My favorite anti-stress foods are pasta with cheese sauce, bread and butter,



and ice cream.) In addition, binge eating, whether due to poverty or dieting, causes the body to adapt to the fluctuations of food intake by converting more of what is eaten into fat, in preparation for the lean times.

Plenty of studies have shown that meditation helps bust stress, but if you're too wound up to sit still, it'll be hard to still your mind. Yoga poses were actually developed thousands of years ago to get people ready to sit in meditation, so we can look there first for help.

Kim Innes, an assistant pro-

fessor at the Center for the Study of Complementary and Alternative Therapies at the University of Virginia Health Systems, and Alka Kanaya, internist at the University of California at San Francisco, have each looked at fat storage in the body and its effect on health, and considered yoga for reducing stress-related weight gain.

Thirteen studies of yoga and body composition showed a decreased body weight by as much as 13.6 percent, increased insulin sensitivity, and lower cholesterol. And it didn't take long: just nine days of practice had dramatic effects. Innes, quoted in the *Yoga Journal* article, "surmises that stress relief and feelings of well-being fostered by a regular yoga practice serve to rebalance the nervous system."

While the common image of yoga is of human pretzels, not for the faint of heart or the

overweight, it is restorative yoga that is the key here. Emphasizing supported poses, restorative yoga soothes the nervous system, and as the body and mind release agitation, the body begins to heal itself.

Judith Lasater, yoga teacher and author of *Relax and Renew: Restful Yoga for Stressful Times*, writes, "The antidote to stress is relaxation. To relax is to rest deeply. Relaxation is a state in which there is no movement, no effort, and the brain is quiet." This is different from sleep, and from watching TV, which engage muscular tension and brain wave activity.

Jenny Chapin is an acupuncturist, bodyworker, and yoga teacher in Greenfield. For previous articles, and to offer topics of interest for this column, visit her website, www.jennychapin.com.

THE HEALTHY GEEZER

On Gallstones

BY FRED CICETTI

LEONIA, NJ - *Q. I'm from an Italian-American family and we seem to have a predisposition for gallstones. Is this something people of my ethnic background get more often?*

I could find no evidence that people with an Italian background get more gallstones than others. However, Native Americans have an inclination for this malady; they have the highest rate of gallstones in the United States.

There are a bunch of other risk factors. People over age 60 are more likely to develop gallstones than younger people. Women between 20 and 60 years of age are twice as likely to develop gallstones as men. Other factors include obesity, excess estrogen, cholesterol-lowering drugs, diabetes, rapid weight loss, and fasting.

The gallbladder is a blue-green organ, about three inches long on the underside of the liver. The liver produces bile in a dilute form, which is then stored and concentrated

in the gallbladder. The bile is then secreted from the gallbladder into the small intestine where it aids digestion.

You can live without a gallbladder. After it is removed, bile flows out of the liver through ducts into the small intestine. However, because the bile isn't stored in the gallbladder, it flows into the small intestine more frequently.

Bile is made up of fatty substances such as cholesterol. When excessive amounts of fat are present, stones can form. The stones can be as small as a grain of sand or as large as a golf ball. About 90% of gallstones are composed of cholesterol.

Gallstones can block the normal flow of bile. A blockage can cause inflammation.

If the blockage persists, it can damage organs and be fatal.

Symptoms of gallstones often present themselves suddenly. If you have a gallstone "attack," you can suffer pain in the upper abdomen, between the shoulder blades, and under the right shoulder.



ILLUSTRATION: JESSICA HARMON

An attack, which often comes after a fatty meal, can last from a half-hour to several hours.

Other symptoms include nausea, vomiting, indigestion, abdominal bloating, and recurring intolerance of fatty foods.

You should get to a doctor immediately if you have an attack with chills, fever, yellowing of the skin or whites of the eyes, and clay-colored stools.

About 80 percent of people with gallstones have no symptoms. They have what are called "silent stones" that don't need treatment.

Gallstones are usually treated by removing the gallbladder. This surgery is called a "cholecystectomy." In traditional surgery, the gallbladder is removed through an abdominal incision up to eight inches long. However, the most common method today employs a laparoscope, a thin tube with a scope on the end of it.

The laparoscope is inserted through a small incision below the navel. The surgeon can see inside with the scope.

The other surgical tools are inserted in three other small incisions in your abdomen. The gallbladder is removed through one of these cuts.

Abdominal ultrasound is considered the safest and simplest of the tests for gallstones. Sonar waves from a probe are passed over the abdomen to detect the presence of stones.

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

Water Problems

BY JOSEPH A. PARZYCH GILL - Water always seemed to be a problem on the farm - there was either too little or too much. I sometimes wondered why Pa settled in Gill. Perhaps it was because he could assume the mortgage and take possession without a down payment. Unfortunately, when the family moved to Gill, we didn't have any more luck with the farm than the previous owner, Jephred Carey. I never found out what happened to Carey. All I know of him is that old timers in town called our farm "Jep's Place."

First Jep's house burned down, according to local legend. Then, after rebuilding it, he couldn't scratch out enough money to pay the mortgage. He

hadn't done much in the way of maintenance or finishing the house. We never knew what became of him, or whether he was even dead or alive. We often heard strange sounds in the night. Even during the day, the back shed was dark with empty barrels standing in the shadows. My older sisters speculated that it might be Jep coming back at night to retrieve something hidden in the barrels, or his ghost coming to haunt us. I don't know what was more scary - the thought of Jep, or his ghost.

Though someone had dug a shallow well in the front yard, it wasn't very productive. That isn't to say there wasn't any water on the farm. At times in the spring, water flooded the cellar a foot or more deep. And during rainstorms the roof leaked like it'd been riddled with birdshot.

We'd awaken in the dead of night to hear the dreaded sound of rain on the roof and jump out of bed to light the kerosene lamps. While some kids ran to get pots and pails to catch the water, others moved beds away from leaks. After positioning receptacles to catch the water, we'd climb back into bed under damp covers for an uneasy sleep, listening to the "plinking and plunking" into assorted containers, knowing the leaks would migrate as the roof got saturated and we'd soon be up moving things around again.

The one place on the farm that didn't seem to accumulate water was the well. That went dry before the ink dried on the deed. When the family first moved in, Ma and the kids lugged water from the brook and collected rainwater off the roof until Pa and the older boys dug a new well. When Pa wasn't around, Ma often wondered aloud, "Why'd he buy such a place?"

Pa put Walter, Stanley, and Johnny to work digging a new well, and left for his job at the mill. The boys were in their early teens. They dug down as far as they could but struck no water. That night it rained. The clay at the bottom of the well became saturated with rainwater and turned to muck.

The next day, Pa borrowed a mud pump from the Montague highway department. On his way home, he stopped at Starbuck Plumbing to ask the owner, Mr. Starbuck, to sell him well tiles on credit. "I suppose you want them delivered, too," Starbuck said. Pa got riled up by the retort. Polish families buying up farms in the Connecticut River valley irked the earlier settlers, as immigrant families displaced old time Yankees. Resentment often surfaced in dealing with the immigrants, as it did that day in the plumbing shop.

"Well, I can't carry them on my back," Pa snapped back, and

paid him off as soon as possible, never to buy anything at the plumbing shop ever again.

On the following day, the rain-soaked clay made slow digging. The well didn't get much deeper before Pa had to leave for work. The hole wasn't shored up. Afraid they'd be buried alive, the boys spent most of their time keeping a wary eye on the dirt walls, getting their feet free from the sticky clay, and looking to head up the ladder.

The next morning, Pa helped them dig deeper. The clay became wetter and harder to toss up out of the hole. Pa set up a tripod and pulley. He tied a rope to a pail and they began hauling clay out, pail by pail. Soon, water began seeping in at the bottom. Small chunks of clay began ominously dropping from the sides. More clay fell. Pa decided it was time to set the tiles before the whole thing collapsed on the boys.

- Continued next week

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Pioneer Cooperative of Franklin County currently has membership opportunities for two units located in the Montague City section of Montague. Coop

members occupy apartments in buildings owned by the coop. Becoming a member is not difficult, but does involve more responsibilities than a conventional rental relationship. In exchange for below market rents, members agree to participate in meetings and committees, a monthly work requirement of 4 hours and normal outdoor and common area maintenance of the property they occupy. Large first floor 2 or 3 bedroom apartment with large windows, high tin ceilings and lots of open space. Range & Refrigerator. Laundry hook-up. Basement storage. Gas heat and hot water. \$700/mo, no utils. Sunny second floor 1 or 2 bedroom apartment. Range & Refrigerator. Laundry hook-up. Basement storage. Gas heat and hot water. \$580/mo, no utils. Non-smokers preferred. Please call 413-772-5052 or email info@pioneercoop.org for more information.

POLICE from page 6

the committee, where, he said, "We will continue to revise it until it meets the needs of the committee." When the plan is revised, the Prudential Committee will look at it for a final decision on any shared-use spaces. If it works for them, then any transfer of land from the Prudential Committee to the town, or any other specific arrangements, will have to be spelled out. On the building committee side, we now must look at the cost-benefit issues and trade-offs and try to figure out what is best for our town.

Sudoku

By Willy White

Here are the answers to last week's puzzle.

7	1	8	9	5	6	2	3	4
9	4	3	7	8	2	6	1	5
6	5	2	3	1	4	7	9	8
3	2	7	8	4	9	5	6	1
4	6	5	2	3	1	8	7	9
1	8	9	5	6	7	3	4	2
8	3	1	4	7	5	9	2	6
2	7	4	6	9	8	1	5	3
5	9	6	1	2	3	4	8	7

Do we go with less expensive vinyl siding rather than masonry? What kind of flooring should we use in the heavily traveled areas of what will be a 24-hour a day, seven-day a week facility? Do we want to bear added cost in construction, or in maintenance and replacement fees? We will be asking Humes for many cost and prediction figures in the next few weeks.

As a follow-up to questions raised in my last update, I did indeed ask Humes about the town hall storage space and Bernardston's modular building approach for their police department. Humes said some room in the current police quarters in the basement of town hall would be suitable for town storage, if air-conditioning were maintained for most of the year.

As far as modular buildings go, they do not meet code requirements and so are not an option. All first-responder

buildings must meet seismic codes. In addition, public health regulations translate into very strict cell construction requirements, and cover all procedures in the handling and detention of prisoners - which determine how those areas must be built. Dispatch centers must also meet National Fire Protection Association standards.

Finally, I want to note the time and work that Zukowski and Godin have already put in visiting and talking about the many stations and safety complexes they evaluated prior to working with Humes. That, along with the recommendations that emerged from the discussions they have had with their departments, and Zellmann's experience and observations, have greatly increased the efficiency and usefulness of the planning process. We all got home in the snow, and without incident.

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JACK COUGHLIN ILLUSTRATION

FRIDAY, MARCH 23RD

The Shea Theater, Turners Falls: *Celebrating The Music of the J. Geils Band* benefit for the therapeutic riding center, 7:30 p.m. Featuring an eight piece group with Danny Klein, original founding member of J. Geils on bass, Rosy Rosenblatt harp, The Heavy Metal Horns and Hackel on drums. Joining DK and Friends will be very special guests "Bennie and The Jets" (Elton John tribute) along with local veteran rockers Ambush. Tickets \$15 available at the People's Pint, World Eye Bookshop, Cup 'O Joe, The Smokin' Hippo & at the Shea on show night. Your \$50 donation to the therapeutic riding center gets you into the pre-concert VIP reception sponsored by The Smokin' Hippo and The People's Pint. For VIP tickets, call 863-0002 or www.OpeningGaitsTRC.org

Deja Brew: *Euphemisms-Folk Rock*. 9 to 11p.m. No cover

Rt. 63 Road House: *Stonewall-rock*, originals & covers, come to dance! 9:30 p.m.

Concert at The Bookmill, Montague Center: *Swing Caravan*, Hot gypsy jazz a la Django Reinhardt. Arrive early for couches, armchairs, and to browse the books. \$10 in advance, \$12 at the door. 8 p.m.

FRIDAY & SATURDAY, MARCH 23RD & 24TH

Pothole Pictures presents *The Seven Samurai*, Memorial Hall Theater, Shelburne Falls. 7:30 p.m.

FRIDAY TO SUNDAY, MARCH 23RD TO 25TH

The classic Rogers and Hammerstein musical, "The Sound of Music" performed by the Barre Players. Shows are at 8 p.m. Thursday, Fridays & Saturdays; 2 p.m. on Sundays. Special offer: Thursday March 29th -tickets just \$7. All other performances: tickets are \$14 adults, \$12 seniors. Info: 978-724-0108. Continues **Thursday-Sunday, March 29th to April 1st.**

SATURDAY, MARCH 24TH

Comedy at the Shea! *Boston Comedy Festival on Tour*, with national headlining comedian Jim McCue, BCF 2006 winner Dan Boulger, Mike Prior and Brian Joyce



Tex & Pat LaMountain, Russ Thomas, Joe Graveline, (pictured clockwise) at Great Falls Coffeehouse, March 28th. 7 p.m. This quartet of area singer-songwriters bring a variety of songs and styles to the Great Falls Discovery Center performance series held on the last Wednesday of each month.

at The Shea Theater, Turners Falls. Some proceeds benefit 21st Century Community Learning Center, Greenfield. Beer & wine served in lobby before the show. Material appropriate for 17 and older. Showtime 8 p.m., doors open at 7 p.m. Tickets \$15 in advance, \$18 at the door, available on-line at www.sheacomedy.com, World Eye Bookshop, The Gill Store or at the Shea, 863-2281.

Deja Brew: *Josh Levangie-Johnny Cash Favorites*. 9 to 11p.m. No cover

Rt. 63 Road House: *Catamount-classic & southern rock*, come to dance! 9:30 p.m.

Open Mic at Cup 'O Joe, Ave A, Turners Falls. Everyone welcome! 6:30 p.m.

Concert at The Bookmill, Montague Center: *Tripping Lilly & Ryan Fitzsimmons* "cutting edge pop folk" Arrive early for couches, armchairs, and to browse the books. \$10 in advance, \$12 at the door. 8 p.m.

THROUGH MARCH 25TH

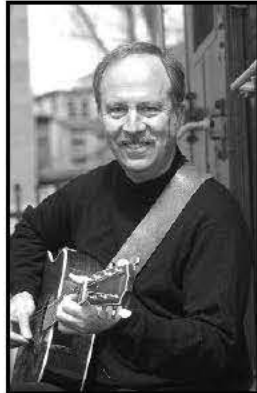
Local artists on display at Green Trees Gallery in Northfield, 5-7 p.m. *Apex to Zenith*, a panoramic collection of over 35 regional artists. www.greentreesgallery.com

SUNDAY, MARCH 25TH

The Montague Bookmill Presents: The Dead of Winter Free Films for the Frozen: *I Walked With A Zombie*, 7 p.m.

Family Contra Dance with Cindy Green. Simple dances with easy instruction geared for little feet. Lots of fun, humor and some singing games too. Great for 3-11yr olds and

parents. Chase the Winter Blues away. Montague Grange, Montague Center. 4 to 5:30 p.m. 367-9380



online www.1794meetinghouse.org or (978) 544 5200, and at the door. 4 p.m.

MONDAY, MARCH 26TH

Live Jazz at Ristorante DiPaolo, Avenue A, 6 to 9 p.m. Info. 863-4441.

Deja Brew, Wendell-A *Night of Spoken Word*: Open Mic 7 to 8 p.m., Guest readers 8 to 10 p.m., no cover.

Rt. 63 Road House: *Singer/songwriter series* hosted by Rob Skelton.

TUESDAY, MARCH 27TH

Amandla Community Chorus in collaboration with middle school students sing songs from Underground Railroad & other Liberation Struggles. 7 p.m. Free & open to the public.

WEDNESDAY, MARCH 28TH

The Friends of the Great Falls Discovery Center invite you to enjoy four singer songwriters who have been performing and recording music for decades. Pat & Tex, Joe Graveline, and Russ Thomas in concert, an acoustic sampler of tradition-

al & contemporary folk, blues, rock, country, and swing. Held in the historic Great Hall of the Great Falls Discovery Center, 2 Avenue A, Turners Falls. Doors open at 6:30 p.m. - coffee & homemade baked goods. Sliding scale donation of \$5 - \$10. Wheelchair accessible. Info. 863-3221 x 3.

Fiddle Tune swap at Deja Brew, Wendell, all welcome. 7 to 9 p.m.

THURSDAY, MARCH 29TH

Deja Brew, Wendell-Dave Robinson & Tommy Filault-Blues, 8 to 10 p.m.

Rigoberta Menchú, Guatemalan Indian leader and 1992 Nobel Peace Laureate, will give a talk on "Healing Communities Torn by Racism and Violence" at 8 p.m. in Johnson Chapel, Amherst College. Free & open to the public. Sponsored by Amherst's Mayo-Smith-Read Trans-Disciplinary Fund.

FRIDAY, MARCH 30TH

Deja Brew, Wendell-Acoustic Duo *Warped Americana*, Steve Crow & Peter Kim. 9 to 11 p.m., no cover-

ONGOING

Exhibit: John Willis' and Tom Young's "Recycled Realities and Other Stories" at Hallmark Museum of Contemporary Photography, Turners Falls. Haunting and surreal, series of black and white images invite viewers into a vast paper landscape at Erving Paper Mill. Also images from photographic projects: "View from the Rez" and "Timeline". Reception with live music and hors d'oeuvres will be held on **Saturday, March 31** from 1-5 pm. Slide presentation from 7:15-8:45 p.m. at Hallmark Institute



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<p>SATURDAY, MARCH 24TH What's Happening with the Bald Eagles? Join Refuge staff to learn about what phase the bald eagles are in their nesting and reproduction cycle. 11 - 12 p.m.</p> <p>WEDNESDAY, MARCH 28TH Friends Coffeehouse Series. Join the Friends for a night of local entertainment. \$5 - \$10 sliding scale. 7 p.m.</p>	<p>SATURDAY, MARCH 31ST Live Bald Eagle with Tom Richardi Join us to celebrate the success story of the bald eagle as we prepare for it to be delisted from the status of being an endangered species. 1 p.m.</p> <p>UNTIL MARCH 31ST Stephen Gingold's Nature Photography. Explore the world of nature, both at a</p>	<p>landscape scale and focused at close range for details, through the eyes of Stephen Gingold as you see his photographs in this special exhibit.</p> <p>APRIL 6TH TO 28TH Museum of Industrial Heritage Display and Jack Coughlin Sketched Portraits in the Great Hall.</p>
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THURS - Drop-in, 3 - 6 p.m. & Movie Night, 6 - 8 p.m.

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Showtimes for
Fri., March 23rd-Thurs., March 29th

<p>1. HILLS HAVE EYES 2 R DAILY 7:00 9:30 MAT. FRI, SAT, SUN 12:00 2:00 4:00</p> <p>2. TMNT PG13 DAILY 7:00 9:30 in DTS sound MAT. FRI, SAT, SUN 12:00 2:00 4:00</p> <p>3. I THINK I LOVE MY WIFE DAILY 7:00 9:30 R</p> <p>3. BRIDGE TO TERABITHA PG13 MATINEE ONLY FRI, SAT, SUN 12:00 2:00 4:00</p> <p>4. WILD HOGS PG13 DAILY 6:45 9:15 MATINEE FRI, SAT, SUN 12:15 3:15</p> <p>5. PREMONITION R DAILY 6:45 9:15 in DTS sound MATINEE FRI, SAT, SUN 12:15 3:30</p> <p>6. SHOOTER R DAILY 6:30 9:00 in DTS sound MATINEE FRI, SAT, SUN 12:30 3:30</p> <p>7. 300 R in DTS sound DAILY 6:30 9:00 MATINEE FRI, SAT, SUN 12:30 3:30</p>	<p>8. THE SEVEN SAMURAI Poor 16th century Japanese farming village hires 7 ronin (mercenary, masterless samurai) to save their town from vicious bandits in this model for countless American Westerns. Some consider this the greatest film ever made. The fastest moving 3 1/2 hours you'll ever spend - it never drags. Directed by Akira Kurosawa. 1954. Japanese w/subt. NR. 204 min. b&w</p> <p>Music before movie 7 p.m. Fri. Doug Creighton & Dedo Norris-traditional tunes on accordion & guitar Sat. The Illiterati-jazz</p> <p style="text-align: center;">51 Bridge St., Shelburne Falls 625-2896</p>
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IRISH SKETCHBOOK

A Day in the Burren (Part II)

BY DAVID BRULE

ERVINGSIDE - If you're lucky, you're sitting at an outside table at Monk's Pub in Ballyvaughn, your pint of Guinness optimistically half full (you can count the foam rings formed with every gulp taken), you've spent the perfect morning drifting through the limestone scenery of the Burren, the sun sparkles on Galway Bay, even through your closed eyelids, and the Irish gods are in their heaven. Luckily, there's no concept of "siesta" in Ireland, even for the lazy traveler in this slow-moving country, otherwise I'd be here for hours! I've been told by the Irish they've also rejected "mañana, mañana," another Spanish-language concept, because it conveys far too much urgency to suit them! So, keeping the "don't rush, don't bother" rule in mind, a plan slowly forms to continue the ramble through the Burren, making sure there's a pub at the beginning and at the end of each destination.

Reluctantly leaving Monk's, a drive along the Coast Road brings you past the Black Head (headland) where shortly you turn left and up the Caher Valley to a secret little spot known mostly to the birds and a few hill-walkers. Up here there's a little stream that trickles out of the Burren, a green oasis of running water in the rocky landscape. This shallow laughing brook is home to finches and wagtails, and became part of our Burren routine when we were bird watching and botanizing up this way a few years ago. A stony slope rises up behind us bearing on its shoulders what is called a "Green Road," impassible by car even though it's ten feet wide. Stone walls border each side, marching off in both directions as far as the eye can see.

These green roads lead nowhere. The true Irish name is Famine Road, as the bilingual signs will tell you. One name in English, the real name in Gaelic. The starving Irish were forced to build these roads during the Famine by the occupying British, in order to justify the doling out of a few pennies a day. Somehow it galled the British to give the native people of this land any kind of welfare support for free. They were made to earn the pittance by building useless roads that went nowhere.

The Brits often complained of the Burren that "There wasn't enough water to drown a man, nor a tree to hang him on, nor enough earth to bury him." Nevertheless, off we go up the hill, scrambling over the shale surface of the so-called road, peeking into crevices for wildflowers. Through a series of quirks of geological history, the Burren is a rare spot where exotics like orchids and other Mediterranean flora share some of the same terrain with alpine flowers, and the Gentians give this desert stone a blue hue in May. Here and there in the slabstone walls you see a deliberately constructed little doorway, a bit more than ankle high. The builders knew the Little People travel along certain paths, and to disturb them would certainly bring down serious misfortune and evil upon the thoughtless one. The fairy people were not to be trifled with, so allowances had to be made. You must still remember to turn your jacket inside out before you enter any one of the fairy circles that dot the landscape. Otherwise, you'll be carried off and not be heard of again. Or at least that's what I've been told.

A forty minute hike leads to the top of the hill from which you can spy another headland, the Cliffs of Moher, about 20 miles away. We'll get there in due time. But there's some backtracking and one last stop in another lost corner of the landscape before reaching the coast.

The ring fort at Caher Chomain is invisible most of the time. You approach it from a road that leads you past wedge tombs and dolmens dating from 4000 BC. Soon you see a little lay-by, big enough for two or three cars. It's through the cow gate with you, and you're off on a short mile-long hike along a path through the hazel bush and furze woods. The path leads down to a little glen, one of the most peaceful spots you'll find in this peaceful country. The glen glows in the late afternoon light. There's a swale of meadow grass and wildflowers that sweeps in a crescent along the base of a curving one hundred foot cliff, partly hidden by groves of small oak and hazel-



The cliffs of Moher, near Doolin

nut shrubs. The path turns upward to the top of the hill and soon you're picking your way through a rocky grassland of tumbledown walls.

You first reach the outermost walls of the ring fort, which is beginning to materialize before your eyes. This wall is eight feet thick and still about five feet high, and encloses another ring, and another. These rings are really semi-circles that end at the edge of the cliff. Safe from attack up the cliff, and with these concentric defenses, the inhabitants were quite secure here. Just to be sure, however, there were a series of tunnels that led to escape routes far down the cliff. It's estimated that an extended family of about 60 - 70 people lived on this site around 400 AD, and for several centuries.

Sitting on the edge of the cliff, quite safe from enemies, out comes the soda bread and Irish Cheddar that's been riding around in the backpack. Sun is moving at an angle, but there are

still hours of daylight left. Trees rise up the cliff, their top leafy branches softening the atmosphere here. A small falcon with a reddish hue, a kestrel, hovers on the updraft and hunts for supper. He does have a fierce look on his darkly hooded face, and a sharp glint in his eye. Suddenly, you're floating with him over the tops of trees and down the glen, with trees rushing past, and your knapsack left far below! Good God it could be the fairies, you think, and in a wink the spell is broken, and you're back sitting near your cheese. Thank goodness it was just a reminder to turn the jacket inside out! Suddenly, a donkey brays in the wind in the distance, but otherwise, silence again, except for the trees swaying in the light breeze.

Ignoring one of the basic rules of the rover in the Irish landscape, it's time to formulate a plan and a timeframe. Get over to the Cliffs the other side of Doolin, before the light fades too much. A short jaunt in the car, and by timing it right, you can arrive there after the last tour bus leaves around 6 p.m. The cost of parking has risen from a reasonable one Euro to about 12 Euros over the past few years. You can't park without paying, unless it's after hours, so by shrewd calculation, at this hour you don't have to pay for the privilege of walking up a paved path leaning into the constant gale blowing up the cliff face from the crashing sea a thousand feet below, to look at the Cliffs through wind-seared, watery eyes.

Birds, however, are what bring some of us here; you can see waves any time. Not too far below are numerous rock stacks where you can watch thousands

and thousands of sea birds. Puffins, guillemots, murre, fulmars and gulls glide, wheel and scream, carrying on with their lives in this raucous seabird colony. This is the kind of sight you would need to travel for hours by boat stateside in the North Atlantic to witness. Here, it's a ten-minute walk to the bird rocks. Sadly, the Celtic Tiger, the chance to make millions off this natural attraction, and too many deaths when nonchalant tourists allowed themselves to be swept off cliffs by the fierce winds, have changed the visitor's experience. The government has launched a mammoth project to do a massive reconstruction of the viewing areas and walkways. Apparently, you will soon view the Cliffs from inside a hollowed-out artificial hill, the access to which you'll pay for mightily with your hard-earned euros.

Ah well, surely the birds will keep up their racket all night, and the waves will roar as they have for millions of years here. It's high time to be rolling down to the musical town of Doolin through the twilight. In the distance you see the lighthouses on the Aran Islands, turf smoke rises up the chimneys into the gathering evening along the down-turning road. You can almost already hear the fiddle and tin whistle lifting up from celebrated pubs like O'Connor's, McDermott's and McGann's. The sun will be back up again before we see the end of this perfect day in County Clare! But then, as they say here, there's no rush, won't we all be sleeping long enough one day?



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