



HIDDEN LANDSCAPES
May 19th at the Discovery Center
Page 6



PATRIOT ACT
Living History on Lexington Green
Page 15

LAKE PLEASANT MILLERS FALLS MONTAGUE CENTER MONTAGUE CITY TURNERS FALLS

The Montague Reporter

YEAR 6 - NO. 31

also serving Gill, Erving and Wendell

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THE VOICE OF THE VILLAGES

MAY 8, 2008

ANNUAL TOWN MEETINGS

Gill Shaves \$178,000 off G-M School Assessment

But Override May be in the Offing

ALEX GOTTSCHALK The town of Gill shaved \$178,010 off the \$1,517,372 assessment request from the Gill-Montague schools at annual town meeting on Monday, May 5th. The school request would have amounted to a 16.4% increase over the current year's assessment. At the meeting, an amended school budget of \$1,339,362 was approved.

Reached after the meeting, selectboard member Ann Banash talked about the school budget, and how the town's contribution is likely to change in the weeks ahead.

"It certainly isn't over. We can't do the whole thing without an override. We can do some, meet them

halfway, but not the whole thing." On the town side of the budget, Banash expressed satisfaction with town meeting's work. "I thought it was great. We have a budget we can live with on the town side. It's pretty lean, but we can live with it. I'm happy about the COLA raises."

Town meeting opted to follow the town's personnel policies, indexed to inflation, and grant workers 4.15% cost of living increases. Voters passed an overall operating budget for town departments of \$1,346,840.16, which represents a 0.8% increase over last year's town side of the budget.

The citizens of Gill see GILL pg 9



MATTHEW ROBINSON PHOTO
Montague Town Clerk Deb Bourbeau (left), Town Accountant Carolyn Olsen, and Moderator Ray Godin confer on the first day of town meeting, Saturday, May 3rd.

Montague Town Meeting Draws the Line

JOANNA FRANKEL - Town meeting members rejected the budget prepared and recommended by the finance committee and selectboard on Saturday, May 3rd, and Wednesday, May 7th, working slowly and methodically to trim salaries and benefits from town employees in an attempt to save municipal services, and reduce the scope of a Proposition 2½ override. The annual meeting, which began at 8:30 a.m. on Saturday, had managed to wade

through a mere seven of the 24 articles on the agenda by the time the meeting adjourned at 4:00 p.m. to make the high school auditorium available for Ja'Duke Productions performance of *Joseph and the Amazing Technicolor Dreamcoat*.

After seven years of budgetary famine, town meeting members seemed ready to follow a path that might lead them out of the sea of red ink that had threatened to

MONTAGUE pg 10

Erving Annual Meeting Offers No Dissent

Most Articles Pass Unanimously

ALEX GOTTSCHALK The town of Erving acquitted itself proudly on Wednesday, May 7th, when residents gathered for annual town meeting and plowed through a lengthy agenda, with little or no acrimony. Kudos to town moderator Richard Peabody, who ran the proceedings with energy, fairness and humor.

The voters unanimously approved a town operating budget of \$3,386,835, after a short introduction by the selectboard chair Andrew Tessier. The \$2,035,000 for the Erving Elementary School budget passed by majority vote, and the secondary school budget of \$1,023,358 was approved unanimously, as was the \$1,023,358 for the Franklin County Technical School.

Voters approved the sum of \$1,356 to give a 2.5% cost of living increase to various elected town officers.

They also raised and appropriated \$298,028 to operate Erving's wastewater treatment plants; passed by majority vote. An additional \$27,000 to fund the wastewater treatment plant in the village of Farley passed unanimously.

With no dissenting votes, town meeting also agreed to expend \$414,000 for a facility upgrade of the Farley Wastewater Treatment Plant. A slightly larger sum, \$480,000, was unanimously approved to pay for a facility upgrade, engineering costs and design at the Erving Wastewater Treatment Plant.

Voters set aside \$25,000 from free cash to maintain and improve see ERVING pg 13

May Day in Montague



MICHAEL MULLER PHOTO
The Johnny Jump-Ups Morris Team dance around the Maypole on the Montague Town Common on Sunday, May 4th, guaranteeing fertile fields for the villagers and good luck for a year and a day to all bystanders.

GCC Hosts Transportation Forum

ALEX GOTTSCHALK GREENFIELD - With the average price of gas hitting \$3.62 a gallon nationwide and climbing, a two-hour discussion on the future of transportation in Franklin County drew an overflow crowd on Thursday, May 1st.

The Mel Rice meeting room at GCC's downtown center was filled to capacity with local residents. The panel discussion was led by GCC science teacher Teresa Jones, who coordinates the community college's Sustainable Energy Program. The panel also included Nancy Hazard of WorldSustain and co-chair of the Greening Greenfield

Committee; Maureen Mulvaney, Transportation Manager of the Franklin Regional Council of Governments; and Tina Cote, administrator of the Franklin Regional Transportation Authority.

Greenfield Mayor Christine Forgey gave a short but enthusiastic introduction to the evening. "This is important work. It's a grassroots effort, and it is going beyond the local level. But it starts with communities like Greenfield and the vision you have."

Forgey spoke of her memories of the energy crisis of the 1970s and reminded the audience that in terms of conservation, alternative energy and national energy policy, "The ball was dropped."

Hazard reeled off grim statistics to those present about the high cost of oil consumption, citing pollution, climate change, war and a decline in pollinators as all directly or indirectly connected to "our love affair with transportation." However, Hazard also stressed, "We have to focus on the solution side of things, what we can do as individuals, and the 'fun factor'."

For Hazard, the "fun factor" included a slide presentation highlighting the quirky ingenuity of some non-gas powered vehicles that have been or are currently being developed. Hazard also challenged the audience to envision the creation of bike-able and walk-able communities, two ideas she said are very possible within Greenfield, to say nothing of other Franklin County towns.

One of the most effective methods of conservation is the simplest, according to Hazard: carpooling and ride sharing. She mentioned two local groups that were helping create a network for those who would like to carpool: ridebuzz.org and goloco.org.

see GCC pg 14

PET OF THE WEEK

Take Me Home!



Mickey

My name is Mickey and I'm a 4-year-old female black shorthair cat in need of a good home. I was transferred here from another shelter. I hope to find my forever home soon! I'm very sweet and like the usual cat things: napping, playing, being petted, napping, eating, demanding attention, and did I mention napping? Do you have a home for a nice kitty like 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.

ERVING LIBRARY NEWS

Chess Club Begins May 20th

BY MARCIA BERNARD
ERVING - The Erving Public Library will host a free six-week Chess Club beginning on Tuesday, May 20th and running through June 24th. Beginners from 6:30-7 p.m.; open play from 7-8 p.m. All ages are welcome; children under 10 must be accompanied by an adult. Led by Chess Master Andy Morris-Friedman, chess teaches sports-

manship, cooperation, improves self-esteem and builds confidence. The chess club will start from square one, learn the rules and the pieces. Study famous games and winning strategies to improve your play. Space is limited and registration is required. Please call the library at 423-3348 for more information. This program is funded by the Erving Cultural Council.

CARNEGIE LIBRARY NEWS

Children's Festival May 16th

BY LINDA HICKMAN
TURNERS FALLS - The Crabapple Blossom Children's Festival will be held on Friday, May 16th, from 9:30 a.m. - noon in Peskeompskut Park. Tom Carroll and Laurie Davidson of Montague will perform a bilingual concert from 10

- 11 a.m. during the event, which will also include arts and crafts activities and free refreshments. If it rains, the festival will be held inside the Carnegie Library. The Community Partnerships for Children is sponsoring the event. For more information: 863-3214.

Family Museum

The Leverett Family Museum, 1 Shutesbury Rd., is open to the public on Saturday from 10-12 or by appointment.

Artifacts, photos and exhibits tell of the early days of Leverett and the surrounding area. Located in the former Bradford Field Memorial Library. Questions? (413) 548-9207.

Wendell Plant Swap May 17th

WENDELL - Attention all plant lovers! Do you need good homes for your extra seeds, flower plants, or veggie starts? Would you like to try some new and different plants this season? Are you curious about what other folks are growing?

The Wendell Plant Swap will be held Saturday, May 17th from 10 a.m. to 12 noon. No money is needed--just bring

plant items (labeled, please) to trade. No plants? No problem! Bring baked goods, eggs, or what ever else you have to trade. You can tour and sign up for a plot at the Wendell Community Garden on that day as well. For more information call (978) 544-2306.

The plant swap is sponsored by the Wendell Community Garden Committee.

Mohawk Ramblers Raffle Winners

BY JOHN P. BUREK
 Congratulations to the winners of the Mohawk Ramblers Motorcycle Club Spring Raffle

- 1st Prize Kellie Grybko of Whately - Red Sox Trip for 4
- 2nd Prize Beth Bogdahn of Deerfield - Red Sox Trip for 2
- 3rd Prize Nuni Rindone of

Erving - Red Sox Trip for 2

- 4th Prize Lucas Hanks of Orange \$100
- 5th Prize Shayna Gruszkowski of Bernardston \$50.

Thank you to all who participated.

SENIOR CENTER ACTIVITIES -- May 12th - 16th

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 congregate meals. Council-on-Aging Director is Bunny Caldwell. For information or to make reservations, call 863-9357. Meal reservations need to be made a day in advance by 11 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. Trips: Call the Senior Center 863-9357 or 863-4500

Monday, 12th
 9-11 a.m. Foot Screening. Gill and Montague residents only. Advance registration needed. \$5.
 10 a.m. Senior Aerobics

11 a.m. Easy Aerobics
Tuesday, 13th
 Meals only
Wednesday, 14th
 10 a.m. Senior Aerobics
 11:15 a.m. Mealsite Meeting
 12:45 p.m. Bingo
Thursday, 15th
 1 p.m. Pitch
Friday, 16th
 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 congregate meals. For information and reservations call Polly Kiely, Senior Center director at 413 423-3308. Lunch daily at 11:30 a.m. with reservations a day in advance by 11:00 a.m. Transportation can be provided

FACES & PLACES



DETMOLD PHOTO

Nina Rossi re-envision's Railroad Salvage in the window of Seth & Eva's, on Avenue A. More art will be coming to downtown next weekend with the return of Arts and Blooms.

CORRECTIONS

In the last issue (MR VI #30), in Art Gilmore's thank you letter to town staff for their help during the construction phase of the new veterans memorial on Avenue A, due to a transcription error we inadvertently left out Gilmore's thank you to the town clerk and her staff.

And due to reporting error in the same issue in the story "Fairbrother Names Caldwell as Originator of

Rock Hugging Indian Retort" the following corrections are noted for the record: Dick Caldwell will not be 78 until July 5th. He was not a Navy pilot during the Korean War; he served in Naval Aviation instead. And the Waco plane he flew in '38 out of the Turners Falls Airport had three seats in the back, two in the front, not the other way around

Other than that, Caldwell said, we got everything else in the story just right.

Fun Bike Tour

BY LINDA HICKMAN
TURNERS FALLS - On Sunday, May 11th, a Fun Bike Ride and Tour will start at the beginning of the Turners Falls Bike Path in Unity Park at 2 p.m.

The leisurely paced ride will last approximately nine miles and will cover the new bike path from Unity Park to the rail yard in East Deerfield and back. Librarian Linda Hickman, author of the Turners Falls Historical Walking Tour brochure, will lead the ride and provide commentary.

The bike ride is sponsored by the Montague Public Libraries and is part of the Crabapple Blossom Festival, which runs from May 3rd - May 18th.

For more info, call: 413-863-3214 or 413-774-0204.

Blood Drive

A blood drive will be held at the Turners Falls Fire Department, Tuesday, May 13th, from 1 p.m. to 7 p.m. To schedule an appointment, call 1-800-448-3543.

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 FAX (413) 863-3050
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 Postmaster: Send address changes to
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 Turners Falls, MA 01376
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TFHS Students Sponsor Benefit Concert for Donovan Murphy

BY SAM WILLIAMS AND ETHAN CRANE

TURNERS FALLS - The 12th grade U.S. Government class of Turners Falls High School is sponsoring a benefit concert to raise money for a struggling local family in need of support.

As a class, we chose a family we felt was more than worthy and deserving of the community's support. We felt it would be best to help the Murphy family, a family working hard to deal with the aftermath of a tragic accident this past summer, which left them sacrificing everything they had to ensure that their son Donovan's medical needs were met.

Donovan Murphy is a teenage boy whose life was filled with swimming and sports, particularly during the hot days of summer. He was always one of the smaller kids who joined the games of tag organized in the neighborhood downtown, but the kids he played with say he was always the hardest to catch. Young people from the area would often meet outside of Donovan's house and play games before heading somewhere to swim.

Though many of the areas around town are dangerous and not open to swimming, young people, including Donovan and his friends, thought little of the possibility of being hurt at one of them.

On the summer day in question, a small group went to swim at the Rock Dam.



Donovan Murphy, injured last summer in dive at the Rock Dam, is now paralyzed from the waist down.

Though none of members of our class were with Donovan on the day of his accident, the students can easily picture the events that led to his injury.

After diving from a ledge, Donovan hit his head on a rock and became unconscious. He spent many weeks in the hospital, after emerging from a coma induced by the accident. When he finally awoke, doctors informed him he was paralyzed from the waist down.

The students in the class are haunted by the fact that this accident could have happened to any one of them, or to one of their siblings or their friends. It took this unfortunate accident for many young people in the area to realize the dangers they put themselves in every day.

Donovan's life has been forever changed, and the class

has mobilized to try and make his current situation better. Since the accident, Donovan's entire family has worked hard to help make this difficult situation better for him. They have given up their home to live in a handicapped accessible apartment, crammed a full family into two bedrooms, and drastically cut back on their personal expenses. They made all of these sacrifices to pay for Donovan's medical expenses.

Our U.S. Government class decided we wanted to make it possible for the Murphy family to get some much needed local support.

Over the past months the

class has spent time in and out of school meeting with Donovan and his family and finding ways they could best help them. The idea of gaining support for the Murphys from the whole town, rather than from just a few generous businesses or people, was one that appealed to the class. We decided a benefit concert, featuring the band Haven't a Clue and D.J. Tim Dowd, would be the best way to raise money, because people would come and enjoy themselves while supporting a good

cause. There will also be fun activities for kids, like face painting and a water balloon toss.

The benefit concert will take place at Unity Park on May 17th from noon to 3 p.m., with a rain date of May 18th. The event is free, but donations for the family will be accepted. Come to this benefit concert and show your support for the Murphy family, struggling through a hardship that could have befallen any one of us.

Benefit Concert at Unity Park for the Murphy Family

Free admission to the concert!

Sponsored by TFHS senior U.S. Government Class

May 17th • Noon to 3 pm

*** Rain date: May 18th**

Featuring: Haven't a Clue with Jeff Kenney, DJ Tim Dowd, and other local talent

Pie Eating Contest • Water Balloons • Face Painting
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24 3rd Street, Turners Falls, Mass. 01376

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Circulation

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"The Voice of the Villages"

Photography

Joe Parzych
Shawn Woolsey

Technical Administrators

Michael Muller
Michael Farick

Founded by
Harry Brandt David Detmold
August, 2002

Arthur Evans

The Issues that Matter

With his 14-point victory over Hillary Clinton in Tuesday's North Carolina primary, Barack Obama has put to rest fears his opponent raised about his electability, and is now poised to assume the mantle of the Democratic party's presumptive nominee. Clinton, knocked off her pedestal by Obama's surprising victory in the all-white Iowa caucuses in January, went through a shape-shifting metamorphosis from heir apparent to the candidate of experience, to scrappy working class hero. But her baffling campaign came a cropper in North Carolina, and served her poorly in Indiana where she barely eked out a 14,000 vote victory on Tuesday, in a primary where 1.27 million votes were cast.

Since the Democratic front-runners split the electorate down the middle on Super Tuesday, an increasingly desperate Clinton tore a page from Karl Rove's playbook, heaping guilt by association, and tossing everything but the kitchen sink on her young rival.

Obama, who defined his candidacy around a politics of unity and hope, was constrained from retaliating in kind. He found no plus side in being the last man standing if he were seen as counterattack-

ing the first female candidate who has ever had a credible shot at the White House. So he spent the last two months getting browbeaten for things his pastor said, for befriending Tony Rezko, joining a board of directors with William Ayers, and for blurting out boilerplate stereotypes about small town America in a tony private fundraiser in San Francisco.

Maybe we can get beyond that now.

We hope Obama finds his fighting mettle, and trains fire on the appropriate adversary. That would be the Republican nominee.

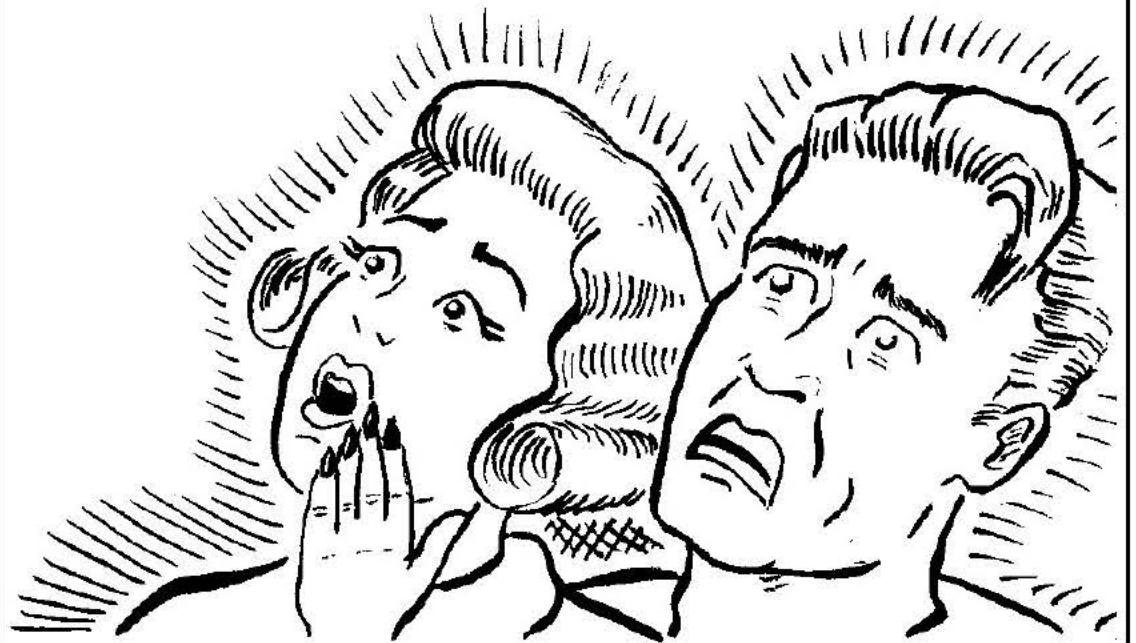
John McCain has had the last few months to define himself to the American people as a patriot and war hero, true, but has wandered from his straight talk express to embrace permanent tax cuts for the wealthiest Americans, stricter constructionist judges for the Supreme Court, a century of U.S. military involvement in Iraq, and a hands off regulatory policy for corporations in an age of malfeasance and economic meltdown. Go get him, Obama, and don't pull any punches.

It is the domestic and foreign policies of the Republicans that have drained the national treasury, strained the American military, abandoned returning veterans, and laid waste to the ecosphere. Every small town in America has a right to be bitter.

Montague's budget deficit, the lack of funding for our schools, the sorry state of our roads and bridges, the soaring price of oil, and the steady erosion of our paychecks can all be laid at the Bush White House door.

We look forward to finding a partner in a Democratic Congress and an Obama White House to repair the rents in the social fabric and pull this nation together again.

REVOLT OF THE TOWN MEETING MEMBERS



GIVE US A BUDGET THAT WON'T EAT US ALIVE!

KAREN WILKINSON ILLUSTRATION

LETTERS TO THE EDITOR

Why I'm Running for Selectboard

To the residents of Montague:

I am running for re-election to the Montague Selectboard.

Why would I do that?

It has been my privilege to serve the town of Montague for nine years as a member of the selectboard. In those years I have seen enormous changes both in our infrastructure and our image. I am proud to live in Montague and to have been part of that growth.

Because of the dedication and creativity of many people, we are known around the state as a town that accomplishes much in spite of our size; that cares deeply about our citizens

and environment; that is creative in solutions to issues, and that is now being discovered to be a cultural and dynamic treasure to visit. As a town, we are starting to enjoy ourselves.

Obviously we have many significant challenges still in front of us. This is a particularly difficult financial period, not only for Montague but also for the entire region; however, I believe we can find an answer over the course of the next several years that will lead to fiscal solvency and allow us to focus more on the positive activities we are undertaking. In addition I would like to continue to work with other communities to find

solutions to our regional problems, which are imperative to solving our own.

I have found Montague's staff to be bright, dedicated, adaptable and a pleasure to work with, and I would like to continue to collaborate with them and our town committees and boards.

It has been my pleasure to work with many involved, concerned, and thoughtful people over the last nine years, and I would appreciate your support on May 19th so that we may continue our efforts.

Thank you,

- Pat Allen
Montague City

Story on Female Boxer Regrettable

It is regrettable that the *Montague Reporter* saw fit to publish an article lauding a female boxer ("Sonya Lamonakis Victorious in Women's Heavyweight Bout" MR VI #29).

Boxing is a vicious sport. Its spectators hunger and thirst to

see one of the contestants get "knocked out." The spectators do not care that the unconscious boxer has been knocked into a coma.

Punching a female boxer on her bosom and belly should be looked on as less than animal.

Cock-fighting, dog-fighting,

bull-baiting and competitive bird-shooting are banned.

Let one of your readers defend a position that boxing, especially involving women, should merit acceptance.

- Paul Seamans
Gill

American Dead in Iraq and Afghanistan as of 5/7/08



(Casualty sign temporarily located next to Wagon Wheel Restaurant on Rte. 2 in Gill)

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Memorial Day Parade for Montague

On Monday, May 26th, the Trustees of the Soldiers Memorial of the town of Montague will hold a parade

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and ceremony to honor all those veterans who are serving and have served in the military of the United States of America.

The parade will step off at 10:15 a.m. and proceed from Second Street down Avenue A to the newly renovated war memorial, where the ceremony will follow.

Any veteran who would like to participate in the parade is invited to attend. Those who do

attend must be in place no later than 10:00 a.m. at the corner of Second Street and Avenue A.

The Trustees are urging all members of the community to attend and recognize those men and women who have served and are serving from the town of Montague.

- Art Gilmore, Chair
Soldiers Memorial
Trustees
Montague

GUEST EDITORIAL

A Mother Remembers the Way Her Son Grew Up

BY NANCY HOLMES

TURNERS FALLS - As I closed the door to his room, tears welled up in my eyes. Sometimes he seems so grown, yet other times he is still my little boy. It is hard to believe that one hour ago I felt I was talking to someone I had never met before rather than to the child I bore and nurtured the last 12 years.

It all started with a ringing phone, 9:30 on a school night, too late for a seventh grader. "Tell whoever it is you can't talk," I said.

"Let me just talk for a minute," he replied.

"Who is it?" I asked.

"Never mind!" he answered.

I took a deep calming breath.

"Who is it? I asked again.

"Tony."

"Tony who?"

"Never Mind!" he answered rudely.

"Please hang up the phone!" I insisted.

"Fine... I gotta go," he said to

Tony Somebody.

That was when this other being emerged from my son Zachary's body. He told me - no, he screamed at me - how much he hated me, how I was ruining his life. If I kept picking on him, asking him all that stuff, he would pack his bags, and when I got up some morning, he would be gone. Why did I need to know everything about his life?

So, instead of doing what I have learned over the years is best to do - take a deep breath, count to ten, and say, "We can discuss this later when we are both calmer - I yelled right back. After I had my say, I left his room.

I walked around the neighborhood trying to understand what had just happened to us. Where was that boy I could talk with, the little boy who would tell me about his day, the excited voice saying that a friend invited him to a party or that he had gotten picked for the school

play? It seemed to me that this child went into the middle school building, and when his body came out, a different being was inside, one who won't answer a question without asking a question: "Why do you want to know? What difference does it make to you?"

How could someone change so quickly, become so moody? Some days he eats anything in sight, other days nothing at all. Some days he will sleep all the time, the next stay up till midnight. What could be happening to him?

I was thinking how hard this conflict was on me, because I am approaching the age a woman hears about, the age of decreasing hormones, the diminishing estrogen causing me to cry a lot. My imagination

goes wild. I get very moody, eat anything, and then won't be hungry for days. I don't sleep much at night, but then will sleep an entire day away. It was then that I realized: it's hormones! I remembered myself at his age: how I felt about my parents, how my friends were much more important to me than family, how I wanted to fly.

Walking back to the house, I was calmer. Just as I got through the door, Zack called out to me timidly from his room, "Mom, can you come in here a minute?"

"Sure, what is it?" I answered calmly, thrilled to hear him call for me.

"That phone call I got, it was from a girl, Toni. I'm kinda going out with her." He then opened up and for the next 20

minutes we talked, laughed, joked, discussed and apologized to each other. I learned to think like a kid again, or at least to see the world through his eyes.

I learned more about the parenting of an adolescent in that time period, than I did in any book I have read. I know there will be difficult times in the arena with Zack and the raging testosterone vs. Nancy and the diminishing estrogen, but I believe that soon we will come to a level with which we will both feel more comfortable.

On the wall in our family room we have a plaque that reads, "There are but two gifts we can give our children: One is roots, the other is wings." I have given him great roots; I hope I can let him try his wings.

Prayers for Peace on Mother's Day

An Interfaith service, Prayers for Peace, will take place on Mother's Day, Sunday May 11th, at 7 p.m. at Our Lady of Peace Church, Seventh Street, Turners Falls. The service, sponsored by the Interfaith Council of Franklin County, will bring together representatives from various faith traditions and spiritual groups, who will each pray for peace according to his or her own tradition. The proclamation for Mother's Day in 1870 by Julia Ward Howe

was a resounding call for the women of the world to unite and lead the world to peace.

The Interfaith Council invites members of the community to attend and participate at this time when the world is divided by hostilities, ideologies and stereotypes that make peace a fragile hope.

An offering will be taken up for the Peacemaker Awards, given each year to teens who work for peace and justice. For more info: 863-2585.



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Hidden Landscapes Comes to Discovery Center

BY DAVID DETMOLD

TURNERS FALLS - On Monday, May 19th, Ted Timreck, a documentary filmmaker who is a research associate for the Smithsonian National Museum of Natural History, will bring his latest work in progress, "Hidden Landscapes," to Turners Falls for a 7 p.m. showing at the Great Falls Discovery Center. Timreck -- whose documentaries over the last three decades have appeared on public television on programs like Nova, the Learning Channel, and the National Geographic Channel -- has worked closely with researchers delving into the mystery of stone chambers, mounds, and other stone landscape features in the Northeastern United States and Canada. His film, envisioned as a six-part documentary, will include a section on a disputed stone formation at the Turners Falls Airport. Timreck will show that section of the film on May 19th, following a private screening for the Montague selectboard on May 14th.



DOUG HARRIS PHOTO

Manitou Stone

According to Narragansett Indian Tribe Deputy Historic Preservation Officer Doug Harris, Timreck's documentary work on the Turners Falls Airport site was shown two weeks ago in Washington DC to officials at the Federal Aviation Administration (FAA), the National Trust for Historic Preservation (NTHP), and the Smithsonian. Timreck said the officials' reaction to his documentary work on the Turners Falls site, "particularly complimentary."

Controversy of the site in question has held up progress on a \$5 million runway extension project at the Turners Falls Municipal Airport, while a decision is reached in Washington between the FAA and the NTHP as to the cultural significance of the site to federally recognized tribes like the Narragansetts and the Wampanoag Tribe of Gayhead (Aquinnah). That hold-up was the subject of recent disparaging remarks against Native Americans at an April 4th meeting between

Massachusetts Aeronautics and Space Administration Commissioner Robert Welch and the local Turners Falls airport commissioners, at the airport administration building.

Harris said bringing Timreck's documentary film to Turners Falls on May 19th is an attempt to share more information with town residents about the importance of the airport site to Native peoples. "We're hoping to inspire in the viewer and the people of this region the sense of preservation and protection of such sites," even though, "by going public, we run the risk of inviting their destruction."

Harris continued, "There are not enough Indians in this region to protect these sites. We have to have partnership with the people of Franklin County and the people of Turners Falls."

Timreck said he first became interested in Eastern stone landscapes while documenting an archeological exploration along the Atlantic coast of Labrador in the early 1980s for the Smithsonian. He said that

expedition "discovered significant stone ruins pointing to 7500 years of Native ceremonial history. Those coastlands had never been destroyed or overtaken," by European settlement, Timreck

Timreck said the mound building societies in the Mississippi Valley have been well established at about 5500 years ago. But he said the research that he has helped to document in Eastern North

said.

Stone landscapes in New England, such as the fabled Monk's Caves in Shutesbury, have often been ascribed to the influence of Norse or Viking exploration of North America in pre-Colonial times. Timreck said, "There are now a core of scientists who understand there is a history of Native civilization in Eastern North America going back 10,000 years, that we never had a concept for. When I first began documenting stone landscapes, I was on the archeological fringe. In the 70s and 80s, the bitterness of the arguments between the amateurs and the professional archeologists was horrendous. In fact, over the last 30 years, we've shown we don't really know what the deeper levels of civilization are in North America."

America points to mound building and stone landscape development far older: 9,000 years ago.

"We tend to underestimate all the people of the past, in particular the Eastern Native Americans," who were never given credit, Timreck said, "for piling one stone on top of another."

Harris said Indians have been reluctant to share their belief system and knowledge of the significance of ceremonial sites to the European settlers, since the Native people in general, and Medicine Men in particular, were being "assaulted, killed, chased away, and imprisoned," in centuries past. But he said the decision to show this film now - on the 332nd anniversary of the massacre of Native Americans across the river in Gill by Captain William Turner and 145 colonial settlers on May 19th, 1676 - was taken in light of the town of Montague's Reconciliation Ceremony with the Narragansetts in 2004.

"That was a very significant step towards bringing peace to the spirits of the many slain of the Turners Falls massacre," said Harris. The 19th of May is the time each year when we bring ourselves to remembering the pledge that was made. Let's celebrate our willingness to bring forth the relationship between the Native past as well as the Native present in this community."

Opening Day at the Farmers Market



DETMOLD PHOTO

Alicia MacDonald from Bucking Bull Farm on Leyden Road in Greenfield offered spring onion starts for samples at the opening day of the Great Falls Farmers Market, Wednesday, May 7th.

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A Party on the Plains

BY DAVID DETMOLD

MONTAGUE - In the 70s, bonfires would burn on summer nights on the Montague Plains, as local teens gathered to drink beer and carry on till all hours. Now the Plains are the setting for a different kind of fire: "prescribed burns," authorized by the Department of Fisheries and Wildlife, which manages the 1500-acre wildlife area there.

On Monday, May 5th, the Department of Fish and Game held a party of their own on the Plains, to celebrate the success of their management plan for the Plains, which has featured extensive thinning of the trees to render the area less susceptible to the threat of running crown fires, that have historically consumed the fire-prone species that dominate the barrens: pitch pine and scrub oak. But that habitat is not only fire-prone, it is also fire dependent: and numerous declining or threatened species also depend on the favorable conditions regular fires have created on the Plains. So, to reduce the ever present threat of uncontrollable wildfires, and to maintain favorable habitat, Mass Fish and Wildlife has also adopted a program of setting controlled burns, a few acres wide, on a rotating basis, coupled with mowing the under story throughout the Plains.

With Mary Griffin, the Commissioner of the Department of Fish and Game, was on hand to recognize the success of these efforts, as were officials from Fish and Wildlife, the Bureau of Fire Control, along with assorted foresters, biologists, and garden variety ecologists and nature enthusiasts. They all spoke highly of each other's efforts, standing beneath the power lines in the splendor of early spring sunshine.

Joe Larson, who serves on the Fish and Wildlife board, recalled other possible fates that might have befallen the Plains. "We could have been standing here in

the shadow of a nuclear power plant," he said. "Then, some thought this would be a great site for Boston to get rid of its garbage."

Eastern pine barrens are sort of threatened species themselves: prime targets for development, with their perc-able sandy soils and flat topography, most of these habitats have disappeared along the Eastern seaboard, leaving the state protected Montague Plains one of the few large undeveloped pine barrens in the Commonwealth, outside Martha's Vineyard and Cape Cod. As such, Larson said, it was a great boon to the region's biodiversity when Fish and Wildlife purchased 1490 acres of the Plains from Northeast Utilities in 1999, and added it to the small contiguous parcel surrounding DFW previously owned in the vicinity of the Bitzer Fish Hatchery to form the Montague Plains Wildlife Management Area.

Larson said \$5 from the annual fees people pay to purchase fishing and hunting licenses went into a fund, which eventually allowed the state to make the \$2-plus million land acquisition on the Plains. "So keep in mind what could have been here had other cards been played."

The 50 or so environmental officials and local residents walked along beneath giant pylons carrying the power lines. The ground on both sides of the access road was scorched with recent flames. New green shoots were poking up amid the charred branches and underbrush.

With the oak forest of Will's Hill in the background, and a

towhee calling clearly from the scrub oak thickets, Mass Wildlife restoration ecologist Tim Simmons told of the hundreds of Eastern box turtles rambling the Plains. But he also talked about the loss of five species of Lepodoptera since surveys were taken on the Plains in the 80s. The need to manage and maintain the rare species on the Plains, coupled with the need to protect public safety from runaway wildfires (one researcher combed through local fire logs to find 117 instances of wildfires on the Plains in the last 75 years) led to the controlled burns, forest thinning, and understory mowing of recent years.

Further down the line, Bill Patterson, a professor of forestry at UMass Amherst who has made the study of the characteristics of wildfires, and the management of controlled burns, a lifetime vocation, talked of living in Hingham at age 11 at the time of the Great Plymouth Fire in 1957, which burned 15000 acres at the rate of 18 acres a minute, with flame lengths of 150 feet leaping a four lane divided highway. This

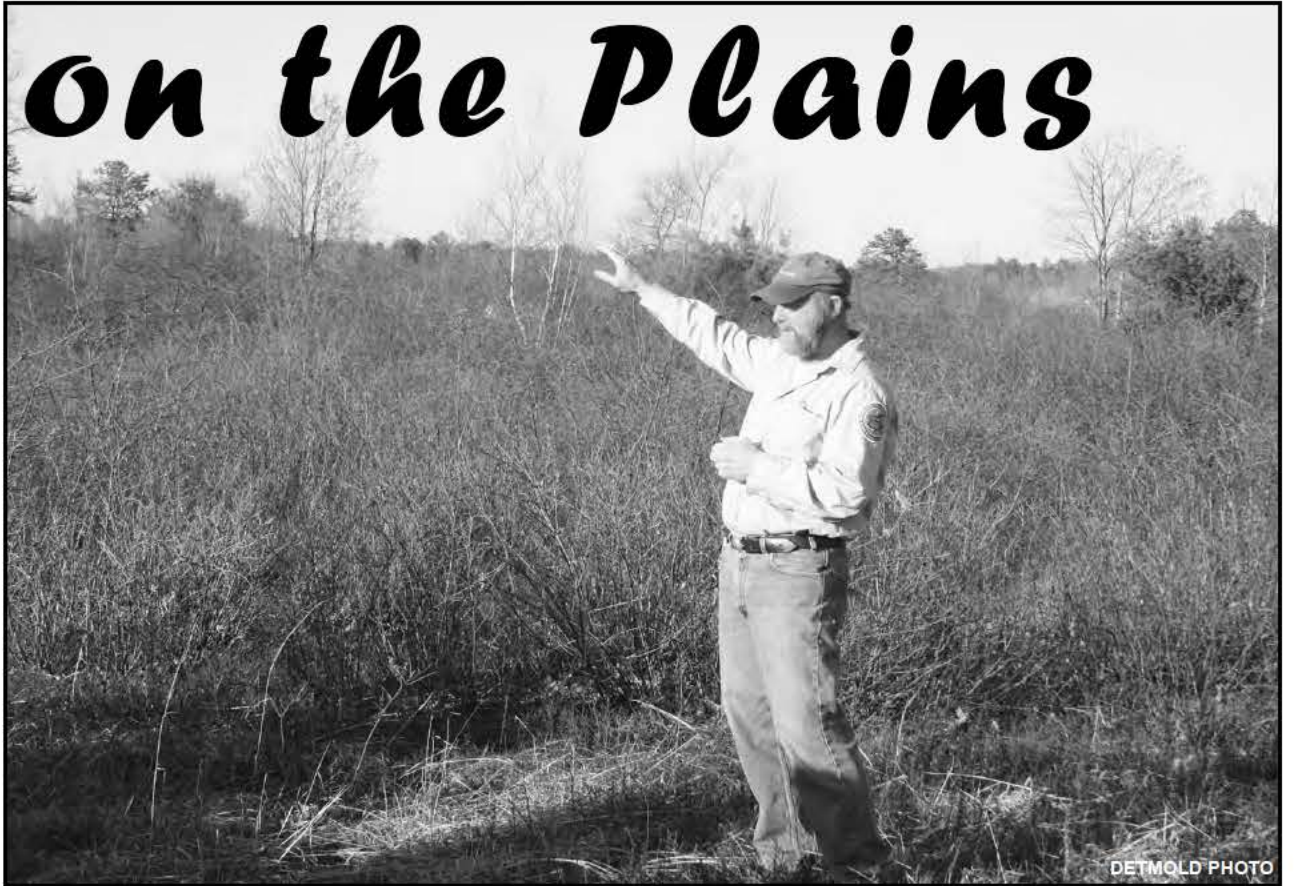
sparked Patterson's interest in forest fires, which seemed undimmed as he held forth on the per acre density of the fire load on the Plains in the days before the management plan had been enacted.

Due to the sandy soil and the particular flora that thrives on the Plains, the area is subject to unusual fluctuations in temperatures, and persistent frost ten months of the year. Just in the last three weeks, Patterson said, temperatures on the Plains had varied from 12 degrees to 90 degrees, creating a "remarkable ecological environment, and a challenge from the standpoint of fire management."

With the controlled burns, Patterson said, they have to wait for the ideal conditions of wind, temperature and humidity, and those ideal conditions can be as hard to find as a dormant buck moth in August. It is also difficult to find a time of year when controlled burns will not adversely affect at least one - or more - of the threatened species of Lepodoptera whose habitat the naturalists are trying to protect. So, Patterson said, the trend has

been for the management team to set smaller and smaller fires on the Plains, to achieve the desired reduction of fire load while allowing much of the threatened species' habitat to remain undisturbed.

Most of the Plains had been farmed at one time, in the 1800s to early 1900s, but the soil was poor for farming, so the plowed fields grew up to pitch pine. Patterson said there was nothing natural about stands of pitch pine shading out the species that naturally proliferate, such as blueberry and huckleberry, in companionship with scrub oak in the few unplowed areas of the Plains. As the ongoing thinning and controlled burns change the face of the Plains, it will begin to resemble the habitat that predominated on the sandy barrens for centuries, since Lake Hitchcock dried up and left Montague with one of the most precious aquifer recharge areas in the state, home to rare and wonderful species, and myriad walking trails waiting for hikers, birders, and nature lovers of all stripes to rediscover them.



Tim Simmons points in the direction of Wills Hill where 50 Eastern Box Turtles were spotted in a recent survey just on the East side

DETMOLD PHOTO

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NOTES FROM THE WENDELL SELECTBOARD

Preparing for Annual Town Meeting

BY JOSH HEINEMANN - At the April 30th meeting, the Wendell selectboard reviewed a draft of the warrant for the June 3rd annual town meeting. Articles would authorize a total payment of \$152,453 for interest and principal on the new fire truck, the new town buildings and the land under the town office building, Fiske Pond, and recent renovations to Mahar Regional High School. The largest single payment would be for the town building projects construction note: \$65,789. Additionally, \$12,500 would be placed in the reserve account, \$20,000 would be placed in stabilization, \$2,000 would be set aside for tax title expenses, and \$6,000 would be allocated to pay for an independent audit. The Interior Design Committee for the new town office building requested \$2,500 for framing and hanging the bicentennial quilt, but at an earlier selectboard meeting, Carolyn Manley, who serves on that committee, said she thought the final expense for hanging

the quilt is likely to be lower.

The open space committee is asking for \$5,000 for help from the Franklin Regional Council of Governments to update the open space plan, which needs to be renewed to make Wendell eligible for grants for open space planning and acquisition.

An article to change the Swift River School agreement so that Wendell and New Salem would make equal payments for capital improvements to the school was among several articles not yet approaching final form.

Lisa Hoag, of Locke Village Road, met the selectboard for some help in refining an article she plans to submit proposing a noise ordinance. She has a draft of the article and the necessary signatures, and she had based her wording on noise ordinances from Shutesbury, Leverett, and Gill, which she said are all variations on one passed in Amherst in 1987.

Hoag complained about unnecessary noise of engines revving and car horns at all

hours of the day and night disturbing her right to peaceful enjoyment of her home. She said she had no issue with the legitimate noise of car repair, work, or business, but what she was living with amounted to a nuisance at all hours of the day and night.

Selectboard member Dan Keller asked if her article might be duplicating state law against disturbing the peace, and asked who would be responsible for enforcing it. Hoag said she was not sure what state law covered, but that a state trooper had recommended she videotape incidents and record license plates involved. Enforcement starts with a warning, and in Amherst the first penalty for breaking the noise ordinance is \$100. Mediation could replace a fine if all parties agree.

Hoag said she still wants to work on the article in ways that would make it less restrictive, and hoped the signatures she already had gathered would still be considered valid.

Town coordinator Nancy

Aldrich suggested that possibly the article could go to town meeting as written, and then be amended to be less restrictive at the meeting.

Selectboard member Christine Heard said that with ten signatures on the newly worded article there would be no avenue to fight the new article's legitimacy, but the selectboard agreed that Hoag could submit a less restrictive article and not have to gather ten new signatures.

The May 14th selectboard meeting is the last one at which warrant articles can be changed.

The meeting opened with Judy Kosuda of Locke Village Road, representing Massamont Insurance, suggesting that the town get its comprehensive and liability insurance from Massamont instead of from the Massachusetts Interlocal Insurance Association (MIIA). Since the April 16th selectboard meeting, MIIA lowered their price to \$31,949, compared with Massamont's \$32,069, but Kosuda said that with accident insurance for police and fire personnel, the total Massamont bill would save the town \$736. Aldrich said the town will put insurance out for bids in coming years.

Towards the close of the meeting, the selectboard voted to get comprehensive and liability insurance from MIIA, and police and fire accident insurance from Nationwide, through Massamont.

The selectboard sent a thank you letter to the students from Northfield Mount Herman school for the good work they did cleaning town properties on April 24th. For the Earth Day cleanup, Lake Grove students brought a vanload of trash the students had picked up from the roadsides.

Selectboard chair Ted Lewis

said he and Anne Diemand filled the town dump truck twice with trash citizens had gathered from the roadsides and left in bags or in piles for pickup. They worked from 9:00 a.m. to 2:00 p.m. gathering trash and leaving it at the WRATS.

Joy Gorzocoski, former town custodian, told the selectboard that Larry Ramsdell, the present custodian, asked her for some help at the library for now. Heard said that a backup worker was good to have in any case, and the selectboard agreed that Gorzocoski could fill in for Ramsdell at the same rate of pay.

FRCOG has offered to do traffic counts, including speed measurements, in Wendell, and asked where the town wants them. Lewis said he and Aldrich would go over the list of places they had put counters in the last dozen years and recommend four locations for this year.

Aldrich said Martin Electric gave a price of \$900 for a smoke and fire detector at the new senior center with a weatherproof external bell and light to alert passers by. Lewis thought the price was high, but Keller felt complete weatherproofing might justify the expense, and the renovation budget still had enough money to cover it. The basement of the former library has water coming in, but gutters all around the building. Directing roof runoff away should correct that problem.

Keller said he had an email from New Salem selectboard member Steve Varney recommending a \$1,000 pay raise from each town for shared coordinator Nancy Aldrich, in addition to a 3% cost of living allowance. The two towns jointly would make her COLA 6%.

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~ J.R.R. Tolkien

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NOTES FROM THE MONTAGUE SELECTBOARD

Highway Department to Work 10-Hour Days

BY DAVID DETMOLD - The Montague highway department will be looking forward to some long weekends (after working 10-hour days Monday through Thursday) in the months ahead.

At the request of DPW superintendent Tom Bergeron, the Montague selectboard approved the change from an 8-hour, five day work week, to the longer hours and a four day per week schedule at their meeting on Monday, May 5th.

Bergeron said his crew would be more productive, and energy costs at the DPW would be reduced by the change to

longer days and shorter weeks. "When we go to the further points in town, it takes 45 minutes to get there." And 45 minutes to return. There have been some jobs, like recent paving on Taylor Hill Road, that Bergeron said could have been wrapped up on the same day, had the crew been able to work two more hours.

As well, the utility costs at the DPW building would drop to next to nothing on Fridays, Bergeron said, creating more savings, in addition to the fuel costs saved by less driving back and forth to more distant parts of town.

Bergeron said residents could call the police dispatch line on Fridays, for any emergencies that required DPW response, and the police would contact a DPW foreman, available on pager 24/7.

The selectboard agreed to the plan on a three month trial basis.

In other news:

- The board signed a state-funded contract with Fuss and O'Neil Architects of West Springfield for \$80,000 to study the feasibility of replacing the pedestrian bridge across the canal to the

Strathmore Mill recently purchased by John Anctil of the Swift River Group. The expedited permitting grant will also pay for a study of the infrastructure within the building, title issues surrounding the property, problems associated with the access road to the site, permitting issues, and issues related to the sewer and water lines to the mill complex, town administrator Frank

Abbondanzio said. He said Anctil had 60 days from Tuesday, April 29th, to make the first quarterly payment on back taxes and construction

costs owed to the town for the Strathmore. The total due is about \$490,000, with legal costs included; the first quarterly payment should therefore be about \$122,500.

- The board granted Permission for the Great Falls Farmers Market to set up on the corner of Avenue A and 2nd Street, Wednesday afternoons from 3 to 6 p.m., from May to the end of October. New vendors are welcome, said market manager Don Clegg (413-774-6719), who promised organic produce would be available, fresh from a farm in Gill this year.

GILL from pg 1

faced a packed agenda at the annual budget meeting Monday night, with 25 articles to be disposed of. In addition to the town and school budgets, the items that drew the most attention were the purchase of a new dump truck, a non-binding resolution calling for the closure of the Vermont Yankee nuclear plant, and issues surrounding the auction of surplus town equipment.

Article 12 dealt with the sale of surplus equipment, and whether to prohibit such sales to town employees. This article drew the first of several protracted debates of the evening. Selectboard member Banash told the audience she was "vehemently opposed" to the article, given that the prohibition of sales of town surplus equipment to town employees and their relatives would effectively exclude a large part of the population from ever purchasing used equipment from the town. However, Banash also said it

was important to have, "more notice [regarding town sales]. I have no objection to that."

Recently, police chief David Hastings had purchased a used police cruiser from the town. While no one felt he had acted improperly, Sandy Brown summed up the attitude of at least a half dozen townspeople in the room when she commented, "I think it's the appearance of it all, not the actual conduct."

The article was defeated.

The next article took up the question of whether the town would oppose the 20-year relicensing of the Vermont Yankee nuclear power plant in Vernon, VT, 10 miles north of town hall. Moderator Ray Steele deferred to the petitioners who placed the resolution on the warrant, so John Ward read the article and provided commentary.

"Only 2% of our electricity is produced by this reactor. It could close tomorrow and the lights would not go out... If there was a catastrophic event at a wind turbine, would we

need an evacuation plan?"

Tony Williams, who had been handing out fact sheets about the nuclear plant prior to the meeting, also spoke in support of the measure, as did Claire Chang who reminded the gathering that the article was non-binding, but also stated, "If we don't exercise our voice, why would anyone else care?"

Patricia Conway also addressed the crowd. "I'm not necessarily opposed to nuclear energy, but I do think the government has failed to protect us from spent fuel... By voting 'Yes,' we're sending them a message. We're asking that the government protect us."

Conway spoke of her son who lives in Nevada, near Yucca Flats, an area the government has designated to play host to the nation's supply of high level radioactive waste, despite its record of lively geological activity.

The article was approved unanimously, followed by applause.

Article 14 regarded the purchase of two dump trucks, to

replace old vehicles at the highway department. The older truck (1989) would cost \$135,000 to replace; the newer one, \$120,000, and, if approved, these amounts would have gone to a townwide debt exclusion vote. Although the same issue had been debated last year at town meeting, nevertheless the article went down by a vote of 23 to 54.

Those in opposition said they were concerned the town was setting itself up for a crippling financial burden with a two truck purchase. Paul Nowill, of the finance committee told the attendees it would "be better to stagger the purchase" and reported the finance committee had voted against the article by a vote of five to zero.

Anticipating the defeat of Article 14, the next article dropped the highway department's request down to just the \$135,000 for replacing the older truck, to be paid for by a debt exclusion override.

Former highway boss Ernie Hastings firmly reminded

residents, "This needs to pass in a big way. We've gotten nineteen years out of one of those trucks and roads are how you get to work, to school and how you got here tonight."

With that, the article passed unanimously.



HIGHLIGHTS OF THE GILL POLICE LOG

Fireworks Thrown from Vehicle

Friday, 5-2
 3:45 p.m. Assisted Montague Police with reported fight.
 5:03 p.m. Welfare check requested at Main Road residence.

Saturday, 5-3
 11:55 a.m. Criminal complaint sought against [redacted]. Charged with unlicensed operation of motor vehicle, and unregistered motor vehicle.

Sunday, 5-4
 12:50 a.m. Arrested [redacted]. Charged with operating under the influence of alcohol, marked lanes violation, open container of alcohol in vehicle, operating negligently and failure to wear safety belt.

6:35 p.m. Assisted with stray dog on West Gill Road, returned to owner.

Monday, 5-5
 6:25 p.m. Assisted Erving police with three car accident on Northfield Road.
 7:35 p.m. Report of subject throwing fireworks out of moving Vehicle on West Gill Road. Vehicle stopped on Turners Falls Road in Bernardston. Incident under investigation with other charges pending.

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MONTAGUE from pg 1

swamp the Senior Center, parks and recreation, the branch libraries, curbside recycling and the dog catcher this year. The selectboard and finance committee had proposed to eliminate these services from the town's operating budget unless voters townwide passed a \$250,000 override on May 19th.

On Saturday, town meeting firmly rejected that approach, adding all those services back into the operating budget, except for the \$25,000 for the animal control officer's salary.

Instead, town meeting began systematically trimming personnel costs, department by department. In some cases, the meeting voted lower salary figures for elected officials, to wipe out their anticipated step increases for the coming year and level fund their salaries at last year's figures. In the cases of workers under contract, the meeting passed line items for departmental personnel costs equivalent to level funded salaries from '08, but recognized it would be up to the department heads, the selectboard and the unions representing those workers to determine how the appropriated

enough, with an amendment offered by Christopher Sawyer-Laucanno, of Precinct 5, to lower the stipend received by members of the selectboard from the recommended \$3,561 for the chair, and \$3,271 for the second and third members, to \$1,000 for each. He explained that he was in effect lowering his wife's salary (Sawyer-Laucanno is married to selectboard member Patricia Pruitt), but tough times call for sacrifices.

The amendment passed by majority vote, and it was on to the board of assessors. Laucanno proposed lowering the assessors' stipends from \$3,500 for the chair and \$2,940 for the second and third members down to \$1000 for each. This amendment led to lengthier discussion, with people speaking passionately on both sides. Paul Emery and Terry Miner, both members of the assessors board, expressed concerns that cuts would make it even more difficult to find people willing to serve. Some members of town meeting argued that if we were going to cut the stipends for the selectboard, there should be equitable cuts all around, rather than valuing the work of one board over another.

Steve Ellis, of Precinct 4, made the point that would be echoed again and again throughout the day. "We need to make cuts in things that aren't direct services to the people of this town. This is uncomfortable, but it's crunch time for our community."

After it was pointed out that school committee members and finance committee members, along with the volunteers who serve on many other town boards, receive no

compensation for their work or mileage, it was Leslie Cromack of Precinct 1 who moved things along. "Mr. Moderator, I've never done this in 30-plus years as a town meeting member, but I'd like to move this question." The amendment to reduce the

DPW superintendent generated little discussion.

However discussion on the next article, Article 7, General Government, began around 10 a.m. and took up the remainder of the meeting, with an hour off for lunch. Naughton began



David Jensen, Precinct 2, makes a point at annual town meeting

those deliberations by seeking to amend the entire article to freeze all wage increases for the year. Moderator Ray Godin made the point that town meeting could pass an amount of money for personnel costs for each department, but could not dictate

to the selectboard or the department heads how to spend that money (e.g. reduce hours, transfer funds from expense line items, lay people off, or freeze wages). Deliberations followed about how to deal with Naughton's amendment procedurally, and it was decided he would have to make his amendment on a line by line basis, with a dollar amount specific to each department.

Town accountant Carolyn Olsen played a starring role for the remainder of the meeting, working her calculator more rapidly than town meeting members could work their way through each department's budget, and keeping Naughton, who took up a semi-permanent post at the front podium, supplied with a running tally of amounts to be deleted from each line of Article 7.

But among the town meeting members, there were several points of view on how to best cut the operating budget in order to make room for the services that had been proposed for the \$250,000 'override basket'.

Next on the chopping block came the assessors office. Deb Radway and Robin Sherman, both of Precinct 1, came

forward with an amendment to reduce the hours of an assessors clerk from full time to part time, as part of a package they proposed to reduce the hours of two other support staff in town hall, and reduce the town's contribution to employee health care plans from 90% to 80%. Director of assessing JoAnn Greenleaf persuaded the meeting that moving the clerk's position to half time would cost the town more money than it saved when it came time to gather data for the next triennial property revaluation. Sherman and Radway withdrew their amendment.

Then, Naughton's proposal to freeze wages of all town personnel rolled forward, but not without persistent vocal opposition from the floor and the stage, where the finance committee and selectboard were seated. Selectboard member Allen Ross, in particular, made numerous speeches supporting the need for a substantial override, to raise new revenues to meet operating expenses, and finance committee member Jeff Singleton also spoke in support of the need to keep a reasonable override in the final budget plan, though he supported Naughton's effort to freeze wages for this year.

There were a number of "No" votes on the stage at each point Naughton's amendments were raised and passed by the majority of the members seated on the floor.

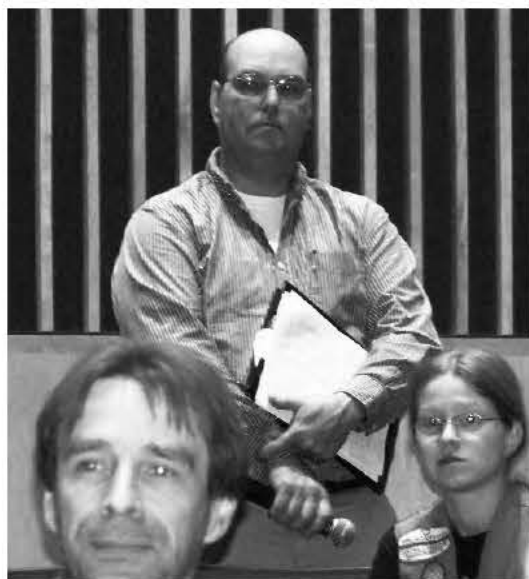
Amounts equivalent to level funded wages for the offices of the assessor, treasurer/collector, planning department, and registrar carried by majority.

Lunch break!

An hour later, more amendments were on the menu, all of which were intended to reduce the number of a la carte items on the override and preserve town services.

The police budget was reduced by approximately \$18,000, and though some town meeting members suggested delaying the purchase of a new

see MONTAGUE pg 11



Doug Stephens, Precinct 6, listens as DPW boss Tom Bergeron prepares to defend his budget. A runner from Girl Scout Troop 79 (right) waits for the microphone.

amounts would be allocated for employee salaries.

The effort began simply

members, along with the other town boards, receive no

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police cruiser, an annual item, town meeting ultimately decided to keep the \$35,000 for the new cruiser in the budget.

Although Naughton originally sought to amend the police dispatch budget down by \$25,000 to the '08 level for personnel costs, Chief Ray Zukowski persuaded the meeting that more money was needed to keep trained dispatch staff in position. Otherwise, he said, the town would wind up spending even more money for police officers to handle dispatch tasks. "We have to have someone sitting there, 24/7," the chief explained.

In the end, Naughton reduced his amendment, and the line item for dispatch passed for only \$1000 less than originally recommended.

The line item for personnel costs was then frozen at '08 levels for the office of the building inspector.

Then, the job of animal control officer, one of those eliminated from the operating budget and slated to be part of a Proposition 2½ override, was defended by David Jensen, of Precinct 2, who argued, "Animal control will eventually prove essential."

However, Jensen's proposed amendment to add the animal control officer's job back into the budget failed by a majority vote. Selectboard member Pat

similar to the one now used for trash pick up.

An amendment offered by John Reynolds, of Precinct 1, to

to over 700 seniors who use the service, and a majority of town meeting agreed to reinstate the Council on Aging budget. "I

The first article of the day was a non-binding resolution calling for the decommissioning of the Vermont Yankee Nuclear Power Plant, brought to town meeting via a petition signed by 38 town meeting members, representing all six precincts. As explained by Detmold, similar resolutions are being brought to town meeting in 14 other Franklin County towns this spring.

Detmold raised concerns about Montague's proximity to the plant in the event of a major accident. The 36-year-old nuclear plant in Vernon, VT, is slated to be decommissioned in March 2012, but the plant's owner is seeking a 20-year extension of its operating license. Detmold described several accidents that had already occurred there, and said in the event of a catastrophic accident, most town residents would find their families and

"head south" as quickly as possible, but emergency responders, police and fire fighters would have to stay behind to coordinate the emergency response.

While some town meeting members felt more information was needed to make an educated decision on this article, and Barry Levine, of Precinct 3, said the country needs more nuclear power, in the end the article passed by a majority vote.



Selectboard Chair Pat Allen and Town Administrator Frank Abbondanzio, Saturday, as the amendments kept on coming.

increase the cemetery budget by \$2,000 to allow for maintenance work on the Dry Hill Cemetery failed on a standing vote.

The debate then turned to human service line items. Chris Boutwell, chair of the board of health, offered an amendment to add the \$25,000 salary for a part time public health nurse back into the budget, rather than leave it in the override.

On top of this amendment came another, offered by David Detmold, of Precinct 5, to lower the nurse's salary to \$19,000, which could be taken from free cash and replaced with the unexpended funds left in the '08 board of health budget after the former town nurse resigned last August. As he explained,

want to make sure as I get older, it's there when I get there," declared Boutwell.

Another beloved town service that had been slated for the override was considered next: the Montague public libraries. An amendment to essentially level fund library salaries, while eliminating the need to close the branch libraries in Montague Center and Millers Falls, and preserve the ability to access state grant funds for library materials, was put forth by Naughton and passed by majority vote. This left one less item on the 'basket of services' Proposition 2 ½ override.

What proved to be the last item for the day was also one that had been proposed for the override. Naughton again suggested an amendment, this one reducing the budget for parks and rec, but reinstating it in the operating budget.

Rather than cutting the budget, argued selectboard members, parks and rec should be funded in full, but via the override.

Ellis, of Precinct 4 speaking passionately in favor of the parks and recreation programming, argued, "I don't want to trust this to an override, because I don't think the override will pass."

In the end, town meeting agreed to fully fund the department as part of the operating budget.

Given the turn of events of the day, with most of the original items planned for the override now restored to General Government, some town meeting members, including Jamie Berger of Precinct 5, Anne Jemas of Precinct 4, and selectboard member Allen, spoke about the predicament they faced. Allen mused, "We've now taken everything out that we thought would sell an override," and Jemas concurred, "All the services that elicit an emotional response from people are out of the override. What's our strategy to fund things now?"

That question was left hanging as the meeting adjourned at 4 p.m. Before leaving the auditorium, Cromack said he had never, in his three decades of experience, seen town meeting take the kind of budget cutting approach they took that day.



Mike Naughton, Precinct 2, at the podium; Jeff Singleton at the finance committee dais

Allen argued the animal control officer was "not as essential as some other services."

The budget for the department of public works proved to be a complicated one, as Naughton's amendment to level pay for fiscal '09 was on the table, along with a great deal of sentiment to maintain curbside recycling for Montague in the regular operating budget. Town meeting members opted to do just that, taking recycling services out of the 'override basket,' and adding them back into the DPW operating budget. The vote to keep recycling in the budget passed unanimously, increasing the DPW's recommended budget from \$1,272,176 to \$1,309,390. That figure reflected level funded wages for the department.

A suggestion was made, however, to explore the possibility of a pay as you go sticker system for curbside recycling,

"Approximately one third of our residents are senior citizens. They pay fifty cents out of every dollar of their tax money to educate our young. We should give back to them." A standing vote passed, 36 to 33, and the town nurse position was reinstated in the operating budget, funded at \$19,000.

Next up was the Council on Aging, as many town meeting members waved yellow fans declaring, "I'm a Senior Center Fan!" distributed by senior center supporters as people entered the building that morning. Again, Naughton was the first to come forward with an amendment, this one taking the fate of the Council on Aging off the override and placing the \$36,000 to fund the senior center program back into the budget.

Bunny Caldwell, senior center director, spoke of the importance of the programs provided

Round Two

On Wednesday evening, town meeting reconvened for round two. Article 7, town government, was again the main focus of discussion, with selectboard member Allen Ross leading the charge to undo the work town meeting had done on Saturday, restore the budgets for all town departments, including the services originally scheduled for an override, and take money from reserves to fund the shortfall the override would have covered.

Races in Two Precincts for Town Meeting

BY DAVID DETMOLD
MONTAGUE - With no townwide contested races in the offing for the town election on May 19th, the only toss-ups are to be found further down the ballot, where candidates for town meeting are in competitive races in two of the six precincts.

Eight candidates for town meeting are in the running for seven three-year seats in Precinct 1 (Montague Center). They are: incumbents Robin Sherman, Eileen Mariani, Arthur Evans and Veronica Phaneuf, and hopefuls David Leh, Juanita Caldwell, Mark Fairbrother, and Malcolm Clark.

Over in Lake Pleasant and Millers Falls (Precinct 2), eight candidates have also lined up for the seven three-

year seats. Jeanne Golrick and Edward Golrick hope to join incumbent Peter Golrick to represent that precinct, along with hopefuls Bernice Grzybowski, Jan Atamian, Sophia Libby, and Michael Henry. Two incumbents are seeking re-election for three-year seats in Precinct 2: Marjorie Levenson and Robert Sojka.

Write-in candidates are sought for one three-year seat and one one-year seat in Precinct 5 (downtown Turners) and for two three-year seats and one one-year seat in Precinct 6 (Montague City and the Patch).

There are no competitive races for town meeting on the Hill; both Precinct 3 and 4 have seven candidates running for seven three-year seats.

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see MONTAGUE pg 11

Asked how this might affect the town's reserve fund, finance chair John Hanold said it would reduce both free cash and stabilization to less than \$1000.

Ross said, "Saturday's town meeting made an emphatic statement that they wanted to fund most town services through the operating budget. They did not feel an override would pass." But Ross maintained, "The budget we came up with is unfair and inadequate in its preparation.

"Employees in the town are being asked to make personal sacrifices in the thousands of dollars, while the taxpayers are making no direct contribution."

Ross added that the selectboard and finance committee would seek to redress the shortfall in the townside of the budget immediately, without spending as much from reserves as Hanold had calculated. And he said the town should prepare an override when the final figures for state aid and the school budget have been arrived at.

Town administrator Frank Abbondanzio said, "Town meeting on Saturday obviously meant to address the townside deficit. We have a much greater deficit looming in the school budget, where the schools are seeking an \$850,000 increase," which the town has proposed to short fund by \$650,000.

"Once we get to the school budget, we are looking at an override, use of reserves, and cuts. There's no way to avoid it."

Finance committee member Jeff Singleton referred to the approach advocated by Ross, saying, "I don't support this change. Town meeting decided to set a course and send a message on Saturday. I think it was the right message, and we ought to stick to our guns."

He said the town was already committing \$468,000 in reserves to the budget this year. And he added, "The assumption we totally oppose an override is incorrect. I think we need a \$150,000 override to reduce our over use of reserves. I do agree there should be some sort of shared sacrifice."

Seated beside Ross on the selectboard's side of the stage, with chair Pat Allen absent, Patricia Pruitt said, "I'm not thrilled with this proposal (advocated by Ross). "It seems to not threaten anyone's comfort

zones, but it does not solve our problem.... We were expressly trying to avoid taking more out of reserves."

Les Cromack, of Precinct 1, said, "My budget is in a heck of a lot better shape than the town's. I applaud the people who tried to do something in the last town meeting. These reserves need to last four or five years.

"We must address this issue this year, not let it go again," he added.

Robert Quinn O'Connor, Precinct 6, addressed the issue of shared sacrifice.

"We've heard it said that we are asking employees to make

he had been arguing with his wife all day about the budget. "And I hope I win.

"I wish we had heard the school budget first," he said. "It's time we treated our town employees the same way we treat our teachers. It's a two-way street. If one gets an increase, they all get an increase."

Gilmore made a motion to support Ross's approach to solving the budget problem by undoing the work of town meeting on Article 7 on Saturday. But his motion failed by a standing vote of 25 in favor, 48 against.

Singleton made a motion to

approve a second override in the amount of \$45,337, to fund the remaining items in the 'basket of services': the animal control officer's salary, and cuts in the town nurse's salary, the town libraries budget, and the parks and recreation department budget, failed.

Next up, the Gill-Montague Regional School District mounted a valiant defense of their \$17,068,078 '09 operating budget, trying to persuade town meeting members to approve their request for a Montague assessment of \$7,935,253, an 11.4% increase over last year's school assessment.

School committee chair

Mary Kociela said, "Knowing the tight financial situation faced by the towns of Gill and Montague, we have worked hard to increase revenues, pursue consolidation, and cut costs wherever possible."

She said \$17 million would provide a "level services budget" for the district schools, that would "contain the bare minimum needed to meet [Department of Elementary and Secondary Education] requirements, and she pledged to "continue to operate a district that you can be proud of."

GMRSD business manager Lyn Bassett said the proposed '09 school budget represented a 5.48% increase over last year. The difference between the steep hike in town assessments and the 5.48% increase in the total budget was due to the lack of adequate state funding, Bassett said.

Interim superintendent Ken Rocke said the district was still recovering from the loss of eight full time positions last year, and would be aggressively pursuing a plea for more state aid from the DESE, which has accepted the district's turnaround plan, after labeling the Gill-Montague schools 'underperforming' last year. Rocke said there was a likelihood the GMRSD would be receiving 'pothole' funds from the state this year as well.

He added, "I know the budget we presented to you is a stressful budget to the town, but it would be premature to promise cuts at this time."

Precinct 3's Barry Levine noted that the GMRSD share of Montague's budget has steadily increased from 37% in 1995 to 48.5% last year. "The line is going straight up. I don't know where it's going to stop," he said.

He asked if the GMRSD was negotiating wages and benefits "in line with the town." Rocke said he could not discuss the progress of negotiations with the teachers. Bassett said personnel increases of 3% to 5% had been built into the '09 budget.

Naughton compared the ease of funding a million dollar increase in the district's operating budget for Gill and Montague to a person like himself trying to lift up a pickup truck loaded with bricks with his bare hands. "It's impossible," he said.

Town meeting voted down the GMRSD budget.

Annual town meeting will resume on Thursday, May 22nd at 6:30 p.m. to take up the next fifteen articles.

Eighty-two town meeting members showed up for the start of the annual meeting on Saturday, and 25 were excused by calling the town clerk beforehand to say they could not attend. Five members had resigned for various reasons before the May 3rd meeting. Fourteen members were no shows.

According to the town clerk, the Saturday no-shows were: David Bennett, Precinct 2; Michael Boduch, Precinct 3; Doug Dziadzio, Precinct 1; Greg Garrison, Precinct 6; Kathy Hyson, Precinct 3; Nicole Kapise, Precinct 5; Ellen Kastanopolous, Precinct 5; John Little, Precinct 6; Don MacPhail, Precinct 3; Jonathan Parrott, Precinct 2; Margaret Pyfrom, Precinct 3; Edward Voudron, Precinct 4; Betty Waidlich, Precinct 2; and Jon Waidlich, Precinct 4.

On Wednesday, the town clerk listed 20 town meeting members as no shows, including Bennett, Dziadzio, Garrison, Hyson, Kapise, Little, Parrott, Voudron, and Jon Waidlich. Also absent without notice were Paul Burek, Precinct 2; Daniel Chevalier, Precinct 6; Candice Dodge, Precinct 6; Charles Dodge, Precinct 6; Denise DiPaolo, Precinct 5; Addie Rose Holland, Precinct 6; Jean Hebden, Precinct 5; Russel Laramie, Precinct 3; Deb Picking, Precinct 6; and Ed Zewinski, Precinct 3.



Doug Brown and Carlyn Saltman (left to right) follow the discussion as Lyn Bassett, Valeria Smith, Mary Kociela and Chip Wood wait their turn to present the Gill-Montague school budget on Saturday. They had a long wait: the school budget did not get discussed until Wednesday night. Norm Seymour is also pictured (right, rear).

sacrifices, and no one else is making any. But I will pay 2.5% more on my property taxes next year. Two and a half percent was supposed to be the limit," for tax levy increases, O'Connor said, "but it's become the standard."

In addition, O'Connor said, "In a year or two I'll be paying more for the water pollution control facility, and for the police station. My sewer rates will rise. No matter what we do, we're going to be paying more for the schools."

Robin Sherman, Precinct 1, said, "I think this town needs more revenue, and an override is going to be necessary. I do agree that in order to fund the same level of services we've historically had, we're going to need an override, but we're not necessarily going to [pass one.]"

She continued, "I don't want to be put in the position of tying these particular services [the libraries, the parks and rec, the senior center], services that are essential to the elderly and kids and poor people, to an override. And I think a commitment to cut operating expenses is part of the equation, to send a message," to the taxpayers.

Art Gilmore, Precinct 2, said

reduce the line item for employee benefits by \$95,700, an amount equivalent to the savings the town would realize if unionized employees were to accept a change in the town's contribution for their health care coverage from 90% to 80%.

Abbondanzio had earlier spoken to this proposal, saying it might require a negotiated buy-out in the first year, but would lead to continued savings for the town in years to come. "We need to get the contribution rate down," he said. "It's one of the biggest budget busters."

Singleton's amendment passed by majority vote.

Steve Ellis, of Precinct 4, made a motion to reconsider the budget for parks and recreation, and delete \$7,012 from that line item, to be made up by a modest increase in user fees for park programs. Parks and recreation director Jon Dobosz supported the measure, which passed unanimously.

Singleton made a motion to change the funding mechanism for Article 7, adding a \$150,000 general override into the mix, along with the sale of real estate from the industrial park and the property tax levy. His motion carried.

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Linnell
Chase Fuller
Jessica Fuller
Lauren Grimard
Emma Johnson
Kolbe Martineau
Heather McKenna
Katri Mizula
Morgan Ozdarski
Jonathan Rawls
Tyler Richardson
Heyley Westfall

Second Honors:

Benjamin
Bochamikov
Meghan Casey
Courtney Eugin
Meaghan Horan
Kaineeca Pabon
Ashley Patnode
Tyler Peters
Katerina Sankova
Malcolm Smith

Kenneth Sroka
Nicholas Wells
Justin Wyman

Third Honors:

Elyssa Carner
Cameron Jacques-Burek
Rayanne Mercure
Kyle Wawrzyniak

Grade 7 - First Honors:

Meredith Brown
Katelyn Dodge
Kayla Drumgool
Shawn Englehardt
Emilee Felton
Summer Forest-Bulley
Shannon Hersey
Jayna Kelly
Rylen Kelly
Troy Langknecht
Brandon Lenois
Brooke Martineau
Timothy Meyer
Abigail Rubin
Christian Sawicki

Dakota Smith-Porter
Nala Vaughn
Brittany York

Second Honors:

Breanna Breault
Katie Brunell
Cody Brunelle
Abigail
Cichanowicz
Ceara Dolhenty
Jasmine Farr-Marcum

Grade 8 - First Honors:

Casey Banning
Jolina-Rose Blier
Jane Booth
Anthony Brunette
Daniel Colton
Haley Fiske
Stephanie French
Christopher Gordon
Mark Hudyma
Lily Kane
Jesse Langknecht
Samuel Letcher
Alyssa Nicotra

Interlande
Haylee Keene
Mitarho Kelly
Leslie Kozma

Second Honors:

Bethany Laramie
Connor Roberge
Kory Ryan
Jose Santiago
Amanda Sicard
Olivia Tardie
Kelsey Yolish
Isabelle
Zantouliadis

Malik Odeh
Haley Ozdarski
Emily Pollard
Cameron Savinski

Second Honors:

Jenna Costa
Stacy French
Haley Laramie
Jeremy Mankowsky
Iancu Placinta
Thomas Sanders
Shawna Williams

Third Honors:

Brandyn Boroski
Samantha Caouette
Taylor Croteau
Megan Foster
Matthew Fowler
Colton Hallett
Victoria Kyser
Breanna Miller
Angelica Renaud
Todd Richardson
Samantha Shaw
Kayleigh Turn

NOTES FROM THE ERVING SELECTBOARD

Goodwin Defeats Dubai 92 - 69

BY NICHOLE CLAYTON - In an upset, Andrew Goodwin, of 17 Swamp Road defeated one-term incumbent Jeffrey Dubai, of Mountain Road by a vote of 92 - 69, for a three-year seat on the selectboard. As town clerk Richard Newton brought results of the vote in to the meeting room on Monday night, Dubai turned to his colleagues on the board to say, "I've just been given 50 free nights a year."

Goodwin said as people signed his nominating papers they told him they were eager for "new blood in town."

"We have a great town with a good financial base," said Goodwin. "But we can't run sloppy. We need to look at every penny we spend."

Dubai will continue to serve the town on the historical commission and as chair of the planning board.

Newton also announced the results of a three-way race for two seats on the recreation commission, where newcomer Rolando Garcia topped incumbent Jacquie Boyden, 88 to 67, with Bill Bembury coming in first with 125 votes.

A little more than 15% of the town's 1083 voters turned out

for the municipal election: 164 voters cast ballots.

In other selectboard news, the town's engineering consultant, Tighe and Bond, notified the board that bids for extending water lines approximately 750 feet west from Semb Drive along Route 2, during the course of Mass Highway's construction of that roadway came in lower than expected. Although the town had anticipated spending approximately \$90,000 for the project, the low bid came in at \$44,600.

Samuel Dean, the newly hired technology coordinator for School Union #28 and Erving Elementary principal Charlene Galenski brought a spread sheet defending their proposal for \$50,000 to be allocated for new computers for the district to the selectboard. Selectboard chair Tessier said, "This is a plan we can really get behind."

Dean's proposal provides a 16-year plan for replacing old computers with new, and outlines the cost and savings for Union #28's technology needs. The school currently has 74 computers. However Dean said he believes the school can get by with 70 computers, with the new upgrades.

ERVING from pg. 1

town buildings.

At this juncture, Peabody commented that the smoothness with which the meeting was running was "very weird."

A motion to approve 20,000 from free cash for closing expenses at the former Maple Avenue landfill passed unanimously. Ten thousand dollars was set aside for the Council on Aging's expenses, and for the town audit. Spending \$4,000 for the purpose of purchasing space in the *Around Town* newsletter also passed unanimously, as did \$40,000 for the purpose of restoring records in the town clerk's office.

Voters set aside \$10,000 for the purpose of conducting a revaluation of the Northfield Mountain Pumped Storage Project, again unanimously.

They transferred from free cash the sum of \$50,000 to purchase self-contained breathing apparatus for the fire department.

Voted unanimously.

Article 25, to raise and appropriate \$6,623 to increase the municipal clerk's work week from 24 to 33 hours passed unanimously.

A \$6,500 transfer from free cash for the purchase of hoses and accessories for the fire department passed unanimously.

Voters reauthorized a revolving fund in the amount of \$1500 for the reprinting, publication and sale of *The History Of Erving*. The book is currently available at Erving town hall for sixteen dollars a copy.

A vote to see if the town will authorize selectmen to dispose of any town property declared surplus by either the selectmen or other departments passed unanimously.

A vote to transfer the sum of \$50,000 from free cash for the purchase of computers and associated accessories for the Erving Elementary School also passed, unanimously, as did a \$100,000

free cash transfer to a special stabilization fund for retiree insurance, along with a transfer of \$50,000 from free cash to a special stabilization fund for employee benefits.

Voters decided to put \$487,435 into the stabilization fund, without any noticeable disagreement or dissenting vote.

They gave the selectboard \$5,000 from free cash to buy computers and accessories, and transferred another \$10,000 from free cash to replace the boiler and air conditioning unit at the town library, along with \$8,000 to replace the town hall copy machine. All passed unanimously.

It is good to live in a town with such a harmonious spirit of civic engagement. (And enough cash to cover expenses.)

Peabody swore in a dozen new town employees. "It's a bold step into the abyss when you say you want to do something for the town," he said.

HIGHLIGHTS FROM THE ERVING POLICE LOG

More Illegal Dumping

Tuesday, 4/29
2:53 p.m. Criminal application issued to [redacted], for operating a motor vehicle with a suspended license.
5:25 p.m. Arrested [redacted]

[redacted], for unregistered motor vehicle and possession of marijuana.

Wednesday, 4/30
10:40 a.m. Report of elderly woman with knee injury on River Road. Assisted with first aid until ambulance responded.
7:45 p.m. Report of male/female dispute on Pratt Street. Found to be two people talking loud while taking a walk.

9:06 p.m. Arrested [redacted] for a default warrant.
Thursday, 5/1
1:45 p.m. Report of illegal dumping on Central Street.
9:47 p.m. Report of a large amount of

broken glass on Route 2, both travel lanes, West of North Street. Advised Mass. Highway.

10:14 p.m. Report of dispute between male and female at Bridge Street in Millers Falls. Advised by Montague police that parties were last seen on foot in direction of Lester Street. Patrolled area, parties not found.

Saturday, 5/3
8:55 p.m. Assisted Gill police at Walnut Street for disturbance. All okay upon arrival.

Sunday, 5/4
8:25 a.m. Report from resident on Cross Street of people dumping rubbish at their house at night.

12:10 p.m. Noise complaint on High Street. Spoke with resident.

Monday, 5/4
6:15 p.m. Three car motor vehicle accident with injury on Route 63 at Northfield Road.

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Ride-Share Interest Growing

JONATHAN von RANSON WENDELL - The Wendell Townsfolk e-mail list has lit up in the last week with over two dozen emails about sharing rides.

The flurry of activity started when Arieh Kurinsky noticed how expensive it is to commute to his new job in Amherst.

Wendell is about 15 miles from Amherst and Greenfield

and over 20 miles from Northampton - the direction of much commuting and shopping - and rising gas prices on top of the natural-conservative ethic in this town are precipitating some serious thought about how to double- and triple-up on the trips.

Laura Doughty has made an offer to collect a list of people and their usual trips, and Wendell residents who wish to

add their information to that database may contact her at laura@mgm.mit.edu

In the early 1980s, Wendell began a ride-share system called "Star Route Riders," in which the meetinghouse was designated as a place to wait for a ride or look for riders.

The effort foundered when one of its chief organizers got a ride to Oregon and never returned.

GCC from pg 1

With 26 towns, 72,000 people and an area covering 725 square miles, Franklin County presents a substantial challenge for effective public transportation, contended Maureen Mulvaney. "Here mobility and alternatives are the primary challenges, not congestion or safety, like other regions," she added.

Mulvaney also noted the county gets only about a million dollars a year in federal transportation dollars, which, at

best, amounts to repairing one bridge (unless that bridge happens to cross the Connecticut between Montague and Gill, in which case \$34.5 million may be a more accurate price tag). On the positive side, Mulvaney spoke of upcoming plans to make the country seat more pedestrian and bike friendly.

"Advocate, participate and persevere, keep plugging", she urged the audience.

Tina Cote of the FRTA closed the panel presentation by discussing the increase in use over the last year of FRTA busses, and said the FRTA is looking into alternate fuels and more bike racks for their vehicles. There is also talk of building a new transit building, to act as a regional hub for travelers in the area. The building would be designed to be "near net zero in terms of energy consumption," Cote promised.

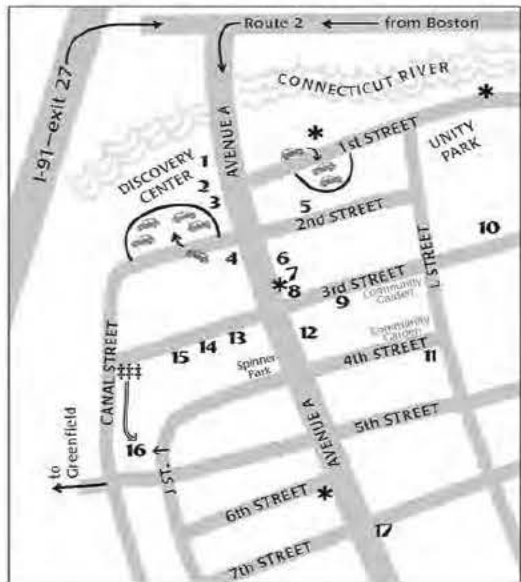
Questions for the panelists ranged from the idea of establishing a bus route to Brattleboro, to electric buses, to carrying capacity, to transit service to Fitchburg and a "Walk to School Campaign."

One Greenfield resident offered this pointed comment. "We haven't really discussed how much of the Earth's resources this country uses, and how our continued consumer impulses and sense of entitlement are affecting the world," said Tom McLean of Greenfield.

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Corner of Third Street & Canal Street
Sculpture Park in its first year, offering opportunities to young burgeoning artists to come, create art and be mentored by area sculptors. Come see what has happened and is happening!
On Sunday, several students in the Poetics of Construction Class in the Architecture & Design Program of UMass, Amherst will display their hypothetical designs in a 3-D model layout for the corner of Canal & Third Street. Model will include area of Third Street, from Avenue A to the river and beyond.

TURNERS FALLS PUBLIC ART INSTALLATIONS

- * Powertown; by James Rourke
- * Rock, Paper, Knife; by Gary Orlinsky
- * Doosel; by Stephen Cahill
- * Atlantic Salmon Mosaic; by Cynthia Fisher

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Grange Meeting Postponed

The next meeting of the Montague Grange has been postponed until Wednesday, May 14th, at 6:30 p.m., due to a conflict in dates with the extension of annual town meeting, on Wednesday, May 7th. The Grange's May meeting will feature a presentation of the history of the Grange hall, and of the Grange in Montague, along with a discussion of the current needs of the hall. The public is invited to attend.

The Grange Hall is located across from the town common in Montague Center.

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Re-enactment of Revolution on Lexington Green

BY RAY DIDONATO - As darkness gave way to the light of morning on Patriots Day, the sound of robins filled the Lexington Green. The alarm sounded from the Old Belfry. As colonists walking the Green and nearby streets murmured about news from Boston, Lexington militiamen emerged from Buckman Tavern and assembled on the Green, led by Captain John Parker.

One by one, each colonist shouted his name as roll call was made. Words attributed to Parker are etched beneath a carved relief situated today across from the Green, "Don't fire unless fired upon, but if they mean to have a war, let it begin here." However, from his own later testimony it appears that Parker actually instructed his men to stand fast but to neither "meddle or make" with the British troops or otherwise "molest" them, hoping that the British would pass peaceably through Lexington.

British regulars were on the way, having crossed the Charles River the previous night to begin the march from Charlestown along Bay Road to Concord. Now, the sound of drums could be heard in the distance, as Major John Pitcairn led British regulars toward Lexington en route to Concord.

We, witnesses to history reenacted, stood in deep throngs around the Green, some standing on step ladders, some children squeezing through the crowd up to the rope barricade surrounding the Green. Here, centuries ago, colonial spectators watched the same events unfold in Lexington, except the air was rife with revolutionary tensions.

The atmosphere in spring of 1775 could aptly be described as a powder keg. The British Crown, incensed by the actions of American colonists in Boston, which included the dumping of a shipment of tea into Boston Harbor to protest a



Redcoats line up on Lexington Green during an annual re-enactment.

new tax, had imposed the "Intolerable Acts" in 1774, which among other things closed the Port of Boston to most trade routes. Britain subsequently seated General Thomas Gage as military Governor.

With the Massachusetts Legislature dissolved, the Commonwealth was essentially under military rule. As a "colonist" relayed to us the previous night at the "Alarm and Muster" of the Lincoln Minutemen, the British Crown "had no right to impose military rule" on the colonists, who had governed themselves more or less freely. It was within this framework of a British show of force and colonial resentment that the events of April 19th, 1775 unfolded.

General Gage dispatched regulars under the command of Lt. Col. Francis Smith and Major John Pitcairn to seize a cache of military armaments rumored to be stored in Concord. Fortunately, Paul Revere and William Dawes received word of the impending British march from Boston, and, each riding a different route, one out of Charlestown and one across Boston Neck, they raised the alarm.

In the Old North Church, two candles were lit to signify the route the British regulars would take, across Boston Harbor and the Charles River into Charlestown, rather than by land across Boston Neck. While Revere took the sea route from Boston to Lexington, Dawes took the land route out of Boston Neck, each with the intent of riding along the Bay Road to Lexington to warn Samuel Adams and John Hancock of the British advance. The two arrived in Lexington at around the same time, and after warning Adams and Hancock, proceeded to Concord to warn the town of the British movements.

Having watched the riders arrive in Lexington, and the Lexington militiamen gather on the Green, we now heard the sound of British drums drawing closer, now a fife melody was audible. Then before our eyes, British regulars rushed onto the Green and stood at attention. The drummers and fife players proceeded, with Major Pitcairn walking to the front. The colonists were ordered to drop their arms, and then the British troops jeered them. The tension visible, it seemed as if Pitcairn

could barely keep his men in order, the regulars eager to mete out punishment on the armed colonists. A march forward, then the regulars drew their muskets and fixed on bayonets.

A voice, likely either a militiaman or colonial spectator, exclaimed "Bayonets?!"

Someone fired, exactly who is still unknown, and intermittent shots were fired by British regulars and the militiamen. The regulars then fired and pursued the militiamen without explicit order and, under orders from Parker to disperse and not to fire, the militiamen fled as the British advanced with bayonets. More firing, then all was quiet.

The British regulars, having routed the Lexington militia, now regrouped in the center of the Lexington Green, loaded their muskets, and fired simultaneously a final time. They then stood at attention, and upon orders began to march off the Green and out of Lexington with the fife playing "Yankee Doodle," a tune meant to ridicule the colonists as nothing more than country bumpkins. Some militiamen lay motionless on the Green. Eight colonists were killed in all, and another

nine injured.

After departing Lexington for Concord, Revere and Dawes were joined by Dr. Samuel Prescott, who had been visiting his fiancée in Lexington. The three encountered a patrol of British in Lincoln; Revere was detained while Prescott, who knew the local areas well, fled into swamps and evaded the British, eventually making his way to Concord to raise the alarm. Dawes made a tricky escape, but ended up walking back to Lexington after losing his horse.

In Concord, a militia of some 400 colonists, including the Lincoln and Acton Minutemen and others from surrounding towns, would confront British regulars at the North Bridge and drive them out of Concord. Retreating through Lexington, the British were ambushed by the emboldened Lexington militiamen under Parker, who offered quite a bit more resistance this time. Pursued on Bay Road by the colonists, whose ranks throughout the day swelled to over 4,000 as minutemen and militiamen poured in from surrounding towns, the British soldiers were frustrated and exhausted. Colonists fired from behind stone walls and trees, only to move to another hidden advance position to fire again. Even with reinforcements, the outnumbered British were repelled and retreated all the way back into Boston, suffering 273 casualties along the way.

At day's end, it was the Concord colonists who would play "Yankee Doodle," which would be taken up as a victory song for the revolutionaries and played upon the defeat of the British at Yorktown. But here on the Lexington Green, we witnessed reenacted the battle which shed the first blood of American colonists in a series of confrontations that ultimately led to the birth of an America free from British rule.

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Cheesemaking Workshop

GILL - A cheese-making workshop will be held at Upinngil Farm in Gill on Sunday, May 11th. Participants will learn how to take raw milk to create a hard "cheddar" cheese. Cliff Hatch, owner of Upinngil Farm, will lead this hands-on workshop, and will demonstrate dif-

ferent recipes and cultures to make several varieties of cheese. Participants are asked to bring two gallons of their own animal's milk to make small batches of such cheeses as brie, mozzarella, ricotta and cream cheese. Cost: \$64 for NOFA members or \$70 for non-members. Pre-registration is recommended. For more info: www.nofamass.org.

Letter Carriers to Fight Hunger

On Saturday, May 10th, the National Association of Letter Carriers (NALC) will collect food donations to benefit those at greatest hunger risk in an effort to fight hunger during the NALC's annual Stamp Out Hunger! food drive.

The Stamp Out Hunger! drive is a nationwide effort to provide food to local food banks and pantries, which would otherwise have depleted stocks during the summer months, to help feed the hungry on a daily basis. The nation's 230,000 letter carriers will be collecting food donations in more than 10,000 local communities and delivering them to food bank members of America's Second Harvest - The Nation's Food Bank Network and other hunger relief organizations.

Approximately one in four people in a soup kitchen line is a child.

You can help. Just leave a bag of non-perishable food where your letter carrier normally delivers your mail. Your letter carrier will then pick up and deliver the food to a local food bank.

HIGHLIGHTS FROM THE MONTAGUE POLICE LOG

Larceny, Disorderly Conduct, OUI

Wednesday, 4/30

10:49 a.m. Report of vandalism at an East Main Street address, Millers Falls.
3:40 p.m. Report of larceny at a Bridge Street address, Millers Falls.
4:03 p.m. Report of trespassing, L Street address, Turners Falls. Investigated.
4:56 p.m. Report of unwanted person at H Street address, Turners Falls. Arrested [redacted] on a straight warrant.
11:03 p.m. Report of loud noise disturbance at an Avenue A address, Turners Falls. Peace restored.
11:49 p.m. Domestic disturbance Fourth Street, Turners Falls. Investigated.

Thursday, 5/1

1:18 a.m. Report of larceny in alleyway behind Jake's Tavern, Avenue A, Turners.
7:14 a.m. Report of vandalism at Pipione's Sport Shop, Avenue A, Turners.
3:35 p.m. Report of vandalism, Morris Avenue, Turners Falls. Investigated.
6:05 p.m. Report of illegal dumping at an L Street address. Services rendered.
9:58 p.m. Report of fight in progress at a Newton Street address, Millers Falls. Arrested [redacted].

[redacted], on a default warrant and for possession of Class D drug, subsequent offense.

Friday, 5/2

1:43 a.m. Motor vehicle stop on Avenue A. Arrested [redacted] for driving under the influence, 2nd offense, speeding, and breaking a red light
8:30 a.m. Report of larceny, Fourth Street, Turners; investigated.
9:46 a.m. Walk-in to station reported vandalism, Davis St., Turners. Report taken.
11:00 a.m. Walk-in report of larceny, Fourth St., Turners. Report taken.
12:17 p.m. Domestic disturbance, Powertown, Fourth St. Turners; arrested [redacted] on a default warrant for disorderly conduct.
2:38 p.m. Report of accident with property damage in front of Pipione's. Arrested [redacted], on a default warrant, for possession of Class D and Class E drugs.
3:45 p.m. Report of a fight in alley behind Chick's Garage, Third Street, Turners. Services rendered.

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Answers to April 24th Crossword Puzzle:

Across

1. Baht
5. ATMs
9. IRS
12. Eller
13. Beau
14. Lait
16. Dollars and Cents
19. Staple
20. Tso
21. Gap
22. Mentor
25. Nlers
27. Tepee
30. Snap To
32. Ere
33. Sap
34. Save Us
38. Room Spray Scents
42. Monaco
43. Pot
44. CNN
45. Tatter
47. Sales
49. Ester
52. Are Too
54. Rah
55. Um
57. Oil Man
61. Stop Making Sense
65. Tare
66. Gene
67. Erore
68. Yaz
69. Area
70. ESPN

Down

1. Blot
2. Alla
3. Help Me

4. Tralee
5. Abs
6. Tea
7. Mantra
8. Suds
9. Ile
10. Range
11. Sitar
12. Eds
15. Tsps
17. Ren
18. Conlax
23. Tsar
24. On Paper
26. Love
27. Term
28. Eroo
29. Peon
31. Psst
33. Spot
35. Encl
36. Ulne
37. SSNs
39. Mate
40. Scarum
41. Yore
46. Tanker
47. Soisee
48. AOLers
49. Erst
50. Satay
51. Thora
53. Tog
56. Raga
58. MNOP
59. Assn
60. Nee
62. Pez
63. Ine
64. NEA

MCTV Schedule: May 9th - 15th

Eagle Cam: Friday 1P-6P; Sunday 1P-6P; Saturday 130P-6P; Sunday 230P-6P; Monday 1P-6P; Tuesday 230P-6P; Wednesday 1P-6P; Thursday 1P-6P;

Friday, May 9

8:00 am All Day Town Meeting 5/7/08
6:00 pm Franklin County Matters: Domestic Violence
7:00 pm GMRSD (4/22/08)
9:00 pm Coffee House Series: Fall Town String Band
11:00 pm Carlos Anderson: We're Blessed

Saturday, May 10

8:00 am Women Girls & HIV
8:30 am The Spirit of Lake Pleasant
10:30 am TFHS National Honor Society
11:30 am Tapping Maple Ridge
12:30 pm Sheffield Play Mighty Minds
8:00 pm All Day Town Meeting (5/7/08)

Sunday, May 11

8:00 am All Day Town Meeting (5/3/08)
8:00 pm All Day Town Meeting (5/7/08)

Monday, May 12

8:00 am Coffee House: Joe Graveline
9:00 am Community Land Trust in Action
10:00 am Birds of Prey
11:30 am Enjoy the Ride
12:30 pm Independent Voices
6:00 pm Over the Falls: Linda Rollins
7:00 pm Select Board Meeting (Live)
9:00 pm Franklin County Matters: State Government
10:00 pm Middle School Soccer
11:00 pm Coffee House Series: Ferne Bork, Dan Tinen, Bruce Kahn Trio

Tuesday, May 13

8:00 am All Day Town Meeting (5/3/08)
6:00 pm Coffee House: Fabulous Maurice
7:00 pm GMRSD (Live)
10:00 pm Discovery Center: Fossil Tracks
11:00 pm Eaton Hachi Go

Wednesday, May 14

8:00 am Eaton Sue Mono Giri
9:00 am Open Mic Night
10:30 am Flight
11:00 am Franklin County Matters: Farren Care Center
12:00 pm Independent Voices 37
12:30 pm Lake Pleasant Slide Show
6:00 pm Montague Update: Martha & Clarkson Edwards
7:00 pm Memorial Parade and Ceremony
8:00 pm Amandla
9:30 pm Bernanke
10:30 pm Carlos W. Anderson: Prodigal Children
11:30 pm Common Man: Cowbell Prescription

Thursday, May 15

8:00 am Dark Water Pie
9:30 am Discovery Center: Fossil Tracks
10:30 am Franklin County Matters: Sheriff's Office
11:30 am Mind Control
12:00 pm Montague Update: John Hanold
6:00 pm Child & Family Today: Children's Mental Health
6:30 pm On the Ridge: Scents & Sensibility
7:00 pm Select Board (5/12/08)
9:00 pm Changing Face of Turners Falls
11:00 pm People's Harvest

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JESSICA HARMON ILLUSTRATION

BY FRED CICETTI

LEONIA, NJ - Q. I have a leaky heart valve that may need surgery down the road. Can you tell me about heart-valve surgery in one of your columns?

First, let's explain briefly how the heart works.

There are four chambers in the heart - two atria on top and two ventricles below. There are four valves that open and shut with every heartbeat to control the circulation of the blood.

These valves, which are made of tissue flaps, are called the tricuspid, pulmonary, mitral and aortic.

Blood flows in one direction through the heart to get a new supply of oxygen from the lungs. Here's how it goes:

Used blood comes back to the heart from the body and goes into the right atrium. The right atrium pumps the blood downward through the tricuspid valve into the right ventricle. The right ventricle pumps the blood through the pulmonary valve to the lungs. The oxygenated blood returns from the lungs to the left atrium. The left atrium moves the blood down through the mitral valve into the left ventricle. The left ventricle pumps the blood out the aortic valve, which supplies the body.

Valves can malfunction and

strain the heart. If a valve doesn't close properly, blood will flow backward. This is called "regurgitation." If valve flaps don't open correctly, they prevent blood from flowing through them. This is called "stenosis."

Advanced valve disease can cause blood clots, stroke or sudden death from cardiac arrest.

For seniors, there is a problem with the flaps of the aortic and mitral valves; they thicken and harden with age, making blood flow more difficult. These changes may lead to complications in people with heart disease.

Other common causes of valve disease are: birth defects that produce irregularly shaped aortic valves or narrowed mitral valves; infective endocarditis, a bacterial infection of the lining of the heart's walls and valves;

coronary artery disease, and heart attack.

People with malfunctioning valves who don't have serious symptoms may not need treatment. Medicines can help with symptoms but don't fix a bad valve. Surgery or a less invasive procedure is often needed to correct valve disease.

There is a percutaneous (through-the-skin) procedure that may be used to open narrowed tricuspid, pulmonary and mitral valves. In rare cases, it is used on aortic valves. A balloon-tipped catheter is inserted into the narrowed valve and inflated. The balloon makes the central area of the valve larger. The balloon is then deflated and removed.

During surgery, valves may either be repaired or replaced. Repair may involve opening a

narrowed valve or reinforcing a valve that doesn't close properly. Surgeons replace irreparable valves with prosthetic valves.

Prosthetic valves can be mechanical; they are made of plastic, carbon, or metal. Or, these replacement valves can be composed of human or animal tissue. There is an increased risk of blood clots forming with a mechanical valve, so patients who get them have to take blood-thinning medicines as long as they have this kind of valve.

Valve surgery is an open-heart operation that requires a heart-lung bypass machine. During the operation, the heart must stop beating. The machine keeps the blood circulating in the patient's body.

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

THE GARDENER'S COMPANION: Thankfully, the Lilacs

BY LESLIE BROWN

MONTAGUE CITY

Thankfully, the lilacs, which looked ready to open with the heat of mid-April, stayed tightly budded. The two frosty nights, one even colder than the next, robbed local farmers of some crops and killed the early rhododendron blossoms in the school courtyard. Now, on the cool, damp day following the first part of town meeting, the wood fire warms the cellar, the floors of the house and the cat, while the sun-room sits at a comfortable 66 degrees with only the masked sunlight to heat it.

That's where the tomato and pepper plants have been starting to show their true leaves and some growth. They appreciate the warmth, in view of the cool temperatures outdoors. They've also benefited from their first feeding, and are now a dark green, with sturdy stems.

While it is a long time until they will be safe to go outside, the tomatoes are well on track for planting around Memorial Day.

The peppers will go in the ground a bit later, as they do not appreciate cool nights.

After the unseasonable warmth of the 70 and 80-degree weather over April school vacation, the return to cool and damp has allowed us to hold on to the early flowers, and has also been optimal for the 'cold crops' like peas, spinach and leafy vegetables. The daffodils which threatened to bloom and fade have held their bloom a little longer. The bloodroot I borrowed from the nearby woods continues to spread.

It does seem as if the earliest flowers of spring are short-lived, as it is. My lilacs, a huge personal favorite, usually last a week in the best of conditions. They all prefer the

cool weather. One especially spectacular early bloomer is the Manchurian apricot. This tree, shaped like a Japanese drawing, lifts the most delicate pinkish white blooms to the bright blue of the spring sky. It is the earliest tree to bloom, and really one of the most beautiful.

I have been delayed in my

planting of early crops because of the rain. The kale and lettuce should have been planted already. I'll try to get them in soon. The onions and leeks have thrived in this patch of cool, damp weather and look headed for a fine crop, especially if I can keep my neighbor's cat from using the raised beds as a private restroom.

Speaking of spring varmints in the yard and garden, it has been a fine winter for the voles that apparently benefited from the



MARY AZARIAN WOODBLOCK

deep snow cover to continue their destructive tunneling and chomping on the tender roots of anything they could find. The castor oil impregnated grit

scattered in the paths seems to have helped; at least the voles have ceased their tunneling. Perhaps they succumbed to flooding and are awaiting FEMA relocation.

Many of us prefer to interfere with pests by organic means. I am still looking for a way to rid the Azalea of inchworms. Early pre-emergent treatments seem beneficial, but the traditional insecticidal soaps do not prevent these critters from defoliating this fabulously beautiful bush. Despite the return to damp, cool weather, I know that spring is here: my neighbor recently called me to report that his rhubarb is ready. This means that he is hoping I will make a pie, and I will not disappoint him. This traditional pie is a longtime New England digestive tonic, which happens to taste delicious, too!

Strawberry Rhubarb Pie

<p>Pastry for a two-crust pie</p> <p>Two cups of fresh rhubarb, cut into half-inch chunks</p> <p>One cup of halved strawberries</p> <p>3/4 cup sugar</p> <p>2 tablespoons of flour</p> <p>1 beaten egg</p> <p>Mix the fruit in a bowl. Combine the sugar, flour and beaten egg and stir into the fruit mixture.</p> <p>Fill the bottom crust of the pie</p>	<p>with the fruit mixture.</p> <p>Create a lattice top with the remaining pastry and sprinkle the top of the pie with cinnamon sugar.</p> <p>Bake at 425 degrees for about 40 minutes. Cover the pie with a sheet of aluminum foil at the end of the baking time so as to avoid burning the crust.</p> <p>Cool to room temperature, cut and enjoy!</p>
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ARTS & ENTERTAINMENT



JACK COUGHLIN ILLUSTRATION

FRIDAY, MAY 9th

Great Falls Coffeehouse: The Fabulous Maurice, 7 p.m. at the Great Falls Discovery Center, Turners Falls.

At the Montague Book Mill, Montague Center: Fiddle player *Anna Falkenau* and singer/songwriter/guitarist *Ivan Murray* present an exciting evening of original and traditional songs and tunes, rooted in both Irish and American music traditions. 8 p.m.

Deja Brew, Wendell: *Kellianna* - Acoustic Rock, 9 to 11 p.m.

FRIDAY & SATURDAY, MAY 9TH & 10th

Ja'Duke Center for the Performing Arts presents *Joseph and the Amazing Technicolor Dreamcoat* at Turners Falls High School. 7 p.m., Reservations 863-0001. Adults \$12, 12 & under/ 65 & older \$10.

SATURDAY, MAY 10th

Downtown Spring Clean Up. Volunteers meet at the Great Falls Discovery Center, 10 a.m.

The Jack Bassett Montague Mile, 10 a.m., Turners Falls High School track. Various categories for all ages, a benefit for the Great Falls Middle & Turners Falls High Schools. Contact Bob Avery 863-9502 or ravery21@hotmail.com

At The Great Falls Discovery Center: *Celebrating Migrating Bird Day*. Weather will determine the day's offerings to include bird walks, indoor or outdoor activities on bird migration, flight, feeding,



Bob Rosser and friends perform at the Wendell Full Moon Coffee House on Saturday, May 17th at 7:30 p.m. Open Mic and fabulous desserts prior!

and survival. Indoor activities on bird nests, eggs, fledglings, and survival will be from 2 - 3 p.m.

The St. James Coffeehouse, Greenfield: *Root Cellar*. Benefit performance for Habitat for Humanity - traditional Celtic to Americana to contemporary originals. 7 p.m. Refreshments, tickets: Adult/child \$14/\$7. Info (413) 772-2213 Or www.stjames-gfd.org

Deja Brew, Wendell: *Richard Chase Group* - Acoustic Folk/Singer Songwriter, 9 to 11 p.m.

SUNDAY, MAY 11th

Fun Bike Ride and Tour. The 8 mile ride will cover the new bike path and Migratory Way. Librarian Linda Hickman, author of The Turners Falls Historical Walking Tour brochure, will lead the ride and provide commentary. The ride will start at the beginning of the Turners Falls Bike Path in Unity Park, 2 p.m.

Northfield Mount Hermon School's 114th Concert of Sacred Music, performances by The Symphony Orchestra, Concert Choir, Alumni Choir, and The Chamber Orchestra., 2:30 p.m. Free and open to the public. Directions, call 498-3000 or www.nmhschool.org.

At The Rendezvous, Turners Falls: TNT Karaoke, 8 p.m. to midnight.

Rt. 63 Road House, Millers Falls: *Second Sunday Comedy Series*. Three comics, 7 p.m. \$5 cover.

Deja Brew, Wendell: *Steve Crow, Peter Kim & Don McAulay* - Warped Americana, 7 to 10 p.m..

MONDAY, MAY 12th

At *The Rendezvous*, Turners Falls: Slope Editions poetry reading fea-

turing Matt Hart & Amanda Nadelberg, 7 p.m. Followed by jazz combo *Ghost Quartet*.

WEDNESDAY, MAY 14th

The Turners Falls Fishway opens for the season! Open for public viewing during the height of spawning season. Wednesday - Sunday, 9 a.m. - 5 p.m., through June 15th.

Join Athol Bird & Nature Club members Cindy & Chuck Hartwell. for a slide show presentation of their travels to the Amazon region, Machu Pichu & the Colca Canyon, for amazing bird sights. Held at the Millers River Environmental Center, Athol. Free, 7 p.m.

THURSDAY, MAY 15th

Deja Brew, Wendell: *Wailin' Dave Robinson and Tommy Fillault* - Blues based roots, 8 to 10 p.m..

FRIDAY, MAY 16th

Children's Festival in Peskeompskut Park 9:30 a.m. - noon - Features include bilingual concert with Tom Carroll and Laurie Davidson 10 a.m., arts and crafts activities. In case of rain, it will be held inside the Carnegie Library.

At The Great Falls Discovery Center, Turners Falls: *Sensational Seasons! Buds & Blossoms* Join Rachel Roberts for this free workshop for young children. Science activity & art project. 10 to 11 a.m.

Valley Idol! A benefit for the Shea Theater, Turners Falls. First night begins at 6:30 p.m. Register as a contestant: (must be 18 years old) \$35 (register online or call Shea Theater 863-2281) Audience Admission: \$3.00 (first night only) Round 1: May 17th at 7 p.m., round 2: May 24th, 7 p.m. Grand Finale: May 31st at 8 p.m. Audience Admission: \$10/\$12 at door.

Rt. 63 Road House, Millers Falls: *Jukebox Junkies*, dance music from the 70's - 90's. 9:30 p.m.

Deja Brew, Wendell: *Richard Chase Group* - Acoustic Folk Songwriter, 9 to 11 p.m..

SATURDAY, MAY 17th

"Valley Idol, Jr." is an a cappella singing competition for 8 - 17 yr-olds. 1st Prize -\$300 U.S. Savings Bonds for each age categories. First Round Try-outs: 9:30 a.m. To register call 863-2281. Audience Admission for all dates: \$5. Round 2: **May 24th**, 9:30 a.m., finale: **May 31st** at 9:30 a.m. Winners perform

at Finale of Valley Idol!

Friends of the Montague Public Libraries Used Book Sale. Books are \$2 a bag, spring arts and crafts activities from 10 am. - noon for children at the library with Children's Librarian Linda Hickman, 10 a.m. - 2 p.m.

Pioneer Valley Institute program: *Living With Dinosaurs* join histo-

rian Sarah Doyle and geologist Steve Winters for a combined cultural and geological history tour of Pioneer Valley dinosaur fossils. 10 a.m., meet at the Great Falls Discovery Center, Turners Falls. Register: science_matters@yahoo.com

Amandla Chorus 20th Anniversary concert, at Wesley United Methodist Church, Hadley. Admission is free, donations welcome to support the work of the Tibetan Assoc. of Western Mass and the Food Bank.

Rt. 63 Road House, Millers Falls: **YARN!** Alternative country, bluegrass rockers! Pick of the night by the Montague Reporter staff. Check it out. 9:30 p.m.

Wendell Full Moon Coffee House, Wendell center: *Bob Rosser & friends*. 7:30 p.m. \$6 - \$12, partial proceeds to benefit Good Neighbors. (978) 544-5557. www.wendellfullmoon.org

SATURDAY & SUNDAY, MAY 17th & 18th

4th Annual Great Falls Art Fest! The Brick House organized, held on the beautiful grounds of the Great Falls Discovery Center, Turners Falls. Two full days of live local music, fun children's activities, and delicious local cuisine. Proceeds from this event will benefit the community based programs at The Brick House. www.thebrick-houseinc.org.

ONGOING

Hallmark Museum of Contemporary Photography, Turners Falls. On display: Lili Almog, Studio 52 - *Perfect Intimacy Revealed Through Photographer's Eyes* & Linda Butler - *Meditations on Simplicity*, Studio 56.

On display at the Discovery Center,

HOT SPOT TEEN CENTER

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Info: Jared at 863-9559.
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Turners Falls: *Wild about Nature: WGBY Photo Contest*, photographs of nature in Western Mass. till 5/31.



Andrew Hendryx's mandolin from YARN, a terrific roots-rock/alt-country band from Brooklyn, N.Y. playing at the Rt. 63 Road House, Saturday, May 17th, 9:30 p.m.

UNTIL JUNE 1st
The Barns of Franklin County show at the Meeting House Community Gallery, Unitarian Church, Bernardston. Thirty area artists showing over sixty works depicting Franklin County Barns of the past and present. Thurs., Fri., and Sat. 11 a.m. - 5 p.m., and Sun. 1 - 3 p.m.




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THIS WILD PLACE



ILLUSTRATION BY ANJA SCHUTZ

BY KARL MEYER

GREENFIELD - It was mid-morning when the phone rang: my friend Pam. "There are these birds in front of my window, pretty big. They're feeding on the ground. They have long bills. I've never seen them before."

I started to ask a question, but she broke in again, "There's like an orange patch on the back of the head."

"It's a flicker," I said.

"A what?"

"A northern flicker. It's a type of woodpecker." This was kind of fun. Sometimes people ask me questions about a bird they've seen. Sometimes I can help them; sometimes I can't.

But this day, here was a live call. Here was a live bird being described, on a real-time bird line. Fun! Especially if you're not stumped. And I wasn't stumped. I just about yelled out "flicker" as soon as Pam said the bird was on the ground, and that it had a long bill. This doesn't make me brilliant or clairvoyant or smart or anything. It just meant I'd just gotten in from a longish bicycle ride and flickers seemed to be all over. A wave of them had just arrived from further south. Northern flickers nest all the way north to the edge of the tundra.

So I'd been hearing their robust, shrill, "eeieek" as they retreated from pasture edges where they were probing along the edges. Their size, their bouncing, strong flight certainly gave them away - as did the white rump and the flashy yellow under-wings as the birds pumped away in retreat.

Flickers have some of the most striking markings of any of our birds. Both males and females have that crimson orange slash across the back of the head, as well as black bibs. There are different patterns of barring and speckling on the

powdered-chocolate back and breast, and the males also sport a black mustache. Add to this the white on the back of the tail and those gold-yellow wing linings, and you have one fancy-looking woodpecker.

You'd think all of that patterning would serve them well as some type of camouflage. It certainly doesn't work in some instances. It wouldn't this day, anyway. Flickers seem to get hammered by hawks. I'm not sure this is always in migration, but sometimes it is.

I was once up on an island off the Maine coast during the height of the fall hawk migration. The spruce forest was littered with the gold and black dotted feathers that were patently the remnants of virtually dozens of flickers: easy prey. Likewise, when the peregrine falcons first returned to Springfield two decades back, people who visited the cement walkways near the downtown clock tower were constantly reporting little piles of flicker feathers. The falcons were feasting.

Northern flickers spend more time feeding on the ground than any other North American woodpecker. They are virtually anteaters. They take plenty of other ground bugs too, as well as seeds and acorns. And though they nest in tree snags, flickers occasionally squat in the pre-made earthen holes of bank swallows and belted kingfishers.

One of the birds had flown off, Pam was explaining. I continued to spout what more I could tell her of flickers. "Oooh!" there was a pause. Then, "Oh my gosh!!" I asked what happened. There'd been a lightning swoop; a bird was atop the woodpecker, "It's a hawk."

This was really an excellent bird call. "It's got the bird down," Pam said. "It's standing on top of it."

"Pam, it's a Cooper's hawk," I told her. "You might not like this next part."

"But how do you know?"

This was one of those times when you just knew. "It's not biting the bird is it? Just kind of squeezing it with its feet?"

"Yes."

"Cooper's hawk," I repeated, telling her it would be slowly working those razor sharp claws into the flickers soft tissues to dispatch it.

To her credit, and though she was shocked, Pam didn't flinch. "It's trying to move its head,"

she said of the woodpecker.

"Yeah, it's not having a good day."

We stuck with the wild-window show for a few more minutes, me explaining that everybody has to eat; that Cooper's hawks may already be sitting on eggs. It was actually kind of neat to hear this bit of nature translated through someone else's eyes. And I was happy to do a little hand holding for Pam. She does quite a bit of it in hospice work. She's sees more of life than a lot of us.

I got an email the next day.

She'd gone out later and happily retrieved a couple of gorgeously ornate feathers, the remains of a Northern (yellow-shafted) flicker.

Cooling thought: A friend offered me a garden plot. I wasn't sure I'd have time this May, but this really seems the year when we all should try and grow something. "How about we become sharecroppers?" I asked. Agreed! Turning that soil is best thing I've done this spring. Contact Karl at: www.karlmeyerwriting.com.

Perennial Memories at Cold Brook Farm

BY FRAN HEMOND

MONTAGUE CENTER - Stand up and cheer! After a winter that packed snow to new heights and made proper use of skis and skates and sleds, a hundred yellow daffodils popped up at pond's edge, apparently oblivious to the plowing and scraping and raking that had gone on over their heads. They had been planted more than ten years ago when an aunt, who had grown up here, gave me ninety-nine bulbs to see to it that daffodils greeted each spring at Cold Brook. And cheer, too, the family folk who planted the shad-bush and weeping willow, the forsythia and white birch that add accents and color to the pine and maple, the fern and grassy edges that brighten the shoreline of the north pond, spring playground for the mallards and sometime mergansers.

In the early 1900s, the eastern shore was pastureland. Except for the huge white oak that still dominates, it was largely a steep treeless slope

with fence and wooden turnstile, its grass nibbled low by the few Holsteins who wandered from the main pasture to graze on the Vermont style feedlot. The pines that offer

been blossoming each April for over a century. The white lilac has been spreading for generations. And the memory of Grandmother's hollyhocks, tall spikes of rose and red and white, dramatic against the red barn, returns each year. Her white roses, too, were the prize of their day.

Here at Cold Brook Farm the backyard became a sheltered enclave when the family planted an evergreen copse of hemlock and spruce and pine set off by white birch. The practical was not lost, but the pipe and rope clothesline is hardly noticed, dwarfed by a huge sugar maple that my uncle planted with a hundred pounds of potatoes at its roots. The rhododendron that settles in the front of the house and gives the Breakfast Club birds a welcome haven, also, is the happy addition of this earlier time.

Indeed, it seems that we may well stand and cheer folks whose inspiration and hard work have sent the worthwhile and beautiful down the generations.



heron and big hawks a high spot to survey a lower world were probably nature sown, but a dogwood that adds interest was planted four generations ago by a young lady resident who lived life on the farm with enthusiasm.

The Japanese quince has

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