



MEMORIAL DAY
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Feel the Love!
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LAKE PLEASANT MILLERS FALLS MONTAGUE CENTER MONTAGUE CITY TURNERS FALLS

The Montague Reporter

YEAR 5 - NO. 33

also serving Gill, Erving and Wendell

50¢

REPORTER@MONTAGUEMA.NET

THE VOICE OF THE VILLAGES

MAY 24, 2007

Gill Voters Defeat Overrides for Town, Schools

ALEX GOTTSCHALK
For Gill selectboard chair Ann Banash, the resounding defeat on Monday, May 21st of the \$300,000 town and school budget override question, along with the second override question for \$125,000 to buy a single axle dump truck for the highway department, means it is time to go back to the drawing

to do now," Banash said. The majority of the override funds - \$223,000 - was intended to meet the G-M school assessment.

At the May 7th annual town meeting, Banash told the voters that failure to pass the override would be "devastating" to departmental services.

In the aftermath of Monday's vote, the town will need to cut at least \$77,000 from departmental budgets.

The second override question would have provided funding for a new vehicle for the highway department. The single axle dump truck with plow, sander and associated equipment would have cost \$140,000, with 15,000 of the price tag paid for

out of state Chapter 90 funds. That question failed by a margin of 64.6% to 35.4%, with 190 opposed and 104 in favor.

The overrides were the main draw for a town election that featured no races for town offices; 30% of Gill's registered voters turned out. Banash said, "I think 30% is pretty good, but it still means that 70% didn't show up. I would've thought that an override would have brought more people out."

The Gill residents who turned out to exercise their civic rights on the balmy spring afternoon stated strong opinions both for and against see **GILL** pg 10

"Proposition 2½ was passed to protect taxpayers from themselves, and no matter what the urgency I will not vote for an override."

**-Paul Seamans
Munns Ferry
Road**

board. "What we do first is go back to the budget and start cutting. I think we'll be cutting as much as possible without decimating the services in this town. We'll go to the fire department, we'll go the police department, but [the budget] was bare bones to begin with. We have another town meeting set for June 11th. Whether we finish [the budget] in June or whether it will go on later, I don't know."

The first override question, for an additional \$300,000 to be divided among town and school services, went down 73.5% to 26.5% with 208 opposed and 75 in favor. "I don't know what the school is going

Mixed Message on Montague Center School Closing

NON-BINDING OPINION QUESTION PASSES 965 - 719

BY DAVID DETMOLD
On a mild, sunny Monday, the voters of Montague took a long-simmering family feud into the voting booth, and emerged with a muddled mandate on closing Montague Center School. A non-binding opinion question was placed on the town ballot after a petition drive, mounted by a group called the Organized Taxpayers of Montague, garnered the signatures of 900 registered voters in January this year calling for the Montague Center School to be closed by September of 2007. The proponents of closing Montague Center added slightly to those numbers in Monday's non-binding townwide poll, with 965 voters (57.3%) backing the school closing; 719 voters (42.7%) opposed the proposition.

The school committee has the responsibility of making decisions on school closings or grade configuration, and on the G-M school district ballot

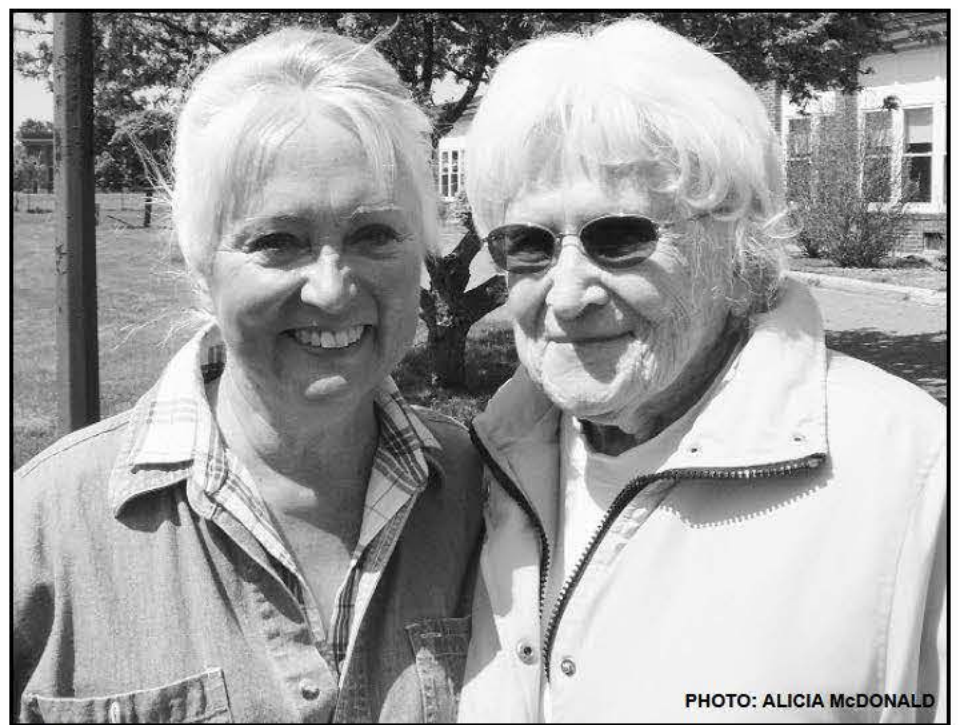


PHOTO: ALICIA McDONALD

Lin Saulnier and her mother, Julia outside the polls at Hillcrest School, where the voters were more than 4 to 1 in favor of closing Montague Center School. Townwide, "Yes" votes carried the day by 57.3 percent. The question failed in Millers Falls, Lake Pleasant and Montague Center.

the results of Monday's balloting were also mixed. Of the slate of school committee candidates backing the 'campus model' of elementary education in Montague, (i.e. closing Montague Center School) two of the four - Joyce Phillips and Linda Kuklewicz - got elected,

with one of those, essentially unopposed for a two-year Montague seat. Phillips, perhaps the most forceful and outspoken critic of Montague Center School was elected to a three-year seat with 786 votes, ousting two-term incumbent Richard Colton

(602 votes), the committee's most stalwart Montague Center School proponent. Kelly Gobeil, another advocate of closing Montague Center, failed in her bid to gain a three-year Montague seat, garnering 682 votes.

Incumbent school committee see **VOTES** pg 12

Ten Contestants in the Running for Valley Idol \$1,000 Prize

BY JESSICA HARMON
TURNERS FALLS
Who needs corporate television? If you've never seen the singing competition "American Idol," you won't have missed a thing if you catch our home-grown version, "Valley Idol," a benefit event for the Shea Theater on Avenue A in Turners Falls. In its second year, Valley Idol is an undeniable crowd-pleaser, and cheering the vocal talents of your own community is far more fun and appreciated than cheering the TV



LEO HWANG-CARLOS PHOTO

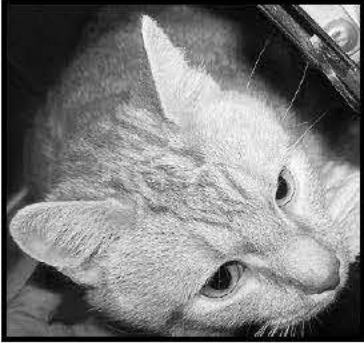
Teresa Dailey made the cut at "Valley Idol" See her vie with nine other contestants on Saturday, May 26th at the Shea Theater.

screen. There is no age limit for contestants, so anybody who pays the \$35 registration fee can attempt to win the \$1,000 prize and local celebrity status. The Shea, a versatile performance space and home to local theater groups the Country Players, Arena Civic Theater, Shea Young Stage Company and Ja'Duke Productions, is a relaxed, intimate setting to watch live performance.

Having missed last see **IDOL** pg 15

PET OF THE WEEK

Get Me Outta Here!



Olivia

Olivia is a three-year-old female orange tabby in need of a good home. Some cats can't wait to get sprung from their cages and Olivia is one. She wants to get out and check out what's going on! She will roll around, purr, and squeak hello to you. She's obviously got a curious nature and she is quite lively, as well as happy. She is OK being held too. For more information on adopting Olivia please contact the Dakin Pioneer Valley Humane Society at 413-548-9898 or via email at leverett@dpvhs.org.

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CARNEGIE LIBRARY NEWS

Summer Hours

BY LINDA HICKMAN
TURNERS FALLS - The Carnegie Library will be closed on Saturdays starting this week through Labor Day weekend in September. This is the only change in the schedule. Otherwise, summer hours are Monday - Wednesday 1 - 8

p.m., Thursday 1 - 5 p.m. and Friday 10 a.m. - 5 p.m. The library is very busy during the summer, due to the Summer Reading program, high-speed Internet access, and air conditioning, as well as the book and movie collections. For more information, call 863-3214.



Montague Briefs

JESSICA HARMON ILLUSTRATION

Elm Grove Association Meets

MONTAGUE CENTER - The Elm Grove Cemetery Association held their 116th annual meeting on Thursday, May 17th at the Welch Lane home of secretary Linda Welch. The officers - president Bradford Councilman, vice president Warren Welch, and treasurer Jean O'Hara - agreed to make no changes to the current fee schedule or lot purchase price. Gary Turn will continue as caretaker.

Although 116 years may seem like enough annual meetings in a row for any association, even one that looks out for the eternal resting place of its members, the Association is keeping an eye on the immediate future as well. They have planned a 117th annual meeting

for Thursday, May 15th, 2008.

For more information about Elm Grove Cemetery, contact Bradford Councilman at P.O. Box 911, Montague, 01351.

Bandstand Dedication

The Montague Community Band will hold its Bandstand Dedication concert on Monday evening, June 11th at 7 p.m. in Peskeomskut Park (hopefully). If the park is not yet open, the concert will be held at the Turners Falls High School. Tickets will be necessary if the concert is held at the high school, so to be safe, pick up your free tickets now! They are available at the Montague town hall and at the Greenfield Savings Bank in Turners Falls.

Fire District Committee Appointed

The Turners Falls Fire and

FACES & PLACES



Cross-dressing Party on 4th Street! Saturday, May 19th.
Rudy Giuliani failed to appear.

DETMOLD PHOTO

Water District met on May 21st, and appointed a seven-person committee to look into "alternative schemes for performing fire and health services for the community." The committee will also look at the possibility of new sources of revenue for the district, by charging for certain calls, for instance.

Those appointed to the committee include: Prudential Committee member Mark Allen, Captain John Zellman of the Turners Falls firefighters, former Prudential Committee member Dean Letourneau, Dave Gendron, Meghan Valle, Carol LaPointe, and Richard Kuklewicz. The committee will

hold its first meeting on Wednesday, May 30th, at 5:15 p.m. at the district office at 226 Millers Falls Road.

Baseball League Star

Dominic Viadero of Montague was named to the Central New England Class A Prep School Baseball League All Star Team for the second year in a row.

A right handed pitcher, Dom won 5 out of 6 complete games pitched for Deerfield Academy (DA) this year. Dom is finishing his senior year at DA and will attend Stonehill College in Easton, this fall.

Copper Thieves Apprehended in Daylight Heist

BY JEAN HEBDEN
ERVINGSIDE - The frustration the Erving police had been feeling over a string of burglaries came to end on May 13th. Over the previous weeks, someone had been breaking into the International Paper Mill building in Ervingside, near the Montague town line, every four or five days or so to strip and steal copper and other metals that could easily be traded in for

cash. The culprits would work late at night into the early morning hours, gaining entry through the back of the huge old building, where passing vehicles would be unaware of pickup trucks used to transport the ill gotten gains. The Erving police had stepped up their patrols, but being a small force they asked Montague if they could help keep an eye on the mill.

On May 13th, the thieves

changed their work schedule and struck in the daytime. Montague patrolman Christopher LaPointe drove to check out the building and observed people fleeing from the scene. Later that day, Montague sergeant Chip Dodge stopped a pickup truck driven by one of the suspects. [REDACTED] from Marlborough, NH, was arrested on a number of charges related to the break-ins, and is being

held at the Franklin County Jail on \$100,000 bail.

Erving chief Christopher Blair states that the police investigating these crimes believe there were at least three people involved, based on evidence collected at the crime scene such as number and types of foot prints and tire tracks. Further investigation shows that at least \$7,500 worth of metal was stolen, but Blair estimates the haul could be worth twice because the scrap metal yards

continued next page

SENIOR CENTER ACTIVITIES May 28th to June 1st

MONTAGUE Senior Center, 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.

Monday, 28th
10 a.m. Senior Aerobics
11 a.m. Easy Aerobics
1 p.m. Canasta
Tuesday, 29th

9:30 a.m. T'ai Chi
Wednesday, 30th
10 a.m. Senior Aerobics
11 a.m. Social Security Presentation with Dan Moraski, public affairs specialist.
12:45 p.m. Bingo
Thursday, 31st
1:00 p.m. Pitch
Friday, 1st
10 a.m. Senior Aerobics
11 a.m. Easy Aerobics

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

vided for meals, Thursday shopping, or medical necessity by calling Dana Moore at 978 544-3898.

Monday, 28th
9:30 a.m. Exercise
9:45 a.m. Library
12 Noon Pitch
Tuesday, 29th
9 a.m. Aerobics
12:30 p.m. Painting
Wednesday, 30th
9:30 a.m. Line Dancing
12 Noon Bingo
Thursday, 31st
9 a.m. Aerobics
12:30 p.m. Shopping

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

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MAC N' CHEESE A HIT AT HILLCREST

BY DAVID DETMOLD

TURNERS FALLS - More than two hundred extremely proud parents and grandparents packed the standing room only community room at Hillcrest Elementary School on Tuesday, May 22nd, at 2 p.m. for the annual spring concert. This year, the theme of the children's choral program was "Mac n' Cheese, a musical revue about friends and community," written by Mac Huff and John Jacobson.

Hillcrest principal Chris Jutres welcome friends and family members to the school with these words. "Together, we are better. This is a school community that excels with parents, teachers, and community, all together."

The pre-schoolers stood proudly before the assemblage and sang a song about a Big Fat Worm, followed by another about a Butterfly in a Big Blue Sky. They ended their part of the performance with a song with the lyric line, "The more we get together, the happier we will be." The pre-schoolers used sign language to accentuate the words to every song.

Then, with music teacher



DETMOLD PHOTO

Nan Sadoski leads the Hillcrest kindergarteners, first and second graders in song during the annual spring concert.

Nan Sadoski commanding everyone's attention, she led each grade, seated on risers in order from kindergarten to the second graders, through a joyous programme that began with the song, Great New Day. At least one elderly gentleman seated nearby sang along in unison.

The second graders hit the semi-humorous theme song, Mac n' Cheese, out of the

bleachers; it was received with a huge ovation from the crowd. The kindergartners and first graders followed up with Reach for the Rainbow, and Follow Your Dream.

Laughter, beaming faces, and proud smiles filled the hall as the younger students burst into song. Who says music is not an essential part of every school curriculum?

Sadoski is the only music teacher for the 500 elementary students in the district. She sees them one hour a week. She deserves a great deal of respect for the tireless enthusiasm she brings to the task of sparking a love of music in the children of Gill and Montague.

The spring concert at Montague Center School will take place on June 7th, 7p.m.

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- Sandy Brown

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at Schuetzen Verein grounds off Route 2, Barton Cove, Gill. Grounds open 4:00 p.m., show at 5 p.m. cash bar, food available - no coolers allowed. Tickets \$20 prepaid, available at TF Fire Dept., Montague Police Dept. and World Eye Bookshop in Greenfield.

continued from pg 2 where the metals had been turned in did not ask for identification, and the transactions were made on a cash basis, so establishing a paper trail has been difficult.

Blair estimates the damage to the mill building at \$100,000. While stripping the pipes and wires, the thieves destroyed important electrical compo-

nents that supply power to generators and furnaces.

Chief Blair appreciates the teamwork between the Montague and Erving police departments, and sent letters of commendation to Chief Ray Zukowski thanking his men for their cooperation. He states, "More arrests are forthcoming."



Invisible Goslings in Gill
BY JOSEPH PARZYCH
GILL - A pair of geese and a dozen goslings strolled through our back yard recently. When I approached them with a camera, they headed for the woods. The goslings are fluffy golden brown and when they stopped in the area of pine needles, as you can see, they are quite nicely camouflaged. We have never seen geese in the area before.

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Memorial Day

Memorial Day is a time to honor those who have died in our nation's service. As much as we decry war as a means of solving differences between peoples and look forward to the day when that barbaric practice ends, we owe it to those who have answered the call and given their lives in the armed services to pay tribute to their sacrifice.

A Memorial Day parade and ceremony will be held in Turners Falls on Monday, May 28th. Participants will gather at the Discovery Center parking lot on Second and Avenue A at 10:00 a.m. The parade will step off at 10:30, and march down the Avenue to the Veterans Memorial, where the ceremony will take place, beginning as soon as the parade arrives. An announcement will be made about the planned groundbreaking for the new veterans memorial.

In the event of rain, the ceremony will be held at the Montague Elks at 10:30 a.m.

The parade line-up is as follows. The Montague police escort will lead the parade, followed by the civil air patrol color guard and contingent, the Veterans of Foreign Wars, the American Legion, the Vietnam Veterans, and any other veterans who desire to march.

Following the veterans, the Turners Falls High School Band will parade, along with the Montague selectboard, the Montague Elks, and local girl

scouts and boy scouts. The trustees of the veterans memorial will be followed by contingents from the fire departments of Turners Falls, Montague Center, and Millers Falls.

The high school band will start a drum cadence as soon as the first unit steps off, and maintain it until the trustees reach the steps of the memorial. At that time the band will stop playing, until requested to play the Star Spangled Banner following the posting of colors.

Chaplain Joanne Brown of the Montague Elks will give the opening prayer. Commander John Murphy, Commander Brian San Soucie, and state president Al Cummings will speak on behalf of the VFW, the American Legion, and the Vietnam Veterans, respectively. High school student Charles Peterson, once again, will read *In Flanders Field*.

Walter Kostanski, Nicholas Prokowich, Al Cummings, and Larry Parker will assist with the placement of wreaths at the World War II memorial, the Korean monument, the Vietnam monument, and the casualty sign for Iraq and Afghanistan. Don Girard will play Taps. Montague Elks Exalted Ruler Pam Lester will lead the 11th hour ceremony.

Pat Allen, chair of the Montague selectboard will speak. The main speaker of the day will be Kathleen Belanger, mother of Sergeant Gregory Belanger of South Deerfield,



JESSICA HARMON ILLUSTRATION

killed in action in Iraq. Mrs. Belanger has given generously to support the creation of a new veterans memorial in Montague.

Among the other speakers will be DPW highway superintendent Tom Bergeron, whose department will assist in the construction of the new memorial, and Frank Abbondanzio, administrator for the town of Montague.

The ceremony will close with the Turners Falls High School Band playing God Bless America, Joanne Brown offering a closing prayer, and Major Gary Longley of the civil air patrol retiring the colors.

Then, everyone will go home and enjoy the holiday, while the war in Iraq grinds mercilessly on.

Decoration Day

BY FRAN HEMOND

MONTAGUE CENTER - A few years after the Civil War, General John Logan, Commander-in-Chief of the Grand Army of the United States, ordered that on May 30th, 1868 the fallen soldiers of the Northern Army be honored by the troops by "strewing flowers on their graves." It was called Decoration Day. Some Southern states had already recognized the service of deceased Confederate soldiers. Led by Rhode Island in 1877, May 30th became a legal state holiday

throughout the North, and in 1882 the 'proper' designation was considered 'Memorial Day.' Eventually, all veterans were honored.

Post World War I, some Civil War veterans were still living, and they were introduced at school assemblies to youngsters who marveled at the dusty blue uniforms and ancient soldiers. The veterans did not dwell on the tragedy of a war between the states. Less than a century previous their grandfathers had fought alongside the soldiers

see DECORATION pg 5

Memorial Day Ceremony in the Center

BY RICHARD COLTON

MONTAGUE CENTER - All are invited to Montague Center's Memorial Day Service, on Sunday, May 27th at 11:15 a.m. on the town common in Montague Center. Kathy Peura of Montague is our speaker. Kathy's daughter is Chief Master Sergeant Beth Peura of the Air Force, currently stationed at Lackland Air Force Base in San Antonio, TX. Beth Peura has served three tours of duty in Iraq. She was in charge of the intensive care unit in Balad, Iraq. Her husband is now serving his second tour of duty in Iraq. The speaker will be accompanied by the VFW

Honor Guard. The Heritage Breeds 4H Club of Montague will be presiding over the flag ceremony. All are welcome.



DETMOLD PHOTO

The Turners Falls High School marching band on the Avenue earlier this year

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ERVING MEMORIAL DAY CEREMONIES

Monday, May 28th

Erving will hold two Memorial Day ceremonies. The first at 10 a.m. at Veterans Field at Erving'side, followed at 11 a.m. by a short service at the memorial markers outside town hall in Erving center.

We welcome your letters
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American Dead in Iraq as of 5/23/07

US FORCES
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3,422

Afghanistan **390**

Wounded in Action **31,797**

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GUEST EDITORIAL

More About Signs in Montague

HYRUM H. HUSKEY JR. - THE PATCH - With all due respect to the Montague DPW superintendent, Tom Bergeron, and the restrictions of his departmental budget, I believe his reply to the article by Joe Janikas about poorly maintained signs was lame, at best. Bergeron's response simply demonstrated he would rather shift responsibility than find a solution to these types of "appearance" problems. It is an attitude that is all too prevalently demonstrated in the litter that lines our curbs, the porch junk that lies in plain view of our streets, the weeds

that grow up on our medians, the dilapidated condition of some homes, the graffiti that already marks the upper end of our new bike path, and the lack of effective policy, bylaws, and initiatives to change the situation.

In the first place, the sign conditions described in Janikas' article in the May 10th issue go much further back than "a week or two earlier" when the DPW superintendent says he brought the issue up with the Mass Highway Department. The sign on the Greenfield end of the White Bridge has certainly

been in that condition as far back as the past two years, during which Mr. Bergeron has received \$90,000 budget allotments for "unspecified vehicle purchases" to be made at the discretion of the superintendent. Perhaps town meeting members should have cut a bit of that vehicle funding back, and established a Sign Improvement Contingency Fund to enhance the entrances to our town. Such signs are hardly as costly as works of commissioned art!

Secondly, when responsibility cannot be determined, or is ambiguous, a leader

assumes responsibility and finds a means to a desirable end. On a much smaller budget, RiverCulture has already made huge strides in enhancing the town's image. John Carey didn't go find someone to clean litter off the streets; he began picking it up! The Brick House didn't determine if their budget could afford it; they organized a number of volunteer street cleanups. I didn't pick up two trash bags of litter from Canal Street and Avenue A and deliver them to the town garage because I needed the exercise! Or mow a small section of bike path last summer

because I worked for the DPW. We just assumed a small part of the responsibility for what should be the job of the DPW.

Everyone in town has some personal responsibility about the appearance of our town, and should have expectations for a litter-free environment beyond just what our jobs or town budget might imply.

One has to wonder what the DPW superintendent intends to do next if Mass Highway Department does not "hopefully... get back to me soon." I hope he's not holding his breath!

LETTERS TO THE EDITOR

Thank you, Town of Montague Voters

Thanks to everyone who supported my candidacy for Parks and Recreation Commissioner. I am deeply honored by the number of votes cast in my favor, and I will now try to live up to your expectations.

In order for me to do my job as a commissioner of parks and rec, I need *your* help. Participants, volunteers, and spectators of all events sponsored by the Montague parks and recreation department are the eyes and ears of the board. Realistically, board members cannot be all, hear all or see all, so we depend on your feedback. If there is conduct that you witness that is not a positive reflection of the department, please contact a commissioner. If there

is a special program you would like to see available, please contact a commissioner and we will explore options to make it available. If a program does not live up to your expectations, please let a commissioner know and we will try to improve it. If a program is above and beyond your expectations, let us know that too!

In other words, the parks and the programs belong to you, the inhabitants of the town of Montague. With your help, we can make them the best that they can be. I look forward to another three years serving you on the board.

- Linda Ackerman
Montague Center

Golf Tournament and Montague Mile Thank You

What started out as a mere idea turned into a successful and enjoyable community event on Saturday, May 12th, with the first Support our Students (SOS) Golf Tournament and Montague Mile fundraiser. The SOS committee would like to thank our local community for all of their help and support in putting this together. We made \$3300, which will go directly to reading, physical education, and athletics programs for all of our students at the Gill-Montague Regional School District.

Thank you to all of our golf hole sponsors, our raffle donors, and our bakers! Thank you to all of the kids - elementary through high school grades - who helped run the kids' games and manned

the tables. And thank you to Muzzy and George too! And to Kathy and the Thomas Memorial Golf and Country Club for their help and support, and all of our golf teams and Montague Mile participants, once more Thank You!

Congratulations to the winners. The first place team for the golf tournament was comprised of Justin Dion, Wally Fitzpatrick, Chris Austin, and Mike Williams.

For the Montague Mile, in the male category 13-19, congratulations to Lucas Foley; for 20-39, Tom Hartnett, for 40-54 Barry Askern, and for age 55+, Jerry Hartnett. In the female category, ages 13-19, Danielle Dolhenty, 20-39, Kim Kuminski,

40-54 Joanne Rabideau, 55+ Nancy Holmes and for age 12 and under: Maddy Scott.

We feel that this event was such a success and we received so much positive feedback that we're planning on doing it again next year. Please join us then!

- Bob Avery
Linda Chandler
Marie Colton
Stacey Langknecht
Noreen Lemieux
Support our Students,
Gill-Montague



DECORATION

from pg 4

from the South to establish this nation. They did not discuss the 540,000 estimated American casualties. They spoke briefly. They were survivors.

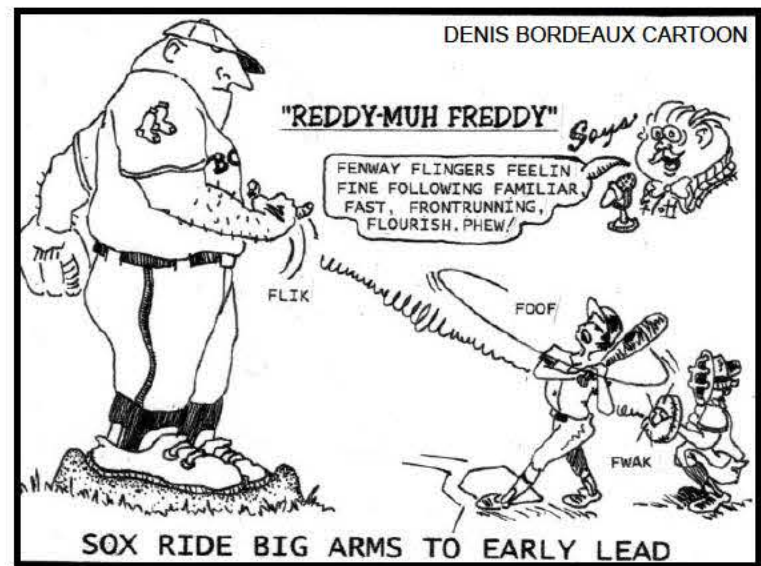
Their numbers dwindled each year, and finally it was the World War I veterans on stage whom we cheered in their khaki uniforms. They were relatively young, and we heard of Belleau Wood and

Chateau Thierry and trench warfare. They had been "over there," and we believed, as they did, that this was the 'war to end all wars.'

Today Memorial Day is a legal federal holiday, designated by Congress on the last Monday in May. It is observed according to the custom of the area and, of course, here in the North it brings hope that spring frosts are gone and outdoor living is at hand.

This year the men and

women who have served our country in World War II, Korea and Vietnam, Afghanistan and Iraq are among the honored. Pearl Harbor, Omaha Beach, Manila, the Bulge, many Americans gave their lives. And as we honor them, may we hope we gain sufficient wisdom, honesty, and expertise in our dealings with other nations that we no longer have to put generations of young men and women at risk.



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NOTES FROM THE ERVING SELECTBOARD

Conservation Land Purchase Shrinks by 40 Acres

BY DAVID DETMOLD - The selectboard plans to close on the Giniusz Farm property along Old State Road in Farley on May 29th. Most of the property will be placed under permanent conservation easement, and managed by the conservation commission for the recreational enjoyment of town residents. Thirteen acres on the south side of Old State Road will be reserved for future town use that may arise.

But the acreage tagged for conservation land has suddenly been reduced by approximately 40 acres, as the town's surveyor, Dan Werner, conducted a recent boundary survey of the land. Last June, when town meeting approved the conservation land purchase for the price of

\$800,000, voters were told the land totaled 167 acres. A Department of Conservation Services Self-Help grant will reimburse the town for \$145,000 of the purchase price.

After learning of the reduced acreage and consulting town attorney Donna MacNicol, the selectboard deliberated as to whether the town should try to renegotiate the purchase price with the Giniusz family, or return to town meeting to seek guidance on how to proceed.

The problem apparently stemmed from inaccuracies in town records and surveys from "a very long time ago," according to Sharp. Acting on advice from counsel, the board decided to go ahead with the planned purchase. Sharp said the

'missing' 40 acres would have been located, more or less, on top of Poplar Mountain.

The Erving selectboard will hold a public hearing on June 4th at 7:30 p.m. on a liquor license transfer request by Vicky Fellows. Fellows is seeking the board's permission to transfer to her name the all alcohol package store license (no consumption of alcohol on premises) currently held by her parents Leo and Jane Realini, for Your Deli on Route 2 in Erving Center.

The market and deli has been closed for renovations for the past three months. Fellows, who is completing extensive renovations to the interior and exterior of the store, hoped to reopen for business by Memorial Day, but that date may be pushed

further in the future, according to Erving town administrative coordinator Tom Sharp.

On May 21st, the board discussed the possibility of enacting a set of 'dog bylaws', as the town considers withdrawing from the Franklin Regional Council of Governments' (COG) 'dog program'. Town clerk Richard Newton said the COG is more or less trying to get out of the dog business, urging towns to set up programs of their own, and only three or four towns are still part of the program. Newton researched nearby towns' dog bylaws, and offered a template to the selectboard for consideration, including a leash law, a pooper scooper bylaw, a nuisance dog bylaw and the like.

Under the new arrangement,

if approved by the selectboard and passed by town meeting, Newton said residents would still purchase dog licenses at the town hall, and the COG would bid on providing the licenses by bundling the application for dog licenses from a number of towns. The Erving police chief would remain the animal control officer for the town.

Newton thought the cost of a dog license might go up from the current \$3 and \$6 for an unspayed female, to something more in line with neighboring towns, perhaps \$10 and \$15 for an unspayed female. Newton said there are about 100 dog licenses issued to Erving residents annually, and only "a handful" of unlicensed dogs in town.

HIGHLIGHTS OF THE MONTAGUE POLICE LOG

Leafletting on Greenfield Road; Bears on the Fairway

Thursday 5-17

8:30 a.m. [redacted] was arrested and charged with domestic assault and battery.

Friday 5-18

4:08 p.m. After a motor vehicle stop on Millers Falls Road at Winthrop Street, [redacted]

[redacted] was arrested and charged with speeding, operating with a suspended license, no inspection sticker, license not in possession, registration not in possession, operating with revoked registration, and uninsured motor vehicle.

5:46 p.m. After a motor vehicle stop on Millers Falls Road at West Mineral Road, [redacted]

[redacted] was arrested and charged with

operating under the influence of liquor, speeding, and failure to wear a seat belt.

9:52 p.m. After a motor vehicle stop on Canal Street, Stephanie [redacted]

[redacted] was arrested and charged with being a minor in possession of alcohol.

10:43 p.m. Report of a disturbance near the north end of Turners Falls Road. [redacted]

[redacted] was arrested and charged with disturbing the peace, and being a person under 21 procuring alcohol.

Sunday 5-20

4:39 p.m. Report of a domestic disturbance at a Bridge Street address. Man and woman were arguing. Found to be verbal only.

10:33 p.m. Report of a fight in

the alley by St. Stan's. Caller reports large group of youths fighting. Officer determined only two were actually fighting. Fight ended on arrival of police. Everyone sent on their way.

Monday 5-21

5:10 a.m. Walk-in to station reports three bears were seen crossing Montague City Road headed for the golf course. Area searched. Bears gone on arrival.

7:53 a.m. Report of soliciting on Greenfield Road. Caller stated that someone left political leaflet at the door. Report taken.

10:31 p.m. [redacted] was arrested on a straight warrant.

Wednesday 5-23

12:13 a.m. Report of a restraining order violation at a 2nd Street

address. [redacted]

[redacted] was arrested and charged with violating an abuse prevention order.

7:55 a.m. After a motor vehicle stop on Turnpike Road, [redacted]

[redacted]

[redacted] was arrested and charged with operating with a suspended license and a marked lanes violation.

MCTV Schedule

Channel 17: May 25th - 31st

Barton Cove Eagles:

Eagle Broadcast is dependent upon working Equipment at Barton Cove
7A-8A (Daily); 1P-530P (Friday, Sunday, Monday, Wednesday, Thursday); 130P-530P (Tuesday); 3P-6P (Saturday)

Friday, May 25

8:00 am Montague Select Board 5/22/07
10:30 am Let's See It Again
11:00 am Discovery Center: Tracking The Wily Coyote
6:00 pm Nasa Destination Tomorrow #23
7:00 pm GMRSD meeting 5/22/07
10:00 pm Valley Idol 2007: Night Two

Saturday, May 26

8:00 am NASA Destination Tomorrow #23
8:30 am GMRSD Meeting 5/22/07
11:30 am Valley Idol 2007: Night Two
6:00 pm Thomas Jefferson Speaks
6:30 pm The Well Being: "Listening To Your Body"
7:30 pm Montague Grange Variety Show
9:00 pm Thomas Jefferson Speaks
9:30 pm Montague Update: Ed and Beverly Phelps
10:30 pm Thomas Jefferson Speaks

Sunday, May 27

8:00 am Thomas Jefferson Speaks
8:30 am The Well Being: "Listening To Your Body"
9:30 am Montague Grange Variety Show
11:00 am Thomas Jefferson Speaks
11:30 am Montague Update: Ed and Beverly Phelps
12:30 pm Thomas Jefferson Speaks
6:30 pm Sheffield School Play: Mighty Minds
7:30 pm Great Falls Art Fest 2007
9:00 pm Discovery Center: Birds of Prey
10:30 pm Montague Village History

Monday, May 28

8:00 am Sheffield School Play: Mighty Minds
9:00 am Great Falls Art Fest 2007

10:30 am Discovery Center: Birds of Prey
12:00 pm Montague Village History
6:00 pm Over The Falls: Lorena Loubusky Lonergan
7:00 pm Valley Idol 2007: Night Three
10:30 pm Source To Sea

Tuesday, May 29

8:00 am Over The Falls: Lorena Loubusky Lonergan
9:00 am Valley Idol 2007: Night Three
12:30 pm Source To Sea
6:00 pm GED Connection: Language Arts and Writing
6:30 pm Independent Voices #29
7:00 pm GMRSD 5/22/07
10:00 pm Carlos W. Anderson: Hope Church

Wednesday, May 30

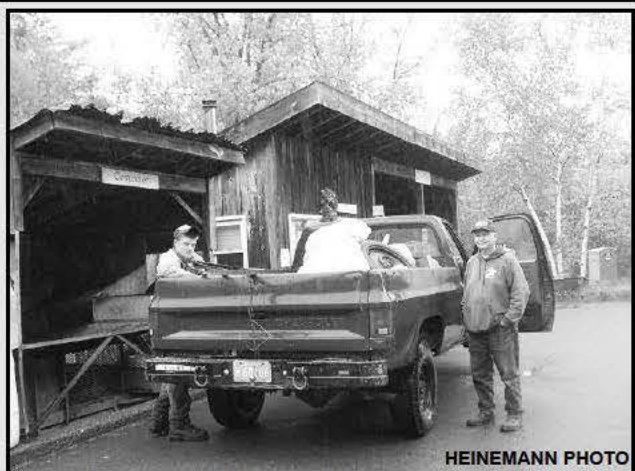
8:00 am GED Connection: Language Arts and Writing
8:30 am Independent Voices #29
9:00 am GMRSD 5/22/07
12:00 pm Carlos W. Anderson: Hope Church
6:30 pm NASA Destination Tomorrow #23
7:00 pm GED Connection: Getting Ideas on Paper
7:30 pm The Well Being: "Listening To Your Body"
8:30 pm The Road to Recovery Presents: El Alcohol en la comunidad Latina
9:30 pm Great Falls Art Fest 2007

Thursday, May 31

8:00 am NASA Destination Tomorrow #23
8:30 am GED Connection: Getting Ideas on Paper
9:00 am The Well Being: "Listening To Your Body"
10:00 am The Road to Recovery Presents: El Alcohol en la comunidad Latina
11:00 am Great Falls Art Fest 2007
7:00 pm Montague Select Board 5/22/07
9:30 pm Montague Grange Variety Show
11:00 pm Montague Update: Ed & Beverly Phelps

Wendell Litter Pick Up

BY JOSH HEINEMANN - On Saturday, May 19th, five Wendell volunteers met at the town garage, and braved the morning's rain to pick up trash along the town's roads. One crew started near Wendell Depot and worked up the hill, while a second group drove around in the town's old pick up truck, "The Colonel," picking up piles of bags that had been gathered earlier and called in, then went to special places where road worker Josh White remembered piles of trash. As usual, most of the trash was food and beverage containers. First prize was split between a stereo, which was on the bank below Depot Road and a pair of garage door openers complete with tracks, chains and motors, off New Salem Road.



Josh White and Alex unloading trash from The Colonel

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NOTES FROM THE WENDELL SELECTBOARD

Friends Raise \$77,000 for New Library

BY JOSH HEINEMANN - At the May 16th selectboard meeting, librarian Rose Heidkamp reported that the Friends of the Wendell library have made a gift to the library trustees of \$30,000 to be used for equipment and furnishings of the new building, including the skylight. The Friends have raised \$77,000, and have voted to put that money into a library donation account.

The last time she met with the selectboard, Heidkamp said the board agreed that any great changes to the playground or landscaping at the new library should come before them. An anonymous donor has offered to create a stone amphitheater in the area west of the building. The stonemason's work would include three large stones forming the amphitheater, a front stone patio area with stone benches, and stones for sitting on. The library trustees accepted the offer considering that stones are an appropriate landscape item in Wendell. Board member Christine Heard brought up the handwork that the benches will add to mowing the grounds, and liability, but the selectboard members liked the idea. Logistics of getting the large stones in place around the other site work and seeding were left for Heidkamp to arrange with Whitney trucking, and Handford Construction's project manager.

Jerry Barilla has made up copies of the library lot plan to hand out at the annual town meeting for people to draw ideas on.

Since this was the first meeting after the May 7th town election, the selectboard began with a unanimous vote of confidence in Ted Lewis, elected to yet another term as selectboard chair.

A good part of the May 16th meeting was devoted to preparing warrant articles for the annual town meeting, which will be held on Wednesday, June 6th, at 7:30 p.m. A special town meeting will begin at 7:00 p.m. to finish off fiscal 2007 business.

Finance committee member Jim Slavas told the selectboard the town is \$100,000 under its levy limit, and the tax rate they are proposing is \$18.65 per \$1,000, up from \$17.63 last year, and within three cents of

the rate the finance committee projected at the 2006 annual town meeting.

Finance committee member Michael Idoine reported on continuing negotiations between Wendell and New Salem over the funding of Swift River School. The agreement made when the school was built was that each town would pay an annual assessment in proportion to the number of students it sends to the school. Since education reform in 1995, the state has specified a minimum payment that towns must make to their regional schools. That minimum payment changes from year to year and is based on a formula that no one understands, kept secret from town finance committees. The statutory method of determining a town's additional per student cost is based on what is still needed by the school after Chapter 70 funding, and each town's minimum payment. An alternative method factors in the town's minimum payment in its per student assessment, so the total payment by each town more accurately reflects the number of students it sends to the school. The alternative method has to be approved by all towns in a regional school district.

Last year, Wendell approved an assessment for Swift River School according to this alternative method, and is negotiating with New Salem to continue on that path. This year, the difference between the two methods of payment for Wendell and New Salem is not as great as it was last year.

For the Mahar budget the use of the statutory assessment costs Wendell \$100,000 more than the alternative method would cost. Slavas said the respective school committees need to negotiate an agreement even if Orange has to give up something. Orange might lose \$300,000 to the three smaller towns in the Mahar district, but that would translate to three cents on their tax rate. The \$100,000 that Wendell stands to lose by continuing with the statutory assessment amounts to \$1.00 on our tax rate. Wendell was assessed \$9,400 per student at Mahar, and Orange was assessed \$5,600. This year Wendell's assessment has

dropped to \$7,600. Slavas said these funding distortions are not in the long term interest of the schools.

The first USDA building loan payment for the new town office building and library will not make it on this annual town meeting because delays in completing the project are delaying the paperwork required to finalize the loan. Instead, the town will have to make an additional payment on the short-term borrowing paying for the work in progress.

Money will be needed for tax taking, for Swift River capital projects, and finance committee members thought the town should begin to return money to the stabilization account. How much money will be required to heat and maintain the new town buildings is almost a wild guess. They are larger than the buildings they replaced, and they will need more custodial and grounds work, but they are also much tighter, and have more efficient lights. John Flemming, clerk of the works, saw the electric meter on the library run backwards from the solar panels.

The meeting opened with William Landry and Scott McPherson beginning the application to reopen the salvage yard at Mormon Hollow Auto. They own the property and acquired the business back from Andmar industries on March 31st. Since then they have spent hundreds of hours cleaning, and have removed tons of material including 300 gallons of antifreeze from the site. All that remains before they want to open is to steam clean the building walls. Since the name "Mormon Hollow Auto" is in bankruptcy, they want to re-open as "Scott's Wendell." McPherson owns and operates Scott's Garage in Templeton, and his son, Joseph, is set to operate the garage in Wendell. The selectboard scheduled a hearing for the new license to be held at their June 13th meeting.

Town coordinator Nancy Aldrich said that William Diaz asked the building inspector if he (Diaz) could make an offer at a town auction for the building at 118 Depot Road, with the caveat that the offer would hold only if the lot is allowed a variance. The lot is too small to

allow adequate distances between the well, the septic system and the lot line. Lewis said the treasurer, not the selectboard, has say over the auction, but board member Dan Keller felt adding preconditions to a sale was not likely, because of legal complications. He suggested the question could be brought to town council as part of another telephone call.

The board of assessors asked the selectboard's input on whether the town should have a separate tax rate for commercial and residential property. Assessor Paul Sullivan said there is little commercial property in town, and he sees no reason for two rates. Board member Christine Heard made a motion for the town to have one tax rate for commercial, industrial, residential, and open space property, and the motion passed unanimously.

John Ryan representing Franklin County Community Development Corporation described the North Quabbin Loan fund and its offering of loans and technical expertise to business and individuals in the nine towns of the North Quabbin region, among them Wendell. The CDC's objective is to create and retain jobs for low and moderate income residents. Businesses accepting loans must be consistent with their town's community development plan, a copy of which the selectboard or planning board has to send to Ryan in his capacity with the CDC. As of April 30th this year,

the loan portfolio totals \$1.8 million and the average delinquency rate has been 2%, which is less than the national lending average. Repayments are made to the fund, and that money can be loaned to another potential business.

Among the 508 firms in the North Quabbin region 89% have five or fewer employees.

The selectboard approved Keller's motion to authorize the application for the loan fund, with Athol as the lead town for the program.

Three people have expressed interest in the expanded maintenance position for the new town office buildings and grounds. The selectboard is still deciding what pay is appropriate for the job. Their decision on hiring will be made after July 1st.

Keller reported the construction fence that surrounded the new library is gone, and that alone makes the site much more attractive. Site work has started. Road boss Dan Bacigalupo has bought a truckload of arbor vitae to plant along the property line to the north of the building. The cellar perimeter drain now runs out of the building, and to daylight on town owned land. Painting is almost done, and shelving is in the building.

The biggest remaining problem is vibration in the air handling units, which are hanging from the floor.

The office building has a shrinking punch list, which includes the heating controls.

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the poetry page

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

- William Carlos Williams

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

Readers are invited to send poems to the Montague Reporter at 24 3rd Street, Turners Falls, MA 01376; or email us your poetry at reporter-poems@montaguema.net

design by Boysen Hodgson

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

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

The H.S. Reunion

Our class down helps a drop-dead blonde out of his tomato-red XKE into a sea of abrupt silence our yearbook no better than a Ouija board None of us became Rhodes Scholars

Barely recognizable the Senior Prom Queen flabby former quarterback in tow circles around the gymnasium smiling majestically

Lights turned down we dance to a pick-up group's limping Big Band Sound the rotating faceted ball showering us with bright colored spots nostalgia mixed with old gym smells

Later when I search out my tenth grade crush our conversation centers on names She says she never forgets a name unless she wants to then for a second time asks mine

--Art Stein Northfield



Two Geese

Two large geese in the field looking for food on a spring day in Gill, Massachusetts.

--Joseph (Joey) R. Parzych Gill

Evensong in Highland Park

A wood thrush used to celebrate With evensong to close each day. Our porch became a chatting place While waiting for the flute to play.

A trill was launched! The chatter stopped. Rich blessing filled the twilight air As wood thrush sang its Angelus, Melodic, strong, all clear and rare.

Yes! Dusk had gently closed the park, Had set the mood for wood thrush time, And we absorbed the splendid grace Of vespers touching the sublime.

--Kathryn Flagg Millers Falls and Allendale, NJ

Colossus on Skates

To the fragmentary nature of how I hear the radio: let's name a puppy Melinda, let's dive into frostbite for forgetting. You in the graveyard decorating with glitter and glue. You just put some glue on, put glitter everywhere, and shake off the loose remainder. That's like life, I thought. How memories are mice in the rafters. You're inert, as in, you're moving. That's you down the interstate, and, then again, on back roads.

--Seth Landman Northampton

After

Came the caravan Again and again Around and around it came Like the sound of children Singing Frere Jacques

Morning set up the lights What happened next no one will say The evening before there had been laughter- A deep laughter kicking in the door After, nothing more.

--Patricia Pruitt Turners Falls

American Gothic

the history and the future parody by the populations hanging from the hands of those who are rulers. Rome the Republic faced people and their religions as tolerancy to be bought. the holy wars history is now U.S. democracy. but to keep the people involved in all things non-religious would allow the blindness to drop in front of the citizens to forget what has passed in prophetic sense. and what has been attached to freedom is controlled from above.

--Heather Willey Wendell



At Odds

I hate you! liberal, conservative, Liberalism, Conservatism, want to bury you, in facts and statistics, in ideals and reflections,

I hate you! "He Hate Me," me hate you, I think you're a -- --, I'm comin' for you.

Jefferson, Hamilton, f-you, man, yeh - well f-you, too,

Civility, Civil-war, damn straight, I'm waitin' man! --R. J. DiDonato Wendell

CONTRIBUTOR'S NOTES:

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

Ivan Zhdanov, associated with the new wave of Russian Metarealist writers, was born in 1948, and is one of Russia's leading contemporary poets. His translator, John High has known and collaborated with

Zhdanov for years. His collection, The Inconvertible Sky, translated by High and Patrick Henry, was published by Talisman House in 1997.

Patricia Pruitt is Chair of the Montague Selectboard. Her poems have appeared in a number of magazines including Agni and Talisman. Her most recent book is Windows.

Kathryn Flagg, a 60-year resident of Millers Falls, now resides with her son and family in Allendale, New Jersey.

Seth Landman lives in Northampton, MA. He spends his time watching basketball and writing poetry. He never wanted to live in western Massachusetts, but he has grown to love it.

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

Joseph (Joey) R. Parzych lives in Gill, MA.

R. J. DiDonato resides in Wendell with his wife and children.

Al Miller lives on a farm in Montague Center with his wife Suzanne, their dogs, Shetland sheep, highland cows, chickens and turkeys, in a great neighborhood.

Heather Willey resides in Wendell where she develops her art, music, and language. "American Gothic" is from her work in progress, Some People Say.

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Structure of the Embryonic Rat Brain 7

When cartwheels and dandruff, or buttered peas and broth, when the flower girl is doused in ethanol or covered in pachisi, or hands me a pacifier I dare not put in my mouth, when the spear lands and is taken to be a compass, when the measure around is no measure at all, when the hei-tiki-tiki begins to mutter and turns from sea-green into the kind of marbled pink that elicits a "my my my" from everyone and when I see it and I roll all my dimes towards its center.

When everyone at the tiller demands rum instead of thunder and when the nuns in their search for the giant monopole return as strangers holding cameras with a sense of anticipation that no one can translate. When the trains are filled with orphans and there are unacceptable losses and a man holds the gun of the man who shot him. And when the nine ways of god are set adrift and are shaped like gingerbread men and I too am adrift furiously swimming in cold water desperate to catch up and scramble on top of one.

When I am a folding door, or a door that disappears into a wall, or a door that has nothing on either side of it and is firmly attached, or I am enchanted with the universe by a golden scraper and a crab-eating macaque. The equilibrium is struck-I do not move-all the stages of not-being have been digested-I am noseless or I am a group of northwest incinerators-I finally I see that my problem is that the top of my head sometimes feels tender.

I sail with the huns, I eat stew. The haves and have-nots float on ponds of skim milk. I make running lights for my plane crash. Here. I say hit here, hit here hard.

The lizards take tea, the astronauts float away, a man is at sea for a woman who is her own woman and still has trouble moving. And she says 'I was not made like that' 'These beans taste funny' 'Where are all my tendons'

When I am a twisted V with a winged insect inside it. I have been dug by a coal miner. I have the haverhill fever. When the insipid demand their rights or a woman holds her hands beneath a tomato vine and waits for the tomato to drop. When the floor is sloped or the ceilings have been hit and the planets are silver and knock against one another pirouetting or auto-de-fe-ing or in the act of inging that's yet to be attached, no filament, no fibrous ligament, a wandering planetary electron attracted and repelled by all her brothers or lighting brightly in a vacuum tube, all shiny and ill-at-ease.

The wings break. The pity falls. A man who has not heard of love describes the way he feels as lying on warm stones. Like falling up three flights of stairs. Like a careful investigation that led only to what was obvious from the beginning but still cannot be remembered because it is opaque or is too close to the nose or is standing right now in the living room. It has no antenna. It circles itself. It engrosses and cradles. It spits the headlong universe and hurls and kisses and froths at the mouth and burns and heaves and throws me into your dress and you into your own internal epoch, a delicious pool full of jewels and light and bone spirit and bondo and facial cream and a quiet humming of hymns and stones like songs you find yourself singing, all kinds of luminous sounds, odd sounds roasting sounds splicing and hugging sounds the sounds of healthy potato disease, hidden sounds, sounds-you-must-strain-to-hear-as-they-come-out-of-your-head sounds sounds-you-can't-live-without sounds sounds you never knew you knew.

--Christopher Janke
Turners Falls

The Return

Here's a weak knock-the pain already passed through him, the windows blazed with a biased heat, and the home itself, as if suddenly flying above the rooftop, abandoned it wooden frame for next to nothing. Wherever he found himself the golden latch on the unpainted door mysteriously lit his path, though now he waits, eyes collapsing the dark, possessed by a terrified faith, yet devoted to the outcome. He waits for any answer at the road's end, inopportunistically gilded to the elbows by the coolness of the latch seized in the cup of his hand, on the fringes of hope, approaching absolute loss. The mother will come to the porch, and call with her familiar "Who's there?" wearing that incorrigible overcoat outmoded even in the pre-war winters. The echo of unslaked, imaginary insults erupt and settle into nothing, in these left-over, guilty days.

Maybe it's true things are now completely ravaged, the prodigal son, they say, didn't return as such: unsayable, like rain, the uneducated tears, as if he got what he deserved and will pay in a currency of resurrected days-a trifle really. Blessed the one whose road is clear and simple from first light, who even when his head's turned doesn't lose sight of the goal to return and remembers the numbering of clouds among the signs that know his offense. What is resurrection? - a clearance of sorts, a place where there is no place, some kind of secret harbor, sheathes for rivers or stalls for mountains ripped out once and for all from the sequence of events. If only he knew in what country the same home would appear, as if it reflected his own fated departure, as if the mystery of all that was never squandered in indulgence and freedom could be brought back to him.

-- Ivan Zhdanov
Moscow
(translated by John High)

In My Norman Rockwell

There is a Vietnamese woman, standing in the open entrance to her grass and bamboo home. Rice baskets, like her garden, are empty. A tear is moving down through the red dust on her left cheek.

Two small children, one on either side, turn their faces up to hers, their small fists filled with the black cloth of their mother's trousers. Soldiers are pointing rifles at her belly.

Zippos inscribed with the Twenty Third Psalm, "though I walk through the valley of the shadow of death I will fear no evil," light the corners of her home.

She does not confront them. She looks to the space between soldiers. She knows the danger of their weapons and shame. Her wail of grief surrounds them all.

Too much time in this poverty of weapons.

--Al Miller
Montague Center



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NOTES FROM THE MONTAGUE SELECTBOARD

Allen Tapped as Selectboard Chair

BY DAVID DETMOLD - "Good evening, everyone," said Patricia Pruitt, calling the selectboard meeting to order. "It's May 22nd, and our first act is to chose a new chair. Who will it be?"

Board member Allen Ross said, "We all function well together. There is a tradition we rotate the chair." He nominated Pat Allen, who accepted, and was appointed unanimously.

"Thank you," said Allen. "This is a board I'm very pleased with, and I think we work well together."

Ross commended Pruitt as she relinquished the gavel to Allen. "The amount of work a chair does is a lot. I'm grateful

for Patricia for doing a good job."

With the formalities out of the way, the board approved a request from RiverCulture coordinator Lisa Davol and Laurie Wheeler of the Hallmark Museum of Photography to hold a block party in Turners Falls on Saturday, August 11th, from 2 p.m. to 10 p.m. The block party will be held on Avenue A, from 3rd to 5th Street, following a human powered parade on wheels rolling down the Ave on skates, skate boards, uni-bi- or tricycles, pedicabs or other human powered wheeled vehicles from Food City parking lot to the Shea Theater arch at 2 p.m. "Anything but shopping

carts," said Davol, who described the parade as a "celebration of pedestrian life."

A number of area businesses will be providing food booths, and area bands will be featured on a flatbed stage, positioned in front of the beautifully maintained Spinner Park (Thank you Ellen Campbell and Robert Petrizzi of Fairway Avenue for your faithful efforts to maintain the flower beds, and pick up trash at this downtown treasure.)

"We're inviting all parts of the community to come to this small festival," said Davol, who noted the Turners Falls fire department and the Montague police would be selling ham-

burgers, hot dogs and French fries at the party.

Montague Old Home Days takes place the following weekend, August 17th - 19th.

The board approved a request by Tom Bergeron to work with a Green Thumb volunteer, 20 hours a week, if there is no objection from the UE local that represents the DPW workers. The volunteer would mow lawns, and perform building maintenance tasks.

Bergeron said the reconstruction project for the northern end of Greenfield Road, from Hatchery Road to the bike path, had reached the 75% design phase, and said it was time for **continued next page**

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GILL

continued from pg 1

the overrides, with the school budget drawing particular attention.

Paul Seamans, as he entered the municipal complex shared by the highway, police and fire station where voting for the entire town takes place, remarked, "Proposition 2½ was passed to protect taxpayers from themselves, and no matter what the urgency I will not vote for an override."

Ed Golemski voiced a similar opinion. "Of course I voted No; I'm thinking about future taxes."

Among those favoring the first question, Gretel Schatz said, "I'm all for getting more money into our schools."

And Jean Murphy echoed her remark. "I'm always going to support the schools. The budget is too tight as it is."

The day's voting was a small landmark for Gill, as it saw the inaugural use of a new voting machine provided by the state.

"It worked very well, and gave all our poll workers an opportunity to familiarize themselves with the machine, which will be especially useful in 2008 with

the primaries," said town clerk Lynda Hodson-Mayo.

And maybe even with the presidential election that follows.

Main Road Update

GILL - Paving on Main Road will begin Friday, May 25th and run through the following Thursday, May 31st.

Paving will start at the south entrance to Northfield Mount Hermon and will require closing of Main Road

from Route 10 to North Cross Road intersection.

The Main Road detour will continue to send traffic out Boyle Road, but traffic will turn left at the end towards Turners Falls Road in Bernardston.

HIGHLIGHTS OF THE GILL POLICE LOG

Jackknifed Trailer in Gill School Lot

Wednesday 5-16

11:00 a.m. Charged [redacted]

Operating after suspension and unregistered motor vehicle. Incident occurred on Gill-Montague Bridge.

2:04 p.m. Assisted Erving police with motor vehicle accident on Route 2.

3:10 p.m. Report of loose cows on West Gill Road.

Thursday 5-17

3:50 p.m. Assisted with spill on

Gill-Montague bridge, two subjects stranded in an inspection truck, later removed after repairs.

Saturday 5-19

9:55 a.m. Assisted with medical emergency on Franklin Road.

10:15 a.m. Civil dispute on Chappell Drive.

6:15 p.m. Assisted with medical emergency on Riverview Drive.

Sunday 5-20

12:00 p.m. Report of tree down

on Pisgah Mountain Road, assisted Highway Department with same.

2:22 p.m. Arrested [redacted]

Arrested for a warrant.

3:45 p.m. Animal complaint on West Gill Road, referred to Animal Control officer.

Monday 5-21

8:20 a.m. Jackknifed tractor and trailer in the Gill Elementary School parking lot. No injuries, no hazardous materials involved; tow company

called to scene to remove same.

8:35 a.m. Report of damage to utility wires on North Cross Road, spoke with reporting party, no damage observed.

11:15 a.m. Civil dispute on Chappell Drive regarding property lines.

Tuesday 5-22

8:25 a.m. Assisted subject with civil dispute on Oak Street.

5:25 p.m. Subject at station regarding restraining order.

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NOTES FROM THE G - M SCHOOL COMMITTEE

Kociela Re-elected School Committee Chair

BY LISA MERKEL

The G-M school committee met on May 22nd, with three new members on board. Sandra Brown replaced Sue Henry for a three-year Gill seat, Linda Kuklewicz replaced Deb Bourbeau (who resigned) for a two-year term in Montague, and Joyce Phillips replaced Rich Colton for a three-year seat from Montague.

The annual reorganization of the school committee began with the election of a chairperson for the board. Terry Lapachinski nominated current chair Mary Kociela, and was seconded by Ted Castro Santos. A nomination for Joyce Phillips, put forth by Linda Kuklewicz, was seconded by Valeria Smith, but immediately declined by Phillips. Kociela was voted in by eight out of nine members. Phillips did not vote for her.

Valeria Smith was voted in as vice chairperson in a close contest against Mike Langknecht, with five out of nine members supporting her. Castro-Santos nominated Langknecht, and Lapachinski seconded his choice. Kristin Boyle nominated Smith, and was joined in her support by Kuklewicz, Kociela, and Phillips in the vote.

Boyle was unanimously voted committee secretary and Castro-Santos unanimously voted assistant treasurer. The committee also affirmed that Cindy Penniman would continue in the employed position of treasurer.

Valeria Smith presented superintendent Sue Gee with a congratulatory citation from the Massachusetts State Senate for the high quality of her work in her years of service. The senate also wished her good luck with her continued community service as she moves on to the superintendency of the Quabbin Regional School District. Smith acknowledged with regret that it was Gee's last official G-M school committee meeting.

For her last superintendent's report, Gee announced the establishment of a mentor program being implemented by educator Nancy Daniel-Green. The mentor program is required by state law, and was recently cited as lacking on the G-M accountability report. Daniel-Green, who developed the program for the district, described its potential for greatly improving the quality of education at G-M schools. The program is set up for senior educators to

support teachers who are new to the profession, as well as more experienced teachers new to the district. Green said the mentor program is meant to welcome new teachers, smooth their transition, and create a network of support. Three mentors have been hired, and each new teacher will be mentored over a three-year cycle.

The committee heard a report from the task force on the capital improvement needs of the town of Montague's elementary school buildings. The committee will ask Montague building inspector David Jensen to come before them at a future meeting to answer questions about state building code requirements pertaining to the removal of architectural barriers in the schools, specifically the type of lift or elevator needed at the two story Montague Center School and at the three story side of Sheffield School. The committee acknowledged the task force's hard work, and noted that their report was not a schedule for capital improvements, but a snapshot of the current needs with documented numbers attached to their repairs. The decision about which repairs to undertake at which time will be

taken in consultation with the member towns, as the classroom configuration of each school building is settled.

The Montague capital improvements committee has approved only the repair of the roof at the Montague Center School, a \$158,000 item, for the coming fiscal year.

The committee voted in favor of a policy for intra-district school choice for parents of Gill and Montague students starting in the fall of 2007, by a vote eight in favor, and new member Sandra Brown abstaining. Sixth grade students in Gill will be allowed to choose into the Great Falls Middle School if their parents so choose, despite the town meeting vote of May 3rd during which Gill voters turned down the idea of a wholesale move of the Gill sixth grade to the middle school. The policy adopted by the committee rejected the idea of a lottery for intra-district choice students, opting instead to allow the principals of the sending and receiving schools, in consultation with the superintendent, to determine whether or not to grant each request, "based upon educational considerations" for the student.

When the topic turned to whether to re-establish a fourth grade at Montague Center School, to allow third graders there to continue to another grade level at the same school, perhaps with the expectation that a fifth grade would then be provided at Montague Center next year, a heated discussion ensued. The board took no action, but promised a vote on the matter at their next meeting.

This discussion got mixed in with the topic of the No Child Left Behind federally mandated choice for students who would be attending Sheffield School next year. Sheffield has been labeled an under-performing school under NCLB guidelines, and parents of Sheffield students are therefore allowed to choose their children to another district school at taxpayer expense.

Gee told the committee 15 students, some from Turners Falls and some from Montague Center, would be choosing over to Gill next fall, and it would cost \$42,300 to hire a mini-bus from Kuzmeskus to bring them there.

Ted Castro-Santos asked for a breakdown of the cost of cre-
see SCHOOL pg 17

from previous page

the board to schedule a public hearing on the project.

Bergeron said he was consulting with MassHighway to determine who is responsible for maintaining signs at either end of the White Bridge from Greenfield. "If the state does not own either of them, unfortunately, budget issues do not allow us to replace either of them at this time," he said.

Allen replied, "Maybe someone with experience," could volunteer to repaint the sign at the Greenfield end of the bridge.

Bergeron requested town residents to call the DPW with sim-

ilar complaints about public infrastructure in need of maintenance. "We all want the town to flourish and prosper," he said.

The board approved a request by Ristorante DiPaolo owner Denise DiPaolo to extend the boundary covered by her liquor license to include a 5½ foot section of town sidewalk in front of her restaurant. The section is separated from the pedestrian walk by pedestal bases topped by cast iron urns and flowers, linked with decorative chains. Four tables and eight chairs are situated in this section, which can only be used in fair weather. DiPaolo said she is installing a

plate glass storm door in the front door of the restaurant to allow for supervision of the sidewalk seating. The request now goes to the Alcoholic Beverage Control Commission in Boston.


The board approved a request by Marina Goldman of Montague Center, in association with Elyria Films, to use public property in the villages of Millers Falls, Lake Pleasant, and Montague Center over the coming weeks in the filming of a feature length movie called Bridge of Names. Up to 50 people will be involved in the shoot, which will move from

village to village through the first week of June.

The board agreed to send a letter to state legislators opposing a bill backed by Verizon that would, among other things, eliminate local control of community access television stations. "This is an attempt by corporations to limit the amount of autonomous access to as much free speech and freedom of information as possible," said Ross.

The board approved a bid by Warner Brothers, of Sunderland, for \$49,000 to construct the new veterans memorial on Avenue A. "That was \$10,000 higher

than our estimate," said Allen, who added fundraising efforts for the memorial are ongoing. Bergeron offered to help out by having the DPW crew take care of the sidewalk reconstruction part of the project.

The town will hold a labor/management meeting with town and school unions at the Turner Falls High School auditorium on Tuesday, May 29th, at 7 p.m. A pre-town meeting has been scheduled for Wednesday, May 30th, at 7 p.m. at the Senior Center on 5th Street. Annual town meeting begins at 8:30 a.m. at the High School on Saturday, June 2nd. 

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VOTES

continued from page 1

favor of closing Montague Center in November of 2006 before voting to keep it open a few weeks later, received the largest number of votes for a three-year Montague seat, 796. Also running, newcomer Steven Palso of Randall Wood Drive received 109 votes for a three-year Montague seat.

In Gill, a proponent of the campus model of elementary education for Montague, Heidi Engledhardt, failed in her bid for a three-year seat on the committee, bested by former Gill finance committee chair Sandy Brown 837-544.

Linda Kuklewicz gained the two-year Montague seat on the committee, with 1065 votes. David Leh of Montague Center received 173 write-in votes for that seat.

The precinct percentages on the non-binding school closing question broke down as follows: in Montague Center (precinct 1), the ballot question failed 80-372, or 17.7% to 82.3%. With 468 voters coming to the polls, Montague Center had the highest turnout of the day, trailed by Precinct 3 on the Hill with 329 voters and Precinct 4 with 313 voters.

In Lake Pleasant and Millers Falls (Precinct 2) the question of closing Montague Center also failed to pass, but by the narrowest of margins, 116 - 119.

On the Hill, on the west side (Precinct 3) the question passed by 276-53, or 84% to 16%.

On the east side (Precinct 4), including the neighborhood surrounding Hillcrest School, the question passed by the largest margin of the day, 267 to 46, or 85.3% to 14.7%.

Downtown Turners Falls, with the dismally low

turnout of 112 voters, approved closing Montague Center School by 10 votes, 61 to 51 (54.5% to 45.5%).

In Montague City and the Patch (Precinct 6) the question to close Montague Center School passed two to one, 165-78 (or 67.9% to 32.1%).

Voter turnout was moderate overall, with 32.87% of the voters showing up at the polls.

On the town side of the ballot, the top vote getter of the day was town clerk Deb Bourbeau, who racked up 1426 votes, running unopposed, followed by tax collector Patti Dion (1413 votes), also unopposed, and Patricia Pruitt, who took 1306 votes to return for a second three-year term on the selectboard. Linda Ackerman easily beat Brian Costa for a three-year seat on the Parks and Rec Commission, in the only town election race, 1062 to 494.

In the races for town meeting, Precinct 1 veterans Mitch Gaslin (189 votes) and Karen Schweitzer (191) were turned out of office in a squeaker by Jeanne Weintraub (192) and Mike Langknecht (who recently moved from Precinct 2 and had to run again to gain back a seat on town meeting in Montague Center with 224 votes).

Peter Golrick made a return to town meeting in Precinct 2, with four write-in votes for the one open seat there.

Long-time incumbent and frequent no-show Don Wysocki (117) got shown the door in Precinct 4, kicked off by Joyce Morin (203 to 117).

Local legend John Donahue received his walking papers from the voters downtown, losing his seat in Precinct 5 with the low vote total of 51. He was passed by Ericka Almeida (66) and Stanley Dobosz (76) who will now fill his seat and the one open three year seat in that precinct.

Reflecting on the results of the opinion poll, Pat Allen, the chair of the Montague selectboard said, "If this was a presidential election, I think the winner would say 57% is a mandate. However, I don't think it is a mandate. The Yesses came out ahead, but it's non-binding. It's really up to the school committee to decipher this.

"I hope they can have some good discussions, now that the committee has come up with the information they needed on the costs of renovating the elementary schools. That should help them.

"This problem is much larger than Montague. It's statewide. The governor is studying the problem, and I hope he doesn't just tinker with the edges, because I think we are losing public education, at this point.

"I think this has been very emotionally difficult for everyone. Hopefully everyone can step back, take a deep breath, and try to find a solution."

Voting was brisk all day on the Hill and in Montague Center. Here is a sampling of voter opinion from those precincts.

[Reported by Matthew Robinson]

Most of the voters interviewed in Precinct 3 and 4 opted to close the Montague Center School, citing the economic benefits of consolidation for the district. But each voter was clear that money was not the only reason for their Yes vote.

Charles (no last name given) said, "I voted to close the school because you don't need two schools in the town. There's plenty of room at Hillcrest for all the kids."

Ronald Lenois gave several reasons why he voted to close the Montague Center School. "It's too expensive; it's not handicapped accessible; it needs a new roof and there's asbestos. Plus there's no room to expand the school."

Sandy (no last name given) also felt the Montague Center School needs too much work. "I voted to close

the school. It would be silly to put all that money into that school." She said, "It should have been closed a long time ago." She also noted that a new parking lot had recently been built at Hillcrest.

Kevin, originally from Belchertown, wanted to make it clear that his Yes vote was not meant to hurt anyone's feelings. "This is strictly a monetary issue; nothing personal."

Two voters who said they voted No both came from Montague Center originally. "My children went there," a voter named Mary said. "There is a higher quality of learning there," she added.

Many of the voters polled did not want to talk on the record. Most just smiled politely and said, "No comment." One gentleman who refused to comment on his vote said, "This is still America," and then climbed into his foreign automobile and pulled out of the new parking lot.

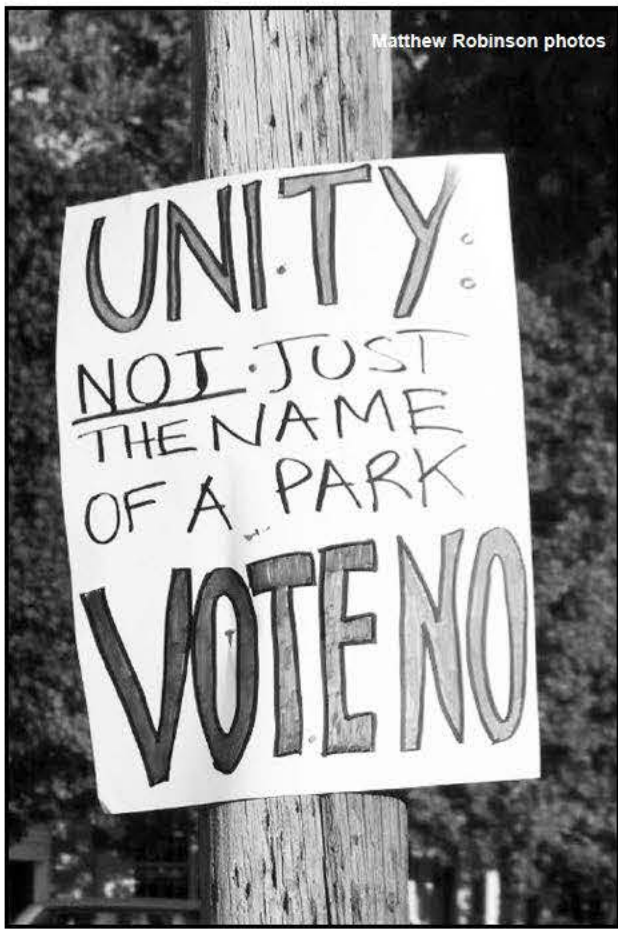
[Reported by Alicia McDonald]

Precinct 4's Robert Sparkman said, "The logic of budgetary constraints trumps any sentiment."

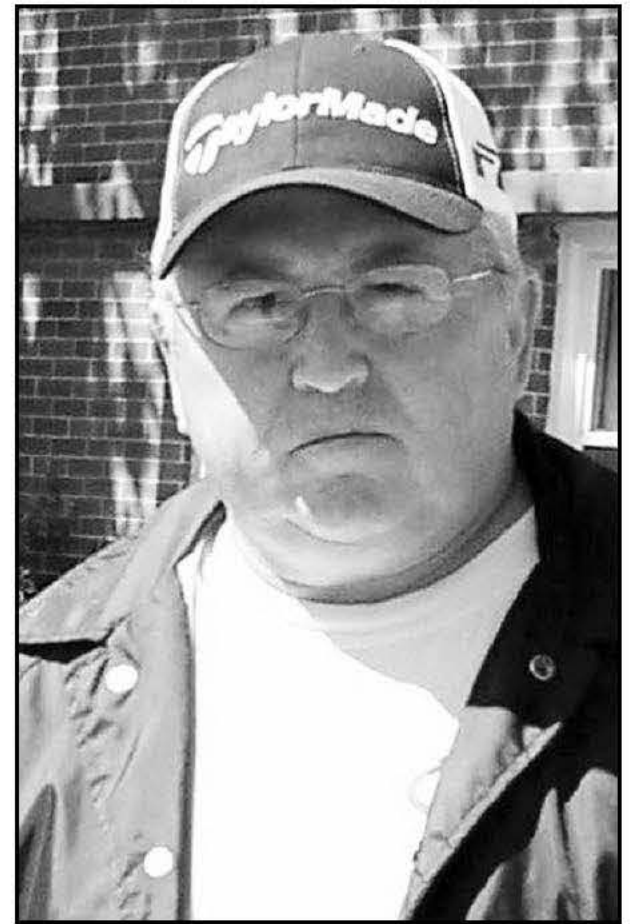
Lin Saulnier stood outside the polls with her mother, Julia Saulnier. Lin voted Yes, as, "The cost of repairing the Center school is too high." And, resolved to stay true to her practice over decades of voting in town, the elder Saulnier said, "I do not care to share my vote with anyone."

[Reported by Joanna Frankel]

Down in Precinct 1, the No's were running strong. Kathy Lynch said, "On the non-binding question, I voted to keep Montague Center School open. I think there's a lot of misinformation surrounding this question. I'm curious why it's all focused on closing Montague Center School, and there's no discussion



Matthew Robinson photos



Ronald Lenois voted to close the Montague Center School. "It's too expensive; it's not handicapped accessible; it needs a new roof and there's asbestos."

about Hillcrest or Sheffield."

"I will definitely vote No on closing Montague Center School," said Casey Beebe. "I don't think that closing it is a solution; it's a crisis mode response. People will be happier with smaller schools with smaller classes that give a community feel. History is see VOTES next page

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VOTES
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ALICIA McDONALD PHOTO

Amy Podlenski voted to close Montague Center School. "The money to upgrade the Center school is better spent on the children themselves, enhancing programs such as art and music."

really important and many communities that choose to close their small, local schools have found it to be a mistake."

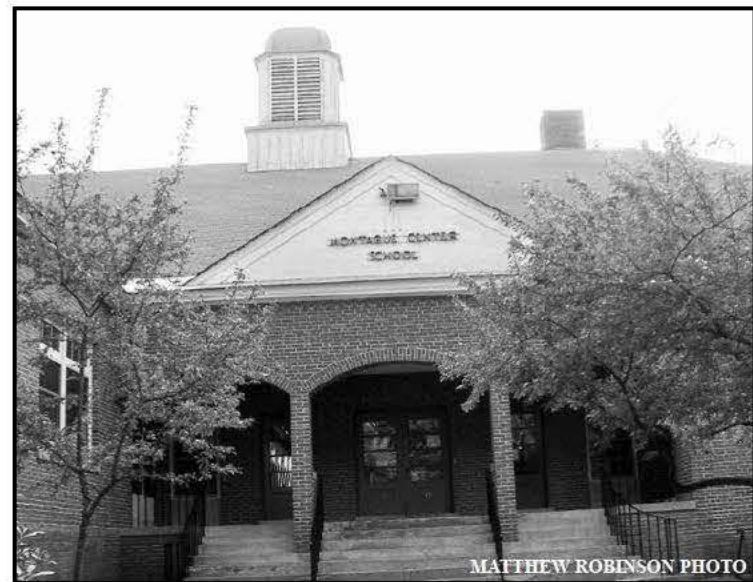
Max Pepper was also "voting No on the question about closing Montague Center School. In this country, in this state, and in this town, we ought to be able to fund education for our children, not war to kill them."

Former Montague Center principal Anna Garbiel had these remarks upon leaving the polling booth. "I voted No for closing Montague Center School. I think it's a shame that this question even came to be on the ballot at all. All the energy that has gone into campaigning to close the school could have been put in a more positive direction. This is not going to attract young families to the district and to the schools, which is what we need to do. The whole question about closing Montague Center School is just smoke and mirrors hiding what our real budget problems are."

[Reported by Alicia McDonald]

As of 1:30 p.m. the Montague City polling station at the former neighborhood school on Masonic Avenue reported 95 ballots cranked into the box, a turnout the poll workers called average.

Brian McCue said he voted No on the opinion ques-



MATTHEW ROBINSON PHOTO

The Montague Center School

tion. "The neighborhood school in Montague Center adds to the unique aura of this town, making it precious to everyone."

Amy Podlenski voted Yes. "The money to upgrade the Center school is better spent on the children themselves, enhancing programs such as art and music. The outdated prices from a ten-year-old study [of renovating the school] are untrustworthy, and the actual costs will be even higher."

Laura Patnode, with her son Jal Kelley-Clark voted No. "School closings always unravel the healthy social fabric of a community. The class argument is ridiculous, because we're all poor!" Kelley-Clark added, "I don't like the idea of people losing their jobs. In the past, redistricting and busing, etc. has not worked to make schools more diverse."

School committee candidate Linda Kuklewicz dropped by and spoke passionately about the burden of accountability for the school committee to produce a balanced budget. "We can no longer expect the town or the state and federal governments to fund the deficits. The schools themselves need to find creative solutions (such as energy efficient designs in the newly remodeled high school) to defray costs. The retired residents on fixed incomes should not have to bear the burden of tax over-

rides." As she stood in the gentle sunshine in the cozy glade at the end of the street, Kuklewicz reminisced about the Masonic building when it was her old neighborhood school. But her nostalgia had clearly been tempered by her view on the district's need for fiscal responsibility.

[Reported by Kevin Foley]

"I don't think we should be closing any schools," said Chris Sawyer-Laucanno, standing in front of the Turners Falls Athletic Club, now the Senior Center, in downtown Turners Falls at 1:30 p.m. He was one of 51 voters in Precinct 5 who turned down the referendum question.

"It's too divisive. The way this played out has been very nasty." He wasn't alone in his thoughts.

"I don't have any kids in school," said one elderly Turners Falls resident. "But I don't think we should be closing any schools."

"I voted to keep the school open," said Dorothy Malloy, a resident of Fourth Street.

Although some felt the school needed to remain open, D. Wood, a Turners Falls resident, offered some simple yet sobering words as she exited the polling place. "It's a hard question. Something has to be done." Town and school officials have grappled with the issue for months, and there is no easy answer, according to Wood.

Voter turnout in Precinct 5 was less than impressive. "It's absolutely shameful how few people showed up," remarked one Turners Falls resident as she exited the polling place.

Although the former Highland School in Millers Falls was quiet at two-thirty in the afternoon, over 109 voters had voted there by that point in the day.

After the vote, Art Gilmore, (who won re-election to town meeting from Precinct 2) had this to say.

"I thought it would probably turn out the way it did. I thought

Millers Falls would probably vote No because they have children going to the school. If they want to keep it open, keep it open."

But Gilmore said, "The thing is, with the budget coming up, where are we going to cut? With the number of children in that school, if it's proven that it will save money to shut it down, then fine. But if we're going to have to spend money to bus the kids elsewhere, or if we're going to lose money to school choice, fine."

As Organized Taxpayers of Montague spokesman Ed Voudren told the selectboard back in January when he delivered the petitions calling for a referendum to close Montague Center School, "The people have spoken, I believe." But rather than the clear mandate some expected, the message they delivered on Monday was decidedly mixed.



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Postcards from Provence: Les Deux France

BY DAVID BRULE - April 22nd. It's election Sunday in the village. By ten o'clock the café on the square is filling up, small groups at tables here and there, morning cigarettes, café crème, the Sunday newspapers. Sun bakes the square even at this early hour.

Everyone is remarking on how early and hot the spring is, and will there be enough rain soon to get through the dry summer months? Lilacs, wisteria, roses in bloom, odd-shaped sycamores, branches truncated, massive and blunt will create dense shade when they leaf out. For now, the pale to brilliant blue of Provence sky overhead, with clouds of screaming swifts streaking ten feet above, whipping and maneuvering in the sheer delight of spring. They've made the migration up from Africa, and are swirling around the familiar tile rooftops of their summer home. Clusters of sleek and gaudy cyclists, in their bright team colors breeze by, chatting and pleased with themselves, the prospect of Sunday morning on the road, physical exertion and challenge ahead, the week's work behind them. The first pastis of the morning are having an effect by 10:30, and talk of the elections is heating up.

The first round in the presidential elections is taking place, with 12 candidates on the ballot, ranging from the extreme left (Trotskyist, Communist, the anti-globalist candidates, the Green Party and on through the Socialist, the Center, the Gaullist, and the far right wing represented by the Front National.) Everyone knows it'll come down to the first serious woman candidate for the presidency in French history, Ségolène Royal of the Socialist Party versus Nicolas Sarkozy of the center-right Gaullist party. The big question is will the huge field of candidates prevent either main candidate from garnering enough of a percentage to ensure victory in the second round in two weeks.

Typically, this first round must produce two top candidates for the final round on May 6th. Anything can happen. Will Ségolène pull enough votes from the Left and Center to assure herself a place on the ballot for the run-off? Will Sarkozy pull enough votes from the fascist Right to dominate the

Center and the Right? Will the mild-mannered former school teacher, Minister of Education and Center candidate François Bayrou fool all and knock one of the other two serious contenders off the ballot for the final round? Speculation abounds as to whether the French voters will vote their conscience in the first round, as is typical, and cast votes for a radical candidate as a form of protest. (For example, one would vote for the ecologist or fascist, knowing full well they could not ever be on the final ballot for the presidency, but to vote in an angry and radical way, to rock the boat, and send a signal.) In the second round, the French want their votes to be more 'useful'. For example, in the last presidential elections, the first round went to the fascist candidate, to protest the continued social unrest, immigration, unemployment, and lack of security on the streets. This protest vote so shocked the country, that in the second round, the Gaullist candidate - Jacques Chirac - easily defeated Jean-Marie Le Pen of the far Right. But the protest vote totally eliminated the Socialist Party, something Ségolène Royal is fighting to avoid. We will know by tonight, but for now, it's Sunday in the south of France, and *Garçon! Un autre pastis, s'il vous plaît!*

May 6th. Climbing high above the Rhone valley as the sun bakes into the hillside of the vineyards of Tain, we hike up a zigzag path to the top of a hill, with the visit to a small chapel there as our first objective for the morning. Rows and rows of two-foot high stocky grapevines march up and down the hills in each direction, each vine supported by a sturdy four-foot high stake. These grapes will produce the world's entire production of a wine called *Crozes-Hermitage*, which will sell for around \$27 a bottle back in the US. On the other side of the hill, a different sort of wine,



Sun-drenched Provence

Tain-Hermitage, will be produced, and given the soil composition, the different amounts of sun exposure and rainfall, a quite different bottle of wine will result. Looking at the soil, you wonder how the vines draw any nourishment at all from this hillside. It seems a pebbly mix of broken down limestone, sand, something vaguely resembling dirt. But, for the sake of consumer research and quality control, we will make our way shortly to the wine cooperative at the foot of this hill, to sample as much of this wine as possible, just to be sure that indeed the quality is acceptable!

Far below, the Rhone flows sullen and dark under the bright sun along tree-lined banks, bordered by flowering apricot trees, cherry, and almond. Up here, we reach the chapel, bemused at the thought that so many of the vineyards of France began as sources for wine to be used by priests and monks to celebrate mass. French religious orders oftentimes developed the best wines, and eventually champagnes, brandy, and other liquors. To some in the US that may seem to be a fundamental contradiction between religious message and actual practice, although France has made an art of savoring contradiction and paradox!

Decidedly, the French electorate remained true to form in the first round on April 22, by choosing two fundamentally different and contradictory figures to oppose one another in the second round, and thus represent *Les Deux France*. So today, May 6th, is the showdown between two different concepts of the future of France. The Socialist Ségolène Royal is facing the controversial and fiery Nicolas

Sarkozy in the final round. The two candidates have brought two decidedly different programs to address the concerns of the French electorate: what to do about internal stability and secure neighborhoods, the marginalization and alienation of the immigrant populations (North African Arabs for the most part), unemployment and a stagnant economy, and the relationship with the US and the European Community. Two weeks ago in the first round, the beautiful weather brought out more than 80% of the electorate, who gave Sarkozy a five point lead over Royal, but that lead seemed to be shrinking with the "Anything but Sarkozy" movement that was growing rapidly.

The elections are always held on Sundays in France, and by 6 p.m., back from our hike to the hillside vineyards, we gathered in the living room in front of the television to await the results. Presidential elections are different here: Sunday voting, direct suffrage (no Electoral College), no opinion polls published within 48 hours of the vote date, no exit polls, the new president to take over immediately in two weeks. At precisely 8 p.m., after a dramatic 10-second countdown, the image of Sarkozy was flashed on the screen with approximately 53% of the vote going to the Gaullist and 47% going to the Socialist. And it was over. Shock and dismay in our household, jubilation next door.

This election had divided the French, and the vote confirmed the split. In the end, a slender majority had chosen the hardliner: Sarkozy had succeeded in drawing in the Far Right to support him, while holding the Center with his promises of aggressive policing of troubled neighborhoods, creating new jobs through Bush-like economic tactics, and creating a new Ministry of National Identity and Immigration, which smacked of early fascist Germany for some. Ségolène, on the other hand, had

espoused a more humanist, inclusive and integrated approach to solving the nation's woes, more in tune with the trends of many current European governments and their populations. However valiant her campaign was, she had to deal with a divided Socialist Party that was none too sure they wanted her as a candidate at the outset, and a classic leftist formula that may be becoming obsolete in the increasingly disarticulated social landscape and the growing global economy.

The Socialists will have to confront the new realities and make serious decisions about the evolution of their party's platforms and very existence. The French voted for a strong authoritarian leader who promised a strong France, a leader who has promised to undo the culture and the gains of the May 1968 revolution which for so many of us represented, albeit briefly, social change and political hope. Strangely enough, this leading European nation, which could never understand how America could have chosen George W. Bush, may well have elected a neo-conservative who emulates the Bush/Cheney style of governance! France has always been a sister Republic to America, and now also finds itself at a crossroads.

Things are moving fast however. Already by May 19th, the new president has been sworn in, and has named a cabinet composed of eight women and nine men. A notable appointment was the Minister of Justice, a woman of modest background, a daughter of Algerian immigrants, who will be France's main magistrate! Are such appointments a sincere effort to open a new era in French politics, after the years of the tired government of Jacques Chirac? Or are we witnessing the beginning of a relentless though brilliant liquidation of the aging Left?

For many, France has always been a bastion of individual liberty, the land where national health care, social security and paid vacations for the working class were invented, where artists, intellectuals, and the oppressed seeking asylum and opportunity were welcomed. We must now wait to see what will be lost and what will be gained, and which France will emerge


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IDOL

continued from pg 1

year's contest I was unsure of what to expect when I arrived at the Shea on May 18th to watch the auditions. As it turned out, I was in for a treat. Suzanne Davis, Shea board member and organizer of the event, assembled a wonderful team to produce the show, and their enthusiasm made for a fun, inviting atmosphere. Most enjoyable of all was marvelous emcee David Peck.

Peck, a semi-finalist in last year's contest, is a DJ for 95.3 Bear Country, and film critic for "Fat Guys on Film". His infectious energy, humor and relaxed nature set everyone at ease, and his years of stage experience lent a smooth professionalism to the proceedings.

The auditions began with a strong, soulful rendition of Patsy Cline's "Walking after Midnight" by Irene Hoisington of Northfield. Her performance won her a spot in the competition, and kicked off what would be a night of surprisingly impressive talent. Hoisington was also the first of many contestants to receive criticism from the judges for focusing too long on the lyric monitor at center stage.

Judging the competition were Kimberley Morin, Theater and Communications professor at GCC for 10 years, who also serves as director for the Uncommon Players; Bill Jamieson a national booking agent and owner of All Access Talent Agency in Greenfield, and Phil Simon, who also represents artists around the country with his agency, Simon Says Booking and Publicity, based in Orange. They were charged with the difficult task of reducing a promising group of 31 hopefuls to the 20 who would enter the first night of official competition on Saturday, May 19th.

Judging criteria was based on stage presence, showmanship, vocal range, voice quality and song choice. As the contenders soon learned, it takes more than a pleasant voice to compete in



LEO HWANG-CARLOS PHOTO

Nicole Ovitt-Serrell

Valley Idol. Fortunately the judges have ample experience and not only made the tough calls on whom to advance, but also shared wisdom and guidance to help the contenders turn in even stronger performances. Unlike the television show, the judges also worked well together and were honest but kind when speaking to contestants.

Sound and music were provided by Tom and Dawn Mayo of Shining Star Karaoke. They brought along a huge selection of music, because the range of song choices covered all genres and eras. In addition to the pre-recorded selections chosen by the majority of competitors, two pieces were performed a cappella. With a strong, adventurous voice, Rachel Almeida of Heath braved a selection from "Aida," and Sharon Horton of Turners Falls surprised and amused us with her cathartic rewrite of "American Pie." Both were eliminated, along with others like 4th Street's own Christopher Holmes, doffing his stand-up comic's hat to croon Tom Jones' "Green Grass of Home" with his rich tone and ample range, and Rob Campbell of Shelburne Falls who successfully handled the vocal gymnastics of Queen's "Killer Queen", even managing a sweet falsetto, despite a case of nerves and allergies.

The first night of competition proved even more exciting, with the contestants experimenting with new approaches to their performance and donning

wardrobes that ranged from daring to dapper. Finding the right balance among all the required scoring elements proved a challenge, and resulted in the elimination of many talented singers. Joey Stankiewicz of Hadley, who made the audition cut with his rumbling rendition of Johnny Cash's "Ring of Fire," wore a smart black suit and channeled Bobby Darin with charm and irrepressible energy. Bob Beasley of Athol won audience appreciation with self-effacing humor followed by Elvis-inspired powerful vocals, but his showmanship wasn't bold enough when it came to making next week's cut. Nicolene Corey of Greenfield, co-owner of Jiggs Tavern, had the vocal range, confidence and talent, but forgot to smile.

Some contestants found their past performance experience providing an additional challenge. In a contest where judges like to find fresh faces and undiscovered talent, perennial favorites may fail to impress. Alana Martineau of Turners Falls, finalist and winner of the \$250 Audience Favorite prize last year, has to work hard to astonish after years of impressive musical performances on the Shea stage, competing with her own celebrity. Vickie Stankiewicz, finalist and last year's shocker, showed her ability to surprise again on Saturday, infusing Melissa Ethridge's "Come to My Window" with a soft femininity and sincerity. New to the competition this year

is Jen Tobey of Montague, winner of the recent WRSI singer/songwriter contest. Tobey thundered through "Get Over It" by the Eagles with aggressive, gritty vocals and a forceful stage presence.

Other contestants learned the hard way that theater experience doesn't always translate to karaoke proficiency. Several other familiar Shea Theater faces were included in Saturday's contest. Erin Richman of Westminster, last year playing the title role in "Cinderella" and musical director for the "Wizard of Oz" coming to the Shea in July, got Saturday's competition off to a strong start with Aretha Franklin's "Chain of Fools." Andrew Boivin of Bernardston, Prince Charming in "Cinderella," impressed the audience and judges with dapper accessories (including turquoise tie, sneakers and cufflinks) and theatrical confidence, but missed the vocal mark when he dropped an octave for Michael Jackson's "The Way You Make Me Feel." Martha King-Devine of Leverett, "Abigail" in last month's "The Crucible" and possibly the youngest person to audition, made a solid dent in Etta James' "At Last" imbuing that standard with smoky, torch-song flavor, but was encouraged by the judges to have fun with her song selections and interact with the audience more. Jerri Higgins of Montague City, also of "Crucible" fame, was bubbling with infectious exuberance and able to break the 'third wall' to include a receptive audience. She will be continuing to the semi-finals.

Nerves tripped up several contestants who otherwise displayed striking vocal ability. Rochelle Gorts of Greenfield was forced to make a last minute song switch, which undid her previous confidence and strong voice; Abby Connolly of Amherst brought a "unique quality" to her dynamic voice and distinctive look; Jocelyn Roberge of Turners left a lasting impression at the auditions with her red high heels, and added

feline playfulness and sweetness to "Bobby Magee;" and Diane Proulx of Greenfield, whose song selections, "Greatest Love of All" by Whitney Houston and "My Heart Will Go On" by Celine Dion ordinarily signal karaoke nightmare, pulled them off with skillful beauty.

The last group to become semi-finalists surprised me the most; these were the vocal stars I didn't pick out of the crowd on audition night. First is Nicole Ovitt-Serrell of Turners Falls. She was feisty, funny and nonchalant until she opened her mouth to sing. What came out were smooth, captivating, effortless vocals that flowed like honey. Second is Lisa Pelletier of Feeding Hills, driving an hour and 15 minutes to audition. She appeared to be a sweet, unassuming, perhaps shy woman with her toddler grandson cheering her on in the audience. What she brought with her were soulful, unaffected, powerhouse vocals. Ashley Parker of Turners Falls transformed her bashful sweetness into sassy strength the minute the music started and ended with a phenomenal finish. Katrina Goff of Athol impressed and surprised the judges by nailing Whitney Houston's "I Will Always Love You" with a spectacular finish. Last is Teresa Dailey of Charlemont. She had to be convinced to even audition and on the night of the contest almost didn't make it as a result of an unexpected problem at work. Thank goodness she did because she was outstanding and achieved the magic combination of vocals and performance. She is going to give the other nine semi-finalists a serious run for their money.

Don't miss the next round of "Valley Idol" at the Shea Theater on Saturday, May 26th at 7 p.m. Not only does it benefit a valuable cause, it promises to be an exciting finish. The semi-finalists return with two song selections, one of their choosing and one of an assigned genre. They will then be reduced to five finalists for the electrifying final round on Saturday, June 2nd at 8 p.m. See you there!



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Your Pace at Your Place

Go Bats!

BY TARA GORVINE

GREAT FALLS - Bats get a bad rap. As nocturnal animals they are innately mysterious, and the folklore and myth surrounding the vampire bat have led to many misconceptions. But I think bats are cool.

Like many kids, I used to go out after dinner and watch bats as they dove for bugs, sometimes throwing stones up in the air to fool them into revealing themselves. Despite this fascination, like many people I feared (until last Thursday, that is) that one would fly into my hair. I have even been known to shriek and run for cover when caught in a flurry of feeding bats. I guess you could call it a love-hate relationship.

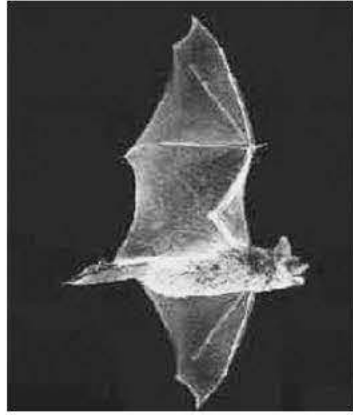
When it comes to bats, John Foster wants us to feel only the love. He also wants to dispel the myths and mystery that surround them. Thursday, May 17th at the Great Falls Discovery Center, he did just that. The executive director of the New England Naturalist Training Center in Northfield, Foster was a fun and easy-going speaker, full of humor for the audience of kids and adults.

Foster concentrated on local

bats so that we would understand the species we come across in our backyards (or, perhaps, in our houses.) He started off with a slideshow of different bat species, the first slide a photo of a "cute" bat he compared to the Taco Bell Chihuahua. If you're not fond of Chihuahuas, you might not have thought it as charming as Foster did, but there was no denying it had a certain fuzzy appeal.

Bats are mammals, we learned, and are more closely related to primates (i.e. humans) than they are to rodents. They birth their young, nurse, have a sophisticated family life, sport five digits, and can live 25 years. Some bats, usually females, live in colonies. Female colony bats share nursing and babysitting duties, and older females - or midwives, as Foster likes to call them - even pantomime the birthing position for new mothers.

There are nine different species of bats in Massachusetts. In the summer you'll find them inside hollow trees, outside dead



trees under the exfoliating bark, in the tree canopy, in holes left by woodpeckers, or in houses, barns and other structures.

If you're a bat enthusiast and are wondering why no bats

have taken up residence in the bat house you put up especially for that purpose, check to see that it gets sunlight. Like all mammals, bats require warmth. In summer they roost outside in areas that are warmed by the sun. In winter when they hibernate, they need a steady climate in order not to waste energy regulating their temperature. They also prefer humid caves in order to maximize their water intake. According to Foster, who specializes in hibernating bats, there are many old mines in western Massachusetts, and plenty of caves as well, so our local bats don't have far to go between summer and winter homes.

Pointing out the small size of the bat's eye relative to its ear, Foster explained the importance of a bat's hearing. In order to locate their own position and the position of everything in their surroundings, bats emit a series of supersonic blasts which bounce off trees, walls, houses,

insects, people, and anything else in their vicinity, echoing back to the bat's ear where it's interpreted. These blasts are inaudible to humans, but we were able to hear them thanks to a sonar detector Foster used on our little field trip down to the canal. We were treated to the "feeding buzz" - a series of sonar blasts heard on the detector as popping sounds - when a bat homed in on an insect. We heard several such buzzes accompanied by a bat flying nearby.

Bats do make sounds that are audible to people. If you get close to one, you might hear the squeaks or hisses they use to communicate fear or disturbance.

Bats come out early in the evening, just as it's getting dark, and feed for several hours. They then return to their roost, emerging again at about 3 a.m. to feed for another several hours before roosting for the rest of the day. That said, they do sometimes come out at odd times of the day if they're hungry or disturbed by something.

Bats in this region eat exclusively insects - mosquitoes, beetles, moths, etc. They don't catch insects in their mouth - if they did, they wouldn't be able to emit sound waves. Instead, they use their interfemoral membrane, the part of the wing stretched between their hind legs, to catch and hold insects until they are ready to eat them.

When Foster brought out a bat skull, about the size of an almond, it was clear that most of their brain is devoted to echolocation. He stressed how bats know exactly where everything around them is located thanks to this handy technique. So, for those of us who fear that bats will fly into our hair, Foster has this to say: Unless you have a lot of bugs in your hair, you have nothing to worry about.

It's not necessary to love bats, but it is worthwhile understanding them. For instance, Foster put to bed the common misconception that bats are rabies carriers. On average, 2.5 people a year in the US are infected with rabies from bats. That's 2.5 out of over 300 million people.

Bats should be handled with caution, but there's no need to go killing them just because they fly into your house. If one should make its way in, Foster (who considers it a treat to have a bat in the house) advises us to turn the lights off in one room and open all its windows, and turn the lights on in the rest of the house. The bat will prefer the dark room and eventually find an open window.

Have a colony of bats you want to move? Questions or concerns? An interest in taking a field study course? Contact John Foster at the New England Naturalist Training Center, (413) 498-2584 or foster@nentic.com.

Pioneer Valley Symphony and Chorus Wraps Up Another Season

BY ANNE HARDING

GREENFIELD - On Saturday, May 21st, the Pioneer Valley Symphony and Chorus led by Paul Phillips and Alexandra

Ludwig gave the final concert of their 68th season. The evening was a fabulous blend of instrumental and vocal performances celebrating several

Verdi and Puccini operas. It was terrific to see the full parking lot at Greenfield High School for an evening of classical music, and while white-haired folks like myself predominated, the audience members spanned several generations.

Truly a community organization, the 200-strong volunteer musicians hail from nearly 40 western Massachusetts towns as well as a few New Hampshire, Vermont and Connecticut communities. They have been professionally led by the music director since 1994

and chorus director Alexandra Ludwig since 2004 (the only sad note of the evening was the announcement that Ms Ludwig was making her final appearance with the group in order focus on her visual arts career).

Considered by board president Zeke Hecker to be "a uniquely bright jewel and one of the oldest and finest community orchestras," the PVS certainly gave an exemplary show. Guest vocalists from the area included mezzo-soprano Marjorie Melnick and baritone John Salvi and the featured vis-

iting artists were soprano Diana McVey and tenor Brian Cheney. I found the virtuosity of the star soloists breathtaking, and felt the chorus and symphony rose to new levels of excellence that night.

Introduced to classical music by my father when I was a little girl (opera by way of NPR's airing of the Metropolitan Opera), I am particularly fond of the Verdi operas. They were among my dad's favorites, hence they're the ones I can sing

see CHORUS pg 18

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A HOLISTIC HEALTH PERSPECTIVE

I Scream, You Scream . . .

BY JENNY CHAPIN

MONTAGUE CENTER - The first ice cream parlor in this country opened in New York City in 1776. The hand-cranked ice cream freezer, invented in 1845, opened up the market for homemade ice cream. The cone, formulated by an ice cream vendor apparently to stop customers from stealing his serving dishes, was made famous at the 1904 World's Fair in Saint Louis. Popsicles and ice cream bars were created in the 1920s.

The United States leads the world in ice cream production and consumption. In 1924, the average American ate eight pints a year; in 1997, it was 48 pints per year. This is, of course, roughly one pint per week. The biggest consumers are children ages two through twelve, and adults age 45 and older.

We are a nation in love with this rich creamy treat - to the degree that, in 1984, President Ronald Reagan declared July

"National Ice Cream Month" - and we uphold our desire for it even as it wreaks havoc on our health.

Milk and dairy products are acid-forming and mucus-producing substances that provide the ideal bodily environment for children and adults to experience increased frequency of colds and flus. Eliminate dairy foods for an extended period and eat a balanced diet, and you're likely to suffer less from colds and sinus infections.

In 1983, Dr. Frank Oski, former chief of pediatrics at Johns Hopkins Medical School, published a book titled *Don't Drink Your Milk*. In it, he contends that drinking milk has been linked with iron-deficiency anemia in infants and children, implicated in cramps and diarrhea among much of the world's population, and the cause of multiple forms of allergy. Oski believes that milk plays a central role in the origins of atherosclerosis and



heart disease, and he documents the link between dairy foods and eczema, bed-wetting, and ear infections in children. (Recall that children are among the highest consumers of ice cream.)

Dr. Christiane Northrup wrote in *Women's Bodies, Women's Wisdom* that she sees "many problems associated with dairy foods: benign breast conditions, chronic vaginal discharge, acne, menstrual cramps, fibroids, chronic intestinal upset, and increased pain from endometriosis." Dairy consumption has also been linked to breast and ovarian

cancers.

Research has shown that processed cow's milk (vs. raw or organic) is not healthy for humans. An expanded list of problems includes colic, gastrointestinal bleeding, inflammatory bowel disease, sinusitis, skin rashes, arthritis, diabetes, osteoporosis, asthma, hives, and autoimmune diseases. The proteins in cow's milk are absorbed into the blood not fully digested; this provokes an immune response, and repeated exposure eventually disrupts normal immune function.

It's not just the dairy that's a problem in ice cream; witness the amount of fat and sugar. My current favorite is Ben & Jerry's Phish Food: a pint is roughly 1100 calories, almost half of which is from fat. Technically that's four servings, but I can eat a pint in two sittings, and I know I'm not alone in that. Tasty, but lots of empty calories, lots of fat, and lots of milk for my body to

process.

According to Oriental Medicine, because ice cream is cold, damp, and sweet, it is one of the worst things we can put into our body. Cold contracts, causing stiffness and pain, and weakens our digestive system. Dampness, or mucoid deposits and moist accumulations, causes edema, cysts, and tumors, as well as inviting an overgrowth of yeasts, viruses, bacteria, and parasites. Excess sweet damages the kidneys and spleen, weakens the bones, and causes head-hair loss.

I won't advocate eliminating ice cream - it's too yummy - but maybe being aware of the myriad ways it affects our bodies will create some balance in how much we eat.

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

THE HEALTHY GEEZER

Smoking Harms Nearly Every Organ of Your Body

BY FRED CICETTI

LEONIA, NJ - During my research on many health topics I have been amazed repeatedly by how pervasive the effects of smoking are on the body.

I quit smoking cigarettes in 1969, five years after the U.S. Surgeon General's first report said that smoking causes lung cancer. I was convinced the report was right when it came out, but it took me five years to develop the willpower to give up my Marlboros. But, at the time, I didn't realize that smoking could harm you in so many more ways.

The most recent Surgeon General's report on the health consequences of smoking said, "Smoking harms nearly every organ of your body, causing many diseases and reducing your health in general." The report also said, "Quitting smoking has immediate as well as long-term benefits, reducing

risks for diseases caused by smoking and improving your health in general."

If you smoke, you owe it to yourself to quit. And I believe you have an obligation to try to help others to quit. I'm going to do my part with this unusual three-part series. No scolding or exaggerated scare tactics. I'm going to give you just the facts in a chain of bulletins.

You can tack these columns up on bulletin boards and refrigerators. I recommend giving them to a smoker you love.

Here goes:
Smoking damages the immune system and increases the risk of infections.

The general health of smokers is inferior to the health of nonsmokers.

Many illnesses in smokers last longer than in nonsmokers.

After surgery, smokers have a greater risk of complications and a lower survival rate.



JESSICA HARMON ILLUSTRATION

When smokers get skin wounds, they take longer to heal than those of non-smokers.

Women who smoke usually reach menopause sooner.

Smokers tend to have lower bone density. Postmenopausal women who smoke have an increased risk for hip fracture than women who never smoked.

Smoking cigarettes causes

heart disease, the leading cause of death in the United States. Smokers who have a heart attack are more likely to die within an hour of the heart attack than nonsmokers.

Cigarette smoking doubles a person's risk for stroke.

Cigarette smoking causes emphysema, which destroys a person's ability to breathe. An early warning sign of emphysema is "smoker's cough."

Smokers commonly suffer from chronic bronchitis.

Smoking causes peripheral artery disease that can affect the blood flow throughout the entire body.

Smoking causes many types of cancer, the second leading cause of death in the United States. These include cancer of the lung, esophagus, larynx, mouth, bladder, pancreas, kidney and cervix.

Smoking increases your risk of developing sciatica, a pain

that runs down the back of your leg from spinal-disc pressure on a nerve. Smoking can block the body's ability to deliver nutrients to the discs of the lower back.

Smoking causes cataracts.

Smoking during pregnancy is linked with the higher risk of miscarriage, premature delivery, stillbirth, infant death, low birth weight, and sudden-infant-death syndrome.

Smoking dulls your senses of taste and smell.

Smoking makes your skin age faster.

Smoking increases the risk of sexual impotence.

[In the second installment of this series on smoking, we'll report on nicotine, cigarettes of all kinds, cigars, pipes and smokeless tobacco.]

If you have a question, please write to fredcicetti@gmail.com.

SCHOOL

continued from pg 11

ating a fourth grade at Montague Center this year, and a fifth grade the next, and whether this would reduce the cost of transporting the remaining students to Gill.

Montague Center parent Emily Browning said, "I think all the parents would keep all their kids at the Montague Center School. We would love nothing more than to have fourth grade at Montague Center."

Gee counseled the committee they were not in a position to add teaching staff at Montague Center, or to upgrade the computer technology or library at that school to provide equitable education for upper grades

there. "You really are in a very difficult financial situation." Gee said 3.5 teaching positions are already on the chopping block for next year.

Under further questioning, Gee admitted that the fifteen Montague students being choiced to Gill would prompt the hiring of a new teacher for the upper grades at Gill Elementary, where two classes have been combined and taught by one teacher for the last four years, due to low enrolment. "As MCAS becomes more and more important, as Gill is a K-6 school... it would be ideal for the district to have a teacher for each grade at Gill."



HIGHLIGHTS OF THE ERVING POLICE LOG

Spittin' in the Beer

Wednesday 5-16

6:45 p.m. Report of a two-car motor vehicle accident on Route 2 in the area of the westbound bypass. Vehicle involved cited for failure to use care in stopping. Massachusetts state police and Erving fire on scene. Both vehicles towed.

Thursday 5-17

9:40 a.m. Report of a domestic disturbance at a Hanson Court address. Subject put hand through window and was bleeding. Found to be verbal only. Subject treated at scene for injury.

11:05 p.m. Report of an unwanted female at the French King Motel. Subject removed by friend

Friday 5-18

11:15 p.m. Assisted Montague police with large underage party on Randall Road. Party was broken up. All drivers given portable breathalyzer tests.

Saturday 5-19

3:45 p.m. Report from off duty Warwick officer off a male party drinking beer traveling Route 2 eastbound. Subject turned into

Wheelock Street. He was using empty beer bottle as a spittoon for chewing tobacco.

Sunday 5-20

10:15 p.m. Report of a fire at Erving Paper Mill. Machine was on fire. Fire out on arrival. Erving fire department on scene.

Tuesday 5-22

11:00 a.m. Report of a raccoon in a dumpster on Old State Road. Animal was found to be fine, just trapped. Assisted with getting it out of the dumpster.

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

Moonshine and Home Brew

BY JOSEPH A. PARZYCH GILL - During prohibition, Pa bought whiskey from people who operated moonshine stills, and began picking up spent mash to feed our farm animals. Still operators fermented a mixture of corn, grain and yeast to produced alcohol. After collecting the alcohol through distillation, the spent mash was of no use to them, and they were more than happy to get rid of the incriminating evidence. There was some residual alcohol in the spent grain. After feasting on this treat, our chickens and

geese wobbled around for a while before passing out.

The first time I saw our geese passed out, I thought they'd died. Mama told me to lay them in a cool place to rest. Their necks hung down like ropes as I carried them to a shady spot under the lilac bush behind the house. When I laid their necks out straight, they honked weakly, seeming quite content. The geese were regular luses, ready to give the moonshine mash another go, as soon as they could navigate again.

With work at the mill slack

during the Depression, and seeing some of his friends prospering from moonshine stills, Pa thought he'd like to earn some of that easy money. The remote farm, being situated on a back road, made it an ideal location for a moonshine operation. With animals on the farm, buying corn and grain wouldn't attract attention, not that most grain dealers cared. They were glad to sell grain to anyone who had the money; the more, the better. If my father got into producing moonshine, the animals would eat the spent mash, getting rid of the evidence and providing feed for them at the same time. It seemed like the perfect setup.

Pa bought a still, fermented a batch of mash for a few days, filled the still, lit the kerosene

burner and began distilling. He never quite grasped the process of distillation and overfilled the still, figuring it worked like a coffee percolator - which, in this case, it did. First steam, then grain, corn, and all, percolated through the coil. The stuff coming out of the end of the coil was substantially the same product going in. Soon, the coils plugged. Pa was sure he had been stuck with a faulty still.

Phony "government agents" got wind of his operation and came to pay a call, to try to shake him down for a bribe. One man approached Pa as he was splitting wood in the yard. The other man stayed in the car with the motor running. The car was a huge monster with big disc wheels. I suspect


it was a Packard or Pierce Arrow. The "agent", announcing he was from the "guvmint", flashed a badge that looked an awful lot like the Dick Tracy badges we got with a couple of box tops and twenty five cents for postage and handling.

Pa pulled the ax out of the chopping block and headed for the man. The phony agent broke into a run toward the car. Pa was right on his heels. The driver began backing the big ark out of the yard before his cohort got in the car. The "agent" ran and jumped on the running board, as the car roared off down the road, raising a cloud of dust, with the agent standing on the running board, trying to get inside.

- Continued next week.

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CHORUS
 continued from page 16

with Saturday's show brought tears to my eyes on many occasions. The music brought back so many fond memories of my father and his passion for high fidelity sound systems blasting opera throughout the neighborhood.

I was reminded about Dad's claims the original Disney animated feature *Fantasia* was his first introduction to classical music and his determination to ensure his children were exposed to

different types of music. The PVS&C has been introducing live symphonic music to area school children for a dozen years, bringing thousands of area school children to performances at the Greenfield High School and more recently expanding to Hampshire County. The program has been so successful there are often waiting lists.

While the season has ended, the Pioneer Valley Symphony and Chorus will be back in the fall.

For more information see <http://www.pvso.org>.

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ARTS & ENTERTAINMENT



FRIDAY, MAY 25TH

Concert at The Bookmill, Montague Center: *The Lonesome Brothers*, the Valley's favorite brothers rock the mill with danceable alt-country full of swagger and pathos 8 p.m. \$10/\$12.

Deja Brew, Wendell: *Mafanti*, World Folk Soul. 9 to 11 p.m.

NMH Presents Music Director's 25th Sacred Concert. 2:30 p.m. at the Auditorium on the Northfield campus. Music from the Concert Choir, Symphony Orchestra, NMH Singers, Select Women's Ensemble, Alumni Choir, and Chamber Orchestra. Heffernon directs the chorus, and Martin Klueh conducts the orchestral music. Free and open to all.

A Bouquet of Music Healing Arts Concert featuring Jerry Noble & Bob Sparkman, jazz for keyboard & clarinet. Baystate Franklin Medical Center's Main Lobby, Greenfield. 12 to 12:45 pm.

Relay for Life Fundraiser "Baked to Death" Chefs Julia Chives, Day Ja Vu, and Emery Legacy. The hostess of the event is Martha Stupor and the judge, Judge Bacon Whopper Jr. Comical Mystery Tour is donating all proceeds to American Cancer Society. Pizza dinner and mystery theater, Montague Elks, Turners Falls. 325-1940.

Hot Spot Entertainment presents a Rock Concert at the Brick House, Turners Falls. *New Beginning*, a collaborative effort between young and established professional musicians to raise funds to help youth learn marketable skills and invest in the present and the future of the youth of Franklin County. 6 to 10 p.m.

SATURDAY, MAY 26TH

Coffee & Soul concert with *Jim Scott*, at All Souls Church, Greenfield. *Dan Tinen, Ferne Bork and Bruce Kahn* trio will open. Admission \$10 at the door, 7:30 p.m.

Deja Brew, Wendell: *Blame It On Tina*, folk rock. 9 to 11 p.m.

The National Spiritual Alliance: Thompson Temple, Lake Pleasant. Psychic readings and Reiki healings cost \$25 for 20 minutes. 11 to 4 p.m.

Valley Idol Karaoke singing competition continues at the Shea Theater, Turners Falls. All proceeds benefit the Shea. Info and tickets 863-2281. 7 p.m.

SUNDAY, MAY 27TH

Deja Brew, Wendell: *Nexus*, rock. 7 to 9 p.m.

Pre-1840 Rendezvous in Northfield. Experience the mountain man life of the 1700 & 1800's by visiting camps from the French & Indian War, Revolutionary War, and Rocky



The Fabulous Maurice performs at the Great Falls Coffee House on Wednesday, May 30th. Maurice has been playing the accordion since childhood and entertaining audiences for years with polka and old time music combined with his special brand of humor. Doors open at 6:30 pm coffee & homemade baked goods. 7 p.m. music. Suggested donation of \$5 - \$10. All proceeds go to support the Discovery Center.

Mountain Fur Trade periods. Sunday (& Tuesday 5/29) Open to the public. Please contact Gary Vigue (508) 248-1163 or NEPR@aol.com for more information. 10 a.m. - 4 p.m.

MONDAY, MAY 28TH

Live Jazz at Ristorante DiPaolo, Turners Falls, 6 to 9 p.m.

TUESDAY, MAY 29TH

Common People Concerts on the Gill common. *Metro Sax Quartet*-eclectic class from the Boston area. 7 p.m., free. Sponsored by the Gill Cultural Council. Info demons_of_gill@yahoo.com. Continue each Tuesday through August.

WEDNESDAY, MAY 30TH

The Fabulous Maurice performs at the Great Falls Coffee House in the Great Hall at the Discovery Center. 7 p.m.

Rt. 63 Road House: *Ottomatic*: Slim-rocken blues, great harp. 8 to 11 p.m., no cover.

THURSDAY, MAY 31ST

Deja Brew, Wendell: *Paul Spaterella*-Acoustic, 8 to 10 p.m.

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 24 Third Street, Turners Falls, 01376

Rt. 63 Road House: Open Mic hosted by Peter Kim. 8:30 p.m., no cover.

C O O P Concerts in the Round At Greenfield Energy Park, Miles Street, Greenfield. Bring a picnic dinner, blanket/chair, and enjoy the great music. 6 to 8 p.m. free.

FRIDAY, JUNE 1ST

Mocha Maya's Coffee House, Shelburne Falls: *The Gray Sky Girls* with special guest *Teresa Storch*. Original and old-time country slowgrass. Free, tips encouraged for the musicians. 7 p.m.

FRIDAY & SATURDAY, JUNE 1ST & 2ND

Pothole Pictures, Memorial Hall Theater, Shelburne Falls presents *Ball of Fire*. 7:30 p.m.

Sleeping Beauty a musical based on Briar Rose by the Brothers Grimm performed by RNR Performing Arts Musicqal Theatre students at South Deerfield Congregational Church, South Deerfield. 7 p.m. \$6 general, \$5 children 10 and under. Info. 665-0439 or rowrant@aol.com

SATURDAY, JUNE 2ND

Valley Idol! Five finalists each perform 2 songs. Judges will score each song separately, and the contestant with the highest combined score will be the grand prize winner! At The

Shea Theatre, 8 p.m.

SUNDAY, JUNE 3RD

Deja Brew, Wendell: *Adam Bergeron*, classical piano 7 to 9 p.m.

MONDAY, JUNE 4TH

Live Jazz at Ristorante DiPaolo, Turners Falls, 6 to 9 p.m.

FRIDAY, JUNE 8TH

Concert at The Bookmill, Montague Center: *Homegrown String Band*, Swinging rhythms of old-time string music. 8 p.m. \$10/\$12.

SATURDAY, JUNE 9TH

The Second Annual Goddess Festival at The Art Bridge, Shelburne Falls noon until 9 p.m. Musicians, belly dancers, fire twirlers, craft vendors & kids activities.

The Changing Face of Turners Falls: A Community In Transition. History, panel discussion begins 10 a.m. at The Shea. Afternoon at the Great Falls Discovery Center, 1:30 to 3 p.m. The Geology, history through architecture and the art scene. Free, everyone welcome.

Concert at The Bookmill, Montague Center: *Stillhouse Jammers*, High lonesome bluegrass w/smokin' fiddle & banjo www.stillhousejammers.com 8 p.m.

FRIDAY & SATURDAY, JUNE 8TH & 9TH

Pothole Pictures, Memorial Hall Theater, Shelburne Falls presents *An Inconvenient Truth*. 7:30 p.m.

JUNE 16TH

Learn the Art of Making Fire at Northfield Mountain Recreation & Environmental Center: This program will teach you how to find fire-making materials; introduce participants to carving a set; and show proper positioning of body and the fire making tools. Program will be held rain or shine. 1 - 4 p.m. for ages 12 and older, \$30 per person. Pre-register 800-859-2960

UNTIL JUNE 17TH

Exhibit: John Willis' and Tom Young's "Recycled Realities and Other Stories". Haunting and surreal series of black and white images at Erving Paper Mill. Also images from "View from the Rez" and "Timeline". Hallmark Museum of Contemporary Photography, Turners Falls. Thursday to Sunday 1-5 p.m. 863-

0009.

The Green Trees Gallery, Northfield: "Fruit and Blooms," works by Gillian Haven, Laura Garrison, Robert Markey, Judy Stalus, Nancy Tips, Jennifer Dorgan, Jeanne Sisson and Jean Tandy. (413) 498-0283 www.greentreesgallery.com

THEATER WORKSHOPS

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<p>THROUGH MAY 30TH Nature Photography by JD Keating on display. JD Keating has lived as a musician and artist in Western Massachusetts for over 20 years.</p> <p>WEDNESDAY, MAY 30TH Great Falls Coffee House, 7 p.m. The Fabulous Maurice!</p> <p>FRIDAY, JUNE 1ST Burgess Story Time for Young Families. Stories about local wildlife, learn how the power of close observations and imagining how wildlife survives creates lifelong connections with wildlife study. "Over 170 books and 15,000</p>	<p>stories by Burgess chronicle the tales of Peter Rabbit and his animal friends, including Jimmy Skunk, Grandfather Frog, Johnny Chuck, Sammy Jay, Reddy Fox, Hooty Owl and many others. Through these engaging stories, generations of young people have learned about the natural world and have developed an understanding of the importance of conservation of our natural resources." from www.thorntonburgess.org 10 to 11 a.m.</p> <p>SATURDAY, JUNE 2ND Annual Family Fish Day! Free</p>	<p>fishing day with fly-tying and spin cast demonstrations, and raffle for fishing poles and tackle boxes. 10 to 2 p.m.</p> <p>THURSDAY, JUNE 7TH Nature in Danger? Books that made a difference: Rachel Carson. Celebrate the pioneering contributions of famed conservationist Rachel Carson at our exciting discussion group. We will be linking with the USFWS online book club and setting up discussion times throughout the summer. Free and open to the public. 7 p.m.</p>
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Great Falls Discovery Center - 2 Avenue A, Turners Falls - www.greatfallsma.org

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THE GARDENER'S COMPANION

Memorial Day Gardening

BY LESLIE BROWN
MONTAGUE CITY -

*"Rough winds do shake the
darling buds of May,*

*And Summer's lease hath all
too short a date"*

- William Shakespeare,
Sonnet #18

Historically, the long Memorial Day weekend is the time for planting out warm weather crops like tomatoes, pepper, squash and melon plants. This tradition is rooted in the weather extremes we've just been experiencing: too early heat followed by unseasonable cold and damp. These fluctuations don't foster the growth of heat-loving plants.

It's really tempting to plant these crops out in early May when we experience temperatures in the high seventies and low eighties. The truth is, however, that you will gain little, because when this unseasonable warmth is followed by equally unseasonable cold, the plants will put growing on hold. If you have the patience, wait for this final May weekend or even the first one in June when all danger of frost is past and the ground has truly warmed up.

Even though your neighbors can brag that they put their tomatoes in first, yours will not only catch up, they'll likely pass by in growth, vigor and fruit production.

The long holiday weekend will also extend the time for some additional work, which will pay off later. I am planning to lay down black plastic to cover the entire bed I want to plant with heat-loving plants. This will not only keep the soil temperature at a more steady level day and night, but will also save my back from extensive weeding.

After the soil has dried out a

bit, I'll lay out the plastic, tacking it down with large metal staples. (Rocks, bricks or such will do as well.) When it's time to plant, I'll snip the plastic, dig a planting hole, drop in a fistful of compost and set in the plant.

Tomatoes are one of the few plants that produce roots from the stem. If you set out your plants burying them up to the primary leaves, they'll produce a large root system that will in turn create a plant that will take in more food, hold more moisture over periods when it's dry and produce more fruit.

This year, I'm growing seven varieties of tomatoes, two determinate and the rest indeterminate. Most tomatoes are indeterminate, vining varieties that continue to grow and set fruits until they are killed by frost. Of these, I have chosen Arkansas Traveler, a southern heirloom that is heat tolerant and produces large, flavorful pink fruit; Believe It Or Not, a smooth extra large sandwich tomato; Marianna's Peace, a potato leaved variety that promises a nice balance of acidity and sweetness; Box Car Willie that produces a heavy crop of good sized fruit for a long season; and Brandywine Red, a medium-sized fruit with intense tomato flavor.

By contrast, the determinate varieties reach an expected height and ripen all fruits in a short period of time. Of these I'm growing Bush Celebrity, a reliable, non-staked tomato that produces medium-sized unblemished tasty fruit meaty enough for freezing, and Gardener's Delight, a heavy producing cherry with big tomato flavor.

If you want to stake or cage



MARY AZARIAN WOODBLOCK

your plants, and you should do so with the indeterminate varieties, set out the cages when you put out your plants. That way the supports will be ready when they are needed and you won't damage the root system. Bi-weekly feeding with a liquid fertilizer and watering as needed are about the only other tending these plants will require. Try to do any watering your plants need before the heat of the day. Then they'll have plenty of time to dry out their leaves before nightfall, improving the chance of avoiding fungal diseases. Check periodically for tomato hornworms on stems and under leaves. If you

experience changes in heat in preparation for the wide range of night temperatures we can have even well into the month of June.

The time is also right for planting squash and cucumber seed directly into the garden soil. Create a small hill of dirt and put the seeds around the top. Six or so will do. The hill will raise the main plant up and will discourage damping off and powdery mildew at least until late season. If you like, put them in a row of string beans or set out pole varieties. Beans started now will produce a nice crop in a couple of months, putting you ahead of the bean beetles that

will show up in August.

All of your plantings will appreciate compost in the soil and liquid fertilizer every week or so. The other key is keeping them relatively weed-free and properly watered. A good watering rule of thumb is to soak your garden with an inch of water every seven to ten days that Mother Nature doesn't provide rain. Use a sprinkler or an irrigating hose.

Believe it or not, more plants die from over-watering than from lack of moisture. Conserve your supply and protect your plants from disease and stress by watering them early in the day.

Even if you don't have a garden space available, plan to grown at least one tomato plant. Many varieties lend themselves to container planting, so as long as you have a space on the south or west side of your home, you can grow these sun-loving beauties.

There's nothing like savoring the first tangy, sun warmed fruit of the season, especially if you can experience the added pleasure of having grown it yourself. Happy Gardening!

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