



NUKE VIGIL

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LIONEL DELEVIGNE PHOTO



CAROLINA WREN

Calls at Cold Brook Farm
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LAKE PLEASANT MILLERS FALLS MONTAGUE CENTER MONTAGUE CITY TURNERS FALLS

The Montague Reporter

YEAR 9 - NO. 25

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THE VOICE OF THE VILLAGES

MARCH 24, 2011

Witnesses to the Enduring Spirit of **Haiti**

BY GLORIA KEGELES WENDELL - Back from their two week trip to work in the *Sante Pou Yo* (Health for All) clinic in rural Haiti, Coco Schachtl and Mary Collins of Wendell tell tales of triage, a harrowing motorcycle transport of a newborn, voodoo ceremonies, spirit protectors, and tent cities.

From February 16th to March 9th, Schachtl, a registered nurse, and Collins, an EMT, volunteered in the clinic established in 2006 by the Canadian doctor Tiffany Keenan in the village of Bod Me Limbe, on the tip of the Bas Limbe Peninsula, an area on the north coast not physically damaged by the 2010

earthquake. The clinic is run by the non-profit HaitiVillageHealth.ca.

By 4:30 a.m., the day's 25 - 40 patients would line up for the 8 a.m. clinic opening, to visit the two Canadian doctors, Collins, Schachtl, and the Haitian medical staff: one doctor, one nurse, two aides, and a pharmacist, assisted by two translators and a security guard. Some would wait 12 hours for their turn; others would have to return the next day.

There were almost always more patients than the clinic could serve. Patients learning of the availability of foreign doctors would walk many miles beyond their local

see **HAITI** pg 13



COURTESY OF HTTP://HAITIVILLAGEHEALTH.CA

Pediatric cholera patient at the Sante Pou Yo clinic



CLAUDIA WELLS PHOTOMONTAGE

Farm to School

NEWS ANALYSIS

BY JONATHAN VON RANSON GREENFIELD - A push by the Franklin County School Committee Caucus to improve cafeteria fare invites local communities to shoulder more food-growing responsibility and clear away obstacles to improving childhood nutrition while strengthening the region's food security.

Called the Farm to School Initiative, it wouldn't just generate more "high quality, nutritious food to school children," said Genevieve Fraser, of

Orange, recent candidate for state representative from the Second Franklin district. "It would help expand local land-based economies."

Fraser is organizer of a "Farm to School Forum" for April 2nd that includes Kelly Erwin, Farm to School program director for Massachusetts, and Deb Habib, co-owner of Seeds of Solidarity Farm in Orange. (The forum is free, open to interested public, at 8:30 a.m.-1:30 p.m. at the Greenfield Middle School, 195 Federal Street. A light breakfast and lunch will be provided.)

Besides the appeal of a more healthful lunch for schoolchildren, and sometimes breakfast too, there's currently a special financial incentive at work - a federal food-processing grant intended to help stimulate the flow of local farm produce to institutions and school cafeterias.

Under the grant, the Western Massachusetts Food Processing Center recently helped pay for the flash freezing of local produce, including a ton of local broccoli to sell to the Holyoke school system.

"It worked well," Fraser said, "but it wasn't cost-

effective."

She believes in the need to create better local systems - that efficiencies of technology and scale can boost trade between local farms and schools. But she cites "unfair competition with government subsidies" in which she finds a destructive bias toward big producers. Fraser sees the dice loaded as well in "federal and state guidelines regarding what can and can't be served" in school cafeterias. So another part of the strategy is to work with lawmakers on leveling the playing field for local

see **SCHOOL** pg 14



SARAH CAMBELL PHOTO

Jean Devereux Koester as Diana and Dawn Ross as Grace in London Suite

London Suite - How Sweet It Is

BY SUDI NIMMS TURNERS FALLS - The Country Players presented Neil Simon's *London Suite* at the Shea Theater last weekend. The final two performances scheduled for Friday and Saturday nite, March 25th and 26th, at 8:00 p.m. and they are a must-see.

Promoted as "four comedies in four acts with four directors," the Country Players only fail to mention these are four directors who have never directed before.

First-timers Sue Shedd, Jerri Higgins, Carl Erickson, and Dave Peck (in order of the acts they direct) all do a splendid

job of giving us a fly-on-the-wall view into the lives of the travelers. No strangers to theater, the fab four give their all to the project - and it shows.

All four vignettes take place in the same luxury hotel suite in London and portray four groups of its visiting guests. In the first, "Settling Accounts," directed by Sue Shedd, financial advisor Billy (Phil Hayes) is being held at gunpoint by his client Brian (Francis Hauert) over the complete absence of Billy's life savings. This piece plays a bit dark with underlying humor. Hauert beautifully plays drunk, angry, and

miffed all at once. Reminiscent of Bernie Madoff, Hayes deftly meanders among his emotional reactions of disbelief, surprise, fear and one hell of a tap dance as he tries desperately to convince his client that his money has gone into investments.

One of Simon's more poignant as well as humorous plays, *London Suite* is one of a number of "Suite" shows Simon wrote, including *Plaza Suite* and *California Suite*. *London Suite* is not as wipe-your-eyes hilarious as, say, *The Odd Couple*, or *Last of the Red Hot*

see **LONDON** pg 9

PETS OF THE WEEK

Creamsicle



Mama Cat

My name is Mama Cat and I'm a one-year-old domestic long hair cat in need of a good home. I am dreaming of two things: a loving home of my own and a real name like a proper cat should have. I'm longing for my forever human to fall in love with me and bring me home – a cozy home, where I can sit warm inside and look out at the weather. And my forever person will give me a real name. I am a rare creamsicle-orange girl (usually boy cats are this color), and I can be a little shy at first but warm up fast! To find out more about adopting me, please contact the Dakin Pioneer Valley Humane Society at (413) 548-9898 or via email at info@dpvhs.org.

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WENDELL LIBRARY NEWS

Great Falls Returns to Wendell

BY ROSIE HEIDKAMP - On a snowy night in February, more than 60 people attended a program at the Wendell Library about the stone ruins scattered throughout the woods of New England.

On hand was Ted Timreck, PBS TV producer, to show his recently completed film, *Great Falls: Hidden Landscapes, the Ancient Stone Ruins of New England*. Also on hand was Doug Harris, Deputy Tribal Narragansett Historic Preservation Officer, who appears in the film.

Harris has been instrumental in the ongoing effort to understand and protect a Native American ceremonial site at the

Turners Fall airport. Harris's work has lead to new interpretations of New England stone ruins.

Previously, few in the scientific community believed native peoples in this area worked with stone. Timreck and Harris build a case that the stone landscapes were built by native people for astronomical, navigational and spiritual purposes. They show strong evidence that a number of the sites appear to be linked to each other across long distances.

Doug Harris and Ted Timreck will not be on hand this time on March 25th, 7:00 p.m. at the Library for a second screening of the film.

CARNEGIE LIBRARY NEWS

Animal Adventures Homeschool Program

TURNERS FALLS - Elise McMahon of Canine Head Start in Montague brought some special visitors to the Animal Adventures Homeschool program at the Carnegie Library on Wednesday, March 16th. She brought her almost five years old champion briard Raven and her sister's nine week old saluki puppy. The puppy stole the show. While Raven quietly lay

down and accepted the petting as her due, the puppy playfully visited with all of the children. While the children enjoyed the dogs, Elise discussed dog care, behavior issues, training and selecting suitable dogs for families. Elise has over twenty years experience and a PhD in the animal behavior field, and has worked with domestic dogs, foxes, wolves and African wild dogs in a variety of settings. She offers companion dog training and canine and



LINDA HICKMAN PHOTO

Sylvia Guillane of Greenfield, Julian and Audrey Kaiser, and Naomi Johnson of Millers Falls enjoyed Animal Adventures Homeschool Program at the Carnegie Library on Wednesday, March 16th.

SENIOR CENTER ACTIVITIES – March 28th - April 1st

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

Monday, March 28th
 10:00 a.m. Senior Aerobics
 10:45 a.m. Chair Exercise
 1:00 p.m. Knitting Circle
 AARP Tax Aid by Appointment
Tuesday, March 29th
 10:30 a.m. Yoga
 1:00 p.m. Painting Class

Wednesday, March 30th
 10:00 a.m. Aerobics
 1:00 p.m. Quilters
Thursday, March 31st
 9:00 a.m. Tai Chi
 1:00 p.m. Pitch
Friday, April 1st
 10:00 a.m. Aerobics
 10:45 a.m. Chair Exercise
 1:00 p.m. Writing Group

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

Monday, March 28th



DETMOLD PHOTO

Winter has been rough on this bench located in front of Equi's Candy Store on Avenue A in Turners Falls. Hopefully, the highway department has some money left in their budget to repair or replace it.

Historic Bridge Facts

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

- The tandem of granite piers supporting the structural steel of the Gill-Montague Bridge comprises 588 cubic yards of quarried block. The piers function as more than a principal support element.
- They integrate the role of expansion and contraction centers for the steel as it passes through the various seasons here in New England.
- To compensate for these variations in expansion and contraction, expansion rollers are built in to the piers to allow for a distance of up to 14 inches in the total length of the bridge, between minus 20 degrees to 120 degrees Fahrenheit.
- Finger-like joints at both ends near the abutments work in conjunction with the rollers to allow for deck expansion and contraction.

More bridge facts next week!

feline behavioral consultation services at her farm and training facility on East Chestnut Hill Road in Montague.

Her small classes, one-on-one services, and her briards are described on www.caninehead-start.com. For more information about the Homeschool Program which meets on Wednesdays at 1:15 p.m., call the Carnegie Library at 863-3214.

Book Launch of
As You Write It
 A Franklin County Anthology by local writers, edited by Laura Rodley
Sunday, April 3rd at 1:00 p.m.
 at the Montague Senior Center, Fifth Street in Turners Falls
 Come hear inspiring stories from the depression era, and beyond; going to the fair, working for the circus and enjoying life to the hilt. Joseph A. Parzych is author of *Jep's Place: Hope, Faith and Other Disasters*. Both he and writer Frances F. Hemond write for The Montague Reporter. This event is free. Refreshments will be served. Wheelchair accessible.

Great Falls Middle School Students of the Week

- Grade 6**
 Will Roberge
- Grade 7**
 Alison Ovalle
- Grade 8**
 Jessica Gaines
 Alexandra Wing-LaClaire

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NOTES FROM THE LEVERETT SELECTBOARD

Conflict Breaks Out Over Peace Commission

BY DAVID DETMOLD - "I don't intend to be quiet at town meeting about it," selectboard member Peter d'Errico told members of the committee to establish a Leverett peace commission on Tuesday.

Proponents hope to form a town commission to assist in efforts to teach mediation in the schools, and work with the selectboard in providing conflict resolution techniques in neighborhood disputes, as well as to focus the town's attention on matters of global resource conflict and alternatives to war.

But d'Errico wasn't buying what the peace committee members were selling.

"I'm really struck by the fact that we're going to create a government agency with no mandate but to find a mandate: 'What do you think we should do to change your way of life or your neighbor's way of life?'"

D'Errico inveighed against the

proposal to create an elected town peace commission on Tuesday, sketching out the implications of establishing a peace commission in McCarthyite terms, and forecasting a body of uniformed agents of town government inspecting citizens' private lives to see if they were measuring up to undefined standards of peaceful behavior.

But in December, when former selectboard member Jim Perkins and others working to bring a petitioned article to establish a Leverett peace commission to the floor for the April 30th annual town meeting first pitched the idea to the board, d'Errico had offered encouragement to the proponents. He compared the proposed peace commission then in a positive light to the effort Wendell recently undertook to establish a paid local food coordinator, and cited the case of the Wendell board of health denying a permit for a couple who hoped to build a non-electric apartment to reduce their ecological impact as a reason to support the proposal for a town peace commission.

"If we had a board of health making a decision like that, I would welcome some entity that had the ability to put two cents in," said d'Errico in December.

But d'Errico has since clarified his position, and would now prefer that the proponents working to establish a town peace commission pursue their effort outside of town government.

"There is nothing the town of Leverett can do to end war," declared d'Errico. "Explain to me how taking control of some aspect of town life without trampling on freedom of thought, freedom of speech, freedom of action, etc. is going to advance the cause of peace?"

D'Errico said he had recently attended a house party to support rebuilding a Palestinian house in Nablus, realizing, "There are some people who would think I am supporting terrorism. To have to have that argument with someone wearing the uniform of the state... if I can do anything to stop that, I will. We are confusing the proper role of town government with a desire to end war."

Proponents denied they had any interest in assuming any coercive power over individual or town affairs, but hoped to serve in a purely unbudgeted, advisory capacity, after listening at house parties to the will of town residents, to attempt to channel the

from LEVERETT pg 13



JESSICA LARKIN ILLUSTRATION

Local Briefs

COMPILED BY DON

CLEGG - Come to the Montague Family Dance on Sunday, March 27th, from 3:30 p.m. to 5:30 p.m., at the Montague Grange, Main Street, in Montague Center. This family-style Contra Dance is fun for all ages and will offer a chance to chase the winter blues away with caller Kathy Torrey and the band Shingle the Roof.

Don't put away your dancing shoes, because there will be a gathering at the Wendell town hall for an **International Circle Dance** on Saturday, April 2nd, starting at 7:30 p.m. A wide variety of dances will be taught with live music supplied by Noah's Raven Dance Band. For more information, call Kevin (978) 544-3218. All are welcome.

Get ready for art, pancakes, and pizza at The Brick House Community Resource Center first annual April Arts Weekend at 24 3rd Street, Turners Falls. The event will begin on Friday, April 1st at 3:00 p.m. with a Youth Art Gallery opening, followed by an open mic from 6:00-9:00 p.m. The events will continue on Saturday morning at 10:00 a.m. with open hours for the art gallery. Five workshops will be held from 1:00 p.m. to 6:00 p.m., with topics including dance improvisation, musical creation, 'zine production 101, clowning (movement), and a writing workshop. Saturday

night will continue with a Youth Art Lock-in. This is a supervised, overnight slumber party with movies, and Pizza! Anyone under age 18 must have a signed permission slip, which can be found on the Brick House webpage. The weekend concludes on Sunday from 9:00 a.m. to 11:00 a.m. with a pancake breakfast. For more info, schedules, early registration, or ways to volunteer, please contact Katie Sachs at 413-863-9559, or visit: aprilartsweekend.wordpress.com.

The community is invited to view selected films made by the **Greenfield School community**. This is the first year of the festival. There are four categories of short films (5 minutes or less) to be showcased on Friday, April 1st, at 7:00 p.m. and on Saturday, April 2nd, at 2:00 p.m. at the Greenfield High School. Contact Becky George: 413-441-6164, beckygeorge1962@gmail.com for more information.

Hope & Olive Restaurant's **Soup & Games Night Benefit** on Monday April 4th at 44 Hope Street in Greenfield will benefit Pioneer Valley Habitat for Humanity. Habitat is currently building a home on Warner Street in Montague City, with the help of students from the Franklin County Technical School.

Send items for local briefs to: reporter-local@montague-ma.net.

Street Sweeping Begins

TURNERS FALLS - Matt Cadran of the Montague Highway has some good news for folks weary of the sand and debris left over from winter storms. The DPW has been tuning up their street sweeper, and they'll begin sweeping the streets next week. "We usually start downtown in

the last week of March," before on street parking resumes the first week of April," Cadran said. After cleaning up downtown, the highway department will move steadily south, cleaning streets all around the town.

Cyclists will be right behind them.

Wendell History Group Meeting

The next meeting of the Wendell History Group is scheduled for Thursday, April 14 at the Wendell Library at 7:15 p.m.

Representative Andrews Office Hours in Gill

State Representative Denise Andrews will hold office hours at the Gill Town Hall on Monday, March 28th at 6:30 p.m.

Wendell Food Coordinator Office Hours

Liz Carter, Local Food Coordinator for Wendell will hold "office hours" Saturday, March 26th, 10:30 a.m. to 12:30 p.m. at Wendell Free Library. Bring questions about growing food to play the "Green Thumb Game." Thinking of starting a garden for the first time? Pick up a free Garden Start-up Kit, and connect with other gardeners in town. Contact Liz Carter at liz.k.carter@gmail.com or (360)797-4034 with ideas, or for more info.

SOAPMAKING CLASS

Learn how to make all natural soap



Lisa's Handcrafted Soap is excited to announce that soap classes are about to begin. The class will roughly last 3 hours. The class will include: an instructional packet, a soap recipe, all materials needed, and a block of soap that you'll make right here and take home.

- When:** Saturday May 7, 2011
- Where:** 100 3rd Street, Turners Falls, MA
- Time:** 2pm-5pm
- Register:** Call 863-5252 or stop by to reserve your space.
- Cost:** The course is \$50. Half/\$25 to be paid at time of reservation and \$25 to be paid the day of the class.
- Need:** Each student must bring one empty cardboard milk or juice carton, rinsed out and dry.
- Note:** Please feel free to call with any questions.



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Hope and Change and Libya

As the Western democracies try to figure out who's in charge of their hastily launched war in Libya, certain clear losers are already emerging from the bomb blasted rubble.

If Truth is the first casualty of war, Hope and Change will soon follow.

Along with the Russians, the British, French, Italians, Brazilians, and many other countries have all sold weapons to Muammar al-Qaddafi. European Union nations approved sales of \$470 million in weapons to Qaddafi's military in 2009 alone. The U.S. 'defense trade' with Libya was more limited, peaking at \$46 million in the final year of the Bush administration.

The world armed the dictator, so when the people of Libya rose up against his oppressive 43-year rule, the world had a collective responsibility to respond. But once Qaddafi began using the tanks, fighter planes, armored vehicles and heavy arms the world sold him against the people of Libya, threats of sanctions or blockades were abandoned in favor of armed intervention.

Revolution, fanned by hunger, the lack of opportunity, and a thirst for democracy, is sweeping inexorably through North Africa and the Middle East. In Tunisia, Egypt, even Bahrain and Yemen, these popular uprisings have been characterized by active non-violence on the part of the people in the street, even in the face of beatings and tear gas and live ammunition.

In Libya, the nonviolence that held through the early weeks of the Arab Spring ran headlong into a ruthless megalomaniac with nowhere to turn. So blood ran in the streets and protestors took up arms in self defense.

For days and then weeks, the world watched as the tide of revolt swept cities in the east and west of Libya, as civilians in Tripoli were shot down in the street and brutally suppressed, as

the rebels advanced, met with overwhelming force, and retreated in disarray.

Finally, in hopes to contain a final rout and massacre in Benghazi, the Western powers moved to obliterate the expensive armaments they had sold to Qaddafi only a few years earlier, when they had welcomed the oil rich Pan-Am bomber back into the fold of civilized nations.

Of course, in order to stop a bloodbath, America, France, Britain and our increasingly reluctant allies have now created a bloodbath of our own, and the outcome of this venture becomes cloudier by the day.

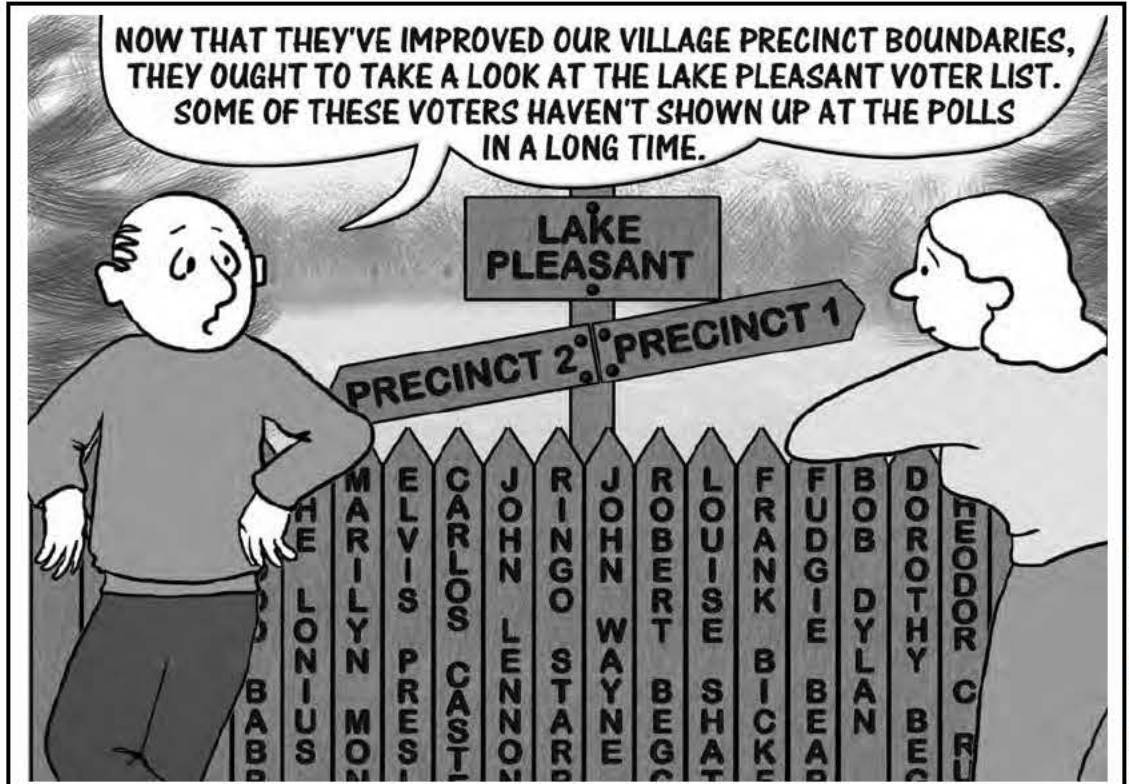
The double standard of America's intervention to stop a bloody crackdown in Libya while tolerating a smaller scale but still bloody crackdown in Bahrain, where the US Fifth Fleet is harbored, has not diminished the fire power our forces have let loose, once again, from "the shores of Tripoli."

Now, the question arises - "Where will this war lead, and who will lead this war?"

That answer is yet to be determined. But it will clearly no longer be determined by the people whose legitimate claims are at stake - the people of Libya.

When we look back on this adventure in years to come, our best hope is that the world will learn a collective lesson when the fog of war has lifted long enough to sort through the debris.

Although the arms trade has become one of America's top exports - rather than the tools of tillage, education, medicine, or any useful manufacturing - our best hope, and the best hope of the millions who want for decent food, housing, or opportunity in so many corners of our suffering planet, is to halt the international sale of weapons of mass destruction - the tanks, and planes and armaments - sold to the leaders of today, who become the tyrants of tomorrow.



KAREN WILKINSON ILLUSTRATION

LETTERS TO THE EDITOR

Close Vermont Yankee Now

The tragic events in Japan offer a telling reminder that accidents are inevitable with technology as complex as nuclear reactors.

The Nuclear Regulatory Commission, as we all know, two weeks ago approved Entergy's 20-year license extension request for Vermont Yankee. The NRC's timing in this case is impeccable. They assured the public there was no danger from a 40-year old Mark I boiling water reactor on the Connecticut River two days before a 40-year Mark I reactor blew the top off its containment building in Japan.

The NRC has yet to turn down a nuclear plant license extension request. They've had 60 requests for license extensions, and approved all 60.

The NRC is a joke. Our only hope is that the state of Vermont will hold the line and shut that plant down on schedule next year.

Accidents are inevitable. Vermont Yankee has demonstrated that fact numerous times with their slipshod operation. Their next accident could be the Big One. The dilapidated plant has already put radiation in the air and in the ground water, with plant spokesmen saying the levels are safe. They have lied about underground pipes. When the fence readings for radiation were

too high, they bought up nearby homes, moved the fence and changed their calculations. With a school directly across the road from the plant, this showed a total disregard for the health and safety of the children.

VY officials like to talk about "acceptable and safe levels" of radiation. According to the National Academy of Sciences, any exposure to radiation increases a person's risk of cancer, "acceptable" or otherwise.

Nuclear reactors like the one sitting on the banks of the Connecticut River contain 1,000 times as much radioactivity as was released by the Hiroshima bomb, and if released it would cause widespread illness and death. Residents of Hiroshima who survived are still suffering from the effects of radiation, as are their children.

Radiation causes birth defects passed down through the generations.

Chernobyl exposed all of Europe to radiation. Vast tracts of land and entire communities in Russia are no longer habitable, and cancer rates in surrounding communities, especially in children, are rampant. If Vermont Yankee contaminates homes, land, and our bodies, no insurance will cover it.

The tragic accident in Japan is

a reminder that this level of risk is unacceptable, especially when safer, renewable options for electricity are available.

The Chinese, who had been gung-ho for nuclear, are now reconsidering that option, as they invest heavily in solar and wind. Ironically, in Japan, wind turbines withstood both the earthquake and tsunami.

A terrorist in a single engine plane could crash through the metal roof of the reactor in Vernon and destroy the seventh story fuel pool, which holds 640 tons of the most highly radioactive material on Earth. The damaged fuel pools in Japan each contained less than 100 tons of spent fuel.

Without water to cover and cool the spent fuel rods in Vernon, they would soon ignite and once burning would spew invisible clouds of radioactivity over a wide area as happened in Chernobyl, and now in Japan.

But even without a terrorist attack, accidents will continue to happen at Vermont Yankee from the slipshod way the plant is run. Leaking pipes could burst and cause the big accident that could put us all in the same situation as the people in Japan and Chernobyl, evacuated and never able to return, if we are not dead or doomed to a slow death.

Vermont Yankee needs to close, now, and Obama needs to scrap plans for new nukes.

- Joseph A. Parzych
Gill

Wanted: an Independent Redistricting Commission

On March 26th our State Senator Stan Rosenberg will be conducting a hearing on redistricting in Springfield. This is a public relations tour in an attempt to fool voters that this process is

fair and above board. The truth is that this process is corrupt.

The last three redistricting plans designed by the legislature have been successfully challenged in the courts. Each time the legislature has drawn districts more concerned with political gamesmanship than truly representing the people. The last time a redistricting plan was drawn the Speaker of the House received a felony conviction for lying under

oath about it.

If Senator Rosenberg truly wanted public input rather than a dog and pony show, he would have supported the effort to create an independent commission to do redistricting. It's not like the legislature has failed one or two, but three times. Hasn't Beacon Hill learned anything from their past mistakes?

As it stands now the Rosenberg plan will be challenged in court costing us taxpayers more money. An independent commission would save us tax dollars while allowing for more transparency and thus resulting in proper representation.

- Amy Patt
Bernardston

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Wounded in Iraq	32,049
Wounded in Afghanistan	10,468

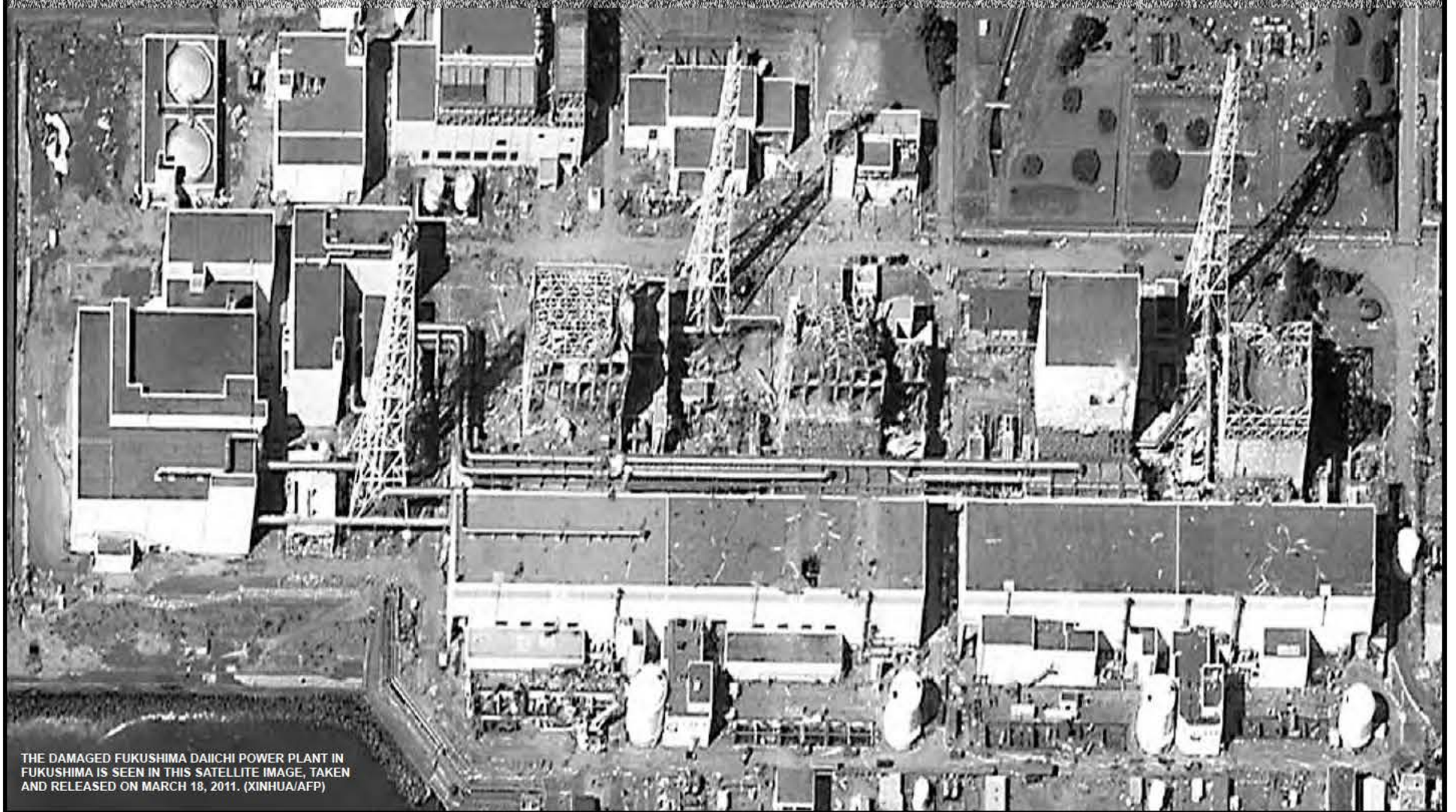
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Nuclear Nightmare



THE DAMAGED FUKUSHIMA DAIICHI POWER PLANT IN FUKUSHIMA IS SEEN IN THIS SATELLITE IMAGE, TAKEN AND RELEASED ON MARCH 18, 2011. (XINHUA/AFP)

BY RALPH NADER

WASHINGTON DC - The unfolding multiple nuclear reactor catastrophe in Japan is prompting overdue attention to the 104 nuclear plants in the United States - many of them aging, many of them near earthquake faults, some on the west coast exposed to potential tsunamis.

Nuclear power plants boil water to produce steam to turn turbines that generate electricity. Nuclear power's overly complex fuel cycle begins with uranium mines and ends with deadly radioactive wastes for which there still are no permanent storage facilities to contain them for tens of thousands of years.

Atomic power plants generate 20 percent of the nation's electricity. Over forty years ago, the industry's promoter and regulator, the Atomic Energy Commission estimated that a full nuclear meltdown could contaminate an area "the size of Pennsylvania" and cause massive casualties. You, the taxpayers, have heavily subsidized nuclear power research, development, and promotion from day one with tens of billions of dollars.

Because of many costs, perils, close calls at various reactors, and the partial meltdown at the Three Mile Island plant in Pennsylvania in 1979, there has not been a nuclear power plant built in the United States since 1974.

Now the industry is coming back "on your back" claiming it will help reduce global warming from fossil fuel emitted greenhouse gases. Pushed aggressively by President Obama and Energy Secretary Chu, who refuses to meet with longtime nuclear industry critics, here is what "on your back" means:

1. Wall Street will not finance new nuclear plants without a

100% taxpayer loan guarantee. Too risky. That's a lot of guarantee given that new nukes cost \$12 billion each, assuming no mishaps. Obama and the Congress are OK with that arrangement.

2. Nuclear power is uninsurable in the private insurance market - too risky. Under the Price-Anderson Act, taxpayers pay the greatest cost of a meltdown's devastation.

3. Nuclear power plants and transports of radioactive wastes are a national security nightmare for the Department of Homeland Security. Imagine the target that thousands of vulnerable spent fuel rods present for sabotage.

4. Guess who pays for whatever final waste repositories are licensed? You the taxpayer and your descendants as far as your gene line persists. Huge decommissioning costs, at the end of a nuclear plant's existence come from the ratepayers' pockets.

5. Nuclear plant disasters present impossible evacuation burdens for those living anywhere near a plant, especially if time is short. Imagine evacuating the long-troubled Indian Point plants 26 miles north of New York City. Workers in that region have a hard enough time evacuating their places of employment during 5 pm rush hour. That's one reason Secretary of State Clinton (in her time as Senator of New York) and Governor Andrew Cuomo called for the shutdown of Indian Point.

6. Nuclear power is both uneconomical and unnecessary. It can't compete against energy conservation, including cogeneration, windpower and ever more efficient, quicker, safer, renewable forms of providing electricity. Amory Lovins argues this point convincingly (see RMI.org). Physicist Lovins asserts that nuclear power "will reduce and retard climate protection."

His reasoning: shifting the tens of billions invested in nuclear power to efficiency and renewables reduce far more carbon per dollar (www.nirs.org/factsheets/whynewnukesareriskyfacts.pdf). The country should move deliberately to shutdown nuclear plants, starting with the aging and seismically threatened reactors. Peter Bradford, a former Nuclear Regulatory Commission (NRC) commissioner has also made a compelling case against nuclear power on economic and safety grounds (www.nirs.org/factsheets/whynewnukesareriskyfacts.pdf).

There is far more for ratepayers, taxpayers and families near nuclear plants to find out. Here's how you can start:

1. Demand public hearings in your communities where there is a nuke, sponsored either by your member of Congress or the NRC,


see NUCLEAR page 14

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NOTES FROM THE MONTAGUE SELECTBOARD

'72' Picked as Recommended Number of Town Meeting Members

BY JANEL NOCKLEBY

On March 7th town clerk Deb Bourbeau recommended to the selectboard that Montague reduce the number of voting precincts from six to three. Bourbeau also recommended reducing the number of elected town meeting members, without specifying a number.

On March 10th a few Montague residents attended a public forum on the topic, and now this week, editing of the town of Montague's 1962 Town Meeting Act is underway at town hall, and approval of a town meeting warrant to redraw precinct boundaries and reduce the number of elected town meeting members is anticipated at a specially scheduled selectboard meeting on Thursday, March 24th, as this paper goes to press. Bourbeau said the effort is intended to save the town an estimated \$1600 per election in town and state elections.

The proposed boundaries for the three new voting districts are outlined on a map, drafted by the Secretary of State's office, posted at town hall, the branch libraries, and the town website (www.montague.net). The three new proposed polling places would be the Montague Fire department for Precinct One in Montague Center (incorporating parts of Lake Pleasant and Millers Falls), the Hillcrest Building for Precinct Two (incorporating part of Lake Pleasant and the Hill), and at Town Hall for Precinct Three, (along the canal from Montague City to downtown Turners).

Bourbeau has said these boundary lines are subject to revision once the decennial federal census figures are finalized. The state is not requiring any change to Montague's precinct

boundaries or town meeting representation. Bourbeau told a questioner at the recent public hearing.

At Monday's selectboard meeting, Bourbeau and selectboard members picked the number 24 for the number of town meeting representatives each of the proposed new precincts would have, bringing the total number elected town meeting reps down to 72 from the current 126, to represent the approximately 8,400 residents, and 5,840 registered voters, of Montague on budgetary and legislative concerns.

The entire package of electoral changes would need final selectboard approval on March 24th, followed by town meeting approval at the annual town meeting on May 7th.

After that, approval by the state legislature is required to amend the Act of 1962, and Bourbeau told the public hearing the legislature may require a town-wide ballot to approve the changes as well.

Also this week, an alternate proposal is being circulated in petition form by some town meeting members dissatisfied with the proposed changes coming from town hall. John Reynolds, of Precinct 1, among those circulating the petition, plans to gather ten signatures before the annual town meeting warrant is closed on March 24th deadline, to place an opposing article on the town meeting warrant calling for committee to be formed to study the issue for six months.

The petition states, "The undersigned individuals (comprised of town meeting members and registered voters) seek to appoint a committee to study the topic of redistricting specifically with regard to: 1) How many

precincts shall exist in the town. 2) Whether the makeup or form of town meeting should be changed. ... The committee shall return to town meeting on or before November 20th, 2011 with recommendations based upon their findings."

"I believe it is always healthy for a town to review its governmental structure from time to time," said Reynolds. "It's been more than 50 years since we moved into a representative town meeting. A look-see at how we're doing is in order. Are we achieving the goals we hoped to achieve initially? This would give the public a chance to consider their town government and their representation."

Art Gilmore, dean of the Precinct 2 delegation, made no bones about why he was signing the petition this week, saying, "I would like to see an open town meeting."

With fewer precincts, Bourbeau anticipates cost savings through a reduction in total poll workers' salaries, since there would be fewer workers, a reduction in ballot printing costs, and a reduction in costs associated with programming at least one ADA-compliant voting machine at each precinct.

Finance committee chair John Hanold calculating the cost savings, assuming two elections per year on average, (for \$3200 to \$5000 in annual savings) at about "three hundredths of a percent" of the town's total annual budget of \$17.9 million.

"When you are deducting spending from a budget of \$17.9 million," added Hanold, "no one savings is going to result in much more than chipping away at it."

If the three remaining precincts elect fewer town

NOTES FROM THE WENDELL SELECTBOARD

Open Meeting Law Complaint

BY JOSH HEINEMANN

At its March 16th meeting, the Wendell selectboard faced a complaint under the open meeting law brought against the selectboard and the assessors by assessor (and former 13 term selectman) Ted Lewis.

In his written complaint, sent to the Attorney General's office, Lewis stated that at the March 2nd meeting, the assessors present, Chris Wings and Stephen Broll, acted on an agenda item that had not been properly posted. The item was a board reorganization in which Wings was elected assessor chair, replacing Lewis.

Lewis was at the March 2nd meeting, but had not been aware that reorganization was on the agenda.

He said the action taken at that meeting was unnecessary because he had offered to give up the chair earlier in the year, and the others had refused the position.

Lewis believes Wings and Broll had consulted outside of an official meeting to arrange the vote.

Because selectboard chair Christine Heard attended the March 2nd meeting, Lewis felt both she and selectboard member Dan Keller were aware the vote was going to take place.

Lewis wanted a public apology made to himself and to the citizens of Wendell published in three area newspapers for the embarrassment caused.

A response to the Attorney General is required within 14 business days from March 9th, the date of Lewis's complaint.

Heard said the boards' response needed to include a remedy of the action taken at the March 2nd assessors meeting, along with a description of any actions the boards will take to resolve the issue.

Town counsel said an apology is not required, and Keller said he had already apologized to Lewis personally for any embarrassment he may have experienced.

Broll said he felt irritated that on top of their already heavy work load the assessors have had to field this complaint. He

and Wings did the responsible thing, Broll said, and Helen Williams, the assistant assessor, in posting the meeting as she did, had only followed Lewis's instructions.

Keller said that the meeting agenda had been reposted, and the votes of March 2nd and March 9th were taken again, to remedy the open meeting law violation, and Wings said the assessors have established a procedure to avoid repeating the violation.

Keller said the onus of specificity in the Open Meeting Law will grind town government to a halt.

Town coordinator Nancy Aldrich said she is not in Wendell on Mondays to post Wednesday selectboard meetings 48 hours in advance, as the law requires, and so she has to post the agenda five days in advance, on Fridays.

In other news, the selectboard and conservation commission received two essays in the competition for the camp scholarship Mass Audubon offered to a Wendell resident. **see WENDELL pg 17**

Respecting Nature

Aria Leelyn, age 11, submitted this winning nature essay to win the Wendell scholarship to Mass Audubon's Wildwood camp this summer. Congratulations Aria!

BY ARIA LEELYN

WENDELL- What would happen if we didn't have nature? We would have no water, no trees, and no chance for natural exploration. The earth would have a different structure, farms would turn into factories, animals wouldn't have homes and we would all have a hard time breathing. The three most important things about nature are trees, water and natural places to explore.

Nature gives us trees that provide oxygen, paper, food, and even companionship.

All living creatures need oxygen, which trees provide. If the trees keep getting cut down, then many creatures would probably die. Paper from trees is important too. If there was no paper, then I couldn't write this essay!

Can you believe that such a barky thing could be turned into something as smooth as paper?

Trees also feed us apples, oranges, pears, and many other nourishing foods.

Trees can also be a companion when you're feeling lonely. People can hear

nature singing with the birds in the back and the wind as the beat and Nature herself in the lead. We have to protect the trees in order to listen to her, and her group.

Nature is also important because it gives us water, which is necessary for the food chain, provides habitat for water creatures and gives people fun things to do.

All living things in the food chain need water. In fact, people's bodies are almost entirely made of water, and people can only survive three days without water.

Rare creatures that live in the depths of the ocean where no light can reach would be exposed to the **see NATURE pg 17**

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NOTES FROM THE MAHAR REGIONAL SCHOOL COMMITTEE

NOTES FROM THE GILL-MONTAGUE REGIONAL SCHOOL COMMITTEE

Wendell Finance Member Criticizes Hybrid Regionalization Costs

BY KATIE NOLAN
ORANGE AND GREEN - Wendell finance committee member Jim Slavas has reservations about the draft agreement for the proposed hybrid K-12 Mahar regional school district. Under the plan, Orange and Petersham will regionalize for grades K-12, while Wendell and New Salem will be part of the region for grades 7-12 (secondary) only.

Wendell and New Salem form the two-town Swift River elementary district, and Swift River is part of the five town Union 28 elementary school union.

Slavas is concerned the Mahar regional superintendent will spend significant time working on elementary school budgets, resulting in Wendell and New Salem overpaying for the superintendent's services.

"Given the complexities and significant potential for substantial problems to arise, I believe the elementary systems should be responsible for more of the superintendent and central office costs under this budget system than is currently contemplated," Slavas wrote in an email to Massachusetts Association of Regional Schools (MARS) consultant Kenneth Roche.

Under the current draft agreement, the grades 7-12 portion of the region would pay 72% of the superintendent's salary, and the elementary portion 28%.

Slavas continued, "Effectively, the superintendent will be dealing with three individual

school committees. In application, this would appear to be little different from the demands placed upon a superintendent of a supervisory union. This would involve significant time and resources that would detract from the superintendent's focus on Mahar..."

In addition, Slavas is concerned that Wendell will be affected if the state Department of Elementary and Secondary Education (DESE) determines sanctions are needed because either Orange or Petersham fails to pass an elementary budget, or spends below the state-mandated minimum, or is placed on the list of underperforming schools. "I have substantial concerns that these sanctions may 'spill over' and be applied to the region as a whole," Slavas wrote in his email to Roche.

At the March 17th regionalization committee meeting, Roche said separate budgets are necessary for Orange and Petersham elementary schools, because Petersham spends approximately \$2000 more per pupil for elementary education than Orange does.

Swift River (New Salem and Wendell) spends slightly more per pupil than Petersham.

In a handout available at the meeting, Roche wrote, "Each elementary district, has, over time, decided what an affordable and educationally sound budget should be for its school or schools. Since the per pupil budget differs significantly from district to district, determining one unified ele-

mentary budget for a K-12 Mahar Regional District might be quite difficult."

Roche called this local variable a "fatal flaw" in the state's regionalization legislation, because it "doesn't allow a clean way to pass a budget when towns have different per pupil spending." Roche presented a draft flow chart for approving school budgets for the hybrid region.

Under this draft, budgets would be prepared separately for the Petersham elementary school and the Orange elementary schools. The Mahar elementary budget would be considered approved when three conditions are met: Two thirds of the five Orange school committee members and of the three Petersham members must vote to approve the Petersham and Orange elementary budgets; a simple majority of Orange and Petersham members on the Mahar committee must vote to approve the Orange and Petersham elementary budgets; and the Orange and Petersham town meetings must approve the budget for their own elementary schools.

As presented by Roche, the Mahar 7-12 budget would be approved when two thirds of the Mahar K-12 school committee approves it, along with three of the four member town meetings.

The entire Mahar K-12 budget would be considered approved when both the elementary and 7-12 budgets are approved.

Central office costs would be allocated to the

see MAHAR pg 15

Gill Elementary Seeks Parity

BY ELLEN BLANCHETTE - Sandra Brown, speaking for the Gill advisory committee, presented the committee's recommendations for Gill Elementary to the Gill-Montague school committee on Tuesday night.

While addressing four issues: equity between elementary schools, nutrition, MCAS test preparation, and after school programs, the basic premise for all the committee's suggestions was fairness and equal opportunity for educational programs and services between the district elementary schools.

The recommendations are the result of a survey of Gill Elementary school teachers and parents.

The advisory committee is made up of the three school committee members from Gill, Sorrel Hatch, Jane Oakes and Jennifer Waldron, plus three appointed at-large members, Linda Croteau, Kim Sprinkle and Sandra Brown.

Brown asked superintendent Carl Ladd to look at the use of personnel shared between the two elementary schools and evaluate the staff scheduling to ensure that all students within the district are receiving equitable learning opportunities. Brown included music, band, art, gym teachers, and technology staff in her request for personnel parity between the elementary schools, and asked Ladd to look for other areas where differences may exist.

In the survey, 67% of respondents said there was too little time in the school day for art, 56% said there was too little time given to music, 60% said there was

too little time for band and 50% felt there was too little physical education. Brown said the committee recognized the district does not have funds to hire more staff, but felt the district could take further measures within the budget to ensure that resources are shared fairly.

A second recommendation concerned nutrition policy in the schools. The committee asked the school district to review, implement and create new policies that assure all foods available in the schools contribute to healthy diet options for students. Comments on the survey indicated concern over the amount of processed food being served for breakfast and lunch. Respondents appreciated the salad bar available at Gill Elementary, and reflected a desire for more use of locally grown foods.

As an indication of how strongly the community feels about this issue, which reflects the national concern over childhood obesity, when asked, "If we had additional money to fund projects or programs at Gill Elementary School, which would you choose to fund?" 84% of respondents answered, "Healthy, local food for school lunch."

The advisory group also recommended creating policies that move away from teaching practices that reflect "teaching to the test," including preparation for MCAS, and allowing for more creative teaching practices. The opinions expressed on the survey indicated 67% of parents and staff felt the present emphasis on test preparation is not benefi-

cial to student learning, and 88% said the amount of time spent on test preparation has increased in recent years.

The final recommendation was a request for an after school program for Gill elementary. This is a complicated question because of the difference in the make-up of the student body between the two schools. According to Ladd, the after school program at Montague Elementary is completely funded by a 21st Century Learning grant based on the school receiving Title I funding. This reflects the percentage of students at Montague Elementary who come to school from low income families and participate in the free lunch program.

Ladd said the committee's request for equity in this case is difficult because the grant funding is school specific and cannot be shared with another school. "It's a double edged sword," he said, because the fact that Gill has a lower poverty rate is a good thing, but means Gill Elementary isn't entitled to exactly the same programs through this source of funding.

Brown argued that even so, there should be a way to provide for an after school program at Gill, saying, "We are all one district." On a survey question of high priority options to fund if money were available, 64% chose an after school program.

Ladd said he would agree to evaluate the issues presented, would seek to improve equity and consider the other recommendations. He said on the question of food at Gill

see PARITY pg 15

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NOTES FROM THE LEVERETT SCHOOL COMMITTEE

LSC Votes a \$1.7 Mil Budget

BY DAVID DETMOLD – On March 14th, the Leverett school committee unanimously approved a \$1,712,167 budget for FY'12, an increase of \$15,519 (0.91%) over FY'11.

"I don't think asking for an increase of \$15,000 is out of line," said school committee chair Farshid Hajir. "I fully support this budget at this level. I'm inclined to ask for more, if fuels costs increase."

The selectboard had asked all town departments to return a level funded budget this year, but has tacitly accepted a 3.5% increase to the regional school assessment, and approved substantial line item increases for fuel at the highway department, tree work, salaries of specific town hall, library and police department employees.

Leverett Elementary has maintained an essentially level funded \$1.69 million budget for the last three years. The school committee is negotiating a teacher contract this year.

Hajir said, "Next year we are going to have to come in with a big increase just to stay where we are. If you fund through grants and one time money, you're digging a hole you need to fill."

Superintendent Joan Wickman noted the selectboard had criticized the school committee for applying one time money – including federal stimulus funding – to supporting the elementary school's operating budget when the two boards met with the finance committee on February

8th. At the meeting, selectboard member Peter d'Errico said, "You don't have that money to spend, but you want to permanently add it to your budget," when Hajir asked the selectboard to "hold the school committee harmless" for loss of grant funds this year.

"It's almost like we should have spent that money on materials," said Wickman.

Hajir said, "This is a process of building trust with the selectboard and finance committee. We're still struggling. They don't seem to be happy with the way we control our expenses." He added, "We're not going to compromise when it comes to maintain the quality of our school. We're going to be fiscally responsible, but we're also going to be educationally responsible."

Kip Fonsh said, "We do have deficit financing, it's called school choice. The continued use of money in this way is simply not sustainable."

Pam Stone said, "The selectboard is very strong against school choice. If we do drop school choice, that will impact our budget tremendously."

Hajir said, "This year, school choice funds are about 10% of our appropriated budget."

Union-28 business manager Mike Kociela recommended the school committee seek a special article to replace a server for the school's computers that principal Ann Ross said is wearing out, rather than try to find \$6,000 in their operating budget to replace it.

Leverett Backs School Roof Repair and Window Replacement Project

Total Cost to Town Expected at \$293,500

BY TANYA CUSHMAN – On Tuesday night's special town meeting, a scant quorum of Leverett residents unanimously approved a single warrant article to continue with the fast-track process to put the town in position to receive a Massachusetts School Building Authority grant to cover about half the cost of repairing and replacing parts of the school's roof along with a number of the building's windows.

Last month, Leverett voted to hire an architect and project manager to meet one require-

ment of the grant guidelines.

A third step, a special town election to vote on a debt exclusion override, will take place at the polls at town hall on Saturday morning, March 26th, from 8 a.m. to 1 p.m.

Total cost of the project is estimated at \$564,248. If the town is successful in gaining MSBA funding on the Green Repair program, the state will pick up 51% of the cost.

The scope of work includes replacing approximately 60 windows - originals from the 1950s, many of which give the

school building its unique appearance.

Before the meeting, voters were invited to see the degradation happening to the wood around the windows and discussed the asbestos found in the caulking of the glass block windows. Fortunately, the tests to see if PCBs were present came back negative.

The windows to be replaced are located along the front of the school, half of the courtyard and along the south side of the school, not including gym win-

see ROOF pg 17

from MONTAGUE pg 6

meeting members, Bourbeau also anticipates a reduction in costs associated with feeding town meeting members lunch during annual meetings, and she also believes it would be easier to get a quorum for those meetings. Bourbeau told the selectboard she hopes for a "more committed, more qualified pool of town meeting member candidates," with a reduction in the number of town meeting members from 126 to 72.

Additionally, the selectboard on Monday approved the idea of inserting language into the town bylaws regarding forfeiture of office if town meeting members fail to show up regularly to represent their precincts, or if they continue to have many excused absences over time. The exact language may change during edits and future meetings, but essentially, town meeting members who have excused absences, still must attend at least half of the scheduled town meetings over a three year term, or risk no longer appearing as an incumbent on the next ballot. Town meeting members who frequently do not show up, and do not call with a reasonable excuse, may also find their incumbent status at risk on future ballots if they fail to attend at least one town meeting per calendar year.

In other news, town planner Walter Ramsey reported to the

selectboard on Monday that the old Cumberland Farms building at the corner of Second Street and Avenue A is "rapidly deteriorating" due to leaks in the roof. "Costs are going up by the day," he said.

The Montague Economic Development Industrial Corporation is tasked with determining that building's future, and Ramsey said at this point, estimates for repairs to the building could run \$40,000 to \$50,000. Options include: demolishing the building for a cost of approximately \$15,000 and then re-seeding the area with grass; offering the property to the Massachusetts Department of Conservation and Recreation (DCR); or leasing the property to a tenant willing to help pay for repairs in exchange for a reduction in rent.

Earlier this month, MCTV and RiverCulture and the Montague Business Association proposed to the EDIC that they would be willing to repair the building and lease it as a town welcome center, TV studio, offices, and community space.

Town administrator Frank Abbondanzio said he did not think DCR would want the building anymore.

While Ramsey was asked to report back to the selectboard on his conversation about the building with DCR, members gave their thoughts on which options they liked most. Selectboard

member Mark Fairbrother recommended demolishing the building. Chris Boutwell didn't want the town to have to manage any more real estate, but liked the idea of having that strategic location used for the benefit of the town without spending a lot of town money to make that happen.

Pat Allen said, "I'd rather see us own it, than DCR, because I think we have better ideas and understand what we want, and we'd be better able to affect results that we actually want."

Abbondanzio said that if the EDIC could accept the lease and repairs proposal quickly from MCTV, assuming they were still interested, without a process of formal proposals, it would be good because when the property "was taken by eminent domain, the stipulation was that it had to be put to cultural use."

Ramsey reported on additional activities underway at the planning office regarding a "solar park" at the old landfill area off of Turnpike Road. "The town is in need for future space for industry," Ramsey said, and the 163 acre area may be a good site for both solar arrays and industrial development. A draft scope of services for pre-development, or a master plan, for the site is in progress, taking into consideration the capped landfill portion, the open burn area, and an adjacent gravel pit.



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Gill-Montague Bridge Update



JOE PARZYCH PHOTO

Workers align galvanized grids in preparation for a concrete pour on the Gill-Montague Bridge

Built to Last a Solid Century

BY JOSEPH A. PARZYCH
GILL-MONTAGUE - Steel workers from the Atlantic Bridge & Engineering Co. of Amesbury, MA worked all day last Thursday. At nine o'clock, when most people were ready for bed, the crew came back to toil until dawn, placing steel deck grids onto steel I-beams spanning the Gill-Montague Bridge. After a short break, they went back to work for another eight hour work day.

"It makes it a long tiring day,

but with the overtime, the paycheck looks pretty good on payday," said steel worker Adam Kollenda, who lives in Hardwick, MA.

While the crew installed deck grids during the night, Gill police blocked off access to the single lane from Route 2 into Turners Falls from 9 p.m. to 5 a.m.

The galvanized steel grids measure 18 feet wide by eight feet long. The grids, prefabricated at Atlantic Bridge's Amesbury facility, are interlaced with galva-

nized reinforcing rods. The crew set grids into place over 'shear pins' steel workers had earlier welded to the I-beams.

Last fall, the beams had been cleared of rust and painted with epoxy primer and paint prior to welding the pins and setting the grids.

Atlantic Bridge & Engineering took meticulous measurements of the bridge understructure last summer, using lasers, so the grids prefabricated in Amesbury fit precisely when the

sections were trucked to the bridge and guided into place.

Before the renovation, the old bridge deck lay unsecured on top of the I-beams, so the deck was able to move, according to Mass Department of Transportation engineer Robert Demers.

Removing the old deck is a matter of cutting the concrete slab into bite-sized chunks and lifting them off to load onto a trailer dump truck. Pouring concrete over the new deck grids and shear pins forms a composite, binding it all into one unit.

"With concrete poured over the grids and the anchor pins and beams, they form a unit," Kollenda said. "I don't think I want to be one of the guys who someday have to take it all apart."

Demers said the bridge steelwork is in good shape. No one needs to think about dismantling it for a hundred years or more, providing they maintain the drains so salt brine doesn't eat away at the concrete and steel.

Asked how future demolition would be possible, Demers replied, "Dynamite."

Demers is undoubtedly right about the long life span of the new bridge deck. Galvanizing the grids keeps the steel from rusting, expanding and popping the concrete, stress factors that contributed to the deterioration of the existing deck. Having learned the hard way that de-icing salt raises havoc, Demers hopes Mass DOT does not defer maintenance on the new deck.

Another reason to hope for a longer life for the new deck is the use of lightweight concrete made with Norlite, a ceramic material instead, of stone. Norlite is made from shale processed in a kiln in Cohoes, NY.

The old deck was comprised of concrete mixed on site in small batches, with minimal attention to standards, and haphazard attention to the ratio of cement, stone, sand and water. The new concrete is lightweight and able to withstand 4,000 pounds of force per square inch. It is batched at Lane's Northfield concrete plant with computerized equipment that assures a consistent and durable mix, subject to testing. The concrete mix uses 3/8 inch Norlite to better infiltrate the deck grids. There have been no voids in the new concrete pours, according to Demers.

A wearing surface of 2 1/2 inches of bituminous concrete is slated to top the concrete composite deck.

The old deck relied on bare reinforcing rods that expand and break up the concrete when they rust, unlike the new galvanized deck grids. Crossing the bridge without avoiding potholes big enough to see the river rushing by below will be a relief to motorists. Motorists may have already had reservations about safety when the bridge swayed and undulated every time a truck drove by.

Since the bridge steel expands see **BRIDGE** pg 14

from **LONDON** pg 1
Lovers.

The playwright explained his method this way: "The way I see things, life is both sad and funny. I can't imagine a comical situation that isn't at the same time also painful. I used to ask myself: What is a humorous situation? Now I ask: What is a sad situation and how can I tell it humorously?"

Though tremendously funny at times, "melancholy and mad-cap" is more of the feeling rippling throughout London Suite's acts.

In "Going Home," directed by Jerri Higgins, daughter Lauren (Christina Bagley) and her mother Mrs. Semple (Kay Lyons) are returning the next day to New York after an

exhaustive shopping trip. Lyons' accent punctuates Simon's dialog pitch perfectly, underscoring the character's feisty side as well as the still-grieving widow. Mrs. Semple is a bit ditsy, "I think I just bought my own shoes," and stubborn when her daughter encourages her to go on a date with an older, rich Scotsman with has nasty allergies.

The meatiest of the stories, "Diana and Sidney," directed by Carl Erickson, resurrects California Suite's characters twenty-odd years later, when they are in a completely different life situation. In California Suite, Diana and Sidney were married and in town for the Oscars - Diana was up for an award. This time around, the couple has been living apart for

several years, and Sidney is in London from Mykonos to ask Diana for financial assistance.

Jeanne Koester's Diana is a tour de force performance. She is still in love with her ex, but has to put on an act to be strong for Sidney's dire news. We admire Francis Hauert again as Sidney, the grieving, humble, charming bisexual man who left Diana for the Greek Isles.

The final, farcical, funniest of the four acts belongs to "Man on the Floor," directed by Dave Peck. We meet American couple Mark (Paul Rothenberg) and Annie (Danielle Canedy) frantically searching for their tickets to Wimbeldon. Annie goes downstairs for tea to escape her husband's rantings. He gets himself in such a dither he throws his back out, and come-

dy ensues. Mark is on the floor at one side of the couch and the ringing phone is at the other. "Oh, that's twelve miles from here!" he cries incredulously.

In comes Scottish Mrs. Sitgood (Kay Lyons again, blessedly) to the rescue! Maybe. Apparently Kevin Costner has booked this suite, and she informs Mark, much to his chagrin, he will have to move down the hall. The bellman (Morgan Hoyle Combs) comes to search for the Wimbeldon tickets and keeps the audience tittering as he escapes under the bed. Dr. McMerlin arrives to help the incapacitated man on the floor, but seems to do more harm than good - even to himself!

If you enjoy watching comedy, drama, frustration, kidnapping, drunken writers, schemes

gone awry, shoe-shopping New Yorkers dating snorting Scottish bachelors who live in unpronounceable castles, the agony of unrequited love, the heartache of mortality, the physical, bumbling comedy of a dufus bell-boy, a smartass doctor, immobilizing back pain, a scrambling search for missing Wimbeldon tickets, and a rather unhelpful assistant hotel manager - and hey, who doesn't? - you should make your way to the Shea for an evening of thought-provoking, laugh-out-loud moments that will keep you wanting more. Enjoy the show!

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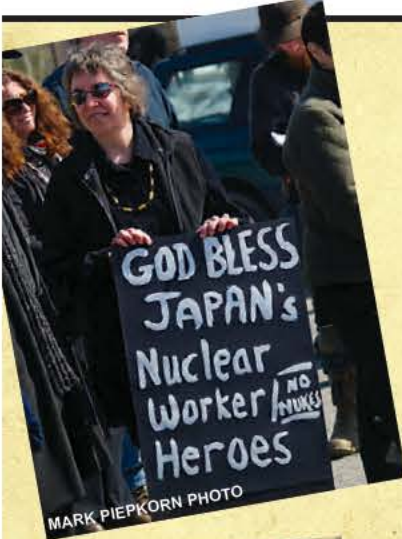
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Fukushima - A Warning for the Whole World

"The disaster in Japan is a warning for the whole world. All nuclear power is unsafe and must be stopped. The whole nuclear cycle must stop - from uranium mining, to processing fuel, to nuclear weapons. It is also a warning that not just nuclear power, but our whole way of life, endlessly extracting precious and limited materials from the Earth must change. Movements like Transition Towns and the creation of local Peace Commissions are vital to help us all envision and make steps to devote ourselves with deep purpose and conviction to change. Our spiritual teaching tells us that the defilement in our minds and hearts causes us to manifest a defiled world. Although the leaders of wealthy corporations seem to have much power, it is us who must start a movement with spiritual power, committing ourselves without reservation to change ourselves and our collective way of living so that future generations have the possibility to live on this Earth. We do not want to accrue the karma of allowing the destruction of the Earth, rather the karma of preserving this most beautiful planet."

*Rev. Gyoway Kato
Nipponzan Myohoji Buddhist Order
Leverett Peace Pagoda*

Speaking to the Fukushima Solidarity Vigil at Vermont Yankee, March 20th, 2011



Rev. Gyoway Kato



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BY MITCHELL WALDRON
RIVERSIDE - Eighteen local residents of the Gill and Turners Falls area rode their bikes from the Gill tavern to the Vermont Yankee nuclear power plant in Vernon, VT on Sunday. We rode to join a vigil in solidarity with the people of Japan who are suffering the after effects of the earthquake and tsunami and the accident that is occurring at a nuclear power complex there as a result of those events.

"I've done this so many times, and the hardest hill is on Northfield Mount Hermon Road," said Karl Meyer. "The hill I always find gnarly is in West Northfield, about two miles heading south from the Vermont line. Steep, and short-ish, but sort of an optical illusion - and a good climb!" said Meyer.

I agree. It was hard. It was 17 miles there and 17 miles back, 34 miles round trip, the longest bike ride I had ever attempted.

Meyer first rode his bike to a demonstration at the Vermont Yankee plant in 1978 with a group called the Solar Rollers.

Bike Ride to the Vernon Nuke

He said, "Bicycles are one of the simple answers to meeting our energy needs. They won't

pollute the places we live in." On the way to Vernon on Sunday, two other members of

the Solar Rollers, John Ward and David Detmold, passed out flyers that told about the effort



JOSEPH A. PARZYCH PHOTO

Eighteen bike riders left the Gill Tavern on Sunday to join more than 500 people in a silent vigil at the Vermont Yankee nuclear plant, in solidarity with the people of Japan who are now suffering the effects of the Fukushima nuclear disaster. Among the riders are Mitchell Waldron, a sixth grader at Gill Elementary, on the far left, followed by (left - right) Matt Howell, Gill selectboard chair John Ward, David Campolo, Dori McCormack, Garth Shaneyfelt, original (1978 - from Vernon to Seabrook) Solar Roller Karl Meyer, Josh Heinemann, original Solar Roller David Detmold, Betsy Evans, Tina Howell, original Solar Roller Terry Plotkin, Alden Booth, Lissa Greenough

to shut down the Vermont Yankee nuclear power plant, to prevent radiation from affecting Gill, Turners Falls or the Greenfield area.

When we got to Vernon, there was a long line of people standing on the sidewalk in front of the nuclear plant, in a silent vigil, holding signs. We stood there in the line for about an hour. Then we formed a circle in the parking lot of the Vernon Elementary School across the street.

Deb Katz from the Citizens Action Network talked about the accident taking place at the nuclear power plant in Japan, and the head monk of the Leverett Peace Pagoda gave a talk calling on people to change their way of life to use less harmful forms of energy.

Mostly, the people running the rally wanted younger people to talk, and a number of younger people between the ages of 12 and 18 came to the microphone and talked about why they were there. "I want a chance to live," said one teenager.

After the speeches, it was time to head back to Gill.

Can Renewables Replace Nuclear and Fossil Fuels?

BY ROSE WHITCOMB
BRATTLEBORO, VT - On Monday, March 21st, one year to the day before the expiration of the Vermont Yankee nuclear power plant's original 40-year operating license, more than 100 people gathered at the Centre Congregational Church in Brattleboro to peer into an energy future free from nuclear power.

The Nuclear Regulatory Commission, days before the multiple core melt disaster and spent fuel pool fires that continue to spew a host of radioactive contaminants on downwind farms and homes surrounding the Fukushima reactors in Japan, approved the 20-year extension of Vermont Yankee's operating license sought by the Vernon power plant's owner, Entergy of New Orleans.

The state of Vermont has voted not to issue a certificate of public good to permit the reactor to continue operating beyond March 21st, 2010, setting up a possible court battle over federal pre-emption of state law.

More than 500 people gathered for a vigil at the Vernon

reactor on Sunday, in solidarity with the people of Japan suffering the effects of widening radiation contamination from Fukushima, where the reactors share the same basic design and age as the Vermont Yankee plant - a GE Mark I boiling water reactor.

On Monday, the first speaker of the evening was Dr. Arjun Makhijani, president of the Institute for Energy and Environmental Research in Takoma Park, MD. Makhijani has done extensive research on the possibility of phasing out not just nuclear power but also the use of fossil fuels. He has concluded that the world can make the shift to alternative energy not only economically, but also relatively soon.

Makhijani presented a slew of options for renewable energy in the United States, including wind and solar energy, while soundly condemning nuclear power. "To the people who say

let's switch from coal to nuclear," Makhijani said, "I ask, 'Is it really the limit of our inventiveness to make plutonium just to boil water?'"

He went on to detail renewable options for both transportation and the commercial power production sectors, saying "There are lots of ways to be smart and only one way to be dumb, and we're doing it."

Makhijani wrapped up his talk by urging that the situation must not be left to emergency management. "I must restrain myself from using harsh words... I cannot believe the NRC has granted a relicensing in the middle of the Japanese crisis."

James Moore, director of the Vermont Public Interest Research Group's clean energy program also addressed the crowd. Moore was optimistic about Vermont's energy future, declaring this to be the dawn of a new clean energy era. He presented several options to replace Vermont Yankee's power including conservation, solar, hydro, and wind power, and pointed to the strides Vermont has already made to include a greater percentage of all these sources in the state's energy mix.

"We are experiencing a rapid growth in renewable energy here in Vermont," Moore said. Between the end of 2009 and March 2012, when Vermont Yankee is slated to go off line,

we will see 220 new megawatts of renewable energy generation in Vermont alone, in addition to hundreds of megawatts of renewable energy from around New England."

Moore said Vermont Yankee supplied 285 MW to Vermont utilities for in state use, although the capacity factor for nuclear power is higher than the capacity factor for some renewable forms of energy, so the comparison is not "apples to apples."

Still, Moore said, "Replacing the power provided by Vermont Yankee is not a problem at all," and turning to local, diversified sources of renewable energy will boost the state's economy at the same time. "This is really just the beginning."

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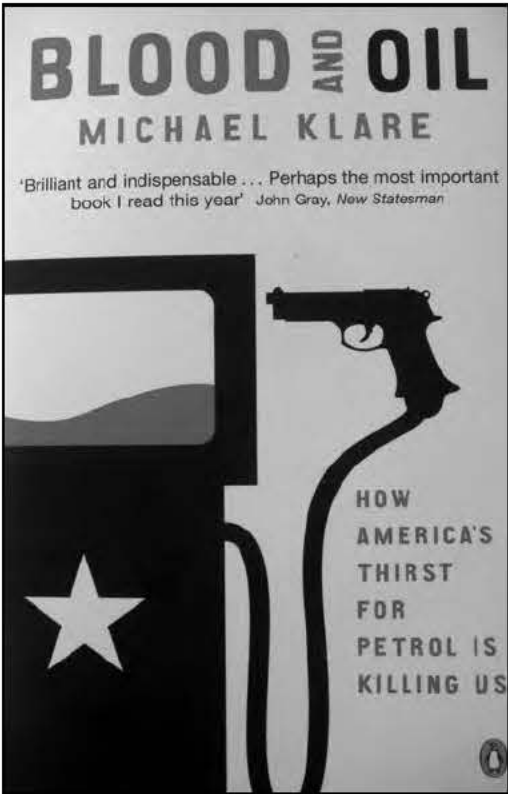
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On Books

Vulcanizing Iraq – Did Oil or Ideology Drive the Decision to Invade?

BY JEFF SINGLETON MONTAGUE - If you are interested in the origins of the Iraq war, there is no better place to go than the Montague Bookmill. Micheal Klare's *Blood and Oil* (2004) and James Mann's *The Rise of the Vulcans* (2004), both currently on the Bookmill shelves, lead one in quite different directions when it comes to the origins of the Iraq invasion.

If you are one of the many people in the Pioneer Valley who firmly believe the war in Iraq was caused by "oil," (that is, the Bush administration's desire to control the flow of oil from the Persian Gulf), *Blood and Oil* is the book for you. In explaining the origins of the war, Klare focuses on the policies promoted by Bush's notorious energy committee, the National Energy Policy Group. The committee was chaired by vice president Cheney and, you may recall, was widely criticized in its day for secretly consulting with leaders of energy-related corporations.

Klare argues the policies promoted by this task force, despite its stated goal to the contrary, would inevitably lead to increasing dependence on Persian Gulf sources of oil.

To meet these demands, the author argues, Persian Gulf

nations will be required to open up their state-controlled oil programs to foreign (read American) private investment and development. In order to overcome potential resistance to this change (and deal with general instability in the region), the U.S. would need to strengthen the regime in Saudi Arabia and eliminate the "threat" from Iraq. The 9-11 attack provided the opportunity. The Iraq invasion was the result.

While this is certainly a plausible scenario, virtually all the evidence for it comes from Klare, not from members of the Bush administration. There is a persistent tendency throughout the book for the author to conflate his own view of the way the world works with what the Bush people must have thought. For example, Klare presents a compelling analysis of data produced by the Department of Energy designed to show the Bush policies would lead to increased dependence on Gulf oil. Fair enough. But is this the way the Bush people looked at it, and did it influence the decision to invade Iraq? Beyond a few general, cherry-picked quotes about the importance of the Persian Gulf there is little direct evidence.

For example, Klare writes: "This circumstance [increased dependence on Gulf oil] no doubt weighed heavily on the deliberations of the NEPG [Cheney energy advisory group]. And while the Cheney report never put the situation so bluntly, it could not entirely conceal our deepening dependence on the Gulf. 'By any esti-

mation,' the NEPG declares, 'Middle East oil production will remain central to world oil security.' As a result, "the Gulf will remain a primary focus of U.S. energy policy."

Now, this is one of the few pieces of direct evidence purporting to show that Bush and company were in deep distress about "oil" on the eve of 9-11. Yet to me this quote simply states a reality we have lived with for about 40 years. Note Klare's conviction that the concerns he believes must have driven policy "no doubt weighed heavily" on the minds of Bush's energy group, although they never actually admitted it "so bluntly," yet they "could not entirely conceal it."

No wonder the Bush people were so nutty, having to constantly conceal their fears about "oil." Why didn't they just say what was on their minds, get it off their chests? Well maybe one reason is that they did not think the way Klare feels they ought to have thought.

One of the problems with Klare's analysis is that the obsession with Iraq in conservative circles began well before Cheney's energy committee was created. In fact, as James Mann's *The Rise of the Vulcans* shows, its origins lie in the Cold War era. Bush's "Axis of Evil," coined in a speech designed to prepare public opinion for the invasion of Iraq, was simply an updated version of Reagan's "Evil Empire," which of course

referred to the Soviet Union.

Mann's book is a collective biography of Bush's so-called "war cabinet" – Cheney, Rumsfeld, Condoleeza Rice, Paul Wolfowitz, et al. Even Colin Powel and his colleague Richard Armitage are here, as rather reluctant Vulcans (a term derived from a statue of the Roman god of fire in Rice's hometown of Birmingham, AL). The author traces their worldview back to the 1970s and the opposition to then Secretary of State Henry Kissinger's policy of détente (compromise with the Soviet Union). In addition to opposing arms limitation treaties with the Soviets, the emerging Vulcans promoted large increases in military spending, an aggressive nuclear weapons build-up and support for anti-communist movements in the Third World. Some of them found homes in the administrations of Ronald Reagan (1981-1989) and George H.W. Bush (1989-1993).

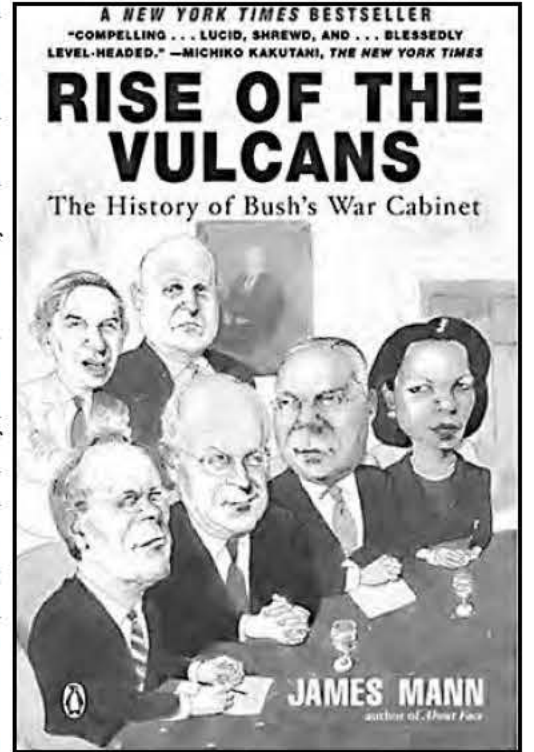
During this period, the Vulcans were driven by ideology – a deeply held, coherent set of ideas about how the world should work. Theirs was (and is)

a view of history and the modern world as a battle between good and evil. The United States, democratic and capitalist, led the "good guys." The Soviet Union was the enemy –

dark, repressive and expansionist. As a result of Kissinger's compromises, we potentially faced Pearl Harbor all over again. Avoiding this threat required not only an aggressive military build-up, but a willingness to use American power even before we were attacked. Note the similarity with the rationale for the Iraq war.

When the cold war ended, the Vulcans were a bit disoriented.

see **REVIEWS** pg 18



HIGHLIGHTS FROM THE GILL POLICE LOG

Domestic Disturbance, File of Life

Monday, 3/14

7:30 a.m. Suspicious motor vehicle in area of River Road. All checked OK.

9:50 a.m. French King Highway resident reports their mail being tampered with from mail box.

10:30 a.m. Assisted resident with parking issue

from Boston.

2:25 p.m. Domestic disturbance on Boyle Road. Issue resolved with Police intervention.

6:15 p.m. Animal complaint on Main Road. Cows in the roadway.

Wednesday, 3/16

9:30 a.m. Unfounded

report of smoke in area of Pisgah Mountain Road.

Thursday, 3/17

7:20 a.m. Suspicious activity on Dole Road. Checked area, all OK.

12:15 p.m. Responded to neighbor dispute in Montague. Same quelled.

7:30 p.m. Assisted residents of Stoughton Place with File of Life forms.

Saturday, 3/19

12:20 p.m. Assisted Northfield police with a domestic disturbance.

6:15 p.m. Assisted Gill fire department with a chimney fire on South Cross Road.

7:50 p.m. Suicidal subject on French King Bridge.
Sunday, 3/20
1:20 a.m. Assisted fire department with flooded basement in Riverside.

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from **HAITI** pg 1

clinics for treatment at *Santa Pou Yo*.

“The clinic has a separate tent to quarantine cholera patients, who are treated with an oral rehydration solution and IV, while the cholera bacteria pass through the body. Dehydration is what kills,” explained Collins.

“We saw a huge variety of patients – a lot of wounds, burns, infections, seizures, even one child birth,” said Schachtl, who with Collins assisted a Canadian doctor and a Haitian midwife with the birth and dramatic aftermath.

The baby aspirated fluid, but the clinic had no suctioning bulbs. The doctor tried suctioning with a syringe, then determined to transport the baby to the nearest hospital.

Available transportation was by motorcycle, a harrowing 40-minute ride, the doctor holding

the baby wrapped in a towel with one arm, while holding onto the driver with the other. The itinerary to the hospital included crossing a two-foot-deep river and winding dirt roads.

The young mother, exhausted and with second-degree tears, was stitched at the clinic. A Doctors Without Borders truck serendipitously arrived within the hour, transporting the new mom safely through the river to reunite with her healthy baby girl.

“Almost everyone is a subsistence farmer or fisherman in the village, growing bananas, potatoes, manioc, sugar cane, and catching fish and lobster,” said Collins. She added the requirements of foreign aid under the U.S. Farm Bill cause locally grown food to be undercut by the U.S. government-subsidized, low-priced food, further depressing the local economies receiving American aid.

Amidst great hardship, the

Haitian people continue to celebrate life and practice the rituals of their rich heritage. Collins and Schachtl were honored to host and participate in a voodoo celebration, where three drummers, accompanied by a singer, played and sang long into the night around a bonfire.

“The men danced a lot with their feet, stomping. The women danced more with their hips, gyrating. The drummers would go for six hours straight, full force, some with their hands, some with sticks; one used a bell. There was call and response,” recalled Schachtl and Collins.

No strangers to improvisational dancing, the Wendellites were told they were the first foreigners at the clinic who would really dance with the villagers. “I danced with the kids. I would jump rope — with style. I boogied down and they went crazy! When I’d run into the kids, they’d yell out to me, ‘Dansez!’,” said

Collins. “That’s what I really had to offer them, to hang out with the people and share joy. For me, that was the most gratifying experience, besides the childbirth — dancing with the kids!”

Schachtl and Collins experienced firsthand a voodoo ceremony, where the priest casts spells for people. “Priests work by channeling with the spirits, intuitively deciding how the rituals will look. The spirit tells them what objects are needed for the ceremony.


“In voodoo, they worship one God above all, and many spirits who rule over different aspects of reality, for example the spirit of crossroads, Legba, who guards the gateway between the spirit world and our world. There’s a warrior spirit, and a spirit of love and motherhood,” said Collins.

“Each person has a spirit protector. It’s as easy as going to a priest who asks his own spirit protector who your spirit protec-

tor is. All voodoo priests are mediums and directly channel spirits by going into a trance.”

Before heading home, the two spent a few days volunteering at Grassroots United in Port-au-Prince, the capital city which suffered great earthquake damage. They witnessed the presidential palace, built to resemble the White House, in shambles — walls crumbled, the dome collapsed. Strikingly, its lawn was covered with tents.

The city parks, once well-groomed, had become tent cities. Schachtl and Collins said they were glad they were not in Haiti during the riots surrounding the beginning of the cholera epidemic, and the recent elections.

They wish to thank the sponsors who contributed toward the \$3,000 raised to assist the clinic, in particular the Thrive Project in Turners Falls, Deja Brew in Wendell, and Annie Hassett and Gangly Heart. 

from **LEVERETT** pg 3

townspeople’s energy towards the cause of peace.

“We’re involved in a nation in a perpetual war situation, burning up an enormous percentage of resources,” said Perkins. “Do we see any way out of this through national politics? It seems to me there isn’t. The hope is there will be a grassroots movement whereby people can take back control of their life.”

“We’re not after power,” said Barbara Tiner. “I guess it’s credibility we’re after.”

D’Errico brought up the concern of the separation of church and state, calling peace a spiritual goal.

Tiner said the only reference to spirituality in the petitioned warrant article was in one phrase referring to the “grievous damage to mind, heart and spirit,” caused by war. She offered to strike that phrase.

Board member Julie Shively advised the group to seek federal nonprofit status for a Friends of the Leverett Peace Commission, to raise any funds the group may need, and cautioned there would be a “knee-jerk reaction” against their proposal from “some people in town.” She advised them to

work for a year in an informal capacity to demonstrate their purpose to townspeople.

Selectboard chair Rich Brazeau said, “If you want to go forward, go through the steps. Everyone has a chance to speak. There’s usually a conversation that goes with these things.”

D’Errico added, “I am bothered that the emphasis will be not just on global wars, but the emphasis will also be on conflicts in the community.” He cited a phrase in the warrant article that indicated the peace commission would “identify and seek to ameliorate sources of conflict” in the community. “This says somewhere in the community there lurk sources of conflict. This is how come war ends up happening in the cause of peace.”

After the committee of peace proponents left the meeting, Fenna Lee Bonsignore sat a bit closer to the selectboard to discuss the history of town votes relating to health and retirement benefits, but she declined an offer to sit right at the selectboard table.

“I don’t want to be that close,” she joked.

“You saw what they did to the last group,” said town clerk Lisa Stratford.

In other news, the selectboard reversed a vote taken at the last meeting to pay back due bills for a shared U-28 employee’s retirement benefits. The town of Leverett, like the town of Shutesbury, has been protesting the payment of that bill because the rate of the benefit is based on the town of Erving’s 79% contribution for retiree health plans, a higher rate than the 50% the towns of Shutesbury and Leverett pay their own retirees.

This week, in the third vote the board has taken on this matter, the selectboard agreed to pay only the portion of the bill equal to the 50% share the town pays for its own employees. Town treasurer DeeAnn Civallo said that would mean withholding about \$300 a month, retroactive to October, 2010, when Charles Paulin, U-28 former business manager, retired, sparking the protest from Shutesbury and Leverett.

Brazeau instructed administrative assistant Marjie McGinnis to prepare language for a special legislative act to resolve the ongoing dispute. Leverett has been participating in meetings with the selectboards and treasurers of other U-28 towns; all have agreed to seek special legislation

to match the contribution for share employees and retirees to the rates paid by each member town to their own employees.

Swift River school committee member Ray DiDonato, speaking for himself and not for the committee as a whole, commented after Tuesday’s meeting, “It is understandable that Leverett and other Union 28 towns want to examine the issue of retiree benefits and seek a remedy legislatively or through a Union 28 policy initiative. However, as Wendell-New Salem is the fiscal entity through which retiree benefits are paid, Leverett’s refusal to pay the full bill from Union 28 impacts our school, and shifts the inequity to Wendell-New Salem. Just as the member towns recently supported Leverett’s request for a level-funded Union 28 budget, I hope Leverett will consider fully supporting Wendell-New Salem’s request that the bill be paid in full until a remedy is found.”

Julie Shively warned of a request by the U.S. Postal Service to hold a public hearing in town hall on Wednesday, April 27th. “I think they’re going to want to close the post office,” she said.


Shively reported from the personnel board meeting that fire

chief John Moruzzi had requested “parity” in pay with the town’s police chief. “He wants the same hourly rate as the police chief,” said Shively. She said that would cost the town \$10,000 more a year, if Moruzzi kept the same number of hours (19 a week) he is working now. Shively said the fire chief was willing to cut his hours back to 12¾ to achieve parity.

The personnel board made no recommendation on the chief’s request, other than to state that the town did not have the money this year to bring the fire chief up to parity with the police chief at nineteen hours a week.


The selectboard appointed Moruzzi, along with Stewart Olsen, Ricky Roberts and Marty Moore to serve on an ad hoc fire truck purchase committee.

With Charles Allen, Jr., the foreman of the highway department out on temporary disability leave, the selectboard hired Matthew Boucher at \$15.75 an hour as a temporary highway worker. Boucher, a welder and tree worker with all the necessary licenses and OSHA certification, is “ready to start,” and the short handed crew is glad to have him.

Silas Ball will fill in for Allen for the time being. 

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BRIDGE from page 9

up to 14 inches during annual changes in temperature, according to research by Ed Gregory (see Bridge Facts on page 2), it will be interesting to see if the bridge does less swaying and bouncing with the new system of a composite deck secured to the I-beams, instead of floating like the old bridge deck.

Now that better weather is here, at long last, SPS will resume pouring concrete without needing to employ ground heaters and blankets to keep it from freezing.

"SPS did not pour any concrete once the weather grew decidedly cold," Demers said. "They continued demolition work, in preparation for resuming concrete work when the weather turns warm."

"The side we're doing now is the easiest," Kollenda said. "There seems to be more deterioration on the sidewalk side. The dam spraying on the bridge most likely caused that."

Demers conceded spray from the dam may have caused more damage on the sidewalk side of the bridge. "But, we won't know

until we demolish it," he added.

SPS continues to demolish the old cast iron bridge railings and supporting beams encased in concrete. Steel workers use 7/8 inch high strength steel bolts in place of rivets to secure the new beams. SPS is fabricating new railings of cast steel, less brittle than cast iron.

Asked about passage for pedestrians while the sidewalk side is being demolished and rebuilt next year, Demers said plans call for a fenced walkway along the east side.



The Box Car Reopens

BY JONATHAN VON RANSON

ERVING CENTER - The Box Car Restaurant on Route 2 in Erving Center was open again last week on St. Patrick's Day, exactly seven months after an arson fire last August 17th.

The long closure was needed to rebuild the structure, which had been covered by insurance, and reassemble the

other elements of the business, which had not.

Sharon Poirier is the owner, head cook and host of the popular eatery, the town's former passenger railroad station. She purchased the restaurant in 2008.

The Box Car is open at 6a.m. (7 a.m. on Sundays) to 2 p.m.; closed Wednesdays. Stop in and enjoy the good home cooking.

SCHOOL from page 1

foods.

Area farmers are generally familiar with this government rich-get-richer policy bias, as are farm-oriented organizations like NOFA (Northeast Organic Farming Association) and CISA (Citizens Involved in Sustaining Agriculture). NOFA and CISA work on behalf of growing more healthful food in a more sustainable manner, generally meaning on diverse, local farms and gardens - "everywhere," to use the language of Orange farmer and CISA "Local Hero" Ricky Baruc.

The present system, even with its built-in partiality for agribusiness, hasn't stopped some schools from trying to increase the modest level of local buying they already do.

Deborah Emmett, cafeteria coordinator at Union 28 Swift River Elementary School, which Wendell shares with New Salem, said, "We've always bought some local products - eggs from Diemand Farm, apples from New Salem Preserves. Last summer, a parent committee started getting together and working toward incorporating more of a salad bar type of thing. Trying to offer more vegetables and fruits." She's part of a committee that includes parents, school principal Sheila Hunter, and Sherry Fiske, "who's retired, but got a lot of that kind of thing going in Orange years ago. We did a parents' survey to find out what they'd like the school to [serve] more of, less of, what to get rid of."

Most responses, Emmett said, "pointed to fresh and local."

Is it an expensive change? "Probably, not really sure," she said. "One of the things is getting farmers who are willing to come

here and deliver. Being a small school we don't require huge amounts of stuff. We want to get it fresh, use it fresh, so we don't have a lot of waste."

Fiske, who worked as the food service director in the Orange K-6 school system until 2008, feels the biggest requirement is desire and commitment on the part of people in key positions in school systems to buy locally. Fiske said she was eventually able to buy around 10% of the school system's food from local farms.

Acknowledging that conditions may have changed - "I'll be refreshing my information on the cost factor" - Fiske said, "I did buy fresh local fruits and vegetables, and often it was as affordable as bringing in from a big distributor - equal to or less."

But are there enough farmers willing to sell to institutions? Tracking by the Massachusetts Department of Agricultural Resources shows, year by year, fewer farmers selling wholesale. Increasingly, they're selling directly to the public.

And there's another real life challenge to meet. "Children don't eat it," said Fiske. "They're not used to eating real food; they're used to eating processed food. I found some children who didn't know what that potato was. Even fruit - fruit comes out of a can! People doubt me when I say it, but it's the truth."

She said children now have been several generations out of touch with non-processed food. "We have to re-educate our whole population."

Her solution in Orange was "to work with classroom teachers who wanted to incorporate [food education] into their curriculum."

Then, Fiske said, "We started working with Seeds of Solidarity," Ricky Baruc and Deb

Habib's farm and education center in Orange. "They took it to a whole new level. They showed teachers how to incorporate local food into their program, they brought in teens, they helped kids plant. Kids who wouldn't touch chives before, would once they had a hand in growing it."

As part of the effort, a small greenhouse was built at Butterfield School and students sold the produce they raised at an open house in the spring.

The demands of work in the school kitchen, Fiske said, may make it harder for some districts, particularly larger ones. "Manpower, or some other obstacle... But if the food service people don't see the importance," she stressed, "if they don't have the interest, it's not going to happen."

Fiske will be part of the program at the April 2nd forum, as will Habib, who will review Wellness Plans mandated for each school under federal regulations and discuss the integration of farming into school curriculum.

The parents, teachers, cafeteria people and others involved in the Farm-to-School Initiative are bucking the system primarily because good nutrition makes schoolchildren healthier and more mentally ready to learn. All the better if that learning includes a little bit about the edible life forms that grow in the sunlight outside the walls of the industrial food system!

But the organizers realize the work contributes to strengthening the local economy too. It raises the profile and recognition of local small agriculture, and increases food security in this heavily food-importing part of the North American continent. All are prizes they are reaching for.



NUCLEAR from page 5 to put the facts, risks and evacuation plans on the table. Insist that the critics as well as the proponents testify and cross-examine each other in front of you and the media.

2. If you call yourself conservative, ask why nuclear power requires such huge amounts of your tax dollars and guarantees and can't buy adequate private insurance. If you have a small business that can't buy insurance because what you do is too risky, you don't stay in business.

3. If you are an environmentalist, ask why nuclear power isn't required to meet a cost-efficient market test against investments in energy conservation and renewables.

4. If you understand traffic congestion, ask for an actual real life evacuation drill for

those living and working 10 miles around the plant (some scientists think it should be at least 25 miles) and watch the hemming and hawing from proponents of nuclear power.

The people in northern Japan may lose their land, homes, relatives, and friends as a result of a dangerous technology designed simply to boil water. There are better ways to generate steam.

Like the troubled Japanese nuclear plants, the Indian Point plants and the four plants at San Onofre and Diablo Canyon in southern California rest near earthquake faults. The seismologists concur that there is a 94% chance of a big earthquake in California within the next thirty years. Obama, Chu and the powerful nuke industry must not be allowed to force the American people to play Russian roulette!



Godin Chosen Grand Marshal for Spring Parade

BY MICHAEL NELSON

TURNERS FALLS - Turners Falls fire chief Ray Godin has been selected as the Grand Marshal for the first annual Franklin County Spring Parade.

The choice was obvious. The chief has spent 34 years serving this community. His exemplary dedication to the town of Montague has not gone unnoticed, and we will celebrate it in the parade, which will pass right by the front door of the fire station.

The parade route was decided months ago. Now parade participants will have the opportunity to march by the front door of the place where Chief Godin began his career and salute him at his longtime home.

The Spring Parade will take place April 9th on the Hill, in

Turners Falls. It will make a three mile loop, beginning at 1 p.m. at the Sheffield School on Crocker Avenue, taking a left onto Montague Street, left again onto Turnpike Road, past the Turners Falls High School, and left again onto Millers Falls Road. At Scotty's Convenience Store, the parade will turn left onto High Street and end back at Sheffield.

Residents who live along the route are encouraged to invite friends and family over to watch the parade in their front yards. Organizations interested in taking part in the parade should call: 413-522-0712 or write: michaelnelsonmba@aol.com. Follow the parade on Facebook - "Franklin County Spring Parade"

See you there!

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JESSICA LARKIN ILLUSTRATION

THE HEALTHY GEEZER: Bring on the Beans

BY FRED CICETTI

LEONIA, NJ - Q. What exactly is the difference between good carbs and bad carbs?

In short, good carbs — or carbohydrates — are good for you. Bad carbs aren't.

Carbohydrates from white bread, white rice, pastries, sugared sodas, and other highly processed foods can make you fat. If you eat a lot of bad carbs, they increase the risk for disease.

Whole grains, beans, fruits, vegetables, and other similar sources of carbohydrates make you healthy by delivering vitamins, minerals, fiber, and many nutrients.

Carbohydrates are the most important source of energy for your body. Your digestive system changes carbohydrates into blood sugar (glucose). Your body uses up the glucose and stores any extra sugar for when you need it. A healthy diet should include good carbs.

Carbohydrates were once

grouped into two main categories — simple and complex. Simple carbohydrates included sugars such as fruit sugar (fructose), corn or grape sugar (dextrose or glucose), and table sugar (sucrose). Complex carbohydrates included everything made of three or more linked sugars. Complex carbohydrates were thought to be the healthiest to eat. Now there are questions about that assumption.

A new system, called the glycemic index, classifies carbohydrates by how quickly and how high they boost blood sugar. Foods with a high glycemic index, like white bread, cause rapid spikes in blood sugar. Foods with a low glycemic index, like whole oats, are digested more slowly, causing a lower and gentler change in blood sugar.

Diets rich in foods with a high glycemic index have been linked to an increased risk for diabetes, heart disease, obesity, age-related macular degeneration, ovulatory infertility and colorectal cancer. Foods with a low glycemic index have been shown to help control diabetes and improve weight loss.

However, there have been other studies that have found the glycemic index has little effect on weight or health. More research into the glycemic index

is needed.

You can't establish a diet by the glycemic index alone. Instead, use it as a general guide. In the meantime, eat foods with a low glycemic index: whole grains, beans, fruits, and vegetables.

The University of Sydney in Australia maintains an updated searchable database at www.glycemicindex.com that now has almost 1,600 entries.

Here are five quick tips about carb consumption from the Harvard School of Public Health:

- Start the day with whole grains. Try a hot cereal, like old-fashioned oats, or a cold cereal that lists a whole grain first on the ingredient list.
- Use whole grain breads for lunch or snacks.
- Bag the potatoes. Instead, try brown rice, bulgur, wheat berries, whole wheat pasta, or another whole grain with your dinner.
- Choose whole fruit instead of juice. An orange has two times as much fiber and half as much sugar as a 12-ounce glass of orange juice.
- Bring on the beans. Beans are an excellent source of slowly digested carbohydrates as well as a great source of protein.

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

from MAHAR pg 7

the towns based on a percentage set out in the regional agreement.

In this proposal, the school committee would be made up of five members from Orange, three from Petersham, two from New Salem, and two from Wendell, while an earlier draft gave only two representatives to Petersham.

Slavas said, "The revised representation results in Orange and Petersham together having a two third vote."

Because of this revision, Slavas said, Orange and Petersham could establish the allocation of costs between elementary and secondary (Mahar "sub-districts" of the region.

He added, "Since it would be to their advantage to shift as much of the shared cost burden on to the Mahar sub-district, Wendell and New Salem would be powerless to remedy the situation."

One of the cost savings mentioned for the hybrid region is state reimbursement for regional transportation costs, currently set at 54% of local costs. These savings will aid Orange and Petersham if the hybrid region is approved. Wendell and New Salem are already classified as a region for Swift River School and already receive reimbursement for student transportation.

Rocke told the regionalization committee meeting he

hoped to have articles asking for approval of the region for annual town meetings in New Salem, Orange and Wendell, and for a special town meeting in Petersham.

Many of the men attending the regionalization meeting on the 17th wore green neckties or neckties with a splash of green, in honor of St. Patrick's Day.

Franklin County sheriff Chris Donelan, husband of Mahar school committee chair Maureen Donelan, wore a green sport coat, and Michael LeBlanc of Petersham wore a green shirt. Superintendent Michael Baldassarre and attorney Joshua Dupre were dressed in shades of blue.

Wendell finance committee member Jim Slavas and Wendell school committee member Dick Baldwin were dressed casually, with no green visible. Petersham elementary superintendent Patricia Martin wore a pale green blouse and Mahar finance director Robin Briand wore a lovely teal green jacket and a silk scarf with touches of the same shade of green.

Reporter Lindsay Washburn of the Athol Daily News was dressed in dark neutral tones, while yours truly wore a forest green Irish wool sweater and pale green mandarin-style tunic over slacks. Even on St. Patrick's Day, hybrid regionalization comes in many colors.



HIGHLIGHTS FROM THE ERVING POLICE LOG

Suspicious Vehicles, Assist Other Police

Tuesday, 3/15 9:30 a.m. Suspicious vehicle on Lester Street. Was Pratt Street resident. 11:13 p.m. Chimney fire at North Street residence. Assisted Erving fire department.	Wednesday, 3/16 7:37 a.m. Past call of suspicious person taking pictures of River Street residence. No other information given.	Thursday, 3/17 6:10 a.m. Motor vehicle crash on Old State Road.	No injury, report taken. 11:08 a.m. Suspicious person reported at Central Street. All set. 12:12 p.m. Assisted Montague police with search for female subject in Erving/Millers Falls.	Friday, 3/18 8:00 p.m. Suspicious motor vehicle at Box Car parking lot. Checked same. No one around.	Saturday, 3/19 3:45 p.m. Noise complaint on Mountain	Road. Caller reports neighbor playing loud music. Music turned down. 7:00 p.m. Civil Citation issued.	Sunday, 3/20 2:20 p.m. Report of loose dog on Pratt Street. Located owner and returned.	Monday, 3/21 8:40 a.m. Noise complaint at French King Highway. Checked same and spoke to both subjects.
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from PARITY pg 7

Elementary, he would make sure food services looked at this issue immediately.

The school committee voted unanimously to accept the recommendations of the Gill advisory committee for review and consideration.

In other votes taken Tuesday night, the school committee agreed unanimously to have the policy on concussion and head injuries, as provided by the superintendent, included in the student handbook for 2011-2012 school year. Ladd said

since any student, regardless of age, grade level or activity, could receive a head injury during the course of participating in a school activity, it was important to have all parents notified of this policy through the student handbook, and not just include it in the athletic handbook.

Jeff Singleton, member from Montague, asked the school committee to support a resolution on health care for the district employees that said, "We urge the legislature to act now on proposals to

allow cities, towns and regional school districts to determine the choice of health care group and plan design outside the collective bargaining process."

The committee voted 4-2 in favor, with Michael Langknecht, Marjorie Levenson, Emily Monosson and Jeff Singleton voting in favor, Joyce Phillips and Kristin Boyle voting against. Jennifer Waldron abstained and Jane Oakes excused herself from the discussion and vote due to a conflict of interest.



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

- William Carlos Williams

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

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Montague Dental Arts,
Dr. Robert Koolkin,
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Readers are invited to send poems to the
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Sharp Words Are Spoken and a Crisis Ensues

History loves company.
Old soldiers lie
only six inches under.
Spoon up next to them
in two-player games of
sardines-turn the key
and close the can behind me.

Keep your distance; I am
the sound of a rock or raft
around which water laps

bubbles in hard candy
that cut your tongue
and make your candy
taste like blood

a plastic Adirondack chair.

I've beeped back up into
stomping grounds: boot-
scrapes, stoops
I've tracked all over the house

have to cough
just to feel
my own soft
interior walls

buzzing with darkness
and wheezy insects

soughing in the trees
peters out predawn
and into the hollow
feeling of fall.

Sleepy seeds crusting
the corners of my eyes

dusk breaks scarlet
sumac, bayberry,
bittersweet scent
of my waxy wick:
Autumn Mist

a security blanket
to bleed out into.

To write only to have
thought of something
(or the opposite)

an empty packet of sweetener
(in case of emergency)

My dead are where my lands lie buried

between the Hilltop Steakhouse and Suffolk
Downs

and never to regain
the ground
we've turned into.

--Kate Colby
Providence, RI

Scarab, Sail And Buckle

Come through winter only to face
the darkest months. The bodies
of the drowned were never buried
in the churchyard proper, but on
the outskirts, lest the sea wanted
to reclaim them. We are spiritual
beings having a human experience.
To have a friend out in the fog, in
the middle of the weather. The best
place for watching rough ocean's inside
a lighthouse. There were five hundred
and eighty doors in Valhalla, and eight
hundred warriors poured from each
door. Easier to imagine the carnal
weapons of Elagabalus; suffocating
the less fortunate under rose petals.
Pity the majority of believers who
only embrace one god. The panther's
fragrant breath allures a multitude.
The capstan can weigh great anchors,
but it too has a threshold for strain.

--Whit Griffin
Western Tennessee

Eleven On The Other Side

The ancients performed dissections
on living criminals. For stealing
bread you'll further our understanding
of the stomach. Fed on scraps
in an effort to stave off a hunger
in the mind. An image with
no attribution, the historian's con-
undrum. The residue of an active
imagination. An insignia sewn
to be stripped off in humiliation.
Blindfolded when the epiphany came,
a tempest of sparrows singing in
their sleep. To attach the wild
bird's song onto a manmade staff.
Their innocence in a sense tipping
into mockery. Puzzled by the
complexity, a whole new scale
is needed. Like a comet
made new with each visitation,
its train luminous, its orbit undefined.

--Whit Griffin
Western Tennessee



ALL SMALL CAPS a night of spoken word

Whit Griffin & Kate Colby

Monday, March 28th. 7:30—10pm *
Deja Brew Pub & Café, Wendell MA

Doors open 7pm for open mike sign up
<http://allsmallecaps.blogspot.com>

This is not a dream

I drive the car -
which in a dream
means control -
along a road
of deep night dark
that surprises me
with 2 ovals of florescent glow.
I slow and face of fox
holds still in the head lights.
I stop. He starts
again to chew
remains of prey
already stripped of fur
nothing now to hold blood, intestines
but mouth and teeth of fox.
His whole body leans into the chew:

spine dips, chest contracts.
The new caught meal
worth the risk of light.
And darkness remains
close as his own body
black flecks speckle his tail.
If I stayed long enough
the dark would take me too
when gas evaporated
and batteries died.
I'd be blind in my metal box
left behind by fox who knows
night's terrain and to take
each meal
as it comes.

--Carolyn A. Cushing
Easthampton

Long time I waited
Your arrival
Without knowing
You'd be a part of my life

You hold me
Protect me
Warm me
Always ready
To embrace me

Then there you were
Coming from I know not where
Who you were with before
No matter.

When you are lost
I long for you
Found, I rejoice
Shout even, hurrray!

Tan, smooth skin
So soft
Inviting me to touch
Caress my nakedness
Where do I end and you begin?

My slippers.
--Suzette Snow-Cobb
Turners Falls

My Little Chickadee

My little black capped little buddies.
Flitting here and there, in search of seed.

While filling the feeders, they zip and zoom, to see who's first.
Such trusting little fellows.

Once while hunting one lit on my arrow, stayed only but a
second, but the memory will last a lifetime.

Chick-a-dee-dee-dee, they sing.
Awesome little creatures.

--Brian Stafford
Montague, MA

Things I don't remember
but remember having

happened: two seasons
ago, the wettest spring

escaped my bones,
yesterday's coffee

the sugar shaken
to the end of the packet,

your first night at home
and every one after -

melting granules of
irretrievable facets

(the mind fans outward
otherwise).
Your weight

each day
remains

a muscle memory
in a silent dune of

decades of mid-September

years of four o'clock

long shadows
and teeth of time.

If I could trace them
on a screen or vase

each leaf
caught in the curb

old pilings
rotting into boundless blue

or bind and hand them
to you - love letters

yellowed packets accrued
at the back of the kitchen
drawer

with twist ties, old fortunes.
This very September day

etched into itself
and all I need to know

about truth, beauty, star-

eyed with abstraction

and steroid ointment
knee pockets

deepening
your receding form of light.

--Kate Colby
Providence, RI

CONTRIBUTOR'S NOTES:

Suzette Snow-Cobb wrote this poem
(and read it) for the Montague
Reporter's Love Poetry Open Mic held
at the Rendezvous in February, while
wearing her slippers.

Kate Colby is the author of four
collections of poetry, most recently *The
Return of the Native* (Ugly Duckling
Presse, 2011) and *Beauport* (Litmus
Press, 2010).

Whit Griffin is the author of
Pentateuch: The First Five Books
(Skysill Press, 2010). Chaplets
include *Wanhope* (Longhouse) and
Fugitive Cant (Country Valley).

Carolyn Cushing is a poet currently
obsessed with cells and the natural
world. She has been writing and
reading around the Pioneer Valley of
Western Massachusetts for over 15
years.

Brian Stafford of Montague, age 52,
has been reading poetry all his life, and
has been writing for a few years.

Erving Paper Describes Difficult Bankruptcy

BY KATIE NOLAN - Erving Paper Mill executives offered the town of Erving \$30,000 per year as a share of outside septage fees generated by Erseco at the paper mill, town-owned water treatment plant, along with continued treatment of Erving Center wastes for free, and an offer to visit the mill to see how the local employer is coping with hard economic times.

Erving Paper Mill and Erseco CEO Morris Housen offered the selectboard and half a dozen assembled residents a narrative of a company struggling with the "overwhelming pain" of bankruptcy.

The company entered Chapter 11 bankruptcy in 2009.

Erseco operates the town-owned Erving Center water treatment plant that treats wastes from Erving Paper Mill, Erving Center residents, and fee-paying "third party" septage haulers. The town

pays Erseco \$1 per year to treat Erving residential wastes. The town has been receiving approximately \$150,000 annually from Erseco as its contracted share of third party fees for septage haulers.

In December, the selectboard agreed to forgive one year's worth of revenue-sharing payments and renew the existing contract for three years, starting in fiscal year 2012.

Erving Paper Mill general manager Tom Newton provided a summary of treatment costs for all wastes coming into the treatment plant, along with revenues from third party fees. He told the selectboard, "There is really no net profit from outside waste tipping fees."

Newton said, although the town owns the treatment plant's assets, the contract signed by the town and paper mill allows the paper mill to use 99% of the facil-

ity's capacity. Newton concluded, "Any capacity that the paper mill creates should be allotted to the paper mill," and, he said, the mill earns its fees from selling that capacity.

In addition, Newton said the town has collected \$632,000 in shared fees over the last five years, characterizing that amount as enough to cover the costs for retrofitting the treatment plant if the town were forced to assume operation of the facility, if Erving Paper Mill were to close. He provided a table from a town-commissioned report from engineering consultant Tighe and Bond pegging the retrofit cost at \$428,000.

Housen contrasted Erving Paper Mill's past with the present. He described the Erving Paper Mill of the past as "wealthy" and mentioned donations to the town of a fire truck **see PAPER MILL pg 20**

from **WENDELL pg 6** dent for a week at their Wildwood Summer sleeper camp in Rindge, NH.

Aldrich read both essays on the importance of nature, and both were enjoyed by all in the office. Only one could be chosen, and that one was written by Aria Leelyn, age 11, a student at Swift River School.

After speaking with town counsel, Aldrich reported on the proper way for homeowners to receive town grant money intended to help private homeowners install a solar furnace. The energy committee intends to build a number of solar furnaces for private installation at a to be scheduled workshop, following a town hall seminar on May 14th.

In order to get reimbursed from the energy committee, a homeowner must speak directly with an installer, get an invoice for the work and submit the invoice to the energy committee, Aldrich said. In order to install a solar furnace, two holes must be drilled in an outside, south facing wall.

One four by eight foot solar furnace will be installed at the senior center.

Mary Thomas of the energy committee said a solar furnace window unit is already in operation at the library, and on sunny days you can feel the warm air circulating from it.

Selectboard member Jeoff Pooser, Broll in his capacity as carpenter, and historic commission member Jerry Eide took a

field trip to the historic Marion Herrick house recently. Pooser reported that Eide gave a convincing argument for including restoration of the town owned property that may be the oldest home in town, in a request for proposals (RFP).

Details of the building point to a construction date of around 1820, and the chestnut rafters and beams are sound enough to make restoration feasible. The stairs were rotten. It looked like a foot of water was in the cellar. Pooser said there is enough junk and wild animal excrement in the building to fill a dumpster before any restoration is undertaken. He thought one way to make the property more attractive for an RFP would be to clean it up first at town expense.

Keller offered to help Eide draft an RFP. Pam Richardson, a member of the historic commission, has asked permission to sift through papers in the house for items of historical interest.

Finance committee member Jim Slavas said the committee is still examining different Consumer Price Indices (CPI's) in order to establish a reasonable Cost of Living Allowance (COLA) for town employees.

The Swift River School budget request is up \$100,000 for FY'12, reflecting an increase of Wendell students. The Mahar request is up \$50,000, and the Franklin County Technical School request is down about the same amount - **\$50,000.**

from **ROOF pg 8**

dows already replaced.

The new windows will meet the new energy stretch code requirements and will be triple-glazed, low-e, argon-filled panes with aluminum casings and a white polymer finish.

Although one resident called the glass block windows "old-fashioned," care will be taken to keep the historical and aesthetic look of those windows by using semi-translucent glass with gray lines, to give the look of muntins separating the glass. The new windows will have "at least" a 20-year warranty, but "should

last much longer."

While the window replacement is the most costly part of the project, it is the approximately \$20,000 for ten inches of new cellulose insulation in the attic that will add the most energy efficiency to the school.

The condition of the slate roof on the old part of the school was the original impetus for the building repair project. The slate has not been maintained; at least one-third of the slates are broken and cracked. The costs for repairing the roof and flashing is about \$100,000, including contingency fees and other indirect

costs.

It was noted that in the future the town can expect to appropriate \$2000 every year to maintain the slate roof.

The MSBA has recommended the project for approval. If that approval is granted, the total cost of the project to the town will be \$293,528. The town will know if the grant has been approved by April 3rd, which would give just enough time to order the windows, which have a 8-12 week lead time, so the window work can be finished by the start of the new school year.

from **NATURE pg 6**

sun and would certainly die without water to shade them.

Water also provides fun. People enjoy splashing at the bottom of a loud and misty waterfall. There are water skis, water balloons and swimming pools. With those things, families and friends can spend time together, laugh, eat, scream with joy and play. The lemonade we share needs water too.

Nature lets us explore and keeps us from being bored. Without it, kids like me wouldn't be able to search for or study bugs, birds, tiny animals, beaver marks or butterfly chrysalises. We wouldn't have a place to find wild berries or mushrooms or study leaves.

Nature gives us a place to learn how to track animals and

watch compost turn into dirt for the garden. We can go into a cave to look for bats, and listen to the echoes of our shoes walking on the floor.

Without nature, we would lose all of the things that were fun before televisions and cell phones came.

Exploring nature gives us exercise, sun, science, and new things to talk about. It also shows that our world actually has something other than polluted cities.

Isn't nature important? For giving us trees, water and a place to explore we get life, fun, and learning. Those are things that everybody loves.

We should respect nature and be careful not to make the things we love disappear.

HIGHLIGHTS FROM THE MONTAGUE POLICE LOG

Illegal Dumping, Fighting, Harassment

Wednesday, 3/16

1:00 p.m. Illegal dumping on L Street. Referred to an officer.

Thursday, 3/17

11:58 a.m. Neighbor disturbance on L Street. Investigated.

12:51 p.m. Neighbor disturbance on K Street. Advised to contact police if it happens again.

3:05 p.m. Fight on L Street. Services rendered.

9:41 p.m. Illegal dumping on Griswold Street. Services rendered.

9:46 p.m. Assault on Fourth Street. Services rendered.

Friday, 3/18

8:11 a.m. Domestic disturbance on Farren Avenue. Services rendered.

1:40 p.m. Default and straight warrant arrest of [redacted]

4:34 p.m. Brush fire on Greenfield Road. Services rendered.

10:47 p.m. General disturbance at Subway on Avenue A. Advised of options.

Saturday, 3/19

9:22 a.m. Default warrant arrest of [redacted]

1:34 p.m. Arrest of [redacted]

for a subsequent offense of driving a motor vehicle with a suspended license and failure to stop at a stop sign.

4:55 p.m. General disturbance on Park Street. Investigated.

11:18 p.m. Fight on Eleventh Street Bridge. Investigated.

Sunday 3/20

10:42 a.m. Assault and battery on H Street. Advised of options.

4:17 p.m. Fight, disturbance on Fifth Street. Investigated.

Monday, 3/21

12:41 p.m. Threatening, harassment on Broadview Heights. Advised of

options.

3:52 p.m. Illegal dumping on Old Sunderland Road. Investigated.

8:58 p.m. Threatening, harassment on Central Street. Investigated.

Tuesday, 3/22

12:32 p.m. Harassment order violation on Fourth Street. Services rendered.

3:51 p.m. Default warrant arrest of [redacted]

5:50 p.m. Threatening, harassment on Fourth Street. Advised of options.

9 p.m. Threatening, harassment on Turners Falls Road. Services rendered.

10:07 p.m. Neighbor disturbance on East Main Street. Services rendered.

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GO GREEN FAMILY

Episode 50: And the Winners Are...

BY JEANNE WEINTRAUB-MASON

MONTAGUE CENTER – That evening, at the Go Green Family celebration dinner, Sam Lively took a final bite of chocolate mousse, wiped his mouth, and made his way to the podium. He waited until a hushed silence descended over the room before delivering his long-awaited news.

“After much deliberation, our judges have reached a decision.” Sam declared. “They faced an extremely dif-

ficult task in selecting just one family to receive the prize for the Go Green Family contest. All three families made changes that can serve as a model for the rest of us in achieving a more sustainable lifestyle.

In a surprise decision, our judges have determined that the winner of Go Green Family will not be awarded to one of the three competing families.” Sam waited for this news to sink in, and watched as diners’ forks and spoons froze in midair. He relished the shock he knew this announcement had produced.

The judges were especially impressed with our families’ responses to this final community challenge. So, instead of choosing one family...” Sam continued smugly, “they decided the winner of the twelve-month-long Go Green Family contest will be the family members who have partnered to create a program—the Green Pioneers’ program, which is educating children in sustainable solutions.

As this project incorporated contributions of members from all three families, we will distribute the prize money among all three families, with

\$50,000 set aside as seed funding for the Green Pioneers. Ruby and Alex Tinker, Jayden and Gerry Bartlett, and Jane Robbins-Levine, will you please stand? Congratulations to you all!

At this time, I’d like to extend a special thank you to all three competing families for their tremendous efforts over the past year to develop a more environmentally sustainable lifestyle and to work towards stopping climate change. You have been an inspiration to us all.”

As Sam headed back to his table, a familiar refrain wafted through the air from the sound system:

Your feet TOO BIG — you’re usin’ too much carbon

Your feet TOO BIG — you’re heatin’ up the skies

Your feet TOO BIG — better find a way to shrink ‘em

Gotta leave a carbon footprint that’s a LIVABLE size!

– The End

The Montague Reporter is seeking submissions of serialized fiction with a local theme: reporter@montaguema.net



MONTAGUE ENERGY CORNER Commonwealth Solar Hot Water Program

BY SALLY PICK - The Massachusetts Clean Energy Center is now offering a rebate for solar hot water systems installed in 2011. Called Commonwealth Solar Hot Water, the program will help Massachusetts residents adopt solar thermal water heating technology. Rebates to qualifying Massachusetts residents will be awarded through a non-competitive application process for the installation of solar hot water projects by pro-

fessional, licensed contractors. About 20 percent of the energy a consumer uses at home goes to heating hot water. Solar hot water systems can generate 60-75% energy savings by decreasing the amount of gas, oil or electricity used to heat the water.

To qualify, a resident and project site must be an electric customer of NSTAR, National Grid, Unitil, or Western Massachusetts Electric Co., or of a municipal power company that participates in MassCEC’s Renewable Energy Trust Fund. Rebates will be based on proj-

ect size. The rebate will amount to approximately \$2250 per system for a typical residential solar hot water system for a four to five person household, with additional rebates available for system components manufactured in Massachusetts. When combined with other federal, state, and utility incentive programs, this rebate can cover more than half of the cost of a system.

For more information go to www.masscec.com/index.cfm/cdid/11772/pid/11150.

from **REVIEWS** pg 12
The world suddenly became more complicated, with various local ethnic conflicts breaking out in places like Bosnia, Rwanda and Sri Lanka. This was petty stuff for the Vulcans, who tended to think big about good and evil. But they quickly transferred their rather paranoid vision to so-called “rogue states” – Iran, North Korea and of course Iraq – who might go nuclear in all senses of the term.

The collapse of the Soviet Union, which the Vulcans believed was the product of the American military buildup they had advocated, also allowed them to portray their policies as promoting American-style political democracy.

The Vulcans were influential in elite foreign policy circles, but they hardly represented mainstream “corporate America.” That they came to power under the second Bush was, in Mann’s view, a bit of a surprise. Politics probably helps explain their influence, although Mann does not stress this factor. Standing tough against the Soviet Union and various “evil doers” like Saddam Hussein has allowed Republican politicians to portray Democratic “liberals” as soft and fuzzy do-gooders in a scary world. It is probably no coincidence that the Iraq war resolution was submitted to Congress on the eve of the 2002 congressional elections.

Michael Klare’s book contains an important analysis of trends in energy policy and their potentially negative con-

sequences for this country, not to mention the rest of the world. For me, however, *Blood and Oil* is more of a warning than an explanation for the war in Iraq. Klare’s methodology promotes a conspiratorial mentality that sees hidden economic motives driving policy.

A collective biography of Rumsfeld, Cheney and their colleagues may not be your idea of summer reading on the beach. But James Mann, a journalist, is an outstanding narrative historian. His account is balanced and he takes the ideas of his subjects seriously, which is appropriate in the writing of good history.

However, the ideology he describes is paranoid and divisive. It almost makes one wish the Iraq invasion was caused by something rational like... “oil.”

Turners Falls

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Comedy at the Shea

featuring three-time Andy Kaufman Award finalist Brian Longwell with Bill Braudis, at the Shea Theater, 71 Avenue A, Turners Falls.

Saturday, April 2nd

Brian Longwell brings his show “Why Work?” to the Shea Theater. The show is the final entry in the 2010-11 Comedy at the Shea series, and also features standup comedian-writer Bill Braudis, who has performed standup on Leno and Conan, and written for HBO’s Emmy-winning Dennis Miller Show.

Showtime 8:00 p.m., with doors opening at 7:00 p.m. Tickets are \$15 in advance, available at World Eye Books, 156 Main Street, Greenfield or at www.SheaComedy.com. Contact the Shea Theater box office at (413) 863-2281.

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JACK COUGHLIN ILLUSTRATION

Deja Brew, Wendell: *Eric Love*, singing all of your favorites from the 60's and 70's, 8:30 - 10:30 p.m.

Montague Grange: Montague Family Dance, 3:30-5:30 p.m. Family-style Contra Dancing for all ages. Chase the winter blues away with caller *Kathy Torrey* and band *Shingle the Roof*.

MONDAY, MARCH 28th
Rendezvous, Turners Falls: *Span of Sunshine, The Ambiguities*, Free, 9:30 p.m.

Deja Brew, Wendell: *All Small Caps, A Night of Spoken Word*, special poetry night menu available, bring a friend and your appetite, 7-10 p.m.

TUESDAY, MARCH 29th
Thrive Project, Turners Falls: *Music Exchange!* Bring your instrument and play, practice, teach, learn, share. Led by Steve "Coolio" Koziol and a host of other experienced valley musicians, 7 - 9 p.m. Free.

THURSDAY, MARCH 31st
Rendezvous, Turners Falls: *Housetop*, swing.

7:30 p.m.

Greenfield High School: *Greenfield Schools Film Festival*, selected films made by the Greenfield School community. There will be 4 categories of short films (5 minutes or less) that will be showcased. Categories include films made by individuals and classes at the Elementary level, Middle School, High School and Staff/Teachers. The films have been screened by each school and the 1st, 2nd and 3rd place films will be shown to the public at 7pm on April 1st and again at 2pm on April 2nd at the Greenfield High School.

FRIDAY, APRIL 1st
Rendezvous, Turners Falls: *Uncle Hal*, modern bluegrass/jazz, Free, 9:30 p.m.

Burrito Rojo, Turners Falls: *Stone Coyotes* 9 p.m.

Deja Brew, Wendell: *The Jim Henry, Guy DeVito & Doug Plavin Experience*, 9-11p.m.

Shea Theater, Turners Falls: GCC Music Department Benefit Concert, *So Nice to Come Home To*, An evening of music inspired by the WWII era sound, 7:30 p.m.

dance 7-10 p.m., caller *Adina Gordon* music by *Nor'Easter*.

Temple Israel, Greenfield: *Mystery Comedy Dinner Theater, Maiden China*, Faux murder and mayhem ensues, in the form of a Murder Mystery Dinner Theater, sponsored by the FUNdraising Events Committee and www.thecomicalmysterytour.com. Details of characters and plot are on their website, 7 p.m.

EVERY FRIDAY AND SATURDAY night
Montague Inn: *TNT Karaoke*.

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

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

THURSDAY, MARCH 24th
Rendezvous, Turners Falls: *And the Kids and the Pirates, Zombie Nurse*, 9 p.m. Free.

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

Between the Uprights, Turners Falls: *Dan, Kip and Shultzzy from Curly Fingers DuPree* host an acoustic open mic, 8:30 - 11:30 p.m.

FRIDAY, MARCH 25th
Great Falls Discovery Center, Turners Falls: *Connecticut River Atlantic Salmon Restoration Program and Fish Population Status Update*, Ken Sprankle, US Fish and Wildlife Service Connecticut River Coordinator will review the history of the modern Atlantic salmon restoration program in the Connecticut River basin, 7 - 8:30 p.m. Free.

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

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

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

Burrito Rojo, Turners Falls: *The Feel*.

Route 63 Roadhouse, Millers Falls: *Heroes in Trouble*, 9:30 p.m.

SATURDAY, MARCH 26th
Rendezvous, Turners Falls: *Kristen Ford, Golden Elk*, 9:30 p.m.

Deja Brew, Wendell: *Ottomatic Slim*, Chicago style blues band, 9 - 11 p.m.

Arts Block Café and The Pushkin, Greenfield: Upper Valley Music Festival, nineteen bands playing a wide variety of styles from rock to jazz, funk to Irish music, 12 p.m. to 1 a.m.

Mocha Maya's, Shelburne: *Greg Koons*, indie rock, 8 p.m.



Carrie Ferguson performs as part of *Syrup: One Sweet Performing Arts Festival*, at Memorial Hall in Shelburne Falls on Saturday, March 26th.

North Hadley Congregational Church: *Profound Sound Voice Studio*, 4 p.m.

Memorial Hall, Shelburne Falls: Piti Theatre Company presents *Syrup: One Sweet Performing Arts Festival*. Afternoon for families starts at 2 p.m. Followed at 7 p.m. by singer/songwriter *Lui Collins*, and world renowned puppeteer *Eric Bass* from Sandglass Theater, Noho singer/songwriter *Carrie Ferguson*, cellist *Wayne Smith*, humorous songs from *Jonathan Mirin*, actor *Court Dorsey*.

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

SUNDAY, MARCH 27th
Rendezvous, Turners Falls: *TNT Karaoke*, 8 p.m. Free.

Deja Brew, Wendell: *Larry Kopp, Country & City Blues Guitar and Vocals*, 8 - 10 p.m.

FRIDAY, APRIL 1st through FRIDAY, APRIL 30th
Great Falls Discovery Center: *Spineless Splendor: a Photography Exhibit* by Northern Naturalists, Noah Charney and Charley Eiseman.

FRIDAY, APRIL 1st and SATURDAY, APRIL 2nd
Memorial Hall Theater, Shelburne Falls: *Pothole Pictures* joins with the Pioneer Valley Jewish Film Festival for showings of *Avalon*, Barry Levinson's 1990 film about a Russian-Jewish family assimilating into American life in the early 20th century. Friday showing at 7:30 p.m. Saturday showing at 8:15 p.m., with music starting at

Montague Grange: *Celebrating 20 years of Western Mass Gender Role Free Contra Dancing!* Extended dance, experience session 4-5:30 p.m., benefit supper 6-7 p.m., all level

Leverett Town Hall: *Lecture-Discussion by Penny Gill: Fear or Consciousness: Dare We Change?* 7 p.m.

SATURDAY, APRIL 2nd
Deja Brew, Wendell: *The Equalites, Reggae Fantastico!* 9-11 p.m.

Shea Theater, Turners Falls: *Comedy at The Shea, Brian Longwell along with Bill Braudis*, 8 p.m.

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Carolina Wrens Come to Breakfast



Carolina Wren

BY FRAN HEMOND
MONTAGUE CENTER - The Breakfast Club started 2011 with a couple of small feeders: one, a tube with seating for two, the other, a foot square flat, both swinging from the edge of the porch roof. They offered mixed berry seed and suet, twenty-four hours.

A couple of new regulars have arrived this season. A pair of Carolina wrens, delightful little red-brown souls with white stripes over their eyes, cocky tails held high and slender bills that kept the feeder a busy place.

This is the first year I have seen them at the farm. And a listing from 1995 of the 60 or so

species I had noted here did not include them. But they have been around for some time, and well appreciated.

The lone American tree sparrow, an occasional white-throated sparrow, the goldfinch who appears when sunflower is featured on the menu, one day four bluebirds, the downy woodpeckers, titmice, and nuthatches, and the profligate chickadees, who scatter seed for the cleaner uppers, the somber black and white juncos, are all eclipsed by the gorgeous cardinal and his mate. Some of the juncos have become more adept at eating at the feeders, but when there is speedy competition, they opt out.

Today the ice has gone from the pond. The high snow banks have melted down to give a view, and two black ducks have preceded the mallards and others who will stop by.

My records tell me that common mergansers and hoodies are sometimes here overnight in March. And it was worth keeping track of, and remembering happily, the pair of wood ducks who considered nesting here in 1995.

The eagle that found the pond a good place to fish this January has not returned to sit in at Breakfast Club sessions, and the Carolina wrens are giving it spark for the season.

from PAPER MILL pg 17 and Jaws of Life equipment, and Christmas parties at the Orange Armory. He told the selectboard and attendees, when he took over managing the company in 2000, the company was financially weak. He said his strategy was to sell all the assets except the mill in order to keep the mill going. He was surprised when the company went into bankruptcy two years ago that there were no calls from the town offering help or sympathy for the company's critical financial condition. He described the current paper mill as a "thrifty" plant, with no reserves to replace equipment, so employees patch and repair and continue working.

Housen asserted the plant's income "doesn't go to lining my pockets - it goes to payroll, equipment, oil, and wastepaper." He said if the mill were obliged to continue to pay the contracted fee to the town it would "make it difficult for the mill the thrive." However, Housen said he was "optimistic that we will survive."

Town administrator Tom Sharp observed Housen was displaying the thrifty nature of the company in lean times because his prepared remarks were written "on the back of scrap paper."

Selectboard chair Andrew Goodwin said, "You've given us a lot of information. We need to do our due diligence."

The board agreed to discuss the offers made by the plant and respond once they had reviewed

them thoroughly.

In other news:

The selectboard discussed changing the town's share of employee health insurance, currently set at 86% for active employees and 79% for retirees, for FY'12.

Goodwin said, "I think we should be leaving this alone this year...our costs haven't increased."

Selectboard member James Hackett observed that with a reduction to 85%, the monthly cost for a family plan would increase by only \$6.81 per pay period. He said, "It's not fair and not popular, but it's reality." He felt the town should reduce its share for employee health plans by at least 1%.

Selectboard member Eugene Klepadlo said the increased cost for employees would be "a lot easier to swallow than \$20 if the premium jumps 10% next year."

Sharp observed that a 1% reduction would save the town \$8300 in FY'12. The board tabled the discussion until the March 28th joint meeting with the finance committee.

Planning board chair William Morris said a public hearing will be held on April 12th on a proposed zoning bylaw to allow drive-through businesses at all commercially zoned properties by special permit. He said the special permit process would give the planning board "all types of control" over drive-through proposals.





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