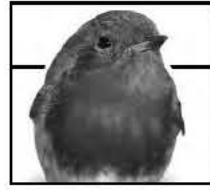




**OBAMA CAMPAIGN**  
Ben Schwartz Coordinates  
Franklin County Page 3



**the Poetry Page**  
Let us Spring!  
Page 8

LAKE PLEASANT MILLERS FALLS MONTAGUE CENTER MONTAGUE CITY TURNERS FALLS

# The Montague Reporter

YEAR 6 - NO. 25

also serving Gill, Erving and Wendell

50¢

REPORTER@MONTAGUEMA.NET

THE VOICE OF THE VILLAGES

MARCH 27, 2008

## Montague Center Supporters in Limbo

**BY DAVID DETMOLD** - With the fate of Montague Center School hanging in the balance, the school committee took two votes on one proposal on Tuesday night, March 25th, first failing to advance and then failing to finally reject a plan to create an in district Horace Mann charter school with an emphasis on environmental education at Montague Center. The proposal was prepared by a community group of parents and school supporters led by Sue Dresser of Montague Center and Deb Foucault of Lake Pleasant. A second community proposal, prepared by a group led by David and Sheri Leh, to keep Montague Center School open as an expanded, K-5 district elementary school did not even come up for a vote by 10:30 p.m., when school committee chair Mary Kociela, who first voted against accepting the Horace Mann proposal before voting against rejecting it, (essentially

keeping the proposal on life support for another week) asked for and received a motion to adjourn.

With Terry Lapachinski absent, the motion to accept the Horace Mann proposal failed 5 - 3, with Ted Castro-Santos joining Sandy Brown and Mike Langknecht in support. Next, the motion to reject the Horace Mann proposal failed on a 4 - 4 tie, with Kociela joining the three supporters in refusing to finally reject the proposal.

Earlier in the meeting, the committee voted 7 to 1, with Brown in opposition, to adopt the full amount of the budget subcommittee's preliminary budget, for \$17,068,078. Brown stated her opposition to the budget proposal in the following terms: "I can't approve a budget that made no effort to implement equity in funding among the academic disciplines and physical education (called the Massachusetts Frameworks), which the school committee



DETMOLD PHOTO

*The Montague Center School at sunset on Wednesday. Proposals for keeping MCS open as a district school failed to advance at the school committee meeting on Tuesday. Final votes on the fate of MCS will be taken on April 1st.*

approved on February 8th, 2005.

"This budget has a new position of assistant superintendent, which I cannot support. It also has \$186,539 for after school athletics and only \$17,358 for all other after school activities, including band

activities. It doesn't address what will be done with the savings of joining the Group Insurance Commission. I realize the actual amount of savings is unknown, but substantial savings will occur.

"This budget doesn't have the imagination

which I feel it must have in this time of decreased funding from the state, and makes no effort to involve parents and the community, nor does it address year after year of decreasing enrollment due primarily to parents choosing out. It does not address in any

way the fact that percentage increases of the size requested cannot be sustained year after year," Brown concluded.

Brown is the former chair of the Gill finance committee.

Castro-Santos said he see **BUDGET** pg 7

### VIEWPOINT: Saving Seed, a Necessity for our Time

**BY DANIEL BOTKIN GILL** - My fascination with seeds and seed saving can be traced back to two lifelong passions: free stuff and great food. And since heirloom seeds and the practice of seed saving also hold hope for helping feed a hungry planet, they're even more compelling to me today. But the gala opening last month of a world seed repository inside the permafrost of an arctic mountain in Norway just made me chuckle. It was heralded as a forward-thinking step to safeguard our seeds - the genetic material for the world's vital food - in case of some future emergency or global meltdown.

If we global citizens really want to safeguard our precious food, our agriculture - and hence,

our very survival - we must also follow another approach with our vital seeds, maybe not as centralized as a frozen vault in Scandinavia. The bigger task is to decentralize society's entire relationship to agriculture, seeds, food production and food security. This path has to do with harnessing more native and renewable resources, and building a locally based, ecologically appropriate and self-sustaining agriculture, based not solely on the bottom line, but upon the changing food needs of the locals, the soil health and other realities on the ground. Some might call this approach 'perma-cultural'.

Today, heirloom varieties intrigue gardeners, consumers, and chefs, even school lunch plan-

ners! But apart from simply being unique in color, form, habit and taste, the self-renewing, proletarian nature of these heritage cultivars has also come to represent growers' autonomy from undue manipulation and control, as well as real insurance against seasonal crises and challenges.

Around the world, local seed savers create food security every single year in this way, by growing out and multiplying their precious, open-pollinated seed crops.

What's more, the diverse gene pool embodied in the various old-time and other open pollinated varieties, offers the best defense against likely epidemics, viruses and other potential scourges of the 21st century. Industrial see **SEED** pg 16

### Gabe Mason, Assistant Manager at the Rendezvous, Dead at 24

**BY DAVID DETMOLD** **SHELBURNE FALLS** - Gabe Mason, 24 years old, died Monday night at his home at 55 Bardswell Ferry Road in Shelburne. The cause of death is under investigation, according to Elizabeth Dunphy-Farris, deputy first assistant district attorney for NW District Attorney Elizabeth Schiebel. Dunphy-Farris said, "Just past midnight into Tuesday, March 25th, state police detectives were called in, and our office was notified. An autopsy was conducted on Wednesday at the office of the chief medical examiner," Dunphy-Farris said.

Mason, a veteran of the Iraq War, served in the city of Fallujah as a Navy



*Gabe Mason in May of 2007, shortly after returning from a tour of duty as a Naval Corpsman in Iraq.*

Corpsman, tending to the medical needs of that city, its residents and the Marines and other ser-

vicemen and women stationed there in the last months of 2006 and the see **MASON** pg 13



**PET OF THE WEEK**  
**Mr. Personality**



**Chevy**

My name is Chevy and I'm a one-year-old spaniel mix in need of a good home. I am a perky little guy with a lot of personality. Can you see that just from looking into my sparkling brown eyes? If you have room in your home for an active, energetic, and completely loveable pet, maybe we would be a good pair. I will be a great best friend, and I will add so much life and fun into your home that you won't remember what you did before you met me! For more information on adopting me please contact the Dakin Pioneer Valley Humane Society at 413-548-9898 or via email leverett@dpvhs.org.

**MONTAGUE LIBRARY NEWS**

**New DVDs and More Goose**

**BY LINDA HICKMAN**  
**TURNERS FALLS** - A wide variety of DVDs, most of them new releases, were recently added to the Carnegie, Millers Falls, and Montague Center Libraries' collections. The titles include *American Gangster*, *Aristocats*, *Balls of Fury*, *Charlie and Lola Volumes 1, 2, and 7*, *Dan in Real Life*, *Darjeeling Limited*, *Go Diego Go: Diego's Magical Mission*, *Into the Wild*, *Jane Austen Book Club*, *Kingdom*, *Legion of Superheroes vol. 2*, *Madeline: Meet Me in Paris*, *No Country for Old Men*, *Superbad*, *Tudors: Complete First Season*, *War*, and *101 Dalmations*.

Mother Goose on the Loose will be held Saturday, April 5th, at the Carnegie Library at 10:30

a.m. The program is an interactive mix of guitar and banjo music, rhymes, stories, puppets, and other visuals. The free sessions are designed for babies through preschoolers and are performed by Children's Librarian Linda Hickman and musician Michael Nix. The monthly Saturday programs are held the first Saturday of each month through spring. Linda Hickman also performs the programs solo on Tuesday mornings at 10 a.m. weekly at the Carnegie Library. The programs are supported by a grant from the Institute of Museum and Library Services, administered by the Massachusetts Board of Library Commissioners. For more information, call the Carnegie Library, 863-3214.

**WENDELL LIBRARY NEWS**

**Gardening Magic**

In anticipation of the arrival of spring, there are many fun and clever activities one can do together with children that will spark and hold their interest for gardening while they patiently await the growing 'magic' to happen!

Join Dawn Ward on four Saturdays in April (the 5th,

12th, 19th and 26th) for arts and crafts, games, songs, stories and of course hands-on exploration, all designed for young children and the young at heart. You do not even need a garden in order to participate. There are plenty of activities that can be done inside, so join us rain or shine.

**Senior Health Fair**

Student nurses from Greenfield Community College are coordinating the Montague Senior Health Fair at the Discovery Center. Friday, April 18th from 9 a.m. to noon. All are welcome to have free blood pressure and blood sugar checks, and cholesterol screenings. Learn about food label reading and much more. Bring your medications in a brown bag for druggist discussion. Learn about any possible interactions. Presenters include; Dr. Brian Wadman, Ophthalmologist, Rite Pharmacy, Franklin County Home Care, YMCA, Consumer Protection, Hospice Services. There will be information, refreshments and door prizes. Put this date on your calendar. All are welcome.

logist, Rite Pharmacy, Franklin County Home Care, YMCA, Consumer Protection, Hospice Services. There will be information, refreshments and door prizes. Put this date on your calendar. All are welcome.

**GREAT FALLS MIDDLE SCHOOL STUDENTS OF THE WEEK**

Grade 6 : Alyssa Rockwood

Grade 7: Ceara Dolhenty

Grade 8: Daniel Colton, Thomas Sanders

**SENIOR CENTER ACTIVITIES -- March 31st - April 4th**

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

**Monday, 31st**

10 a.m. Senior Aerobics  
11 a.m. Easy Aerobics  
1 p.m. 911 Cell phone distribution; The Montague/Gill/Erving TRIAD/S.A.L.T. Council will be distributing cell phones to elders from these communities, to be used for calling 911 in an emergency. These cell phones

can be used while at home, in your car, when you are out for a walk or out in your yard. They can only be used to dial 911. Advance sign-up needed

**Tuesday, 1st**

10 a.m. Brown Bag distributions  
1:30 p.m. Council On Aging meeting

**Wednesday, 2nd**

10 a.m. Senior Aerobics  
12:45 p.m. Bingo

**Thursday, 3rd**

1 p.m. Pitch  
5 p.m. Triad meeting and dinner

**Friday, 4th**

10 a.m. Senior Aerobics  
11 a.m. Easy Aerobics

**ERVING Senior Center**, 18 Pleasant St., Erving (Old Center School, 1st Floor), is open Monday through Thursday from 9 a.m. to 2 p.m. for activities and congregating meals. For information and reservations call Polly Kiely, Senior Center director at 413 423-3308. Lunch

**FACES & PLACES**



**Goodbye Snow**

*Can't Wait for a Warm, Sunny Day!*

**Incorrect Sewer Bills**

**Gill** - Sewer users in the Riverside section were recently mailed incorrect sewer bills. To determine the correct amount due, please deduct the discount amount from the total and disregard the late fee.

If you have any questions, the tax collector will be available Tuesday through Thursday next week, 9:30 a.m. - 4:00 p.m., at 863-2105.

**Turners Falls Water Department will begin reading meters on Monday, March 31st**

**NANCY L. DOLE BOOKS & EPHEMERA**



Buying and selling used books  
32 BRIDGE STREET, 2ND FLOOR  
SHELBOURNE FALLS, MA  
413-625-9850  
ndole@crocker.com closed Mondays

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*Now serving People's Pint Beer on tap!*

(413) 772-2531  
10 Fiske Ave - downtown Greenfield  
Hours: Mon - Sat 11:30 am - 9 pm

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- Washed Stone
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- Processed Gravels
- Red Rock Stone
- 50# bags or bulk
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- Mason Sand
- TRG
- Loam, screened/unscreened



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**BREAKFAST, LUNCH & DINNER**

**Lunch Specials from 11:00 a.m.**  
Mon: American Chop Suey • Tues. Chicken Fricassie • Wed: Chicken Souvlaki, rice • Thurs: Corn Beef & Cabbage • Fri: Fried Scallops  
Sat: Yankee Pot Roast

**Open Sundays 7-2  
863-9636**

**LIVE IN MONTAGUE?**  
EST. 1754  
[www.MontagueMA.net](http://www.MontagueMA.net)  
local gossip, news & business listings

**COMEDY AT THE SHEA**  
**Saturday, April 5th 8 PM** (doors open at 7)  
**Jimmy Dunn with Kelly McFarland**  
\$15 tickets  
17 & older  
Tickets available at World Eye Bookshop or 863-2281  
[www.sheacomedy.com](http://www.sheacomedy.com)

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# Obama's Point Man in Wendell

BY JOE KWIECINSKI

**WENDELL** - It's a long way from Brooklyn, N.Y. to the picturesque town of Wendell, but for Ben Schwartz, the point man for Barack Obama's 2008 Franklin County campaign, his latest move has been life-changing. Schwartz, a 10-year-resident of Wendell, is not only directing area activities on behalf of the Illinois senator, but has also decided to run for delegate to the Democratic National Convention to be held in Denver in late August.

"I've never run for anything in my life," Schwartz said of the April 5th caucus in Amherst, which will produce three delegates to the national convention. "I would consider it a great honor to cast my ballot in Denver."

What stands out most for Schwartz about his charismatic candidate is the commitment to community activism Obama forged long ago, after graduating from Harvard. Unlike most politicians, Illinois Senator Barack Obama began his public service working as a community organizer for three years, in Chicago.

Coordinating local political efforts is what it's all about for Schwartz, too. And many Wendell and Franklin County residents contribute to the informal, loosely structured national network that supports Obama as he battles for the White House. Dan Keller, chair of the Wendell town Democratic committee along with another member of the town Dems, political activist Jonathan Von Ranson, and Lisa Hoag have done outstanding work on behalf of the campaign, Schwartz said.

"Dan, Jonathan, and Lisa have all been extremely helpful

making phone calls, especially during the primary," said Schwartz. "Jonathan has also posted his thoughts about Senator Obama on the internet," on Wendell's local 'Townfolk' list A strong grassroots effort



Barack Obama conferring with Ben Schwartz.

was one of the keys to Obama's strong showing in Franklin County, where he bested Senator Hillary Clinton of New York in 21 of 26 towns, losing only Bernardston, Erving, Monroe, Montague and Orange, despite Clinton's overall 15 point victory in the Massachusetts primary on February 5th. Of course, he carried Wendell!

Schwartz brings a rich, diverse background to his latest avocation. A self-described blue-collar worker, he is also a practicing novelist who went to graduate school at UMass and spent 15 years as a commercial fisherman, trolling the waters off Maine, Alaska, Washington, and Hawaii. Schwartz sold his boats three years ago. "I guess it's easy to see why water quality issues are so important to me," Schwartz observed.

How did a working man with a literary bent become involved in the full contact sport we Americans refer to as politics? "My first major involvement with the process started when I worked for the Kerry campaign

in 2004," Schwartz recalled. "In fact, I waited until John Kerry decided not to run again for president before becoming a member of the Obama effort."

Laboring in the field for Barack Obama has been an eye-opening experience for the Wendell coordinator. "Believe me," said Schwartz, "politics can really be something you become totally invested in." Schwartz works on the Obama campaign's policy advisory committees, contributing written environmental policy materials. "Senator Obama uses the expertise of work funneled to his headquarters in Chicago, relying on his policy advisory committees made up of wide-ranging talent such as Harvard Law School professors, members of the business community, and academia."

The Wendell resident has met Obama on several occasions at gatherings of the senator's supporters. "He's a very personable guy," Schwartz said. "He's smart and dynamic, but very comfortable in himself and working with others."

In addition, Schwartz sees the national political climate as favorable to his candidate's success. "People are simply desperate for change," he noted. "Obama is not just catching a wave. Although he's a uniquely unifying figure in American politics, he truly believes in honest and efficient government. He is an extremely intelligent person with a community mindset. He does not view America as a land of chopped-up interest groups. There's a tendency to look at people as members of groups, but ultimately we're a super mega-large community."

## Report on Franklin - Hampshire Career Center Activities for February, 2008

BY DEBORAH RADWAY

**GREENFIELD** - At the three offices of the Franklin Hampshire Career Center, in the month of February, the Career Center served a total of 1,232 customers (up from 1126 in January). Of these, 84 entered employment, (down from 98 last month, and on par with December of 2007), at an average wage of \$13.02 an hour (up from \$11.55 an hour last month). Our year to date average hire rate is \$12.55 an hour, up slightly from last month's year-to-date average of \$12.46 an hour.

For the year to date, 435 businesses have been served by the Career Center (up from 399 last month), with 273 of them posting job openings (up from 248 last month).

The Orange office served

107 customers (a 44% increase over January, when 74 customers were served) and had 12 enter employment (down from 17 last month) at an average wage of \$10.23 an hour (down from \$12.08 last month). Activities occurring at the Career Center include Orange Jobs for Youth, employer recruitments, free basic computer classes, and general job search assistance. To date, since July 1st, 2007, the beginning of our fiscal year, 87 job seekers we have assisted in Orange have entered employment at an average wage of \$10.36 an hour.

The Greenfield office served 499 customers (up from 488 last month) and had 39 enter employment (down from 57 last month) at an average

wage of \$13.55 an hour (up from \$11.35 per hour last month). To date, since July 1st 2007, 355 job seekers we have assisted in Greenfield have entered employment at an average wage of \$12.38 an hour.

The Northampton office served 700 customers (up from 621 the month before) and had 54 enter employment (about the same as last month's 55) at an average wage of \$13.28 an hour (up from last month's \$11.65 an hour). To date, since July 1st 2007, 440 job seekers we have assisted in Northampton have entered employment at an average wage of \$13.18 an hour.

Deborah Radway is the operations manager of the Franklin Hampshire Career Center.

### Montague Parks & Recreation SPRING PROGRAMS 2008

56 First St., Turners Falls, MA 01376 / Phone: (413) 863-3216

#### YOUTH PROGRAMS

##### TEE BALL

**WHO:** Children ages 4-6  
**WHEN:** Saturday Mornings; 10:30am-11:30am, April 26-June 7  
**FEES:** **Early Bird Registration Fee** (Last Day Friday, April 11): Montague Residents = \$25, Non-residents = \$30  
**Regular Fee** (After Friday, April 11): Montague: Residents = \$30, Non-residents = \$35  
**PARENTS ARE NEEDED TO HELP COACH!**

##### ROOKIE LEAGUE BASEBALL

**WHO:** Grades K-2  
**WHEN:** Saturday mornings; 9:00am-10:15am, April 26-June 7  
**FEES:** Montague Residents = \$35, Non-residents = \$40 (Fees include hat, shirt & pants)

**Enrollment Minimum & Maximum dependent upon the number of parents who volunteer coach.**

##### ROOKIE LEAGUE SOFTBALL

**WHO:** Grades K-2  
**WHEN:** Saturday mornings; 9:00am-10:15am, April 26-June 7  
**FEES:** Montague Residents = \$35, Non-residents = \$40 (Fees include hat, shirt & pants)

**Enrollment Minimum & Maximum dependent upon the number of parents who volunteer coach.**

##### SENIOR LEAGUE SOFTBALL

**WHO:** Girls in grades 3-6  
**WHEN:** Late March/Early April-Late June (Practices-weekdays at coaches' discretion; League Games-weekdays)  
**FEES:** Montague Residents = \$50, Non residents = \$55 (Fees include hat, shirt & pants)

**Parents are needed to help coach and umpire. No experience necessary. Training provided.**

**BASEBALL & SOFTBALL ROOKIE LEAGUES & SENIOR GIRLS SOFTBALL**  
 THE MPRD OFFICE WILL BE OPEN SATURDAY, APRIL 5 FROM 9AM - 12PM FOR REGISTRATIONS AND T-SHIRT/UNIFORM FITTING. \*ALL PLAYERS MUST BE IN BY APRIL 5 TO BE FITTED FOR UNIFORMS. ORDERS WILL BE PLACED THE FOLLOWING MONDAY, AND ANYONE NOT SIZED AFTER THAT DATE WILL AUTOMATICALLY RECEIVE YOUTH X-LARGE SIZES.

##### American Red Cross® BABYSITTING COURSE

**WHO:** Youths ages 11-15  
**WHEN:** Tuesday, June 3 and Wednesday, June 4  
**FEES:** Montague Resident = \$40, Non-resident = \$45 (Book and first aid kit included with fee)

##### INTRO TO TAE KWON DO

**WHO:** Ages 6 & Up  
**WHEN:** Saturday mornings; 9:00am - 9:45am; April 5 - May 17  
**FEES:** Fees: Montague Residents = \$45, Non-Residents = \$50

##### KAYAKING & CANOEING (Two separate programs)

**WHO:** Youths (Those under 13 must attend with an adult. Also being offered as a Family and Adult Program)  
**WHEN:** Canoeing - Saturday, May 17; Kayaking - Saturday, May 31 10:00am - 4:00pm (six-hour program)  
**FEES:** Montague Residents = \$65, Non-residents = \$70 (per program)

##### BINGO BUDDIES

In partnership with the Gill-Montague Council-On-Aging.  
**WHO:** Youth ages 5-12  
**WHEN:** Friday afternoons; 12:15p - 1:30p; April 4, May 2 and 30

#### ADULT PROGRAMS

##### WATER AEROBICS

**WHO:** Adults 18 and Over  
**WHEN:** Monday evenings; 6:00pm - 6:45pm; April 7 - June 9 (No class April 21, May 26)  
**FEES:** Montague Residents = \$40, Non-Residents = \$45

**Registration Deadline: Friday, March 28**

##### Moderate YOGA for Adults

**WHO:** Adults 18 and Over  
**WHEN:** Tuesday evenings; 6:00pm - 7:00pm; April 8 - June 3 (No class April 22)  
**FEES:** Montague Residents = \$45, Non-Residents = \$50

**Registration Deadline: Friday, March 28**

##### PILATES

**WHO:** Adults 18 and Over  
**WHEN:** Evenings; 6:00pm - 6:45pm; April 9 - June 4 (No class April 23)  
**FEES:** Montague Residents = \$60, Non-Residents = \$65

**Registration Deadline: Friday, March 28**

##### GROUP EXERCISE CLASS

**WHO:** Adults 18 and Over  
**WHEN:** Thursday evenings; 6:00pm - 6:45pm; April 10 - June 5 (No class April 24)  
**FEES:** Montague Residents = \$45, Non-Residents = \$50

**Registration Deadline: Friday, March 28**

##### R.A.D. Program

**WHO:** Females 13 & up. Those under 18 must have a waiver signed by their parents.  
**WHEN:** Tuesday evenings; 6:00pm - 9:00pm; April 22, 29; May 6, 13, 20  
**FEES:** FREE

**A partnership with The Franklin County Sheriff's Office.**

#### FAMILY PROGRAMS

##### Peter Cottontail's EGGstravaganza

**WHEN:** Saturday, April 12 @ 1:00pm  
**WHERE:** Unity Park, First Street, Turners Falls  
 THIS EVENT IS RAIN OR SHINE.

##### BASIC METAL DETECTING WORKSHOP

**WHO:** Anyone is welcome! (Children ages 12 & under must be accompanied by a parent or legal guardian)  
**FEES:** Fees: Montague Residents = \$5, Non-residents = \$7

##### Summer Playground Program Registration Information

**Montague Residents** - Registration begins - Monday, April 7;  
**Non-residents** - Registration begins - Monday, April 28  
**Dates of Playground:** Monday, June 30 - Friday, August 15 (7-week program)

Call **863-3216** to receive more information and to register!  
 56 First Street • Turners Falls, MA 01376  
[www.montague.net](http://www.montague.net)



# The Montague Reporter

24 3rd Street, Turners Falls, Mass. 01376

## Editor

David Detmold

## Assistant Editor

Kathleen Litchfield

## Editorial Assistants

Hugh Corr  
David Brule

Circulation  
Suzette Snow Cobb  
Don Clegg

## Layout & Design

Kathleen Litchfield  
Boysen Hodgson  
Katrien Hoyden  
Karen Wilkinson  
Suzette Snow Cobb

"The Voice of the Villages"

## Photography

Joe Parzych  
Shawn Woolsey

## Technical Administrators

Michael Muller  
Michael Farrick

Founded by  
Harry Brandt David Detmold  
August, 2002

Arthur Evans

## Scrapping District Unity

A tearing sound was heard on Tuesday night as superintendent Ken Roche addressed the school committee about the fate of Montague Center School. And as the footsteps of the parents from Lake Pleasant and Montague Center receded down the hall of the high school following the 5-3 vote not to support the last best hope of keeping that elementary school within the fold of the district, doubt remained whether there are enough tailors in the town of Montague to sew this cloth up again.

Despite Roche's halfhearted plea for district unity, it appeared a decision had been taken to cast aside Montague Center and its supporters as the GMRSD cleared the floor for an impending showdown on the '09 budget. The savings from closing Montague Center will be few, if any; the casualties will be many.

As the meeting opened, the absence of school committee member Terry Lapachinski loomed large. Lapachinski had offered cautious praise to the proponents of a plan to create a district Horace Mann charter school at a work session on the Montague Center School proposals on Thursday, March 21st. She used such phrases as: "I thought it was done very well," and "I am encouraged to hear there are some grants available through Horace Mann."

But in her absence on Tuesday, March 25th, it was hard to see any way proponents of the in district charter school proposal could get to the needed five votes for approval. And indeed, as the evening wore on, school committee chair Mary Kociela, still seeking the elusive common ground of consensus, was left looking more and more like a person trying to straddle a chasm in an ice field as the center broke: an untenable position.

Roche can be seen on videotape in the MCTV archives from November 27th of last year, as he tried to secure a hard to find

eight vote to approve the motion to reconfigure the Montague elementary schools, offering the following assurance to Montague Center supporters within the committee and within the community, in exactly these words: "We have to depend upon and trust in the good will and good intentions of our school committee members on this issue. I don't think it can be ultimately and perfectly objective."

"If people agree to this language tonight, everybody has to realize that those people who feel very strongly about Montague Center being given a chance, that we have to honor that. If a group arises and comes back with a reasonable plan, that has a reasonable chance of success - and I'm not saying that anybody would - but I'm trying to calm the fears of those who might see this as just a device to put off a determination and then close the door on Montague Center:

"I think we worked long and hard on this as a group and there's been a new degree of trust developed within this group that I'm very proud of. At some point we have to trust. And if a group does the work and comes forward with a reasonable plan it is going to be given time."

Tuesday night, Roche had a very different message to deliver, and it lacked the same can-do note of compromise. He said, "When I recommended this, the plan was for the district to move as far as possible toward a full grade span configuration, equalize educational offerings for all district students, and make all facilities accessible by 2009." But in doing so, Roche said, his plan was not predicated on pursuing K-5 education at any cost, and he said the district could instead be content with pre-K and K grades at Hillcrest, and grades 1 - 5 at Sheffield. "We could stay there (pre-K and K at Hillcrest) for a long time as a district and deliver better educa-

## BORDEAUX WHINE

by denis bordeaux



## LETTER TO THE EDITOR

# Enough is Enough

How many more of our soldiers have to be killed or injured before we say, 'Enough is Enough'? As of March 20th, 2008, we have lost 3,992 soldiers killed in Iraq. I say if our congressmen and president of

the United States care for the people like they say they do, then they should get their heads out of their collective butts and bring our soldiers home from Iraq, and let Iraqis fight their own war by themselves. So I

ask all of you to contact your congressmen and tell them you have had enough of this war in Iraq, to bring our soldiers home.

- Matthew McMullin-Lego  
Turners Falls

tion, as a Phase One. There are no significant remodeling costs that need to be put in place immediately. We could remain in that configuration for at least several years, or longer."

In fact, the language of the motion the school committee voted on and approved on December 11th of last year was fairly explicit: to "Move all K in the town of Montague to Sheffield by August 2009, provided adequate facilities are available, unless the school committee approves an alternate plan as provided in paragraph 5, below. To accomplish the K transition, the school committee will immediately appoint a building planning committee to assess the cost for necessary renovations to Sheffield. The school committee is committed to a K-5 grade span and will actively seek funding for these necessary renovations in order to fully implement this plan."

The building planning committee for renovating the old side of Sheffield was never appointed, the study never done. Asked earlier this month if that represented a "slippage" of the school committee's commitment to provide K-5 grade span education at Sheffield by 2009, Roche replied the committee had been busy trying to make progress on a number of fronts at once, but he insisted there was no slippage on the commitment for K-5 grade span education.

Yet on Tuesday he told the committee, before determining

the cost of renovating Sheffield, "In my mind we needed to make a determination on Montague Center first."

Roche continued, "Certainly, it would be better to put an elevator in (at the old side of Sheffield), but without one you could still be substantially compliant, or 70% to 80% compliant (at Sheffield). This is an open question: whether the town of Montague is willing or able to make improvements either at Montague Center or Sheffield; we cannot be certain."

As to giving time for a proposal to keep Montague Center open as a district school, a commitment he gave unequivocally on November 27th last year, Roche had this to say on Tuesday night: "The school committee is committed to giving time, to not rejecting proposals frivolously or for political reasons." But, he added, "Concerns school committee members have about capital improvements at Montague Center are valid."

In fact, the section of the December 11th reconfiguration motion inviting community proposals states, "The intent of this provision is not that all school committee members believe that the proposed plan has a good chance of success; instead, the intent of this provision is to ensure that a serious community effort to develop a sustainable configuration at Hillcrest and/or Montague Center School will be allowed sufficient time to do so."

Almost as an afterthought, Roche concluded his remarks Tuesday with a sop to Montague Center supporters, saying, "Arguments we will bring students back to the district have to be given credence as well." School committee member Ted Castro-Santos, who has been the main spokesperson for the argument that closing Montague Center School will aggravate an already untenable trend in school choice students leaving the district, reminded the committee of the results of the survey he conducted of parents living in the

Continued next page

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south end of town who had chosen or were considering choosing to educate their children out of the district at the elementary level. We do not support that choice, but it is a fact, and wishing those losses away will not reverse the trend.

Castro-Santos, along with Sandy Brown, provide the key votes needed to reach 8 out of 9 in support of the elementary school reconfiguration motion in December. On Tuesday, he said, "If I was duped, I was duped. I'd like to believe I wasn't."

For her part, Brown said, "I would not have voted for this motion if I thought the school committee is not committed to a K-5 plan. I understand it was supposed to have two steps. I just heard Ken say educationally it's just as good to have K at Hillcrest. That's not what this motion says."

For their part, Horace Mann charter school proponents Sue Dresser, of Montague Center, and Deb Foucault, of Lake Pleasant, attempted to alleviate school committee concerns about their proposal by saying (Dresser): "My efforts will be directed toward private fundraising and private grants (for ADA improvements at Montague Center) so as not to have to approach the town. I'd personally prefer not to have to ask the town for a dime. That's my preference." And Foucault: "If there are Horace Mann grants available, I'd like to know why the school committee would turn down the chance to bring this money into town."

But it was not enough to convince Kociela to join Brown, Castro-Santos and Mike Langknecht in support, and in Lapachinski's absence there was no other fourth vote if not Kociela's. Five votes were required to approve or reject a plan for keeping Montague Center School open as a district school.

Kociela said she would need a more solid plan for dealing with ADA improvements to Montague Center School, and a realistic way to fund intra-district transportation to that school, since news from the state Department of Elementary and Secondary Education (formerly the DOE) that very day - according to Rocke - indi-

cated that reimbursement funds for regional transportation would not apply to a Horace Mann district charter school.

On Wednesday, J.C. Considine, spokesperson for the Massachusetts Department of Elementary and Secondary Education said that the state would reimburse a district's transportation costs to a Horace Mann charter school, subject to appropriation, at the same level and by the same method regional transportation costs are reimbursed now.

On Tuesday, Kociela would not join the majority in a subsequent vote to finally reject the Horace Mann charter school proposal, either, keeping the issue alive one more week, until a special meeting to be held on Tuesday, April 1st at 7 p.m. at the Turners Falls High School. It is possible that a way forward can still be found to meet the concerns Kociela expressed.

But as the Montague Center and Lake Pleasant parents walked out of the room *en masse* following the initial 5-3 vote failing to approve the Horace Mann proposal, there was more than doubt expressed that compromise was still possible.

In his speech, Rocke anticipated the failure of the school committee to approve the plan, and called on Montague Center proponents to bring their vision for education and their passion to Hillcrest and Sheffield. "Students will receive a fine education at Sheffield," he averred, and that is demonstrably true. However, after assurances were given that if they did the work, and came up with a reasonable plan, supporters would be given time to try to implement that plan, there was also a palpable sense of a rug being pulled swiftly and surely out from under the feet of Montague Center proponents on Tuesday.

As Castro-Santos said, when the school committee passed the reconfiguration plan for Montague elementary schools in December, "It was an attempt to open things up to the community, and find a way for us all to come together. That was the spirit of the compromise."

That tearing sound you heard on Tuesday was more than just the fabric of the district fraying. It was the fabric of the entire town of Montague.

# GUEST EDITORIAL

## Committee Appreciates Role of Town Meeting

BY DEIRDRE CABRAL

**WENDELL** - It was with disappointment, and some hurt, that I read former planning board member Ray DiDonato's letter in the March 20th issue of the *Reporter* (VI #24). Reluctantly, I resolved that I (the current chair of the planning board) should respond in this forum, too, to reassure regular Wendell readers, like me. Contrary to Mr. DiDonato's statements, I, and I believe all on the planning board and forest conservation advisory committee, fully appreciate town meeting's role in our community. No one has ever indicated otherwise in my presence and I have been at all the meetings! That firsthand knowledge makes a difference.

This newspaper's reporter, Josh Heinemann, did a wonderful job trying to relay two hours of presentation and discussion for his article in the March 13th *Reporter* ("Eco-Sensitive Development Zoning Proposed"; MR VI #23). Towards the end of the meeting, we discussed how to bring the proposed Eco-Sensitive Design bylaw forward to the townspeople and to town meeting. It is a complex and significant bylaw change, so we felt a need to understand it all ourselves, and to help people understand it. Frankly, we feared getting to town meeting floor without that being accomplished. We all agreed to the need for pre-town meeting sessions (besides the public hearing). I did wince reading the article's description on this point, but had hoped it would be seen in light of needing input - especially significant suggestions as early as possible, so we could discuss them, think about consequences, and

make changes, if any. The article didn't really read like that, and I am sorry I didn't step in earlier to address it, as I don't think it accurately represented the discussion.

Mr. DiDonato bluntly states that "apparently" a planning board member implied that it is not our "right as residents to introduce amendments on the town meeting floor." He, without firsthand knowledge, is so wrong! To spread that falsehood sows doubt in our town volunteers and is damaging to the reputation of volunteers.

He likewise sows doubt when he goes on to lecture readers and the forest conservation committee that the committee "should not" let the opinion of local land trusts "carry more weight than the stated interests of local residents and voters." We are just doing our homework to understand more about the trusts, to ensure the bylaw works for the benefit of the landowners who will use it. That's all. Nothing nefarious. The lecture read to me as though the Mr. DiDonato believed I and other committee members might actually do something bad, were it not for his lecturing us.

These few volunteers are doing OK. We are not without mistakes, but I think they are the exception, not the rule. We do have open posted meetings and will have open forums on the proposed bylaw. So please, keep an eye out for those notices, and please come to town meeting.

*Deirdre Cabral is the chair of the Wendell planning board. The opinions expressed here are her own, and do not necessarily represent those of any other member of the planning board.*



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# GMRSD Budget Makes Towns' Task More Difficult

BY JOHN HANOLD

MONTAGUE - At their Tuesday meeting, March 25th, the Gill-Montague school committee approved an FY09 budget of \$17,068,078 by a 7 - 1 vote. I have waited patiently and hopefully for two months for this milestone, and feel my hopes have been dashed. This budget will result in an assessment to Montague of about \$7,935,253, or \$812,410 above last year. The estimated increase in all revenues for the town is only \$470,000. I suspect Gill has at least as severe a problem with this vote as Montague does.

A disappointing aspect of this final vote is that the figure is exactly the same one the district's budget subcommittee voted on January 24th and sent to the full school committee. In the intervening months the line item detail has shifted, but the total has not changed. Initial requests from Montague's town departments also exceed the revenue increase, but over the two months the town has debated department needs and tried to reduce costs wherever possible. By the time this letter appears we will have met again, and will devote our attention to how to fund what we have tentatively accepted.

And that brings me to my biggest disappointment. School committee members have met regularly with the selectboards and finance committees of Gill and Montague but their presentations have focused on what is desired or needed (depending on one's choice of word) with only passing recognition of the towns' limited resources. We have regularly shared with the district our forecasts of revenue, so there are no surprises there. The district has delivered the towns a significant problem, without attempting to mitigate it, and has left in the towns' hands the choice of how to solve it.

The deadline for preparing a budget for Montague's annual town meeting is close at hand, and our alternatives are the more painful because of the unchanged Gill-Montague budget.

John Hanold is the chair of the Montague finance committee

# GUEST EDITORIALS:

## A Violation of Trust

BY JEFF SINGLETON

MONTAGUE CENTER- On Tuesday night, the Gill-Montague School Committee debated for several hours two proposals to create alternatives to closing Montague Center School. These proposals were encouraged by the school committee itself as part of a school closing decision made last December. Many good questions (and some not so good questions) were raised. But there were two problems. First, a number of school committee members seemed completely unwilling to evaluate these proposals with an open mind. Rather, they appeared to scramble to come up with reasons to stop the whole process.

More importantly, the process clearly violated the plain language of the compromise motion, passed on December 11th last year. This motion stated that the March 25th vote was not about whether to approve or disapprove the proposals. Rather, it was to ensure that there were coherent groups with coherent proposals that addressed four issues. Here is the language contained in Part 5 of the motion:

*"The group must then develop and present a plan at the March 11th, 2008 meeting that includes the following criteria: a timeline, business plan, education plan and governance plan. In order to be considered, an*

*application must include components consistent with the proposed plan and application. The intent of this provision is not that all school committee members believe that the proposed plan has a good chance of success; instead, the intent of this provision is to ensure that a serious community effort to develop a sustainable configuration at Hillcrest and/or Montague Center School will be allowed sufficient time to do so."*

This is not just an abstract 'process' issue. It was a central part of the compromise that was supposed to reduce divisiveness and build trust. Everyone knew that there would not be enough time by the March vote to produce detailed proposals and have a fair discussion of them. Supporters of Montague Center School feared that that the request for alternatives was just a delaying tactic. We were assured that the March deadline was simply to make sure that viable groups had been formed so that we would not "waste our time."

Based on these assurances, two groups spent considerable time creating detailed proposals for the school (proposals that were commended by the superintendent).

see TRUST pg 7

# Where Did the Promise Go?


BY PATRICIA PRUITT - Tuesday, March 25th, 2008 the Gill-Montague school committee earned the scolding it got from one of its members, who described herself as "ashamed to be a member of the school committee." Unfortunately, what bothered her was the failure to complete the task the SC had set itself: namely, to vote on each of the proposals before it for Montague Center School. From my perspective the problems with Tuesday's meeting went way beyond the failure to complete a vote. The school committee settled for the lowest common denominator: that nothing other than the status quo is possible. In other words that the long history of ill-feeling toward one school in one village of Montague should be upheld over any reasonable opportunity to allow something educationally positive, though difficult, to have a chance to go to the state for consideration. This was despite the more than good faith efforts of the proposers of each plan.

Sue Dresser, Deb Foucault, and others of the Horace Mann Charter School option, and David and Sherri Leh of the Expanded K-5 configuration proposal all spent numerous hours in the past two months on these proposals. Like many people, these folks are parents, hold a job or jobs, and are subject to too much multi-tasking. But it isn't the time, the effort, the good will, or the dedication that strikes this reader. As I read the Horace Mann proposal (Dresser and Foucault) I was struck by the strength of the educational plan, its innovation and use of neighborhood assets. It is a worthy educational plan and was praised as such by several members of the SC. The Leh proposal seeks to solve many of the logistical problems associated with Montague Center, proposing parking solutions, ADA improvements as well as the expanded grade span K-5, which for a brief moment was a plan of the School Committee itself.

The fact that these proposals exist at all is due to the compromise exit to the Montague Center School issue offered to the district by its then brand new superintendent, Ken Rocke. On balance, Rocke has brought considerable energy to the district: the staff and teachers have joined the GIC; he has managed to amend the district agreement ratio necessary to close a school from 8/9 to 6/9; in return he set up the proposals option as a way for concerned parents to keep Montague Center School open, while setting a timeline for closure, in case no group took up the offer. He extended the proposal offer to parents of the Hillcrest School, also. No Hillcrest

see COMPROMISE pg 11

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**BUDGET** from page 1  
 shared Brown's concerns, but decided to support the budget because it contained a number of his priorities, including a restructuring of elementary special education, a fulltime principal at Gill Elementary, and elimination of the combined classroom at Gill.

Also during Tuesday's meeting, superintendent Ken Rocke announced the resignation of GMRSD special education director Cynthia Joyce and the resignation of Bill MacDonald, who has served as half-time principal at both the Gill Elementary School and the Montague Center School for the past year. Rocke also announced that Sheffield principal Chip Wood, who has served as that school's principal for the past five years, would be taking a new administrative post within the district as the director of K-5 elementary education, where he will coordinate curriculum and

student learning throughout the district.

Rocke reported on the presentation of the GMRSD turnaround plan at the state Department of Elementary and Secondary Education (DESE, formerly the Mass DOE) in Malden earlier that day, where acting commissioner Jeffrey Nellhaus recommended its approval. Rocke said he had pressed the point that the financial needs of the district had outstripped the financial capacity of the member towns, and could only be met by increased state aid. He also told the commissioners that there should be a limit placed on how much a district can lose to charter school tuition and school choice losses. "Choice is a good policy," Rocke told the commissioners, "to fill empty seats, but when you have a situation where people are opting out of a failing district, it's unsustainable."

Later, as the discussion of the

Horace Mann charter school proposal for Montague Center unfolded, Rocke told the committee about a conversation he had held with Jeff Wulfson, associate commissioner for school finance and district support at the DESE earlier that day, wherein Wulfson told him that regional school transportation costs to a Horace Mann school would not be reimbursable by the state. "District transportation would have to be paid at the district level," Rocke told the committee. "It is not reimbursable."

But in a follow-up call on Wednesday, J.C. Considine, a spokesperson for the Mass DESE, said, "The state does provide for regional transportation costs for the Gill-Montague Regional School District; it works out to about 70% to 80% a year. Things wouldn't change if the district established a Horace Mann charter school. They would put in

their claims much as they do now."

But Rocke defended his statement on the non-reimbursable nature of transportation to a Horace Mann in district charter school Wednesday, and said an email received by Lyn Bassett, GMRSD business manager, on Tuesday from Jay Sullivan, a staff member at the DESE office of school finance and district support, backed up Wulfson's claim. He quoted that email as reading, "We have no legislative authorization to pay for the cost of transportation to charter schools, and there's no money in the budget."

At press time, Wulfson did not return a phone call seeking clarification on this point.

Kociela indicated the question of how transportation to a Horace Mann charter school would be paid for was among the sticking points for her, in deciding whether or not she could support

the Horace Mann proposal. She also cited the cost of ADA improvements to the Montague Center School and the source of funding for them, and the lack of an advance agreement with the Gill-Montague Teachers Association, whose approval would be required to form a Horace Mann charter school.

Horace Mann proponent Sue Dresser responded to Kociela's concerns by saying she hoped to pursue private fundraising and grants to pay for all ADA improvements at the Montague Center School, which would need to be in place by September of 2009 for a Horace Mann School to open on that date. Dresser also said she felt it was inappropriate to speak to the G-M teachers association prior to receiving a go-ahead from the school committee on the proposal.

The discussion will resume on Tuesday, April 1st, at 7 p.m. at the high school.

**TRUST** from page 6

Now these assurances, and the plain language of the motion quoted above, have been violated. Last night all kinds of questions were raised about the details of the proposals and then were made the basis for a final decision. Some of these questions involved issues that were neither in the original motion or in the criteria created to evaluate proposals. For example, one school committee member voted against the Horace Mann proposal in part because the teachers union had not approved it. Others seem to have been influenced by concerns about financing transportation to the schools.

If this were a true Request for Proposals such actions could be the basis for a lawsuit!

To make matters worse, superintendent Ken Rocke made an initial statement that seemed to bear no relationship to the compromise process he himself had created. He stated that the issue to be discussed was not about the value of small schools, (who said it was?) but about the affordability of different proposals.

Once again, this clearly contradicts the language of the compromise. It also sets out no standard at all for "affordability." The Horace Mann proposal, for example, tentatively suggested a town investment of \$200,000 (subject to discussion and negotiation!) Agree with it or not, this amount was well within the scope of recent town investments in the elementary schools, including Montague Center. Superintendent Rocke seemed to suggest this was not affordable, yet one searches in vain in the original motion or criteria for any basis for this judgment.

In this context it must be mentioned that the school committee failed to implement another key provision of the December compromise - determining the cost of Sheffield renovations required if all elementary students moved there. This was specifically put in the motion because one cannot judge the "affordability" of renovating Montague Center School without considering the alternative. Yet the district failed to abide by this part of the motion, too.

The result has been a predictable disaster. Instead of healing the divisions and distrust surrounding this issue, the school committee has managed to intensify them. One side is angry that the committee did not make "a decision" (here being defined as a decision closing Montague Center School). Supporters of the school feel the goal posts have been moved and the door has been slammed on a positive, hopeful proposal to address school choice losses.

None of this was necessary. The school committee could have stuck by its original motion and allowed these detailed and well-considered proposals to move forward. We then would have had time to ask all the above questions and more, engaging in a constructive and open-minded dialogue before reaching a final decision according to a reasonable timeline.

The school committee needs to go back to square one and stand by its commitments. This is the only way to build "trust."



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— William Carlos Williams

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That's the message frozen in old stone.

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an interloper really headed deep into glass.

I, moving across a vast expanse of water

though it is not water maybe salt  
or consciousness itself

enacted as empathy. Enacted as seeing.

To see with a purpose has its bloom  
and falls to seed and returns

to be a story like any other.  
To be a story open and vulnerable

a measure of time, a day, this day one might say  
an angle of light for instance.

Let us examine green. Let us go together

to see it all unstable and becoming  
violent and testing gravity

so natural in its hunger.

The organic existence of gravity.  
The organic nature of history.

The natural history of tears.

—Peter Gizzi

Holyoke

from *The Outernationale*, (Wesleyan, 2007)

### The Phoenix and the Wow Factor

Even the great mentor had a mentor.  
Donald. The greater mentor.  
I looked into the window of his home.  
There he kept his cat.  
The wild beast was chained to the radiator.  
Its eyes caught mine.  
Meow it said.  
I shuddered.  
The thing beset me with its very presence.  
Half a cake sat on the counter.  
This is the kind of life Donald lives.  
Half a cake at a time.  
In those crumbs I read a message,  
a warning, a cry from a distant factory.  
Behind me I sensed they had caught up.  
Eleven football players.  
Their jerseys looked like armor  
and they stank of death.  
The player whose mother is a psychic

gripped his helmet by the mask  
and lifted it from his head.  
I could barely see through the air.  
His stare chafed.  
Then his mind drooped.  
So quietly you might not notice.  
What was flowing from this giant's eye?  
It seemed to be coated in silver.  
It hardly moved.  
Tear and pupil,  
like twin moons.  
And he whispered, please come back.

—Alex Phillips

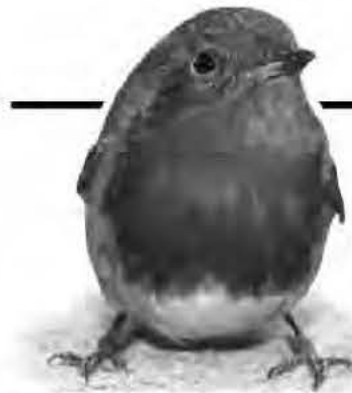
Lake Pleasant

### One Insect

One insect, tapping the window,  
trying to escape the gray damp that is Monday morning,  
trying to escape into warmth and light,  
into the dry shelter that is this building,  
dry, as silver slants from a sky so low  
you could touch it if you opened these third-floor windows  
and leaned out,  
out into the spring rain, reaching past cool wet  
to trace fingertips along the undersides of low laying clouds,  
their bellies heavy with the promise  
of summer growth.  
It's gone now, the insect, as strands of silvery tinsel  
become sheets of gray  
and pale underbellies of leaves flip in the wind  
dressing maples in gowns of sea green caught in slender brown fingers  
as they dance to an unheard tune.  
No music here,  
central air creates a white noise we don't hear  
while outside the windows  
rain rushes a song on slate roof tiles  
and chimes into puddles far below this third-floor room.  
Windblown rain tapping the window,  
trying to draw me out into the gray damp that is Monday morning,  
luring me from warmth and light,  
out of the dry shelter that is this building,  
into the silver-gray magic of a rainy spring day.

—Nicole S Kapise

Turners Falls



Listen to the birds chirping up their corn,  
when you hear the sound of planets coming,  
I saw the fireworks last morning  
and I think that the birds have to fly away,  
away with their corn.

—Isaac Carter Harmon

Turners Falls

### Valley Forge

Extremes assault the stalwart's minds:  
twelve men sleep cold in triple bunks  
mid thousands more in snowbound huts;  
no crumb is lost from rationed bread  
and bandaged feet leave scarlet tracks.

—Kathryn Flagg

Millers Falls & Allendale, NJ

### CONTRIBUTOR'S NOTES:

Alex Phillips lives in Lake Pleasant and is the author of the chapbook *Under a Paper Trails* from Factory Hollow Press in Amherst, MA. He directs the Juniper Institute for Young Writers, a UMASS creative writing program, and is Assistant Director of The Dean's Book Course at UMASS.

Rebecca Wolff is a poet, fiction writer, and the editor and creator of *Fence Magazine* and *Fence Books*. She is the author of *Manderley* and

*Figment*, and co-editor of an anthology *Not for Mothers Only: Contemporary Poems on Child-Getting and Child Rearing*.

Daniel Nester is the author of two books about the musical group Queen, and his obsession with them: *God Save My Queen: A Tribute* and *God Save My Queen II: The Show Must Go On*. His work has appeared in numerous anthologies on gaming, poetry, and rock and roll, and he is the author of *The*

*History of My World Tonight*.

Cecily Iddings received an MA from the U. of Georgia and an MFA from UMASS, Amherst. Her poems have appeared in *Jubilat*, *Spinning Jenny*, *Verse Daily*, and *Meridian*, among others. She is a former editor of *Slope Editions* and lives in Brooklyn. Chris Hosea graduated from Harvard and UMASS, Amherst. His poems have been published in *Denver Quarterly*, *VOLT*, *The Literary Review*,

*Harvard Review*, *Swerve*, and elsewhere. He works at the 92nd Street Y Unterberg Poetry Center and lives in Brooklyn.

Peter Gizzi is the author of *The Outernationale*, *Some Values of Landscape and Weather*, *Artificial Heart*, and *Peripium* and other poems 1987-1992. He has edited books and journals on poetry and has received several awards and fellowships. He is currently the

poetry editor for *The Nation*.

Isaac Carter Harmon is a resident of Turners Falls and has lived here all of his 4 1/2 years. These are the lyrics of his first song, written when he was 3, and more recently expanded. Isaac loves trains, reading stories and the Carnegie Library.

Kathryn Flagg is a member of Circle of Voices, a poetry group facilitated by the library in Allendale, NJ.

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*the poetry page*

**Sweet Um**

Hopefully the ice cream  
will amaze you!  
-though someone who knows  
tells me what I mean:

I hope I amaze you.  
So I've bought a straw hat,  
the first warm one of its kind,  
and on its brim Jack and Jill  
and up top the well  
and underneath fur  
for all winter long.

Seriously, kidding.  
That's a lot like me.

Here's my swiss army watch,  
square-faced, telling  
three times. Here's a story  
on accident, oops, sorry.  
Here I am poorly juggling

two chocolates and a lollipop,  
loops first, pell-mell last.  
It's a talent I have,  
the leaves turning  
quickly gold, are you  
watching?

--Cecily Iddings  
Brooklyn

**Gigantism**

They cross you and uncross you  
unnumberable

and you grow larger.

Infinite grandeur

hauteur

draw yourself up

to your full height

and more

You disobey me  
and I outgrow you

I overgrow

Now, I'm not suggesting an ideology. . .

"And God was pleased to see that  
Noah had stocked the ark  
with hedgehogs"

--Rebecca Wolf

**Poem for The Evil Twin Episode of Knight Rider**

The villains I miss were doppelgängers,  
Always flawed by mustaches, always haunched  
Equilateral, poised from right of the screen.  
He's introduced after some unexplained  
Exile, where he has been tutored in  
The ways of evil and mustache maintenance,  
And returns for a two-part escapade,  
Some revenge on his clean-shaven brethren.  
(The proclivity of heroes' mothers  
To give birth to twins has never been explained.)  
In the final skirmish, always Greco-  
Roman wrestling, the good guy's dim comrade  
Cannot figure out whom to shoot. Unlike  
Bouts with, say, Big Foot, she (always a girl)  
Cannot distinguish between the two, since  
The villain has figured out shaving his mustache  
Advances his cause. I still miss it when  
Our breathless hero turns the look-alike's  
Body over, regains presence of mind,  
Sees himself dead, calm, in his own clothes.

--Daniel Nester

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*Upcoming Readings*

**March 31** - Peter Gizzi and Patricia Pruitt

**April 28** - Lori Shine & Betsy Wheeler

This program is supported, in part, by the Wendell Cultural Council, The Massachusetts Cultural Council, and the National Endowment for the Arts.

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Life after the rupture  
being a constant attempt  
to return to quotidian games  
watched by a guarded sense  
ever since that day that  
there is no resistance  
no sea or air to swim against  
though swimming  
be allowed and encouraged.

People have fallen  
stories and stories framed  
in words bleached  
at the edge  
by electric light,  
and again to no one we say,  
"Do not knock"  
and make of our beds  
a place to land.

Yet of other stories we remember  
we were there  
before  
before  
(I met you)  
(in the meadow)  
(and then there were letters)  
(later we wrote and read)  
before.

Set in my character  
to remind you of a man  
you never knew  
star or wannabe  
with enough patience  
for a fat land

for summer days  
you shut your eyes to  
the warning skies.

All that time where was I  
locked in anger  
a wrestling helmet  
that throbbed  
invisible to all  
another child in a waiting room  
it matters  
as men who kill call  
themselves sad and disappear  
into new countries.

This is hard to read  
through the music coming from the computer  
through the drift of exhaust and barbecue  
through the wind chimes  
through the rustling of the leaves  
through the weight of my hands on the desk  
through the turning of the afternoon  
through the illusion of sameness of calm  
through the unseen unheard fighting.

There never was a first word  
never a first regret voiced over a grave  
I was going to tell you  
I was on my way  
but am distracted  
by most of the ways leading here  
which is to say "the end  
of the furthest branch"  
where we are watched and it is quiet.

--Chris Hosea  
Brooklyn

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## NOTES FROM THE WENDELL SELECTBOARD

# Donations Accepted for Community Garden

**BY JOSH HEINEMANN** - At their last meeting of the 2008 winter, on March 19th, the Wendell selectboard approved the nominations of Ray DiDonato to the open space committee, and Patti Smythe to the planning board.

Kate Nolan, chair of the community garden committee, asked the board about fees the committee might collect for plots in the community garden. She had heard that if a fee is collected, the money would go into the town's general fund, and the community garden could access it only as authorized by town meeting. Instead, if the selectboard approved, the garden committee could accept donations and deposit that money into a special account to be spent by the garden committee as needed.

Selectboard member Dan Keller said he thought that individual plots would be free, and that a voluntary donation would be more appropriate than even a sliding scale fee. The selectboard unanimously approved a resolution to let the garden committee accept donations, even from people who do not want to use space in the garden.

The selectboard tentatively plans to come in early for the next board meeting, to pick a location for the tool shed that will be shared by the community garden and the town office landscape committees.

Heard said she had spoken with cemetery commissioner Dan Bacigalupo about plots in the new town cemetery. Bacigalupo said no one has come forward to fill the empty cemetery commissioner slot, because it would require being present when a grave is dug. The fee for a plot is has not been set, and selectboard chair Ted Lewis said that any records are in a shoebox somewhere, and "probably lost." On the plus side, town coordinator Nancy Aldrich said when a grave is

being dug a trench inspector is not yet required by state law.

Heard reported that the board of health, with town meeting approval, is willing to accept the responsibility of appointing an animal inspector, whose job would be quarantining animals suspected of having rabies. Aldrich said she just received the paperwork for appointing Johanna Fitzgerald as animal inspector, with the job of checking barns and the condition of livestock.

The board of assessors said they need one more thing approved by the state Department of Revenue before they can send out tax bills. If bills are sent out after April 1st there will be a single bill for the whole year.

Selectboard members tentatively scheduled a meeting with the assessors with the hope of getting them to send out semi-annual estimated tax bills, based on the prior year's bill, to avoid the cash shortage the town is facing now, and save taxpayers the shock of a single bill once a year.

State senator Stan Rosenberg sent another letter to the Senate Ways and Means Committee requesting supplemental budget payments to Wendell of \$177,266 for tornado cleanup from the July 2006 storm, and \$36,726 for mutual aid payments to the surrounding towns that helped Wendell immediately after the storm. If that fails, Rosenberg will try to put that money into the 2009 budget. Keller commented that the country's financial outlook is starting to cloud that issue.

Michael Idoine and Jim Slavos from the finance committee said they were not yet ready to discuss planned pay raises for town employees. Slavos reported he did his "dog and pony show" in front of the Mahar district K through 12 regionalization subcommittee, to demonstrate that the statutory

method of assessing towns used to pay for Mahar Regional High School is unfair, in violation of the original contract that created the district, and places an unfair burden on Wendell for the students the town sends to Mahar. He sent files ahead to Mahar superintendent Dr. Namin, and his feeling was that the people listening understood and sympathized. But the administrator from Orange said their town is already facing a \$785,000 deficit, and adding another \$300,000 to that figure by using the alternative method of assessment is an unlikely prospect. The alternative assessment method would cost Orange taxpayers \$0.62 on the tax rate, and save Wendell taxpayers \$1.48.

Slavas said there is an obvious failure in the equation used to determine funding for school districts, and that Wendell got sucked into the undertow of the legislature's attempts to help high growth towns in the east.

Idoine offered a procedural reminder that the Mahar school committee will vote on the school budget, and if as expected they use the statutory method of assessment, Wendell at its annual town meeting can appropriate the lower amount as would be determined by the alternative method. The finance committee from each of the four towns in the Mahar District will meet on April 16th.

Town coordinator Nancy Aldrich reported that the new senior center has been insulated in both the ceiling and walls. Selectboard members agreed that the bid for the electrical work in both the senior center and the town hall should include inspecting the old wires to make sure they are still safe.

Mike Mauri is the forester hired by the open space committee to make recommendations for Wendell's town forests. His report said some pieces looked like they had not been touched in a century, although

they had been given to the town in a will that stated that cordwood and logs should be harvested, and the proceeds used for the school budget.

Board members read a memo from the open space committee suggesting that the town consider alternatives for some of the tax foreclosed properties being considered for auction. One has a building that needs to be demolished; some are close to a stream; some need cleanup, or their history suggests a cleanup will be required; some are too small to build on, or have no road frontage. Board members spread out a town map on the table, found each piece and decided that the selectboard needs to hold a conversation with both the board of health and the open space committee before any auction is held.

Selectboard member Christine Heard said that David Coy of Farley Road will attend the May 3rd Hands across North Quabbin forum in Athol.

## NOTES FROM THE ERVING SELECTBOARD

## Auditor Gives High Marks for Erving

**BY NICHOLE CLAYTON** - The town of Erving has earned high praise from CPA Tom Scanlon, of Deerfield, who recently completed an audit of the town's fiscal year 2007 performance. Scanlon also performed the 2004 audit for the town. "This town has come so far from three years prior. It's showing that it is a very well managed town," Scanlon said. Town reserves (free cash and stabilization) are at approximately 30% of revenues, rather than the 5% recommended by the state, which Scanlon interpreted as a sign of good budgeting and good fiscal control. Scanlon noted that he completed the audit five days earlier than scheduled, due to the fact the town's records and data are in such good order.

The selectboard thanked him for his services, as well as his kind words.

Assistant assessor Jacquie Boyden presented a draft memo about the revaluation of the Northfield Mountain Pumped Hydro Station, which showed an increase in the value of that facility of approximately 14 million dollars. Erving's 86% share of the property will equal about \$474,154,000; the remaining 14% of the approximately \$550 million plant is located in the town of Northfield. Northfield Mountain typically pays more than 85% of the town of Erving's property taxes.

Engineering consultants Tighe and Bond reported that a survey of the former landfill on Maple Avenue in Farley has

been completed, clearly demarcating the boundaries of the old landfill, which has been capped to meet Department of Environmental Protection standards. This area of land will be tested quarterly over the next year, to make sure that groundwater levels fall within proper bounds.

In other news, at the arson damaged Usher Mill, owners Patriots Environmental of Worcester have commenced crushing brick from the demolished building, and will continue for a period of 180 days. Old timbers from the mill are being salvaged, along with scrap metals.

The board reappointed Art Johnson, Jr. and Dan Hammock as the inspector of animals for the town.

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**COMPROMISE** from pg 6 proposals came forward. He has written a turnaround plan for the district as a way to persuade DOE to take another look at our "underperforming" status. He displays an awareness of the town's increased share of district financing. So on Tuesday the school committee listened to Superintendent Rocke discuss the task of choosing or not choosing one or both of the proposals.

Rocke used the phrase "close..." or "closing Montague Center School" repeatedly in his ten minute remarks. These remarks were not off the cuff; he is a careful speaker of our native tongue. Although there was some attempt to balance his remarks, it

began to sound to this listener as if every sentence had words about closing Montague Center School. The school committee is in the middle of a second vote to confirm or reject the first vote taken on Tuesday on the Horace Mann proposal. It has yet to vote on the Leh proposal. With all the promise in Rocke's and the SC offering a way for parents to keep education going in Montague Center School, with the quality of the proposals the SC has received, Tuesday's incomplete process and often negative remarks leaves one wondering, "Where did the promise go?"



Patricia Pruitt is a member of the Montague selectboard

**NOTES FROM THE MONTAGUE SELECTBOARD**

**Spring Programs Promoted**

**BY DAVID DETMOLD** - Jon Dobosz, director of the parks and recreation department, came before the selectboard on Monday, March 24th to give a preview of upcoming spring programs for youth, adults and families. Programs range from t-ball, rookie league baseball, and girls softball (umpires still needed) to an American Red Cross babysitting course for ages 11 - 15. A kayaking and canoeing class will be held in May on Barton Cove, and a multi-generational 'Bingo Buddies' class will take place at the senior center on Friday afternoons when school is not in session.

Among the upcoming family programs are water aerobics at the TFHS swimming pool, as well as moderate yoga and a group exercise class at the high school fitness studio. A metal detecting workshop will be held at the Unity Park field house on Saturday, May 31st. The much anticipated Easter Egg hunt, delayed due to lingering snow,

has been rescheduled to Saturday, April 12th at 1 p.m. at Unity Park, with face painting, a bake sale, Henry the Juggler, and 5000 eggs. "They were gone in five minutes, last year," Dobosz said.

For information on any of these programs, call Parks and Recreation at 863-3216.

The selectboard accepted with thanks a proposal by one of RiverCulture's partners, Jack Nelson, to repaint signs at the White Bridge saying "Entering Montague" and "Entering Turners Falls." The DPW will assist with removal of the old signs, and replacement of the new ones.

The board approved a change order in the amount of \$10,008.97 for Renaissance Builders for work completed on the roof on Strathmore Building #1. The town has spent about \$250,000 of the \$300,000 town meeting allocated to repair safety systems and roofs at the fire damaged mill. Town administrator Frank Abbondanzio said a ninth tractor trailer truck filled

with recycled paper had left the mill this week; and the stacked-up, partially waterlogged bales of paper on the 4th floor of Building #1 have now been spread out and made available for removal to the ground.

Abbondanzio reported on the results of a recent sting operation for liquor license holders serving underage drinkers in Montague. Licensees who failed to accurately card underage youth before serving them or selling them alcohol included the Montague Inn, Route 63 Roadhouse, Carroll's Super Market, the Turners Falls Pizza House and Food City. Those license holders have been summoned to a selectboard meeting on Monday, April 7th to discuss the infraction.

The board plans to conduct interviews and make two appointments to the airport commission, from among the seven candidates that have sent letters of interest, on Tuesday, April 22nd.

**MCTV Schedule: March 28- April 3**

<b>Eagle Cam:</b> Friday 1P-6P, Saturday 130P-6P, Sunday 1P-6P, Monday 1P-6P, Tuesday 12P-6P, Wednesday 1P-6P, Thursday 1P-6P	Village 9:30 am Women Girls & HIV: Teen Girls 10:30 am Safe & Green Forum 12:00 pm Skin & Bonz 6:00 pm The Western Mass Democrat #3: Senator Stan Rosenberg 6:30 pm Amandla 8:00 pm Chronicles of Czestochowa: Easter Mass 9:30 pm EatonDoRyulchiSan 10:00 pm Independent Voices 41 10:30 pm Enjoy the Rid 11:00 pm Montague Machine	All God had Ever Done 10:30 pm Cities & Town Build our Economic Future 11:00 pm Common Man: Stephanie Marshall <b>Wednesday, April 2</b> 8:00 am Windchanger: Ainsley 9:00 am GMRSD (3/25/08) 12:00pm Carlos W. Anderson: If All God Had Ever Done 6:00 pm The Western Mass Democrat: Senator Stan Rosenberg 7:30 pm Discovery Center: Fossil Tracks 8:30 pm Montague Update: John Ancil
<b>Friday, March 28</b> 8:00 am Carlos W. Anderson: We Are Blessed 9:00 am Montague Select Board (3/24/08) 11:00 am Common Man: Eric Goodchild 12:00 pm Bermanke 6:00 pm Tapping Maple Ridge 7:00 pm GMRSD (3/25/08) 10:00 pm Chronicles of Czestochowa: Easter Mass 11:30 pm Wind Changer: Mona Lisa	<b>Monday, March 31</b> 8:00 am The Western Mass Democrat#3: Senator Stan Rosenberg 8:30 am Amandla 10:00 am Chronicles of Czestochowa: Easter Mass 11:30 am EatonDoRyulchiSan 12:00 pm Independent Voices 41 6:30 pm Tapping Maple Ridge 7:00 pm Montague Select Board: (Live) 9:00 pm Physician Focus: Managing Pain 9:30 pm Underground Railway Concert	<b>Thursday, April 3</b> 8:00 am The Western Mass Democrat: Senator Stan Rosenberg 9:00 am Discovery Center: Fossil Tracks 10:00 am Montague Update: John Ancil 11:00 am Mind Control 11:30 am Coffee House: Jeff Martell
<b>Saturday, March 29</b> 8:00 am Tapping Maple Ridge 9:00 am GMRSD (3/25/08) 12:00 pm Chronicles of Czestochowa: Easter Mass 6:00 pm Physician Focus: Healthy Minds Psychiatric Care 6:30 pm This is Montague 7:00 pm Wisdom Way Solar Village 8:00 pm Women Girls & HIV: Teen Girls 9:00 pm Safe & Green Forum 10:30 pm Skin & Bonz	<b>Tuesday, April 1</b> 8:00 am Tapping Maple Ridge 8:30 am Physician Focus: Managing Pain 9:00 am Underground Railway Concert 6:00 pm Windchanger: Ainsley 7:00 pm GMRSD (3/25/08) 10:00 pm Carlos W. Anderson: If	<b>Friday, 3/21</b> 12:15 a.m. Arrested [redacted], on a straight warrant.
<b>Sunday, March 30</b> 8:00 am Physician Focus: Healthy Minds Psychiatric Care 8:30 am This is Montague 9:00 am Wisdom Way Solar		<b>Friday, 3/21</b> 12:15 a.m. Arrested [redacted], on a straight warrant.

**HIGHLIGHTS OF THE MONTAGUE POLICE LOG**  
**Burglary and Larceny**

**Wednesday, 3/19**  
12:42 p.m. Report of burglary / breaking and entering at a Chestnut Hill Loop address, Montague. Investigated.

**Friday, 3/21**  
12:15 a.m. Arrested [redacted], on a straight warrant.

11:49 p.m. Following a motor

vehicle stop, arrested [redacted]

Charged with failure to stop at sign and operating motor vehicle after license revoked. Arrested [redacted]

Charged with disorderly conduct.

**Saturday, 3/22**  
12:22 a.m. Following a traffic

stop, arrested [redacted] on a default warrant.

**Sunday, 3/23**  
12:37 a.m. Report of larceny from Rendezvous, Third Street, Turners Falls. Arrested [redacted]

Charged with disorderly conduct, assault on an officer and resisting arrest.

11:58 a.m. Report of burglary / breaking and entering at Scalper's Lodge, Lake Pleasant.

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## To the GMRS D SCHOOL COMMITTEE

# DO THE RIGHT THING

"The group must then develop and present a plan at the March 11, 2008 meeting that includes the following criteria: a timeline, business plan, education plan and governance plan. In order to be considered, an application must include components consistent with the proposed plan and application. The intent of this provision is not that all School Committee members believe that the proposed plan has a good chance of success; instead, the intent of this provision is to ensure that a serious community effort to develop a sustainable configuration at Hillcrest and/or Montague Center School will be allowed sufficient time to do so."

## HONOR YOUR WORD

Paid for by Marje Levenson and Christopher Sawyer-Lauçanno

## WASTE NOT: Recycling and Climate Change

Rising levels of gases in the Earth's atmosphere have the potential to cause changes in our climate. Some of these emission increases can be traced directly to solid waste. So how does recycling that chocolate milk carton affect emissions? You may be surprised.

Energy consumption matters. Recycling saves energy. Manufacturing goods from recycled materials typically requires less energy than producing goods from virgin materials. Waste prevention is even more effective. When people reuse things or when products are made with less material, less energy is needed to extract, transport, and process raw materials and to manufacture products. When energy demand decreases, fewer fossil fuels are burned and less carbon dioxide is emitted to the atmosphere.

Putting incinerators and landfills on diets. Recycling and waste prevention allow some materials to be diverted from incinerators and landfills, and thus reduce greenhouse gas emissions from the combustion of waste and decomposition.

Get those trees to work. Trees absorb carbon dioxide from the atmosphere and store it in wood in a process called "carbon sequestration." Waste prevention and recycling of paper products allow more trees to remain standing in the forest, where they can continue to remove carbon dioxide from the atmosphere. For more on recycling



J. HARMON ILLUSTRATION

paper and buying recycled paper, please visit: [www.massrecyclespaper.org](http://www.massrecyclespaper.org).

### What Can I Do?

Every little bit helps! For example, by recycling all of its office paper waste for one year, an office building of 7,000 workers could reduce greenhouse gas emissions by 570 metric tons of carbon equivalent (MTCE), when compared to land filling. This is the equivalent to taking about 370 cars off the road that year. If an average family of four were to recycle all of its mixed plastic waste, nearly 340 pounds of carbon equivalent emissions could be reduced each year.

Practice the 3Rs of Reduce, Reuse, Recycle. Do your part to reduce waste by choosing reusable products instead of disposables. Buying products with minimal packaging (including the economy size when that makes sense for you) will help to reduce waste. And whenever you can, recycle paper, plastic, newspaper, glass and aluminum cans. If there isn't a recycling program at your workplace or school, start one. By recycling

half of your household waste, you can save 2,400 pounds of carbon dioxide annually. To find out more about recycling in Franklin County, please visit: [www.franklincountywastedistrict.org](http://www.franklincountywastedistrict.org).

Paper? Plastic? Nope - Reusable! Using your own cloth or nylon bag instead of plastic or paper bags reduces waste and requires no additional energy.

Garbage in, Garbage Out. Reduce household waste by purchasing products that have minimal packaging and reduce your trash by about ten percent. This one tip will help save 1,000 pounds of carbon dioxide per year.

Use Recycled Paper. Stock up on 100% post-consumer recycled paper for your home printer. Doing so will save five pounds of carbon dioxide per ream of paper.

If you have any disposal or recycling questions, please contact the Franklin County Solid Waste District at 413-772-2438. MA Relay for the hearing impaired: 711 or 1-800-439-2370 (TTY/TDD) Email: [info@franklincountywastedistrict.org](mailto:info@franklincountywastedistrict.org). Website: [www.franklincountywastedistrict.org](http://www.franklincountywastedistrict.org). The District is an equal opportunity provider.

*This article was compiled by the Massachusetts Department of Environmental Protection, and submitted by Amy Donovan, program director of the Franklin County Solid Waste District.*

### HIGHLIGHTS OF THE ERVING POLICE LOG

#### Two Scooters

Tuesday, 3/18  
6:20 a.m. Report of breaking and entering into motor vehicle on Mountain Road.  
7:20 a.m. Report of breaking and entering into motor vehicle on Mountain Road. Malicious damage to vehicle.  
Wednesday, 3/19  
4:30 p.m. Criminal application

issued to

[REDACTED] for operating a motor vehicle after suspension.  
Friday, 3/21  
12:53 p.m. Arrested [REDACTED] for default warrant.  
Saturday, 3/22  
12:49 a.m. Report of loud noise disturbance. Parties advised.  
10:01 a.m. Suspicious motor vehicle at Usher Plant.

Investigated.

7:35 p.m. Suspicious motor vehicle at Smokin' Hippo. Investigated.  
11:25 p.m. Motor vehicle accident on Route 2A, Car vs. Deer. Monday, 3/24  
8:30 a.m. Report of two scooters left on Central Street. Collected for safe keeping.  
8:15 p.m. Two-car accident at intersection of Routes 2 and 2A.

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JESSICA HARMON ILLUSTRATION

BY FRED CICETTI

**LEONIA, NJ - Q.** *We had a fire in our retirement community recently and an older woman died. Now I'm worried about fires. How can I protect myself?*

Seniors face the highest risk of perishing in a fire because their senses don't detect danger as easily as they used to, and they don't move quickly to escape during an emergency. So, fire safety is especially important to all older people.

I went to a bunch of experts and collected suggestions for protecting seniors against fire.

## THE HEALTHY GEEZER

# Fire Safety for Seniors

The following is a list of 20 tips distilled from all the best material.

1) First, here are fire-emergency recommendations:

- If you must exit through smoke, crawl under it (smoke rises).
- Cover your mouth and nose with a moist towel or an article of clothing to protect yourself from dangerous fumes.
- Always touch closed doors; if they are warm, don't open them. Don't touch doorknobs.
- If your clothing is on fire, drop to the floor and roll to extinguish flames.
- Avoid elevators; use stairs or fire escapes.

2) Install smoke alarms on all levels of your home and outside all sleeping areas. You double

your chance of surviving a fire with alarms. Vacuum and test them regularly. Replace all batteries at least once a year. Replace your smoke alarms every ten years; they lose sensitivity.

3) Plan a primary escape route and alternates. Discuss your escape plan with family, friends, neighbors and run fire drills. See if everyone can evacuate your home within three minutes - the time it can take for an entire house to go up in flames.

4) Being on the ground floor is safer in an emergency. If you live in a multi-story house, sleep on the ground floor near an exit.

5) Make sure that the windows in every room are easy to open. Get escape ladders for upper floors

and keep them near windows.  
6) Ask your fire department for a home-safety inspection. Ask for suggestions to improve your escape plan.

7) The primary cause of fire deaths among older adults at home is careless smoking. Enough said.

8) When cooking, use a timer if you have to leave the stove. Don't cook if you take medication that makes you drowsy. Keep dishtowels, aprons, napkins away from stove tops. Don't wear loose-fitting clothing when cooking.

9) Don't overload electrical outlets and extension cords.

10) Buy a fire extinguisher. An extinguisher on each level of your home is ideal. A fire-sprinkler system is worth considering.

11) Do not exceed the wattage recommended for light fixtures.

12) Replace appliances that spark, smell unusual, or overheat.

13) Don't put electrical wires under carpets.

14) Keep lamps and nightlights away from fabrics.

15) If children are in your home, make sure you put plastic safety covers on electrical outlets.

16) Children playing with matches is a major cause of fires. Hide matches and lighters when kids are around.

17) Keep portable space heaters away from anything flammable.

18) Put screens on fireplaces to contain sparks. Have the chimney cleaned annually.

19) Keep candles away from kids, pets and curtains.

20) One of the major causes of household fires is flammable liquids. Store them safely away from heat sources and children.

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

## MASON from pg 1

early months of 2007. Mason enlisted in 2005, following his graduation at Turners Falls High in 2003. He took basic training in Illinois, trained as a medic at the Naval hospital at Twenty-nine Palms, CA, and at the Marine base at Camp Pendleton, CA.

Since his return from Iraq, Mason had been taking courses at Greenfield Community College in American sign language and anthropology. He was working as assistant manager at the Rendezvous on Third Street in Turners Falls, where he served as a cook and as a bartender in training.

His mother, Veda Mason-Hillman, of Pleasant Street in Erving, called her eldest son, "a very adventurous, charismatic individual. He had a warm heart." She added, "He wasn't afraid to experience life; he took it by the tail."

As the news of Mason's sudden, unexpected death took hold at the Rendezvous on Tuesday afternoon, his colleagues stood in the pale sunlight on the front porch, talking amongst themselves and crying, or sat around the bar reminiscing about their friend.

"He was the greatest guy I knew," said Rob Laclaire, of Turners Falls, who shared kitchen duties with Mason at the Voo. "He always had a positive outlook. Never depressed. Always happy about life. I was hanging out with him all the time."

Monday was Mason's day off at the bar, and he spent the day with his girlfriend, Justine Regish, and Mason's roommates in Shelburne. But friends said he was most often to be found in the kitchen, or filling in other shifts for co-workers who needed time off.

Co-owner Chris Janke said Mason had recently been promoted. "He was essentially assistant manager. He was in that position because he was great with customers and also because he was a very solid employee, someone we knew we could trust 100%, capable of overseeing tasks and really eager to contribute to the Rendezvous as a whole. We saw him as a great asset." Janke called the news of his death, "Devastating. It doesn't make any sense."

Ian Barrett, a bass player in the Ghost Quartet who had been friends with Mason for many years, said Mason was also a talented song writer and guitarist.

A number of Mason's friends said he had signed up as a medic in Iraq because he wanted to help people. Cori John of Erving said Mason did not like to talk much about his experience in Iraq, but had mentioned that it had been especially hard for him to have to handle the bodies of dead servicemen, going through their pockets to gather their personal effects and photos for their families. He took satisfaction in providing medical care to wounded children, and in helping pregnant women deliver their babies. Mason-Hillman said her son had hoped to continue in the field of search and rescue as a civilian.

His uncle, Kim Mason of Greenfield, said, "This country lost a good kid. He would have gone far and helped a lot of people." He used to take his nephew camping. "I never had a bad word to say about him. I told him a hundred times I was proud of him."

Mason-Hillman recalled her son had saved up money from part time jobs during high school to pay his way on a three week summer trip to Italy, staying at youth hostels in 2001. He ran away from home once, and hopped on a bus to Florida when he was 15 to attend a concert by the jam-band Phish. He called

his mother on the way, to tell her where he was going, and led her on a chase around Springfield after she met him at the bus depot on his return.

Mason had attended the alternative Community School program at Turners Falls High School, after struggling academically. Mason-Hillman had suggested to her son that he just go for his GED, but he was determined to stick it out and get a regular high school diploma, which he did, a year behind his classmates.

During his time in the Community School program, Mason served as an intern for the *Montague Reporter* during the first few months of our publication, in the fall and winter of 2002. He developed topics and wrote articles about his neighborhood of Erving, including a story about Prondecki's adding a pizza oven for the first time, a story about the Erving read-a-thon, and a story about Millers Falls resident Joe Lapinski receiving an honorary high school diploma in recognition of his time served in the army in World War II.

Mason helped the paper to develop its circulation by carrying early sample issues door to door in neighborhoods of

Montague and Erving. He would return to the office from these excursions with reader feedback from people he had met on his route, including one gentleman from River Street who told Mason, "That's a pretty good paper, but you've got a very left-wing editorial page." We've tried to live up to that description ever since.

There was no task Mason would not perform to help the newspaper grow: he took photos, interviewed people for Word on the Avenue opinion pieces, and helped with mailing parties. A few weeks ago, I had the occasion to talk with Mason and Regish at the Rendezvous, and Mason suggested he might like to begin writing for the paper again, a suggestion I took up warmly. As it turns out, the last words he will contribute to the *Reporter*, besides the news of his untimely death, is a song he wrote when he was younger, which his mother found in his personal papers on Tuesday (see page 14).

A memorial service will be held for Gabe Mason at the Kostanski Funeral Home in Turners Falls on Tuesday, April 1st, from 10 a.m. to noon.


We will miss him.



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# JEP'S PLACE Part LXXII

## Helen Disowned

**BY JOSEPH A. PARZYCH GILL** - The family that employed Helen in Greenfield allowed her to attend night school. But she didn't let Pa know. He didn't think much of education, especially for girls, even if it was free.

Helen's employer temporarily moved to Springfield, more than 40 miles away. When the employer and his family moved back to Greenfield, Helen stayed. A couple of college professors hired her. She still visited occasionally, arriving on foot rather than spending money on trolley fare to Turners Falls. She'd accept rides with motorists who stopped to offer, but she never put out her thumb.

Helen's visits became few and far between. Quite small and slight of build, she feared who might pick her up. She was shy, never even dating a boy until she began college.

The day that sticks in my memory was the Sunday she arrived at the farm about noon. As usual, she passed over all of her hard earned money - every cent - in the customary handshake. They

spoke for a few minutes before Pa turned and went into his bedroom without a word of thanks. Helen stayed to talk to us kids for a just few more minutes. We begged her to stay longer. It'd been quite some time since we'd seen her and we hated to see her go.

"I have to get going; I don't want to get caught out on the road after dark."

I wondered why Pa wouldn't give Helen a ride, at least to a traveled highway, but that apparently never entered his mind.

Helen will always live in my mind's eye as this slight figure walking down the dirt road that chilly fall day, coat billowing in the wind, her figure growing smaller and smaller in the distance. We watched until she was gone, hidden by trees at a bend in the road.

Helen continued to visit home and give Pa the golden handshake. She wore cast off clothing and did without. She adored Pa and he loved her, especially since she was such a dutiful daughter.

Helen rated high with Pa as long as the money kept coming, but when she wrote him the good news that she had been accepted at

American International College, and would need money for clothes and college, he dictated a letter that read: "You are no longer a daughter of mine." Helen was crushed, but refused to pass up the opportunity to fulfill her dream of going to college. There she met Ludovico Magrini, an immigrant from Italy. He enunciated in excellent but accented English. Pa didn't like Magrini and tried to discourage Helen from marrying him, but she eloped. Pa liked Magrini even less when he began putting ideas about education into my head. He urged me to apply for admission to Mount Hermon School.

- Continued Next Week

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### By Gabe Mason

Rain drops causing ripples  
In the Mill River  
The water is cold and the  
Young swimmers shiver

There is a rope swing on an  
Overhanging maple  
I guess it wasn't smart -  
Going swimming in April

We really didn't care though  
It was all in good fun  
Nothing and nobody was hurt  
When all was said and done

The kids all did what we  
pleased  
On those hot summer days in  
Leeds

We all had whiffle balls,  
Swings, slide and a seesaw  
But they never kept us  
On the right side of the law

See, we liked to jump off  
Bridges and dams  
On someone else's land.

The cops said we couldn't go  
There, and they let us go our  
way  
But you know we were right  
Back there later that day

We really didn't care though

## Last Weekend for Nominating Papers

BY DAVID DETMOLD

**MONTAGUE** - There are openings in every precinct for town meeting reps. Friday afternoon, March 28th at 5:00 p.m. is the last opportunity for people interested in running to take out nominating papers from the town clerk; those papers have to be returned with the nominating signatures of ten registered voters from your neighborhood by Monday evening, March 31st at 5:00 p.m.

In Precinct 1 (Montague Center) Doug Dziadzio, Deb Radway and George Emery aren't running again. Bunny Caldwell, Malcolm Clark, David Leh and Mark Fairbrother have all taken out papers for those seats.

In Precinct 2 (Lake Pleasant and Millers Falls) David Bennett, Paul Burek, Art Gilmore, Betty Waidlich and Jon Waidlich have all declined to

run again for their seats. Bernice Grybowski, Michael Henry, Mary Cickanowicz, Sophia Libby, Jan Atamian, Jeanne Golrick, and Jon Reipold have all taken out papers for those seats. Additionally, Gilmore has put his name in the running for a one-year seat left vacant since Marty Pappas is moving out of town.

In Precinct 3, Lesley Cogswell and Russell Laramie have decided not to run again. Alicia Wells has taken out papers, but at least one more candidate is needed to fill the seats there (the Hill, East). In Precinct 4 (the Hill, West), Barbara Hoynoski and Alan Sturmer have decided not to run again; Paul Teeling, Linda Kuklewicz and Anthony Tucker have all taken out papers. Paul Flandreau has resigned, leaving one year of his term to be filled.

Downtown, in Precinct 5, Jean Hebden and Nicole Kapise have declined to run again, and Mike Farrick moved leaving one year of his term to be filled. Michael Nelson, Tomasina Hall, George Newton and John Donahue have all taken out papers.

Over in Montague City and the Patch (Precinct 6) John Little, Michael Nelson and Carlyn Saltman have declined to run again for their seats (Nelson moving to Precinct 5), and Mark Allen and Russell Holt have taken out papers. Saltman has elected to run for a vacant one year seat; another one year seat opened up when Brian Costa resigned his seat. Two more candidates are needed in Precinct 6, at minimum.

## Swimming in April

It was all in good fun  
Nothin and nobody was hurt  
When all was said and done

The kids all did what we  
pleased  
On those hot summer days in  
Leeds

Now those cops weren't so  
bad  
I didn't mind them a bit  
They gave me a ride home at  
least  
Five times that summer, I'm  
sure of it

Well, one night we thought  
riding our bikes  
On a nearby golf course  
would be fun  
But the owner didn't think so  
He thought we'd rather  
Take a look  
At his new shotgun

The cops they sent had a pin  
That said  
Officer in training  
That meant he was new

So I looked at him and said  
I probably knew more about  
What's happening to me  
Than you

He didn't buy it, though  
He just brought me home.

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**Saturday, March 29th**  
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# ARTS & ENTERTAINMENT



JACK COUGHLIN ILLUSTRATION

**FRIDAY, MARCH 28th**  
Deadline for artists residing in Massachusetts to submit entries for the "Barns of Franklin County" art show and sale. Entry forms may be picked up in the lobby of the Greenfield Community College Downtown Center. Email version available, contact Beverly Phelps [edcp.bap@comcast.net](mailto:edcp.bap@comcast.net).

Montague Parks & Recreation Family Fun Night, 6:30 - 8 p.m. Unity Park Fieldhouse, Turners Falls. Ping-pong, board games, music, and raffles! Snacks. Children must be accompanied by an adult. Free. Drop-in.

The Montague Bookmill and the Lady Killigrew Cafe present Music at the Mill: **Mawwal**. 8 p.m., Montague Center. Food, beer & wine. [www.mawwalmusic.com](http://www.mawwalmusic.com)

Deja Brew, Wendell: **The Relics** - Rock, no cover 9 to 11 p.m.

Rt. 63 Roadhouse, Millers Falls: Bang Box - party rock, with Mark Wait & Paul Interlande, 9:30 p.m.

At The Rendezvous: **Dance Or Die**, djs - britpop, electro, post-punk, \$3.

**FRIDAY & SATURDAY, MARCH 28th & 29th**  
At The Shea Theater: Jonathan Edwards Academy's Academy Players present Shakespeare's *Comedy of Errors*, 7 p.m. Advance tickets at: Jonathan Edwards Academy, 863-3700 or at the Shea Theater Box Office, 863-2281.

**SATURDAY, MARCH 29th**

Great Falls Discovery Center, Turners Falls: Special Exhibit Tours. Join Refuge staff at 11 a.m. or 2 p.m. Learn the special stories of plants and animals in the habitat displays, including update on progress in the eagles' nest at Barton Cove.



Watercolor "Berkshire Sugarhouse" by Steve Hamlin. Linda and Steve Hamlin present their work at the Great Falls Discovery Center, Turners Falls, April 5th, 1 to 3 p.m.

**H a l l m a r k**  
Museum of Contemporary Photography, Ave A, Turners Falls. Artist's Reception for Lili Almog at Studio 52 - *Perfect Intimacy Revealed Through Photographer's Eyes* and Linda Butler - *Meditations on Simplicity* in Studio 56, 1 - 5 p.m. Illustrated public Artist Talk held in the auditorium at Hallmark Institute of Photography, Industrial Boulevard, Turners Falls, Seating - 7:15 p.m. Lili Almog Talk - 7:30 to 8:15 p.m. Intermission with Linda Butler Talk - 8:30 p.m.

Wooden Fender concert series presents: **Root Cellar** in concert, 7 p.m., Warwick Town Hall. Features Greenfield's singer/songwriters Pat & Tex LaMountain, Celtic singer/guitarist Jennie McAvoy, singer/pianist Daphne Bye, & cellist/bassist Mark Fraser, all of Deerfield. Enjoy Grilled Shish Kabobs & herb rice at 6 p.m. \$5. Suggested donation, \$10. (413) 773-5388, [www.patandtex.com](http://www.patandtex.com).

National Spiritual Alliance Psychic Fair, 11 to 4 p.m., Thompson Temple, Lake Pleasant. [www.thenationalspiritualallianceinc.org](http://www.thenationalspiritualallianceinc.org).

Leverett Crafts & Arts Center Barnes Gallery, reception & kids' party with FREE family events, including musical performances, face painting, clay & origami workshops, and storytelling. 11 to 5 p.m.

Deja Brew, Wendell: **Radio Free Earth** - Rock, no cover 9 to 11 p.m.

The Bright Morning Star band 'reunion concert' at All Souls Unitarian Church, Greenfield, 8 p.m. Benefit for the 'Safe & Green' campaign, a grassroots education and action effort to replace nuclear power with energy conservation and efficiency coupled with safe, sustainable, and affordable power sources. Info: 863-8952.

Rt. 63 Roadhouse, Millers Falls: **The Drunk Stuntmen**. Five year anniversary party, come celebrate with us! 9 p.m.

At The Rendezvous: **Latin Night**. DJ Robert "Cuban Bob" Stover and Salsa, Merengue, Chachacha, Bachata & Reggaeton dance lessons with Meli Morash. 9 p.m., \$3.

**SUNDAY, MARCH 30th**  
The National Spiritual Alliance, Lake Pleasant: Healing Lecture & Participatory Demo., 1 to 3 p.m.

Family Dance, Montague Grange: simple dances paced for little feet. Perfect for 5yr olds to 15. Sixteen to 60! Tim Van Egmond with *Shingle the Roof*, 4 to 6 p.m.

*Amandla Community Chorus* Spring Concert: With special guest, Sisters of the Drum. For 20 years, the Amandla Community Chorus has brought songs from around the world to enthusiastic audiences. Held at Temple Israel, Pierce St., Greenfield. \$8-\$15, 7:30 p.m.

**THROUGH MARCH 30th**  
Photography exhibit at Vermont Center for Photography, Brattleboro: *The Long View, Panoramic Photographs from Exhibiting Members* Gallery Hours are Thursday, Friday from 2 to 7 p.m., Saturday and Sunday from 12 to 5 p.m. Info: (802) 251-6051

**MONDAY, MARCH 31st**  
Deja Brew, Wendell: **A Night of Spoken Word** - Open Mic, no cover, 7 to 10 p.m.

Live jazz at Ristorante DiPaolo, Turners Falls, **Joe Belmont** - solo guitar, 6:30 to 9:30 p.m.

The Rendezvous, 3rd St., Turners Falls: *Le Cabaret de Voo*, a local

artists variety show, 8 p.m. free.

**TUESDAY, APRIL 1st**  
Book Discussion Group: *Animal, Vegetable, Miracle* by Barbara Kingsolver Held at Northfield Mountain Recreation Area. 7 - 9 p.m. Pre-register by calling (800)859-2960.

**THURSDAY, APRIL 3rd**  
The GCC Peace & Social Justice Club invites you to "Peace and Truth for Reel," free film: *The Fog of War: PG 13, Eleven Lessons From The Life of Robert S. Mc Namara*, 7 p.m. with discussion.

**FRIDAY, APRIL 4th**  
The Vermont Center for Photography presents *Ten Years Later* an exhibit of new work by past exhibitors during Brattleboro's Gallery Walk, 49 Flat Street. Music & refreshments. Artists include: Kevin Brubriski, Elijah Gowin, Robert Sargent Fay, Evie Lovett, Jonathan Moller, Jim Schlessinger, Eric Slayton, Paul Taylor, and twenty more. 5:30 to 8:30 p.m.

**SATURDAY, APRIL 5th**  
**Comedy at the Shea** with Larry Lee Lewis and comedians, The Shea Theater, Turners Falls. Some proceeds benefit Franklin County Relay for Life (American Cancer Society) and The Turners Falls All Sports Booster Club. Material appropriate for 18 and older. Showtime 8 p.m., doors open at 7 p.m. Tickets \$15, available on-line at [www.sheacomedy.com](http://www.sheacomedy.com), and at the World Eye Book Shop.

Great Falls Discovery Center, Turners Falls: Celebrate Art with the Hamlins. Steve and Linda Hamlin, of Huntington ([www.mldonline.net](http://www.mldonline.net) and [www.stevehamlinwatercolors.com](http://www.stevehamlinwatercolors.com)) present their work depicting elements of nature from their travels. 1 to 3 p.m.

**SUNDAY, APRIL 6TH**  
Musicians for The Shea: A Benefit Concert for the Shea Theater, 1 to 5 p.m. featuring, the gypsy jazz of Di Di Coy, Folk Rock from *The Steve Crow Trio* and *The Lowercase gs* with J.D. Keating. Additional guest performers. Tickets: \$6.

**FRIDAY, APRIL 11th**

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

Great Falls Discovery Center Coffee House present: A night of a capella with the *Friends*, a female barbershop quartet, *The Northfield Four*, singing a mix from gospel to the Beatles, and Mahar High School students *O-Town A cappella* perform, 7 p.m.

**July 7th to August 15th**  
Theater Workshops for Children: Hampshire Shakespeare Company, Amherst is taking applications for summer theater workshops for children ages 5 - 17 yrs. Info. (413) 788-4750 or [www.hampshireshakespeare.org](http://www.hampshireshakespeare.org).

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DAILY 6:30 9:00 PG  
MAT FRI, SAT, SUN 12:00 2:00 4:00  
2. **DR. SEUSS' HORTON HEARS A WHO!**  
DAILY 6:30 8:30 G in dts sound  
MAT FRI, SAT, SUN 12:00 2:00 4:00  
3. **SHUTTER** PG13  
DAILY 6:30 9:00  
MAT FRI, SAT, SUN 12:00 2:00 4:00  
4. **TYLER PERRY'S MEET BROWNS**  
DAILY 6:45 9:15 PG13  
MAT FRI, SAT, SUN 12:15 3:15  
5. **10,000 B.C.** PG13  
DAILY 6:45 9:15  
MAT FRI, SAT, SUN 12:15 3:15  
6. **21** PG13 in DTS sound  
DAILY 7:00 9:30  
MAT FRI, SAT, SUN 12:30 3:30  
7. **DRILLBIT TAYLOR** PG13  
DAILY 7:00 9:30 in DTS sound  
MAT FRI, SAT, SUN 12:30 3:30

**The Rendezvous**  
Late food? to-go food? **Voo Food!** **BAR WITH FOOD**  
Fri. 3/28 9PM \$3  
**DANCE OR DIE PRESENTS electro FOR DUMMIES**  
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# THE GARDENER'S COMPANION: At The End of the Woodpile

**BY LESLIE BROWN**  
**MONTAGUE CITY** - March is the month of the Lenten moon. The full moon of this month has also several seasonal New England names: Worm Moon, so-called for the season of thawing and the re-appearance of earthworm casts, which herald the return of the robins, and the full Sap Moon, for the sugaring season.



MARY AZARIAN WOODBLOCK

Native Americans called this month's full moon the Crow Moon because the noisy groups of cawing crows signal the end of winter, or the Crust Moon, for the grainy quality of the snow cover as it thaws in the daytime sun and then freezes again after dark.

It is the month of mud, of strong sunlight and still biting

winds and the continuing possibility of snow. It is the time when spring bulbs begin to show through the chilly ground, and pussy willows appear.

Even before the ground is open and dry enough for planting, there are garden tasks to enjoy. Trim out the old canes from berry bushes and spray

fruit trees with dormant oil. Feed fruit trees, berry bushes and lilacs with a scattering of wood ash at the base of the plant. If the snow still lingers, spread the ashes right on top; they'll melt right down to the plant roots with it.

If you can dig a hole in the mud, it's a great time to plant deciduous trees and shrubs. They won't mind the cool temperatures, and you won't have to worry about them drying out with such a ready source of moisture in the wet ground. This is also an excellent opportunity to move dormant plants you want to relocate.

If you didn't feed your garden soil at the end of last season, you can spread aged manure any old time. Lime is also a standard addition to garden soil, as is compost. For a more scientific check of soil quality, take a soil

sample to UMass for a test. For \$9.00, you will get a full report about pH, nutrients and any heavy metals. For instructions and an order form, send a self-addressed, stamped envelope to: Soil Testing Lab, West Experiment Station, 682 North Pleasant Street, University of Massachusetts, Amherst, MA 01003 or go online at [www.umass.edu/soiltest](http://www.umass.edu/soiltest).

Wait to work the soil for planting, however, until it has dried out sufficiently. If a handful of dirt squeezed between your fingers crumbles slowly when released, you're ready to go with the tasty cool weather crops like peas, spinach, lettuce and radishes. Since most of us still have inches of snow and ice covering the garden spaces, we'll have to make do with starting seeds indoors. This is a good time to start Brussels sprouts, broccoli, cabbage and eggplant.

Remember to use a light starter mix for your seeds, bury them only slightly and press the seed into firm contact with the soil. If you use flats, spread the seed or thin the young plants early on so there is plenty of elbow room for the roots. Once the seedlings begin to sport their true leaves, you can feed them with a very light mix of liquid seaweed and water.

While we have enjoyed flocks of Canada geese coming and going over the river all winter, the official harbingers of spring arrived just recently in the form of joyous honking from high, high in the milky blue of the sky. The squirrels in the attic wake early, scampering about with seasonal fever and hopefully with thoughts of moving to their summer homes. I've almost come to the end of my woodpile, so I guess it had better be spring.

## SEED from pg.1

mono-cropping has already proven itself inherently more vulnerable to pests and pandemic than a community of genetically diverse species. Why do you think all those feedlot cows are on antibiotics? Whether a feedlot full of Herefords or a prairie full of hybrid GMO corn or soy, monoculture just isn't a healthy or sustainable way to grow our staple food.

Of course the factory farmed food folks start with quite an edge over the little guys trying to farm viably, feed our families and steward the Earth. We cannot compete with Dole or Del Monte, in acreage or volume. We can't touch Con-Agra's funding and subsidies, Monsanto's influence lobbies or research and development labs. Nor do many of the world's peasants, niche-farmers and backyard perma-culturists

have the technical prowess or pharmacopoeia of, say, Cargill. However, in the realm of seed saving, we all start at an equal level. The genetic material inside a uniquely colored pole bean from Spain, or a rare, purple potato catalogued by ancient Peruvians, or the famous, two pound tomato grown by West Virginia's legendary 'Mortgage Lifter Charlie', these are treasures passed down for anyone who cares to participate in their legacy. You don't need special permission to grow, sell or trade these varieties. You don't need large acreage, an advanced degree, or lots of time or money to save their seed. In fact, for many basic crops, like peas, beans and tomatoes, all you need is the will, the knowledge and the timing to select, gather, dry and store what nature so conveniently provides.

Now we understand why the

seed industry finds so little value in the heirlooms...

A robust, local agriculture based on grassroots seed saving stands in living contrast to the failing, fossil-driven, food paradigm which currently dominates. The seed saving craft is a fine example where the economy of scale actually favors the hobbyist or small time producer. Even the commercial seed industry relies on intensive hand labor, something of which the backyard farmer is unafraid. The real epiphany of seed saving comes when you see the enormous power of small batch technology. With seeds and seed saving, a little bit goes a very long way. A little bit of work yields a lot of valuable seed. A little bit of seed can produce a lot of food. And a few seeds can be stored, divided, replanted, saved again, or multiplied a thousandfold by other growers!

The right to grow and save and share precious seed year to year, generation to generation was passed down to all of us. That is, until recently, when Monsanto and friends began creating genetic mutations and claiming proprietary ownership of our basic grains, while con-

taminating several continents with GMO pollen and squelching varietal coexistence and farmers' choice! Make no mistake - the



Tomatoes grown from heirloom seeds

issue of farmers' ability anywhere to save their own seed stocks versus the powerful trend toward centralized, proprietary control has become a defining issue of our time.

When you hold an heirloom seed in your hand, you hold the legacy of countless, now nameless, farmers, families, villages, tribes and others who cared enough to select and preserve them. These vast historical links of collaboration between generations of horticulturists and their vital plants are humbling and inspiring. By growing and native-adapting treasured old heirlooms, we add another small

chapter to their story.

The seeds of planet Earth, including all their vast potential for feeding us and doing good, belong to humanity, not Monsanto. In a world of rapidly shifting climate, food and water resources, seeds and seed saving are one ubiquitous pathway to self-sufficiency and anti-hunger empowerment, everywhere. Growers large and small, worldwide can and must counter threats to our food sovereignty by continuing undeterred to grow and steward our diverse and valuable, open-pollinated seed stocks, free from corporate control and usurpation.

But, seed saving is like democracy. It's a right in name only, unless and until citizens individually and collectively take it upon themselves, through participation, collaboration and enduring commitment. Break the chain and the heirlooms and open pollinated varieties fade away, keep on dying out. Then we're left with generic food: a thick-skinned, tasteless, unsustainable, industrial McFoodstuff, fattened on Roundup Ready GMO soybeans. Keep alive heirloom seed varieties and we and our children might be enriched many times, not only by lifelong access to rich and excellent food choices, but by a living, growing connection to history, evolution, sustainable agriculture, and to food security here in Franklin County, Massachusetts and across the planet.



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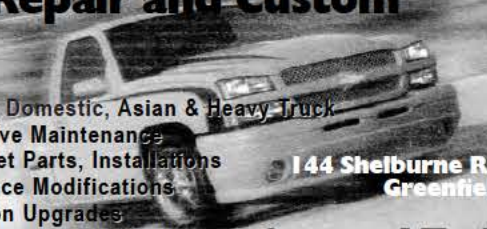
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