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LAKE PLEASANT MILLERS FALLS MONTAGUE CENTER MONTAGUE CITY TURNERS FALLS

The Montague Reporter

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THE VOICE OF THE VILLAGES

MAY 31, 2007

FIRE AT STRATHMORE MILL

Heroic Response Saves 90% of Mill Complex, Southworth

BY DAVID DETMOLD
TURNERS FALLS



DETMOLD PHOTO

Firefighters from Orange extinguish the flames in the ruins of Building #10 at the Strathmore Mill Saturday morning at 7 a.m. Quick work by Turners Falls firefighters and departments from many surrounding towns saved most of the Strathmore complex, and prevented the fire from spreading to the nearby Southworth Paper mill.

On Saturday, May 26th, residents of Turners Falls awoke to the thick pall of smoke filling downtown streets, the smell of fire and a rain of ash. The first clue to the fire's origin came from an examination of the falling ash: curled and charred bits of newsprint and paper. A page from an encyclopedia of ancient Rome lay in the middle of Third Street, with the entry for Ahenobarbus, a commander who fought against Caesar in 49 BC, still readable in the middle of the charred page.

Sometime in the early morn-

ing hours, Building #10 of the Strathmore Paper mill, lately a warehouse for recycled paper under the ownership of Jerry Jones and his shell holding corporation, Western Properties LLC, caught fire and burned to the ground.

At dawn, flames were still shooting from the building, which stood beside a central courtyard to the southwest of the canalside pedestrian bridge entrance to the 244,482-square-foot mill complex, built in 1871. Quick work by the Turners Falls

fire department, supported first by the Northfield fire department, then Greenfield, Erving, and soon dozens of other area departments, contained the damage largely to that one building and spared most of the surrounding Strathmore complex, as well as the Southworth Paper Mill, an operating paper mill that abuts the Strathmore complex immediately to the southwest, on a narrow peninsula of land reachable by a single access road. Building #10, totalling approximately 19,000 square feet on four floors,

was a total loss.

The fire was first reported at 2:49 a.m. by a walk-in to the Montague police station. According to chief Ray Zukowski, the reporting party was a "motorist coming down the hill from Greenfield who saw the flames coming out of the back windows" of the mill building.

On duty at 2:50 a.m., Captain James Bartus of the Turners Falls fire department and firefighter Kyle Cogswell received a call from the Montague police dispatch unit advising them of a building fire in progress at the Strathmore. Assessing the gravity of the situation from the dispatcher's call, Bartus immediately called Shelburne control for back-up, and initiated a full department response from the rest of the Turners Falls department. At the same time, multiple calls from cell phone callers were coming into the station alerting them to the fire, which may have delayed Bartus and Cogswell momentarily from deploying to the Strathmore in Engine #3. Nevertheless, Bartus said they reached Canal Street within "six or seven minutes" of the first call. Cogswell was at the

wheel.

As they crossed the bridge over the canal and swung onto the mill access road, Bartus was about to make a fateful decision on which the future of the Strathmore and his own life and limb depended. "We saw Building #10 on fire. We had heavy fire on the three floors we could see, also involving the roof," said Bartus. The fire was blazing "at least three quarters of the way back" on the visible floors. Cogswell stopped Engine #2 on the Southworth side of the fire, and Bartus got out to assess the situation.

The burning mill building sat hard up against the narrow access road, which in turn is bordered by a chain link security fence and the fast flowing channel of the canal. "I had to have equipment on both sides of the fire," recalled Bartus, in order to effectively fight the blaze and prevent it from spreading to the sprawling mill buildings that make up the majority of the Strathmore complex to the northeast. There was no other way to reach a point on the access road beyond the fire than to drive right past the blaze. Bartus gave Cogswell the order. "I told him to just drive by it."

Within ten minutes, Bartus said, "a truck parked next to the burning building - - either the gas tank or the tires went up in a good sized explosion," and the three-story wall facing the canal

see FIRE pg 10

Wendell Man Sues over Town Office Setback



KEVIN FOLEY PHOTO

Brian Anderson's house, with the new town office building in background.

BY DAVID DETMOLD
Brain Anderson of 5 Morse Village Road is appealing the decision of the Wendell Zoning Board of Appeals of August 29th, 2005 grant-

ing a variance for the setback requirements of the new Wendell town office building. According to Anderson, the ZBA permitted the office building to be built 20 feet back

from the front lot line, rather than the 50 feet stipulated by the town's zoning bylaws. Anderson contends the position of the building closer to see **WENDELL** pg 13

MARVIN GAYE REIGNS SUPREME at the Valley Idol Semi-Finals

BY JESSICA HARMON
TURNERS FALLS - As promised, the second night of the Valley Idol competition, a benefit for the Shea Theater on Avenue A in Turners Falls, turned out to be another exciting cliffhanger. Word must have gotten out because the turnout was high and the audience excited.

The judges remain the same throughout the competition; they are: Kimberley Morin of Greenfield Community College and the Uncommon Players, Bill Jamieson of All Access



PHOTO: LEO HWANG-CARLOS

Vickie Stankiewicz purred through "I Heard it through the Grapevine" at the Valley Idol semifinals at the Shea.

Talent Agency, and Phil Simon of Simon Says Booking and Publicity. The emcee is David Peck, film critic for Bear Country 95.3 and co-star

of local access TV's "Fat Guys on Film."

Narrowed from an original group of 20 contestants, the final 10 per- see **IDOL** pg 9

PET OF THE WEEK

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ERVING PUBLIC LIBRARY NEWS

Unsung Heroines

The Commonwealth of Massachusetts Commission on the Status of Women recently honored Beth Bazler, Marcia Bernard and Marion Overgaard of the Erving Public Library as Unsung Heroines of 2007.

Unsung Heroines are women who don't make the news, but make the difference in their communities, business or volunteer endeavors. They use their time, talent, spirit and enthusiasm to enrich the lives of others.

The librarians joined other

Unsung Heroines from across the state at a reception on May 16th at the State House. Senator Stan Rosenberg hosted the Unsung Heroines from Franklin County in his office for a light luncheon prior to the event.

The ceremony included guest speakers Governor Deval Patrick, former Lt. Governor Evelyn Murphy, and Senate President Therese Murray. Each attendee received certificates, posed for a collective photo, and enjoyed a "Just Desserts" reception.



Marion Overgaard, Beth Bazler and Marcia Bernard (l to r) trustees of the Erving Public Library, have worked for stipends to consolidate, expand, and professionalize Erving's Public Library. Drop by and congratulate them for their award during open hours: Monday through Thursday.

Wendell-Pelham Forest Conservation Project Meeting

On Saturday, June 2nd, a regional meeting of the Wendell-Pelham Forest Conservation Project will be held from 9 – 11:30 a.m. at the Wendell town hall. Representatives of area towns, interested landowners and interested members of the public from Warwick to Belchertown are invited to attend. We will discuss options to keep a working forest landscape and intact forest ecosystems in our communities. Wayne Feiden, the project's consulting planner will facilitate the gathering. Refreshments will be provided by the Wendell Women's Club.

Picnic and Pie Auction at Montague Center School on Monday, June 4th.

Picnic on the lawn 5 - 5:30 p.m. Pie and baked goods auction starting at 5:30. Ed the Wizard will be performing in the auditorium at 5:30. We welcome the community and anyone who would like to enjoy a fun family event.

Teddy Dunbar is a sophomore at TFHS working on his Eagle Scout Project, installing a sun shade shelter at Unity Park on June 9th, 1:00 p.m. He is looking for donations of materials, an auger, a small cement mixer and other items. He is also having a bottle and can drive to help raise funds to purchase materials not donated. Email Teddy at Kdtd15@aol.com

SENIOR CENTER ACTIVITIES June 4th - 8th

MONTAGUE Senior Center, 9:30 a.m. T'ai Chi
Gill/Montague Senior Center, **Wednesday, 6th**
62 Fifth Street, Turners Falls, is 10 a.m. Senior Aerobics
open Monday through Friday 11 a.m. Social Security
from 9:00 A.M. to 2:00 P.M. for Presentation with Dan Moraski,
activities and congregate meals. public affairs specialist.
Council -on Aging Director is 12:45 p.m. Bingo
Bunny Caldwell. For information **Thursday, 7th**
or to make reservations, call 1:00 p.m. Pitch
863-9357. Meal reservations **Friday, 8th**
need to be made a day in 10 a.m. Senior Aerobics
advance by 11 a.m. Messages 11 a.m. Easy Aerobics

ERVING Senior Center, 18 Pleasant St., Erving (Old Center School, 1st Floor), is open Monday through Thursday from 9 a.m. to 2 p.m. for activities and congregate meals. For information and reservations call Polly Kiely, Senior Center director at 413 423-3308. Lunch daily at 11:30 a.m. with reservations a day in advance by 11:00 a.m. Transportation can be provided for meals, Thursday shopping, or medical necessity by calling Dana Moore at 978 544-3898.

Monday, 4th
9:30 a.m. Exercise
9:45 a.m. Library
12 Noon Pitch
Tuesday, 5th
9 a.m. Aerobics
12:30 p.m. Painting
Wednesday, 6th
9:30 a.m. Line Dancing
12 Noon Bingo
Thursday, 7th
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.

Monday, 4th
10 a.m. Senior Aerobics
11 a.m. Easy Aerobics
1 p.m. Canasta
Tuesday, 5th

FACES & PLACES



Al Dray, a communicant of St. James parish in South Deerfield, spent a pleasant afternoon in Turners Falls recently clearing ground and planting abyssum, white petunias, and portulaca around the sign for Our Lady of Czestochowa Church on Avenue A. Dray called Our Lady an "old world church of breathtaking beauty." He said his plantings, which included hosta and day lilies along the verge of the street, were "a form of prayer."

Summer Programs at Montague Parks & Rec

The Montague Parks & Recreation Department would like to announce that registrations are still being accepted for the following programs:

- Youth Programs: Summer Playground Program, Tennis Lessons, Play Soccer Camps ©, American Red Cross Babysitting Course, and Kayaking
- Teen Programs: Tennis Lessons, American Red Cross Babysitting Course, and Kayaking
- Adult Programs: Tennis Lessons, Kayaking
- Family Programs: Family Tennis Program, Scrapbooking, Kayaking, and The Art of Gardening

For more program information, to register, and to receive our Summer Program Brochure contact the MPRD Office at 863-3216.

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The Changing Face of Turners Falls

BY KATHY LITCHFIELD

TURNERS FALLS - On Saturday, June 9th, Turners Falls will come alive with visitors interested in learning about Power Town's history, culture and revitalization.

"The Changing Face of Turners Falls: a Community in Transition" is the title of a day-long, in-depth exploration meant to share the wealth of history, culture and arts happening in downtown Turners with residents and non-residents alike, according to Cynthia Herbert, director of the Pioneer Valley Institute, which is sponsoring the event.

Free and open to the public, the day will include a presentation of Power Town history, a panel discussion with leaders of downtown revitalization efforts, walking tours focusing on geology, history and the arts community and the opening reception of the Great River Art Show winners.

"We're looking to bring in outsiders to see the possibilities in Turners Falls... and also aiming to draw Turners Falls residents in the hopes of getting them to appreciate what they have. Just to bring in interested people," said Herbert, "who might come here for the great nature walks, to go to theater shows at the Shea, to try a new wonderful restaurant or visit the Shady Glen or Cup O' Joe. We want people to come out and appreciate the downtown, its side streets and all of its history."

The day begins at the Shea Theater at 10 a.m. Montague town administrator Frank Abbondanzio will share slides and a historical overview of Turners Falls as a planned industrial town and its evolution through time. From 10:45 to noon, Abbondanzio will be joined by Mark Abramson, realtor at Benchmark & Pratt, Lisa Davol, RiverCulture coordinator and Debra J'Anthony of the Shea Theater, who will run a panel discussion on the changing



RULLMAN PHOTO

The Hallmark Museum of Photography announced this month that it will expand its gallery space to the Crocker Building by January of 2008 (see page 8)

face of Turners' businesses and industry, the history of the Shea Theater and the Colle Opera House and the town's new horizons.

From 1:30 - 3 p.m., local residents will lead walking tours (indoor talks in the event of heavy rain), leaving from the Great Falls Discovery Center. Environmental educator Steve Winters will lead "the Geology of Turners Falls," focusing on the area's rich geologic past, evident in rocks exposed along the sidewalks and side streets of the village, according to Martha Rullman, one of the event's organizers. During this walk, participants will see examples of Turners Falls sandstone rock formations containing abundant dinosaur fossils and can also examine historic village building stones, which include brick made from clays that lined glacial Lake Hitchcock.

Librarian and historian Sue SanSoucie will lead "the History of Turners Falls through its Architecture," which will include gazing at the village's many outstanding examples of late 19th century architecture in the Turners Falls Historic District. The town of Montague has made a concerted effort to preserve the village's architectural heritage as part of its ongoing revitalization effort, said Rullman, prime examples of which are the adaptive reuse of

the Colle Opera House building and the restoration of the Cutlery Block and the Crocker Building.

Finally, artist Jack Nelson will lead a walking tour titled, "The Art Scene of Turners Falls," visiting open studios and galleries including the Hallmark Museum of Contemporary

Photography, where an exhibit of photographs by Tom Young and John Willis entitled "Recycled Realities and Other Stories" is on view.

The day will conclude with a reception at the Great Falls Discovery Center from 3 to 5 p.m. for the winners and honorable mentions of last year's Pioneer Valley Institute's Great River Art Show. The work of artists Christine Labish, Steve Wilda and JoAnn Denehy will be featured. Refreshments and a performance by the Falltown String Band highlight this portion of the event.

The program is sponsored by the Pioneer Valley Institute at Greenfield Community College, and by a grant from the Montague Cultural Council.

As a result of downtown revitalization efforts thus far, Herbert said she thinks "the whole town just looks better.

There is some real vision going on with the town. It is a wonderful example of a planned mill town, with most of its wonderful architecture still intact."

All events will be held rain or shine. For more information call the Pioneer Valley Institute at 413-775-1671.

Correction

In last week's issue, MR V #33, we incorrectly reported that there was no age limit for Valley Idol contestants. There is no upper age limit. However, 18 is the minimum age to audition.

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Couture Bros. Inc. Professional Painting & Decorating Contractors, founded in 1910, donated restoration cleaning to the fountain at the newly renovated Peskeomskut Park in Turners Falls.

Pictured above, Corey Couture works on cleaning the fountain. Corey is the fourth generation of the Couture family in the business, the great grandson of Samuel H. Couture. Couture Bros. Inc. was founded in 1910 and is the oldest family owned and operated business in Turners Falls (and maybe Franklin County!)

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Kathleen Belanger Pays Tribute to Veterans



DETMOLD PHOTO

Kathleen Belanger of South Deerfield speaks at Montague's Memorial Day ceremony on Monday, May 28th

TURNERS FALLS - The Memorial Day parade stepped off in style on Monday morning, May 28th, with officer Ryan Doherty leading the procession in a Montague police cruiser. The percussionists for the Turners Falls High School marching band kept up a steady cadence, the Montague selectboard marched with Senator Stan Rosenberg, color guards, veterans groups, boy scouts and girl scouts, and one engine from the Turners Falls fire department made up the line. (If you wanted to see a muster of firemen, you could have headed down to Canal Street two days earlier; there were more fire trucks assembled there than in the Franklin County Fair parade.) Children along the parade route dashed after tossed hard candy; their mothers and fathers stood solemnly as the veterans passed by.

At the Veterans Memorial,

hundreds gathered on both sides of Avenue A to listen to speakers honor the sacrifice of veterans in our nation's service.

Captain John Murphy of the VFW paid respects to the men and women who served, "who are worthy of a far greater tribute than words can provide. No matter how we feel about the politics of war," he said, "we continue to support our troops and take care of them when they come home."

Rosenburg echoed his remarks during his speech. "Families have to put their lives on hold, when our men and women put on the uniform to defend this country's interests." He called war "the most momentous decision a country can make. You have a responsibility to honor the sacrifice they have made. They

deserve all the respect you have to give."

He concluded by saying, "Let us hope not a single additional name from this community will be written on this memorial."



ELLEN BLANCHETTE PHOTO

Turners Falls High School Marching Band did a great job participating in the parade and adding music to the ceremonies. Here they march past the veterans memorial as speakers prepare to address the crowd in remembrance of those lost in service to our country.

Selectboard chair Pat Allen and town administrator Frank Abbondanzio talked about the community fundraising effort that led to Monday's groundbreaking ceremony for the new veterans memorial, which has been years in the planning. Abbondanzio said construction on the new monument will begin in June, and be completed in time for Veterans Day this year.

Dressed in jaunty red, white and blue, soldiers memorial trustee Art Gilmore introduced one of the new memorial's major contributors, the main speaker of the day, "a woman every veteran in this community owes a debt of gratitude," Kathleen Belanger.

Here is her speech, in full.

"This day, Memorial Day, is

one of reflection and remembrance. Each and every one of us has our own memories, but we come together today to honor those who have lost their lives. I have found the flags on this

cal views today and tomorrow to honor these men who gave the ultimate sacrifice.

"The flags stand tall, waving in the soft New England breeze. But they speak. They remind us how lucky I am and you are to be an American.

"I have many flags at my home. I have three flags that are especially important to me. One of the flags came to me from a veteran, Walter White, who was a cook at the Buckley nursing home. I received an email from Iraq from my son Greg who said, 'Mom, send me a flag.' I thought, 'Wow, how patriotic.' Walter came to my rescue, sent me a flag the very next day. I went to the post office, filled out the paperwork and you have to declare what you're sending. I wrote, 'One American flag.' And under value, I wrote, 'Priceless.'

"The second flag that came to me that means a lot to my heart, came from Steven Ross. He spoke in hushed tones, apologizing for its soiled condition, and

MEMORIAL continued next page

common not only represent a life lost in Iraq and Afghanistan, but freedom and America.

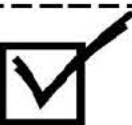
"We need to set aside politi-



ELLEN BLANCHETTE PHOTO

Local Brownie Troop #21 participated in the Memorial Day Parade on Monday in Turners Falls. As the speakers continued, Art Gilmore told the scouts they could sit down on the grass, and they happily complied.

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Montague Labor and Management Meet

BY DAVID DETMOLD -

The town of Montague put forward a united front on the structural budget deficit with a labor management meeting held at the Turners Falls High School auditorium on Tuesday, May 29th. At the front of the room, the finance committee, the selectboard, members of the school committee, along with the departing and acting school superintendents faced a slim crowd of town and school department heads, employees and union representatives for a two-hour discussion of the town and school district's fiscal woes. The centerpiece of the evening was town administrator Frank Abbondanzio's five-year forecast of multi-million dollar budget deficits for Montague if the employee unions do not accept some concessions on wage increases, and if some means of effecting savings in

health care costs is not achieved.

Selectboard chair Pat Allen welcomed everyone to the evening session saying, "Things aren't particularly rosy in the budget department." At that, the batteries in the microphone died. Speaking loudly, she insisted, "This is not the budget for this year we're talking about, but for the next five years."

But Patricia Pruitt, standing next to address the audience, promptly dove into the problem of the looming '08 budget. "We know we have an enormous school budget gap this year the town is not able to meet. We are looking at that as an ongoing reality that seems to be escalating about \$300,000 every year. If we continue along those lines, the town will soon be in the same position as the schools, running enormous deficits.

"Health care costs for the school are up 20% this year," she said. For the town, health care costs are rising 8%. The escalating costs of wages is the other big factor." Town step and cost of living increases, combined, are currently running at about 5% a year, according to figures provided by Abbondanzio. Step and cost of living increases for school employees, factored together, are running at about 6% a year.

Pruitt read a letter from state representative Steve Kulik, who was unable to attend the meeting, outlining the legislature's stance on allowing town and school workers to join the Commonwealth's Group Insurance Commission. Kulik said the legislature was likely to act favorably on the proposal by the end of June. Pruitt said the cost of health insurance under the GIC was rising less steeply

than the town and schools' current health plans: a little more than 6% on average.

Pruitt closed by saying, "The spirit of this meeting is to ask everyone, town and school employees alike, to stay on top of this deficit. It is everyone's task."

Selectboard member Al Ross said, "A higher income tax would more fairly distribute how resources are allocated in this country." But getting down to Montague's brass tacks, he added, "We have to deal with our limited resources and it won't be easy. We'll either have to cut services, cut wages and benefits, or cut people."

Finance committee chair Jeff Singleton called the town and school district's structural deficit a multi-faceted problem to which "there will be no solution unless we all work together, on all the pieces." He advanced

his thesis that education reform in the 1990s "ratcheted up the schools' fixed costs beyond what local government can pay under the strictures of Proposition 2½," creating a structural budget gap that has worsened since state aid has receded in the present decade.

Departing G-M school superintendent Sue Gee said, "We've been struggling for many years with the school budget, as are many districts across the state. Proposition 2½ is not working when you have fixed costs going up five to six percent a year.... This is not a sustainable or realistic situation." Then, following Pruitt's lead, Gee dove bravely into the bottomless pit of the '08 budget crisis, which town meeting will be confronting on Saturday. "Today we have made decreases of \$1,037,000," since the G-M

see BUDGET pg 14

MEMORIAL

from previous page

he quickly put it into my scrapbook. And he quickly said, 'It was in our Humvee.' Steven was with Greg the day he was killed.

"The third flag that means a lot to me was the one that draped his casket the day he came home.

"So, I challenge you to hang your American flags. When you look at them, remember the freedom we have and how precious it is. Look at that flag and remember the men who have gone to World War I, World War II, Vietnam and all the other conflicts. Hang them proudly and remember what they really mean.

"I'm proud to help this community. Greg's grandparents are from Turners Falls, and his

grandfather also has a military background. I'm very honored to come to speak to you today.

"Turn around. There are many veterans here. I want you to give them a hug and thank them for the selflessness with which they provided for our freedom.

"America is the best place in the world to live. We need to honor our vets and those who are serving in Iraq and Afghanistan and support them when they come home, emotionally, financially, physically, whatever we can do. If it wasn't for these



... along the parade route on Avenue A



DETMOLD PHOTOS

Waiting for hard candy ...

women and men, we wouldn't have what we have today, which is freedom.

"God bless America, and God bless all of you."

Kathleen Belanger lives in South Deerfield. Her son Greg was killed by an improvised explosive device while on routine patrol in Baghdad on August 27th, 2003. He was 24. He had joined the army reserves, and was called up after graduating from Johnson and Wales University in Providence, R.I. in 2001, with an associate degree in culinary arts. He entered the Army as a cook. He was pursuing a bachelor's degree in food service management.

Kathleen holds a fundraising

dinner in Greg's honor each year, near the anniversary of his death. She has donated \$2,000

toward the renovation of Montague's veterans memorial.

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Adams Brings Acupuncture to Avenue A Chiropractic and Massage

BY ANNE HARDING

TURNERS FALLS - It was with mixed emotions that acupuncturist Karen Adams of Four Directions Healing Arts announced the closing of her 112 Avenue A offices in Turners Falls. On the one hand, she is leaving behind a dream - the small, downtown, community-based clinic she opened a mere 18 months ago; on the other hand she is fulfilling another by joining forces with Turners Falls chiropractor Lisa Nicotera and massage therapist Debra Charbonneau at Avenue A Chiropractic and Massage, just down the road at 296 Avenue A, who coincidentally opened their practice about 18 months ago.

All three are trained in healing arts that reside somewhat outside the world of traditional Western medicine. It should be noted; however, that all three of these modalities have been gaining steady acceptance not only among patients seeking relief but also among referring MDs, not to mention health insurance companies. In truth, chiropractic has been part of the mainstream medical world for a number of years in spite of its focus on non-surgical intervention.

Founding members Nicotera

and Charbonneau first met in Greenfield over ten years ago when they worked together at Taylor Chiropractic. They went their separate ways professionally, but stayed friends over the years and eventually decided to open a practice together. Along with them, medical billing specialist Liz Serrano became the third member of the team.

Fourteen years ago, Charbonneau completed her massage therapy training at the San Diego Mueller College of Holistic Studies. Prior to that she spent several years as a trader and stockbroker, and claims her Type A personality is suited to her current medical massage practice. The purpose of this type of therapy is different than the relaxation goal many of us associate with massage. About half of Charbonneau's clients see her for corrective massage work under a doctor's diagnosis.



Ready to meet your bodyworking needs on the Avenue are, (l-r), Debra Charbonneau, Karen Adams and Lisa Nicotera, partners in health care at Avenue A Chiropractic and Massage.

She often works with people suffering from injuries sustained in the workplace, automobile accidents or overexertion. Beginning her new career in sports massage, Charbonneau next became interested in correcting underlying issues that cause pain, and as such her focus is on helping patients become pain-free. Since payment for these types of claims is frequently delayed, Charbonneau is one of the few practitioners in Franklin County doing this type of work.

The other half of Charbonneau's clients come for colon hydrotherapy, a method of removing waste from the large intestine using water

infusion rather than drugs. Patients seek treatments for a variety of reasons, some are interested in the cleansing aspects, some in response to digestive or disease issues, and others believe it reduces their allergies or makes them feel healthier. Charbonneau is board certified, meaning she has met a national standard requiring more than a thousand hours of advanced study, so her clients are willing to travel quite a distance and come from a five-state region for treatments.

Nicotera has been in the medical field her entire professional life, beginning as a nurse in 1980. There were times as a nurse she felt frustrated treating symptoms rather than preventing disease. No stranger to changing careers, she also spent time as a massage therapist but ultimately was drawn to chiropractic because it was natural, direct and

medication was not required. Not only that, Nicotera liked chiropractic's ability to offer immediate relief to suffering patients. Once she chose her path, Nicotera moved to Portland, OR for six years to attend the Western States Chiropractic College before returning to Western Massachusetts.

Nicotera practices traditional chiropractic care while incorporating soft tissue work, using her massage therapy training. In addition, she believes she is the only person in this area using IDD therapy (Intervertebral Differential Dynamics). With a patented computerized spinal-rehab system, IDD uses a strong, gentle, controlled pulling traction to treat herniated and degenerative discs without surgery.

The traction opens space, creating a vacuum that allows for a better flow of nutrients, fluids and oxygen to degenerating discs. This can reduce pain, restore mobility and improve general back function. In the case of herniated or bulging discs the traction can pull them off compressed nerves and alleviate severe pain while allowing the see ACUPUNCTURE pg 7

MCTV Schedule

Channel 17: June 1st - 7th

<p>Barton Cove Eagles: *Eagle Broadcast is dependent upon working Equipment at Barton Cove* 7A-8A (Daily) 12P-530P (Friday, Sunday, Tuesday) 1P-530P (Monday, Thursday) 130P-530P (Wednesday)</p> <p>Friday, June 1 8:00 am Montague Select Board 5/22/07 9:30 am Montague Grange Variety Show 11:00 am Montague Update: Ed & Beverly Phelps 6:00 pm Nasa Destination Tomorrow #24 7:00 pm GMRSD meeting 5/22/07 10:00 pm Valley Idol 2007: Night Three</p> <p>Saturday, June 2 8:00 am All Day Town Meeting 7:00 pm The Well Being: "Managing Chronic Pain" 8:30 pm Valley Idol 2007: Night Three</p> <p>Sunday, June 3 8:00 am The Well Being: "Managing Chronic Pain" 9:00 am Valley Idol 2007: Night Three 6:30 pm Montague Update: Block Party & Parade 7:00 pm Child & Family Today: Children's Mental Health 7:30 pm Memorial Day Events 2007 8:30 pm Fall Town String Band 10:30 pm Over The Falls: Lorena Loubusky Lonergan</p> <p>Monday, June 4 8:00 am Montague Update: Block Party & Parade 8:30 am Child & Family Today: Children's Mental Health 9:00 am Memorial Day Events 2007</p>	<p>10:00am Fall Town String Band 12:00 pm Over The Falls: Lorena Loubusky Lonergan 6:00 pm On The Ridge: Denise Murchison 7:00 pm Montague Select Board (Live) 9:30 pm Valley Idol 2007: Finals</p> <p>Tuesday, June 5 8:00am On The Ridge: Denise Murchison 8:30 am Valley Idol 2007: Finals 6:00 pm GED Connection: Getting Ideas on Paper 6:30 pm Independent Voices #29 7:00 pm GMRSD 5/22/07 10:30 pm Carlos W. Anderson: "Right Here All Along"</p> <p>Wednesday, June 6 8:00 am GED Connection: Getting Ideas on Paper 8:30 am Independent Voices #29 9:00 am GMRSD 5/22/07 12:30 pm Carlos W. Anderson: "Right Here All Along" 6:30 pm NASA Destination Tomorrow #24 7:00 pm GED Connection: The Writing Process 7:30 pm The Well Being: "Managing Chronic Pain" 8:30 pm Montague Grange Variety Show 10:00 pm Memorial Day Events 2007</p> <p>Thursday, June 7 8:00 am NASA Destination Tomorrow #24 8:30 am GED Connection: The Writing Process 9:00 am The Well Being: "Managing Chronic Pain" 10:00 am Montague Grange Variety Show 12:00 pm Memorial Day Events 2007 7:00 pm Montague Select Board 5/4/07 9:30 pm Valley Idol 2007: Finals</p>
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HIGHLIGHTS FROM THE MONTAGUE POLICE LOG

Disturbances and Vehicle Stops

Thursday 5-24

7:24 p.m. Report of a motor vehicle accident at the corner of Avenue A and 3rd Street.

was arrested and charged with failure to use care in starting, stopping, turning, or backing and operating under the influence of liquor (2nd offense).

Friday 5-25

11:50 p.m. Report of a domestic disturbance on 4th Street behind Equi's. One party put in protective custody.

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

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

Saturday 5-26

9:24 p.m. Report of a disturbance at Jake's Tavern on Avenue A. Subject put in

protective custody.

Sunday 5-27

12:02 a.m. While assisting another police department,

was arrested and charged with violation of a restraining order.

1:48 a.m. After a motor vehicle stop on 3rd Street at Avenue A,

was arrested and charged with operating with a suspended license, possession of an open container of alcohol in a motor vehicle, failure to wear a seatbelt, speeding, minor in possession of alcohol (subsequent offense)

Monday 5-28

10:01 p.m. Report of disorderly conduct at a 4th Street address.

was arrested and charged with violation of a restraining order.

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The Crew at Alpha Stone Concrete Talks Shop

BY JANEL NOCKELBY
TURNERS FALLS - The crew at Alpha Stone Concrete talk shop over lunch and coffee all the time at Cup O' Joe café on Avenue A. Earlier this spring, while discussing the process of creating inlays, or custom designs, in concrete countertops, one of them said, "For instance, we could make a coffee cup." Another noted that the existing countertop at the café looked, well, "awful." They then started drawing out the design for the custom-made countertop that magically appeared at Cup O' Joe in April. All of the Alpha Stone Concrete staff contributed to the project

baffled by the new countertop, wondering "how long has that been here?"

For some, it helps to have a cup of coffee first before contemplating one's surroundings too carefully. But another regular, Lisa Davol, realized the countertop was new right away and was impressed. "When I came in it just jumped out at me, and that was before my first cup of coffee." She took an Alpha Stone brochure, of course, began daydreaming about future options for her own kitchen.

Alpha Stone Concrete owner Dan Gobillot recently moved to Turners Falls and established his new shop on 11th Street.



JANEL NOCKLEBY PHOTO

Al Zraunig works on one of the concrete forms in the Alpha Stone Concrete shop on 11th Street.

in what employee Bobby Turk called "a very organic process."

And now the Cup O' Joe café has a one-of-a-kind, donated countertop on which employees serve coffee, breakfast, lunch, and sweet treats to customers. The new countertop includes the shapes of two mugs of coffee in the custom design.

Although the process of designing a countertop, creating custom molds or forms for the concrete, hydrating the concrete, and sealing it takes a few weeks, the final installation of the new countertop in the café happened overnight. Cup O' Joe employee Hilary Graves said that a regular customer arrived very early in the morning the next day for his morning coffee but was quite

Although he is co-founder and part owner of Stone Soup Concrete in Florence, Gobillot found himself drawn to living and working in the Turners Falls area after investigating the possibility of installing interior concrete countertops at Ristorante DiPaolo on Avenue A. While the timing didn't work out for that job, Gobillot's crew is now hard at work creating a

countertop for DiPaolo's new outdoor seating area. Alpha Stone Concrete has also helped out Shanahan's Construction Supply Company on Avenue A by building a hearth for a gas fireplace insert display. Davol, who is Cultural Coordinator for the Turners Falls RiverCulture project, is impressed with the way businesses in the area can rely on other local businesses to get their projects completed. She noted how Denise DiPaolo used a local lighting company for her restaurant as well. "There is a ton of talent in the local community," she said.

The talent at Alpha Stone Concrete is award-winning

see STONE pg 20

New Owner for Cup o' Joe

BY DAVID DETMOLD

TURNERS FALLS - If all goes without a hitch, Evelyn Daly of Greenfield will become the new owner of Cup O' Joe on Friday, June 1st, as Zach Fellows, who bought the popular Avenue A coffee shop from Dolly and Paul Letourneau on July 1st, 2003 hands over the keys. Tired of working 80-hour weeks, (40 at the coffee shop and 40 at Brockway and Smith in Hatfield), Fellows thanked longtime customers and wished the new owner success.

Daly is prepared to hit the ground running, with plans to repaint the somewhat garish breakfast and lunch spot in softer tones, consolidate cooking operations further to the rear of the store, rearrange the counters to create more seating, expand the hours, and add more menu items, featuring more local products.

One thing she does not plan to change is the brand of coffee. "We'll be selling certified free trade organic Fogbuster Coffee, roasted in Greenfield on Hope Street by Pierce Brothers. It's a hit."

Inside, she plans to display



DETMOLD PHOTO

Evelyn Daly in front of Cup O' Joe

the new Alpha Stone counter to better advantage. And, with the selectboard's approval, Daly will add a new feature to the front of the store: a sidewalk hot dog cart, New York style.

"I bought the cart from Jim Breton in Greenfield." Breton operates the hot dog cart in front of Bakers on Main Street, and does a brisk daily trade around lunchtime. Daly thinks a hot dog cart would add to the street life in Turners Falls, and provide another attraction for people to come downtown.

She also hopes to get a formal permit from the selectboard to continue the regular open mic series that has become a monthly Saturday night feature at Cup O' Joe.

Daly is excited about the

prospects for her new business, and for the downtown in general. In fact, the Greenfield resident is hoping to move to Turners as soon as she can find a place that will welcome her dog and cats.

"I see Turners as being the next cultural Mecca of the Pioneer Valley. When you talk to arts people from around the Valley, that's what they say," said

Daly. "Avenue A is gorgeous. It really is beautiful."

Daly credited Denise DiPaolo and her Ristorante, along with the Shea Theater for "building a wonderful base for any small business to come in and be successful," in Turners Falls.

Daly, a former Marine, was born in Georgia, and moved with her family to Plainfield when she was ten years old. Her mother, Margot Locke, published *the Country Journal* out of Huntington for many years.

Daly is looking forward to a lively change of pace at the Avenue A coffee shop. Her last job was as superintendent of cemeteries for the town of Orange.

ACUPUNCTURE continued from pg 6

discs to return to their normal position.

Mid-life career changes seem to be a theme at 296 Avenue A. It was an epiphany several years ago that sent Karen Adams to the UK to study at the College of Traditional Acupuncture. She is trained in the Five Element method, which treats the person as a whole in conjunction with their symptoms, as well as the world around them. Five Element acupuncture seeks to return the patient to harmony - looking at their body, mind, heart and spirit as well as understanding their past and their present.

Adams has specialized in treating trauma and stress and more recently fibromyalgia and multiple sclerosis. Her

restless social conscience caused her to team up with "Acupuncturists Without Borders" to help in the wake of the catastrophic aftermath of Hurricane Katrina. Adams made two trips to New Orleans to treat both relief workers and hurricane survivors. That experience has been life altering for her.

The roots of Adams' practice of 'community acupuncture' may be found in her relief work in New Orleans.

Community acupuncture treats clients as a small group seated fully clothed in chairs in the same room. Needles are inserted into the ears and other easily accessible body parts. For certain conditions there appears to be a benefit to group treatments that is larger than individual treatments. The move to 296 Avenue A should

not unduly impact her community acupuncture sessions, as the new location is within easy walking distance of the downtown area.

Avenue A Chiropractic and Massage is located just past Food City, between Miskinis TV and Shanahan Construction. The practitioners spent many hours renovating the clinic space to suit their respective specialties and space needs, and it's clear a lot of thought went into the office design. Many of the interior walls are adorned with the brightly colored works of Nicotera's husband Andy. I find it interesting and fitting that this dynamic group of people, all willing to start a new career, have set up their businesses in downtown Turners Falls - where another renaissance is taking place.



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NOTES FROM THE GILL SELECTBOARD

A New Selectboard for Gill

BY ALEX GOTTSCHALK - On May 25th, a stultifying Friday afternoon, the three members of Gill's selectboard met in the power washed town hall. This was the first meeting of the new board, which welcomes Nancy Griswold of Walnut Street as an addition to longtime selectboard stalwarts Leland Steven and Ann Banash. This is the first change to the board's lineup in thirteen years; Phillip Maddern declined to run again this year following a recent illness.

Griswold said, "I have so much to grasp," as she was quickly nominated by the rest of the board to be clerk, after a rapid-fire explanation of the

voting and chairing policies of the board. Stevens was elected the board's new chair.

At the top of the agenda was the town's budget gap. After the resounding defeat of a pair of override questions on May 21st - one for \$300,000 to supplement the school and town operating budget, and one for \$125,000 to purchase a new single-axle dump truck for the highway department, this '08 budget is a matter of pressing concern for town officials. Regardless of how the G-M school assessment is eventually handled, Gill needs to cut \$77,000 dollars from the town side of the budget.

"First, we need to send a note to all departments, with a

detailed explanation of what is going on, and a suggestion that they look very carefully at their budgets," said Banash, with a clear emphasis on the word "very." A meeting with all town department heads was tentatively scheduled for June 4th.

"They can then review their budgets and suggest to us where they can decrease them," Banash continued. Speaking of school finances, Banash said, "I don't see any way they can come down in their budget."

A few members of the public were at the selectboard meeting, and Banash and Stevens fielded questions from them. Joe Williams of the

finance committee asked why the Gill-Montague school system needs more money in its operating budget than its neighboring city does. "There is something drastically wrong with that," said Williams.

It was mutually agreed that a selectboard meeting was not the forum to discuss that question in detail, rather to discuss the school budget at an upcoming finance committee meeting.

In addition to financial matters, the board voiced a pressing concern about the town's computer system. A motion was approved to develop a new method for

backing up town government data on a protected system outside of town hall.

Administrative assistant Debra Roussel will be resigning her post on June 30th to take the job of town administrator in Hubbardston. The board discussed the details of her job responsibilities in preparation for hiring a new assistant.

Lastly, the board approved using the town's new Acuview Voting Machine for the 2008 state primaries, so that the 2008 presidential election won't be the first time the machine is used.

"We don't want any hanging chads here," Griswold said.

HIGHLIGHTS OF THE ERVING POLICE LOG Medical Call in Bowling Alley Parking Lot

Wednesday 5-23

10:55 p.m. Assisted Gill police with arrest on a warrant at Jan's Package Store.

Thursday 5-24

10:22 p.m. Report of a 25-year-old man unconscious in the French King Bowling Alley parking lot. Subject had an allergic reaction to medication. Assisted Erving Fire and BHA.

Friday 5-25

10:08 p.m. Report of a car vs. deer accident in the area of North Street. Vehicle gone on arrival. Officer dispatched the deer.

Saturday 5-26.

12:05 a.m. After a motor vehicle stop, a criminal application was issued to [redacted] for unlicensed operation, uninsured motor vehicle, and unregistered motor vehicle.

7:05 p.m. Requested assistance at Gill Montague Bridge with intoxicated subject. Montague police placed subject in protective custody.

8:30 p.m. After a motor vehicle stop on Route 2, criminal application issued to [redacted] for operating with a suspended license (subsequent offense), speeding, and seat

belt violation.

Monday 5-28

3:51 p.m. After a motor vehicle stop on Route 2, [redacted] was arrested and charged with operating with a suspended license, revoked registration, and failure to inspect motor vehicle.

Tuesday 5-29

2:10 p.m. Assisted sheriff's department with a warrant arrest of [redacted] at a West High Street location. Subject taken into custody without incident.

Hallmark Museum Announces Expansion

George J. Rosa III, Founder and President of Hallmark Museum of Contemporary Photography has announced that the museum will expand its exhibition, archive and exhibit preparation spaces in January 2008.

The new facilities, in the historic Crocker Bank Building at the entrance to the renaissance district of downtown Turners Falls, will provide three new galleries, an exhibit mounting and framing area, staff quarters, a photographic bookshop and an archive room for study of the museum's permanent collection.

Paul Turnbull, executive director of the Hallmark Museum, said, "This expansion will more than double our current exhibition capabilities, allowing us to show an even greater range of contemporary photography. We'll also be able to feature vibrant and significant work by photographers young in their careers, students, and other under represented artists, as well as theme and group exhibitions."

Rosa plans to devote the next six months to remodeling the lower floor of the 1860's building for museum uses, aiming for a post-New Year grand opening. He said, "This

undertaking is one of the most exciting and rewarding ventures of my life. It allows me to give even greater recognition to the important role that photography and photographers play in our daily lives. I believe it will be good for the greater Turners Falls community that has been so kind to me for so many years."

Hallmark Museum of Contemporary Photography is located at 85 Avenue A, downtown Turners Falls, Massachusetts. Regular museum hours are Thursday through Sunday, 1-5 p.m. All events are free and open to the public.

HIGHLIGHTS OF THE GILL POLICE LOG

Attack on Eagle Island

Wednesday 5-23

2:45 p.m. Report of loud vehicles in the area of West Gill and Franklin Road.

3:33 p.m. Report of past threats made to resident on Chappell Drive.

7:03 p.m. Report of shots fired in West Gill and Center Road area. Checked area, unable to locate source.

9:10 p.m. Report of loose cows on Main Road.

10:34 p.m. Alarm sounding on Pisgah Mountain Road, all checked secure.

10:49 p.m. Arrested [redacted]

[redacted], on a warrant on Main Road.

Thursday 5-24

12:50 p.m. Arrested [redacted] on a warrant on Mountain Road.

8:40 p.m. Responded to Main Road address for suicidal subject in woods. Located same, and transported to hospital.

Friday 5-25

5:20 p.m. Hit and run motor vehicle accident, with no injury on Barton Cove Road.

Saturday 5-26

6:30 p.m. Assisted

Bernardston and state police with numerous brush fires on Interstate 91.

10:10 p.m. Report of subject on French King Bridge with one leg over railing. Located subject; he stated he was playing a prank on a friend.

Sunday 5-27

6:33 p.m. Trespass citation issued on Boyle Road.

Monday 5-28

4:36 a.m. Report of gas drive off from Gill Mobil station; subject left without paying for \$77.00 worth of fuel.

11:50 a.m. Two-car motor

vehicle accident on French King Highway and Meadow Street. No injuries.

1:20 p.m. Report of vandalism on Chappell Drive.

Tuesday 5-29

7:20 a.m. Report of subject on Eagle Island shaking the eagle nest tree. Referred to Environmental Police.

7:30 p.m. Assisted Greenfield police with fatal motor vehicle accident on Route 2.

8:33 p.m. Attempted to make notification regarding above accident.

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74 PROSPECT ST. TURNERS FALLS

IDOL from pg 1

formers began with a prerequisite song from the Motown genre. Having to perform 'outside of the box' can be challenging for some singers, and lets the judges get a better sense of their versatility. This tactic was effective, and proved to be the undoing of some of the performers.

Lisa Pelletier, of Feeding Hills, chose "You Can't Hurry Love" by the Supremes for her Motown tune. She stepped out in a sparkly confection of a dress and looked ready to impress. Once she began to sing, however, her lack of familiarity with the material let her nerves get the best of her, and she stumbled through the first verse with the help of the lyric monitor. She walked out into the audience in an attempt to shake off her false start, but this move only succeeded in tripping her up further. At the end, she confessed that Motown is, "not my genre."

After Pelletier came Katrina Goff, of Athol, and the trouble continued. Goff chose "Signed, Sealed, Delivered I'm Yours," by Stevie Wonder and, although she looked delightful in a lollipop-pink dress, her vocals sounded frenzied as she attempted to mask her unease. She, too, admitted to genre discomfort.

Ashley Parker, of Turners Falls, courageously selected "Respect" by Aretha Franklin. Although she seemed to be reaching for some of the higher notes, she maintained a confident stage presence and capable vocals. Her undoing was her too constant attention to the infamous lyric monitor.

Teresa Dailey, of Charlemont, also seemed to be struggling with nerves. Her consistently impressive showmanship and solid vocals unraveled during her presentation of "Ain't No Mountain High Enough," by Marvin Gaye. She strained for the song's upper range, but her lower vocals were characteristically strong and smoky.

"You Keep Me Hangin' On," by the Supremes was the choice of Nicole Ovitt-Serrell of Greenfield. Ovitt-Serrell gave no illusion of knowing the song or its lyrics and peppered her performance with playful gestures and chatter as she navigated her missteps. She seemed to turn nervousness into cheekiness and banter as the judges critiqued her.

I was expecting more of the same when Jen Tobey of

Montague took the stage. Tobey has demonstrated her rock and roll talent in previous rounds, but I was skeptical about her Soul credentials. I was pleasantly surprised when she broke into "Sexual Healing," by Marvin Gaye. She made the transition to the Motown sound with smooth vocals flavored by a tangy edge. Although she seemed to flounder at the end of the song, and for the first time relied on the lyric monitor, the song showcased her vocal quality and she received compliments from the judges.

Another surprise for me was Erin Richman, of Westminster, VT, singing "Ooh, Baby Baby," the Linda Ronstadt version. Richman seemed completely comfortable with the song and her performance. Her vocals were creamy and light; Morin compared them to butterscotch.

Jerri Higgins, of Montague City, was also undaunted by Motown. Higgins chose "The Tracks of My Tears," by Smokey Robinson, and appeared very comfortable with the song. The only difference the judges noted was that her performance seemed to lack the energy she had shown on previous nights, and they encouraged her to find it again her next time up.

Alana Martineau, of Turners Falls, started the evening's competition singing "And I'm Telling You I'm Not Going" from the musical "Dreamgirls." Anyone who saw Jennifer Hudson perform this song in the movie knows it is a difficult song choice that comes with high expectations attached. Martineau opened with soft elegance through the first verse then let the fireworks begin. She poured herself into the song, pulling out all vocal and emotional stops to wow judges and audience alike. Known as a 'finesse singer,' she proved she can also belt it out with the best of them.

None of the performers could match Vickie Stankiewicz when it came to vocal and performance comfort. The change in genre seemed not to faze her one bit, and she lent authenticity to her rendition of "I Heard it Through the Grapevine," by Marvin Gaye by dressing in drag. Her ensemble consisted of a smart suit, sharp cap, red necktie and a pair of shades. As the

song progressed she removed first the sunglasses and then her suit jacket to reveal a masculine white tank top underneath. Unlike some of the other performers, she managed to make each theatrical tactic look unforced and remained completely in control vocally and physically. The song made good use of her ample range, and she purred through her vocals with playful quirkiness.

The second round of vocal pieces were of the contestants' choosing and the difference in performance was dramatic. Lisa Pelletier hit her stride with "Edge of Seventeen," by Stevie Nicks. She appeared to be channeling the singers' vibe with a Nicks/early-Madonna-esque outfit, complete with lace gloves

and fishnet stockings, and her throaty, deep vocals were an authentic tribute. She still seemed uneasy with her physical performance, however, and the judges advised her to "make it look easy," since she already has vocal power to spare.

Ashley Parker also lacked confidence in her performance. She chose another very challenging song, "I Turn to You," by Christina Aguilera. Although she had moments of sunshine that reminded us why she made it to the semi-finals, she relied heavily on the monitor again and ultimately lost her way.

Katrina Goff chose the Katherine McPhee version of "Somewhere Over the Rainbow." The adaptation was a bit saccharin for my taste overall, but it had some intermittent spice. Like her first performance, she over-sang at times but her risk-taking was commended. When she nailed it, she did so very well.

Jerri Higgins brought her energy with her when she performed Martha and the Vandellas' "Heatwave". She clearly was comfortable with the song, but her effort to turn up the energy level led to an overpowering vocal, and at times she sounded like she was shouting. Nonetheless, she was the most exuberant performer and her infectious enthusiasm sparkled more brightly than her dress.

Nicole Ovitt-Serrell made the unusual selection of "Sunshine of Your Love," by Cream. While the song gave her a chance to show another side of her vocal ability, its long musical interlude bordered on ridiculous. Ovitt-Serrell utilized the ample instrumental break to kiss an audience member in the center section. She also bantered a bit, struck a few poses, and basically hammed up an awkward break. For me, the loss of her vocal grace and effortless delivery was disappointing.

The following five contestants made the cut for next week's final round of competition. One of them will take home \$1,000, and a recording session at Angry Chair Recording Studio in Turners Falls. One of them may also win the \$250 prize for Audience Favorite.



Teresa Dailey overcame microphone difficulties to blast through Guns N Roses' "Sweet Child of Mine" to reach the June 2nd finals of Valley Idol. But does she have the stuff to go the distance?

as she tore her way through a flawless performance, she captivated the audience, and she owned the stage. Jamieson, who works primarily in the rock genre and has over 20 years experience, complimented her strong potential as a performer.

Teresa Dailey came back with a dramatic attitude change. Preparing to sing "Sweet Child of Mine," by Guns N Roses, she encountered microphone difficulties. Where previously she'd been flustered by nerves, this difficulty just seemed to strengthen her determination and she sang without amplification until another microphone was given to her. This microphone had a different sound and required vocal modification but she took it in stride. Her voice was powerful, for the first time aggressive, demanding our attention as she blasted her way through a gritty, explosive, spot-on performance.

Erin Richman stepped out of character as well. Singing "I'm a Woman," by Peggy Lee, she treated us to smoky vocals, sassy strutting and playful theatrics. She took possession of the song with a confidence that belied her youth.

Last but not least among the final five, Vickie Stankiewicz. Stankiewicz cashed in on her comfort with Janis Joplin's music by permeating her gorgeous homage, "Piece of My Heart," with the passionate, hungry attitude only she can bring to a performance, showcasing not only her amazing vocals but also her clothing, her physicality, and her stage presence. Stankiewicz has remained in her own league by always pushing the envelope a little farther. No matter what she attempts, she handles it without flinching and is undoubtedly the most consistent competitor this year.

If you haven't seen Valley Idol yet, you do not want to miss next week's finale. If you have seen it, you are no doubt as anxious as I am to go again and find out who wins. In my opinion it is anybody's ballgame and we won't know until the final note is sung.

The show will begin at 8 p.m. on Saturday, June 2nd at the Shea Theater, and unlike some other venues there's not a bad seat in the house. Come cast your vote for your Audience Favorite and help support a great local theater.

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FIRE from page 1

collapsed in a heap of burning rubble across the access road.

Bartus wasted no time thinking about his narrow escape. He set up a master stream and trained 3 inch and 4 inch lines on the fire. When the second Turners engine arrived on the scene, minutes before the building collapse, Bartus, in radio contact, told Captain John Zellman to hold on the far side of the blaze. "I would have liked my second engine to come by," said Bartus, but by then the risk of passing the burning building appeared too great.

The second Turners engine parked near Building #11, the building that nearly abuts the Southworth mill, and "set up for water supply with master streams to protect Building #11," Bartus said. When the Turners Falls and

Northfield ladder trucks arrived, next, Bartus had them back up the second Turners engine.

"I had decided if we lost Building #11, we'd lose the whole end of the complex and might lose Southworth," Bartus said. Greenfield's ladder truck arrived and trained another 4-inch line on the blaze.

Meanwhile, Bartus concentrated his attention on an L shaped section of the mill connecting the burning building to the rest of the complex. "I thought if I could stop the fire there, I could save the rest of the mill." Some firefighters from Turners Falls and from Erving had come on foot to assist the crew of Engine #3, traveling the long way around via the pedestrian bridge near the Great Falls Discovery Center, opening the gates by Indeck on route.

Turners chief Ray Godin, still officially on vacation, had been roused from sleep with the rest of his department and had by now set up a command post on Canal Street, overlooking the blaze. Soon, the pedestrian bridge from 3rd Street was opened up for foot traffic, and a stream of firefighters came to Bartus' and Cogswell's assistance on the northeast side of the blaze.

One pumper from Greenfield even set up on the bike path, and poured a steady stream of water directly across the canal onto the blaze.

In the understatement of the year, Bartus said the access road between the canal and the mills, "is a tough place to put trucks. There's plenty of water, but not much room to work with it."

Bartus and Captain David Dion both report seeing the building's owner, Jerry Jones, leaving the building with a female companion around 3:30 a.m., less than an hour after the passing motorist reported seeing flames at the rear windows of the mill. Bartus said Jones and his companion were fully dressed, and exited the canal-level main entrance door. He said he talked with Jones, but citing the state fire marshall's ongoing investiga-



EILEEN DOWD PHOTO

"I saw bursts of flames. It was so horrifying and so compelling and so tragic. I was just thankful any of the buildings remained standing. It was such a ball of fire." - Eileen Dowd of 65 Canal Street. Photo taken approximately 3:30 a.m. Saturday morning, from her porch. Building #11 in center of frame.

tion of the fire, declined to characterize their conversation. Jones was interviewed in the early morning hours by state fire marshals, who would only say the cause and point of origin of the fire were under investigation.

At about 8 a.m., Montague police officers were seen at a downtown gas station asking to inspect security videos to determine if anyone had purchased canisters of gasoline the evening before.

Meanwhile, Bartus had plenty of other things to worry about. Building #1, between the collapsed building and the river, had caught fire too, and threatened to spread the conflagration toward the northeast end of the complex. Today, Building #1's roof testifies to how close disaster came to engulfing that huge structure. Gaping holes are burned through the roof at the southern end; charred rafters show like exposed and blackened ribs. "But the sprinkler system held it," said Bartus. "They did what they were expected to do." He added the sprinklers in Building #11, next to Southworth, also did their job, as did the metal fire doors. He could not say whether the sprinkler system in Building #10 was overwhelmed by the fire, or simply failed to function.

"We were able to work a hand line in there [Building #1], up the stairwell and fight the fire in the

attic," said Bartus. He said he entered Building #1 from the level of the 3rd Street pedestrian bridge, with Captain David Dion, and fought the fire in Building #1 from inside. "It was close to dawn by then."

At the same time, firefighters from Greenfield had worked a

entered Building #11, among them Josh Heinemann. With a Leyden firefighter added to their number, three Wendell firefighters scaled the roof of the low building next to the collapsed Building #10. Heinemann said, "We climbed in the window [of Building #11], onto the second floor, with water coming down from above, and two inches of water on the wood floor. There was heavy smoke, but no fire. We opened as many windows as we could to vent the smoke, on that floor, and on the floors above and below. The Northfield chief, in charge of firefighters working that section of the mill, said not to break windows, just open them if they could be opened, and there were plenty that could be opened on both sides."

Heinemann said, "According to the chief's instructions, as soon as one of us was low on air, (the air packs whistle when they are low) we all left the building and went to rehab, where our names and blood pressures were



Jerry Jones stands beside the interior courtyard of the Strathmore Mill in this December 2004 file photo. Building #1 in background.

line in between Southworth and Building #11, to fight the fire from the rear, from the river side. Other firefighters, wearing self contained breathing apparatus, entered Building #11, and worked to keep the fire from spreading to that building, which now stands alone at the southwest end of the Strathmore complex.

Wendell firefighters were among the rotating crew who

taken." Wendell firefighters were given food and sent home around 11:30 a.m., Heinemann said.

Godin said the blaze was the equivalent of a four alarm fire: fire companies from as far as Northampton and Brattleboro responded, along with all local departments. "We pretty much stripped every fire department in Franklin County," Godin said.

At dawn, the access road was

see FIRE pg 11

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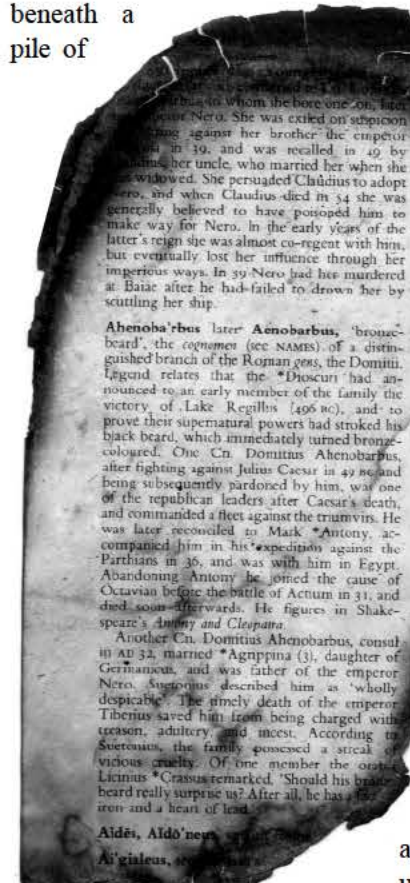
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FIRE from pg 10

lined with fire trucks pouring water on the blaze. Firefighters from Orange stood beneath the pedestrian bridge near the collapsed brick walls of Building #10, directing water on the smoldering ruins.

The ruined cab of a truck lay beneath a pile of



Among the ashes and charred bits of recycled paper raining on downtown Turners Saturday morning, this page from an encyclopedia of ancient Rome was found lying in the middle of 3rd Street.

brick; part of the chain link security fence had collapsed into the canal; Jones' motorboat was parked incongruously beside the smoking ruins, unscathed.

Jones purchased the Strathmore mill in December of 2002 for \$40,000. On Saturday, Montague building inspector David Jensen said Jones had been living in the Strathmore Mill for some time. "Was he authorized to live there?" Jensen chose his words carefully. "It was acknowledged that having a person in the building was not a bad thing, as a sort of 'night watch-

man.'" Jones was apparently living on the fourth floor of Building #2, which lies parallel to the canal to the northeast of the pedestrian footbridge.

Jensen said the fire almost certainly started in one of the lower floors of Building #10. As part of Jones' recycling business, some areas of that building were permitted to store rolls of paper. These permitted areas were established after a lengthy court proceeding between the town of Montague's building and fire departments and Jones to ensure the building's construction and fire safety system and sprinklers were up to the task of handling the amount of combustible material stored there.

Jensen said Jones also had paper stored in the basement of Building #10, in an area not permitted for storage under the terms of the negotiated agreement. Additionally, Jensen said the building's fire alarm may not have been working on the morning of the fire. "The fire alarm has been a chronic problem," at Strathmore under Jones' tenure, Jensen said.

As to whether the fire alarm system, which should have immediately alerted the Turners Falls fire department in the event of fire at the mill, was working on Saturday, Bartus would only note that the fire was called in by the police dispatcher, as well as to comment, "There was an alarm system in the complex. It's being investigated whether it worked appropriately."

Godin said when working properly, "The fire alarm system," at the Strathmore "is activated by smoke detectors, heat detectors, a pull station, or a flow

switch on the sprinkler system. When it's activated, horns and strobes go off in the building itself and the alarm also trips the master box which rings into the station."

Corroborating Jensen's remark about paper being stored outside of the permitted areas of Building #10, Michael Crabtree, of Turners Falls, a temporary worker who said he had been employed by Jones to strip copper conduit wire at the plant for most of the last year, said, "There was tons of paper stored everywhere," at the mill. Jensen said it appeared Jones had been bringing more paper in recently, even as a possible sale of the mill was pending to John Anctil and the Swift River Group, a group of investors interested in purchasing the Strathmore to turn it into a film and television school and production studio.

Crabtree said he had slept at the mill in Building #10 on and off for six months, and said the door from the access road to that building (still visible in the front page photo) was often left open, and was easy to open even when latched. He said he had worked

see FIRE pg 12

Fire Stirs Memories of Strathmore

BY JOSEPH A. PARZYCH GILL - Folks who feared the Strathmore Mill in Turners Falls would meet the same fate as the former GTD plant on Meridian Street in Greenfield felt they could breathe a little easier when a Boston group bought the mill a few years back. Western Properties, LLC, headed by attorney Scott Jones, purchased the Strathmore mill for \$40,000 in 2002, sight unseen - chickenfeed. The original cost of constructing the mill in 1871 was \$400,000. In 2003 dollars, that cost would equal at least \$4 million. Not a bad deal. Scott Jones' dad Jerry, the building's manager, later offered to sell the Strathmore to the town of Montague for \$300,000.

After Saturday's disastrous fire destroyed one of the mill's buildings and dam-

aged others, prospective buyer John Anctil, a partner in the Swift River Group, who earlier had signed a purchase and sale agreement on the Strathmore - reportedly for \$350,000 - said he is still interested in buying and developing the mill into a film and television production school and studio.

On Sunday, Davenport Construction's large crane, digging up smoldering debris for fire department hoses to douse, developed a problem with a water pump on the engine. Ironically, another water pump developed problems after sucking up a piece of lumber when fighting a previous mill fire at the Strathmore, in 1878.

Davenport brought in an excavator, with a demolition attachment that acts much like a clam, to continue dig-

see MEMORIES pg 12



Davenport Construction's excavator digging up smoldering debris on Sunday at the Strathmore while firefighters hose down the hot spots.

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FIRE from page 11

steadily with Jones and another temporary employee, Jonathan Tanzer, of Turners Falls, stripping wire at the Strathmore once the price of copper rose last year to about \$3 a pound. "We stripped copper all last summer, conductor, copper wire, and hauled it down to Kramers [metal recycling in Greenfield]. On a good week, we'd deliver a ton."

Crabtree said when the paper recycling business slowed, Jones turned to stripping copper from the Strathmore as a more lucrative profession. He said he got a call on Sunday, May 6th, from Tanzer asking for his help "to make one last push" stripping copper at the mill. But when he called back to confirm, he said Jones told him, "We don't need you."

That same day, May 6th, Tanzer claims in court documents he was nearly electrocuted at the Strathmore mill in the process of working under Jones' direction to strip copper from a live wire. Captain John Zellman, who said on Saturday he had been in frequent contact with the fire marshal's office in the past two weeks (during Godin's vacation) about that accident, said the wire Jones asked Tanzer to strip on May 6th was carrying 13,800 volts to an outdoor transformer located near the foot of the pedestrian bridge.

Crabtree said, "I don't understand why they didn't use a tester," on that wire.

Ancil, of the Swift River



This photo, taken Saturday at approximately 7 a.m., shows Turners Falls Engine 2 and the Turners Falls ladder truck backed up by the Northfield ladder truck pouring water on the blaze while Greenfield's pumper adds more water power from the bike path across the canal.

Group, reportedly was in the process of negotiating the purchase of the Strathmore in the week before the fire for a figure of \$350,000. But the May 6th accident, which caused Tanzer severe burns, led Tanzer to file a lawsuit against Jones, seeking damages of \$1 million. On Monday, May 21st, a lien in that amount was placed on the Strathmore, a factor that may have delayed Ancil's purchase of the property last week.

Reached by phone on Wednesday, Ancil, who toured the scene the day after the fire, said, "We're still in love with the property, and we're still optimistic." He said he was coming to town on Wednesday to "take a more serious look at what's going on in the buildings that sustained fire and smoke damage. But I hear from the fire department the beams are in good condition, and the buildings are structurally sound."

Asked whether the fire had complicated his plans to purchase and renovate the mill complex for film and television production and a school, Ancil said, "I look at the folks in Iraq. We can't let this discourage us."

They deal with much worse every day. We can't let this discourage us."

Jensen said when he examining the exterior of the building last week, to check the transformer, black marks on the brick wall showed evidence of the force of the May 6th accident, when Tanzer cut into the live transmission wire with a knife. Jensen said Jones was standing near Tanzer at the time, and also received burns from that accident. Jensen said that in previous inspections of the mill he had seen piles of stripped wiring lying in corners of the building.

On Tuesday, Chief Zukowski said the fire that destroyed Building #10 was "of suspicious origin," but the cause was still under investigation. The state fire marshal's office has set up a tip line (800-682-9229) and is offering a \$5,000 reward for information leading to an arrest and conviction in the case. All sides credited the swift response of the Turners Falls fire department for containing the blaze, and preventing a far greater tragedy.

Numerous fire departments from around the area kept men and equipment deployed on the scene through Sunday evening, hosing down the rubble of Building #10 and extinguishing hot spots. The Turners Falls fire see FIRE pg 13

MEMORIES from page 11

going through the rubble to facilitate extinguishing stubborn hot spots. Clayton Davenport said he expects to continue the demolition and disposal of the ruins, though plans are incomplete.

Names of former mill workers seemed to rise up in the hazy smoke drifting from the smoldering ruins as hoses poured water in several streams - Gordon, McAlister, Mr. & Mrs. North, Kabaniac, Hanley, Hastings, Cocking, Wilkey, Novac, Raymonds, Kmiec, Jekhanski, Letourneau, Rosewarne, Pucci, Allen and Hanley are just a few of the hundreds of people who regarded the mill as their second home and fellow workers as family.

The Strathmore Paper Mill, formerly the Keith Paper Company, was the brainchild of John Keith. Construction on the mill began in 1871 and was completed in 1873. They didn't fool around. Nowadays it would take that long to complete an environmental impact study.

Four years after the mill was built, a disastrous fire destroyed it. The Turners Falls Fire Department's steam powered pump quit during the fire. An old hand powered pump, brought in from Greenfield, sucked up a stick of wood, rendering it nearly useless. Firefighters managed to save a couple of outbuildings containing office records, machinery and finished paper. Reconstruction began as soon as the bricks had cooled enough to handle. Insurance covered only \$265,000 of the loss, but the mill was back in operation by early 1878.

During the Keith's heyday, the mill employed three hundred workers. Keith Paper employed Irish, French, Polish, Italian, and good old Yankees. They worked side by side as a congenial group. Rag room ladies sorted and cut up cotton cloth for the manufacture of high quality bond writing paper. Work output was weighed daily. Though workers were not on piecework, a spirited competition to see who could produce the highest scale number

each day spurred them to work at warp speed.

Though called 'rags,' the material consisted largely of new cloth remnants. At first, plant officials allowed workers to buy material. But management felt the expense of weighing, keeping track of how much each bought, and deducting the amount from the employee's paycheck was more bother than it was worth. Then, management allowed the ladies to take home as much scrap material as they could carry, figuring the women had worked like demons in the race to be top producer and had more than earned the paltry cost of the material. Women came to work with empty valises. At day's end they left the mill, valises bulging with their treasures, laden like pack animals.

Women sorting paper also vied to outdo each other. A consistent top producer would triumphantly head for the time clock at day's end, head held high, frazzled, with her wig askew, proud to retain her title.

Most paper mills, like the Keith, were located next to rivers or canals for water necessary for manufacturing and for power generation. The Keith Paper Company first used a cumbersome system of overhead shafts, pulleys, and flat belts connected to four water wheels turned by water from the canal. The paper company replaced the water wheels in 1918 with a single vertical Francis water turbine and General Electric Generator.

It's a tribute to General Electric that the generator installed in 1918 has run, year after year, with little or no daily care, to this very day. Converting to a generator and electric motors proved a more efficient method of power transmission, though not all pulleys, shafts and belts were eliminated. Machinery belting played a role in altering the course of history in Turners Falls at a competing mill.

International Paper Company once operated a large paper mill a little further down the peninsula. When the old IP mill workforce had gone on strike in the thirties, see MEMORIES pg 13



DETMOLD PHOTO

John Ancil, shown here at a 'brainstorming session' about his plans to create a film and television production studio and school at the Strathmore Mill, on Thursday May 17th at the Montague Town Hall. After Saturday's fire, Ancil said he was still optimistic about renovating the mill. "I look at the folks in Iraq. They deal with much worse every day. We can't let this discourage us."

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FIRE from page 12

department was on the scene again on Monday, Tuesday and Wednesday, continuing to hose down the smoking rubble.

Jenson said the sewer treatment plant Southworth shares with Strathmore was flooded with the amount of water being poured on the fire Saturday, shutting down Southworth temporarily. On Tuesday, Jenson said the outflow pipe from Southworth transited Building #10, and was knocked out of commission when the building collapsed, but Southworth had a redundant line to the treatment plant that could be activated. He estimated it would take Southworth a few days to do the work needed to connect to the unused sewer line, and get that mill up and running again.

Also on Tuesday, Jensen said he had toured Building #1 and found it to be "structurally sound." He said reports from the fire department about Building #11, and a tour of the canal level floor of that building indicate that it, too, is "structurally OK."

Jenson said he was proceeding under the assumption that Jones did not have insurance on the mill.

He said he spoke with Jones on Wednesday, and Jones told him he had been asleep when the fire started, and was "awakened by the smoke."

In April, Joe Janikas, a member of the Turners Falls Fire District Prudential Committee, proposed forming a committee to look into possible ways of increasing revenues and decreasing expenses for the district. He suggested it might no longer be cost effective to maintain overnight coverage at the Turners Falls fire station, given the district's current level of call volume. On May 21st, a seven member committee was appointed to consider those changes, chaired by newly elected prudential committee member Mark Allen.

Asked whether he thought the Strathmore fire, and the department's rapid response to the mill in the wee hours of Saturday morning would alter the committee's thinking on the subject of overnight coverage, Allen said, "The fire very poignantly points out the value and the difference in minutes in response time to critical situations. I have no idea what the time lag would have been if you had not had people in house."



Greenfield firefighters work to protect Building #1 on the northeast side of the Strathmore courtyard early Saturday.

But Allen continued, "It's rare. We haven't had a big fire like that since the Crocker Building [ten years ago this June]."

However, Allen said, "None of us can afford to build for the 1000 year storm. We need to talk to a lot of other towns that don't have coverage at night and see how they handle it. That's the task of the committee I'm on: to look at the possibility of change, and weigh the reduced personnel costs against the increased costs in terms of risk. The prudential committee is not going to make a decision on a matter like this without presenting it first to the voters of the fire district."



MEMORIES

from page 12

mill officials seized the opportunity to do a bit of preventative maintenance. Strikers, hearing that IP was installing new belting in the plant, just knew IP officials were bluffing with threats to tear the mill down, and would eventually cave in to workers' demands. They were wrong. IP tore the mill down.

The Montague town hall is located in one of the vestiges of the IP mill. The restored IP carpenter shop and payroll building sit on the other side of Avenue A as the Great Falls Discovery Center. The southern end of the Turners Falls-Gill bridge abutments sit on foundations of the IP mill.

Strathmore Paper Company, a subsidiary of International Paper Company, acquired the Keith mill in the 1951 and operated it as the Strathmore Paper Company until 1986, with a work force of about 120 people.

The Keith was a good place to work. As a union shop, pay and benefits were good and there was little favoritism. Management liked to hire friends and relatives of workers, knowing an employee wouldn't recommend a slacker. The close-knit work force had a strong work ethic, with a lot

of good-natured banter. Labor relations ran relatively smooth, perhaps partly because of favorable pay and benefits and partly because of knowledge of the disastrous outcome of the IP strike.

Strathmore Paper Company, a subsidiary of IP, bought the Keith in the 1950's and operated it as Strathmore Paper Company. Since IP kept the building well maintained, workers had hoped IP would update the mill's inefficient, antiquated machinery, but IP chose instead to close the mill down in 1994.

For a time, several small business rented space in the mill, but couldn't seem to come to an agreement with IP on buying the plant. They all moved out. In 2001, IP sold the 3,026 square-foot powerhouse and power generating equipment to Turners Falls Hydro.

Though the powerhouse is in part of the mill, the sale of the mill to Western Properties had no bearing on the operation of the generating plant. Turners Falls Hydro has recently installed monitoring equipment, fire safety equipment, and automatic controls allowing remote operation of the generating plant. Saturday's fire did not appear to have damaged the generating plant.



WENDELL continued from pg 1

Morse Village Road negatively affects his enjoyment of his property by obstructing his view to the east. He further contends that as an abutter he was never notified of the ZBA hearing on August 29th, 2005, in writing or otherwise.

"When the building was under construction in the summer of 2006, I was taken aback," said Anderson. "I didn't realize it wasn't in conformance. As the roof went on I realized how unhappy I was with where they put the building. If they did everything legally and above board, I wouldn't have much reason to complain."

He spoke with Deirdre Cabral, chair of the planning board around the second week of December, 2006, and she "mentioned the possibility that a variance had been granted." A few days later, Anderson said he wrote a letter to the town saying he did not believe zoning concerns had been properly addressed prior to the building's

construction. The letter stated, "In any case I have not been contacted as an abutter regarding any zoning changes that have been or that should have been made, or any variances that have been or should have been granted. I am aware the setback from Morse Village Road does not conform with existing zoning requirements."

Anderson said the only communication he had received from the town up to this point regarding the town office building project was a letter of apology to abutters concerning temporary impacts: noise, dust and loss of vegetation. On the latter point, he said the contractor for the project, Handford Construction, had removed a line of deciduous trees that had provided a visual screen between his property and the property formerly owned by Anne Marie Metzler, where the town offices were constructed. He said the trees did not block his view to the east in the way the new town office does now.

Anderson moved to Wendell about three years ago and built "a rather large addition to the

rather small house" he purchased at 5 Morse Village Road in 2005. The Metzler property abuts his property, which at one time was subdivided from it, to the east and north. Anderson said the town decided to situate the town office building closer to his house on the lot than Metzler's had been, making its forward position on the lot loom even larger in his range of view. He said he used to be able to see the horizon from his first floor.

Anderson said he voted against the appropriation for the town office building at a town meeting in 2005. At that meeting, he said, mention of the setback variance was not part of the discussion on the warrant article, nor was the position of the town office building clearly delineated on a schematic drawing presented on an easel that night. "It was definitely placed more centrally on the lot and further back, on that drawing," he said.

Anderson said as far as he knows, the Greenfield land court rules favorably on his appeal, the only remedy the judge can order is "to make the building comply

with setback requirements. That's where out of court settlements come into play," Anderson said.

The town of Wendell, according to selectboard member Daniel Keller, is not inclined to entertain the idea of moving the recently completed \$1.1 million, 52,000 square foot town office building (built on a cement slab). The town received an occupancy permit for the building in March, and has only moved into the new offices two months ago.

However, Keller said, "The town has expressed regrets to Brian Anderson for any procedural errors that may have occurred in the review process, and we are willing to work with him to address any concerns he has about the building site. But it is the position of the town that he did know about the building plans and in particular about the decision to locate the building where it is located." Keller went on to say, "It all comes down to a question of notice, and we believe he did know, and was properly noticed through a number of avenues."

Keller acknowledged that written notice to abutters of hearings is "a generally accepted procedure that may have been [in this case] an inadvertent oversight by the zoning board, which at that time was in transition and understaffed." However, Keller said Anderson was given notice of the site plan review of the town offices by the planning board, by mail. That review took place during a multi-day hearing, which, Keller said, Anderson did not attend.

Planning board chair Cabral said the zoning board of appeals had ruled on the matter of the building's setback variance prior to the planning board's site plan review, which dealt more with mitigating the effects of the building's parking and lighting and landscaping for the neighbors.

Keller said, "It's true the ZBA is the final authority when it comes to the setback. But the setback issue was addressed at the planning board hearing. It did come up and it was discussed. Had he been there it would have

see **WENDELL** pg 15

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BUDGET from pg 5

school committee released their 'minimally adequate budget' in January of '07, Gee said, "but there is still a gap of approximately \$800,000. It really is impossible to cut \$800,000 and still have a school district standing."

She offered a few glimmers of hope, speaking of attempts to "join with other school districts to share resources. There has to be a way to consolidate some of the services every school district is mandated to provide, and meet the needs of the towns." She said if the state were to mandate school employees' enrollment in the GIC, "If we could go from 20% health care increases to 10% or 12%, that would help close the gap."

Abbondanzio offered a wrap-up of his historical analysis of the last eight years of town and school expenses and revenues, along with his five-year projections for same. With the advent of Massachusetts education reform in 1993, he said, growth in state aid to the schools averaged 10% a year. "The Gill-Montague schools got more increases than a lot of other school districts around here. It

financed the growth of the school district for seven or eight years, through 2000." Abbondanzio said increases in state aid during those years were in the \$300,000 to \$600,000 range.

Then, in 2000, "All of that started to go away. We saw a big decline in Chapter 70 [state aid for education] across the state, with a 20% cut in one year." Lately, the increase in state aid has averaged 1 1/2%, "not enough to finance the growth of the spending side of the budget."

Then, in what Abbondanzio called a "double whammy," school choice became widely accepted in Franklin County school districts in 2003, and tuition out school choice and charter school costs to the G-M schools began to mount. "In fiscal 2008, school choice will result in \$1.3 million "out the door" from what would have been \$7.3 million in state aid to the G-M schools," Abbondanzio said. "We're seeing revenues from the state at 1999 levels. We're seeing a decline in state aid."

Abbondanzio said across the state, even towns that are not losing to school choice are facing overrides this year, and many are going down to defeat, even in

wealthy communities.

On the town side, Montague lost one third of its state aid in 2003 - 04, reduced staff through early retirement, and pared expense accounts down to the bare minimum to keep departments operating. That same year, the schools lost 24 teachers, and have never recovered in terms of staffing or enrolment.

"The only answer," said Abbondanzio, "is in a rise in the state income tax or sales tax dedicated to state aid." But he said, "The will is not there."

In the absence of relief from the state, municipalities have had to fall back on increases in the property tax, an inequitable recourse for funding local services and schools, since it falls hard on fixed income property owners and low income tenants alike. He said if Montague does not change the way it is doing business, and rein in personnel costs, under the best case revenue scenario the town will face more than a \$2 million budget deficit by 2013.

The union representatives and employees in the room seemed to react warily to this news.

David Jensen asked why a drop in school district enrolment

had not translated to an equal drop in the cost of running the schools. Incoming G-M superintendent Ken Roche explained, "School districts cannot contract efficiently as enrolment declines. You still need a superintendent, you still need a special education director, you need a building, it's not so easy for schools to contract. It often results in decreased educational opportunity for students if you contract too quickly."

Gee said 4.5 teaching and paraprofessional positions are already on the cutting floor for next year, which will result in class sizes rising from 22 to 24, 25, or 26 students. She said with a quarter of students coming to class with special needs in the G-M schools, "if you continue to add more students to classrooms, there is a law of diminishing returns."

United Electrical workers representative Dave Cohen asked what had happened to plans to open up a landfill on Turnpike Road as a new source of town revenue, and why Montague did not enthusiastically support single payer health care, which he said could save millions statewide.

Abbondanzio acknowledged opening a landfill on Turnpike Road could, optimally, bring in half a million dollars to Montague for perhaps twenty years, but that money would best be spent on a capital improvement program for long deferred town projects, rather than on personnel costs.

Town attorney Dick Hayes said town officials, unions and workers should seize the opportunity to develop potential revenue sources in Montague, such as the airport or the landfill, to provide an economic stimulus for the community. A meeting like Tuesday's, he said, put Montague "ahead of the curve" in grappling with a problem that is confronting every community in the state in an era of declining state aid and rising fixed costs. "There's no reason your unions can't band together to create more wealth and begin a serious long range development to get away from the consequences of the town administrator's report," he said.

But one employee, leaving the meeting, had a less optimistic take on the proceedings. "It's the same old story, the same old song and dance," she said.



OFF THE BEATEN TRACK

Lilac Land

BY FLORE

PELHAM - Were you lucky enough to have a lilac tree growing under your bedroom window? That very lilac tree of my youth seemed every year to shoot for the roof.

Perhaps it looked so impressive when you are in your early years, when everything has such a gigantic appearance! There was no need to be called twice for bed, then.

The warm night dispatched melodic sounds, as you climbed the stairs. Fireflies moved as lightning! There was a friend up there, awaiting your nocturnal visit.

Unnoticed *par les grands* (by the adults) you could

quietly open the window sash. How could it be beating its blossoms, against the metal shutters? Or so you believed!

But the fragrance was convincing. You felt you were under a spell, wafting you to Fairy Land.

Are you ready for a surprise?

For those people who still would wander in those blossoming lands, in Pelham, quite nearby, you will encounter such a magic place.

The time to venture there, is now, between the middle of May, to the first half of June! It has 300 varieties of hybrid lilac, planted on its grounds.

You heard me right!

It also brings the marvelous story of Mabel and Al Lumbey, who purchased a Greek Revival house from the town of Prescott, which now lies under the Quabbin Reservoir. They re-erected their home, piece by piece, from the dismantled house.

After planting a wide selection of fruit trees on their grand property, they found the ground slightly alkaline.

But they found lilac trees would thrive there, with little effort.

Over the years, the Lumbeys traveled to many countries, returning with these many species of lilac.

According to the old belief, the lilac first came from Persia, but its real origins are the southern and southeastern mountains of Kansu, in north-central China!

Lilacs were brought to Vienna in the 16th Century from Constantinople, and soon became a favorite in all of Europe.

Even the Pilgrims brought the lilac with them, on the Mayflower.

Bien sur! Of course, it couldn't be a better named vessel.

The miraculous part continues. Their son James, a gifted painter who says he has not inherited his parents' green thumb, continues to tend with devotion this breathtaking land.

The public is invited to share their floral dreams, and James' paintings are not to be missed, either. They are on exhibit in the barn studio building, during May and June, "to be seen and not to be sold" as the sign

indicates!

The address?

The Lumley Studio, 24 Harkness Road, Pelham, MA. One deep breath of the lilacs' heady aroma and you will be transported to Persia, Fairy Land, and beyond. Go!



FLORE PHOTO

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TURNERS FALLS

Montague LAPPS Program a 'Splash' at Turners Falls High School

TURNERS FALLS - Eight-year-old Michelle Vassar is an enthusiastic swimmer. "I love swimming," said the second grader at Hillcrest School in Turners Falls. She plans to join the Montague Parks and Rec. Blue Fish Swim Team, so the swimming lessons she has been taking this week at the Turners Falls High School pool are just what she likes. "Now I can know more stuff about swimming," thanks to the Montague Local Aquatics Program for Personal Safety.

Montague LAPPS was designed and implemented by TFHS swim team member Ali Urban, a junior, who was inspired to begin the program through her participation in Mount Holyoke College's Take the Lead program.

With the collaboration of Montague Catholic Social Ministries and The Kids' Place

After School Program, Ali and her team of high school student instructors and life guards implemented the program at the pool May 21-24 for 19 elementary school children. A pizza dinner for families with guest speaker Betty Miles, aquatics instructor at the Greenfield YMCA and the only "Make a Splash Hero" in Massachusetts, was scheduled for May 25 at MCSM.

"I think this is great," Michelle Rehorka of Montague, the mother of two of the swimmers, said as she watched the lessons at the pool. "It's good to get the kids used to the water and interacting with others."

She said she liked having the high school students teaching the children. "I'm impressed to see so many teenagers. They're handling the little groups of kids great."

With an instructor-student

ratio of 1:2 or 1:1, the children got individualized attention from their mentors.

Eighteen high school volunteers participated from Turners Falls High School, Deerfield Academy and Northfield Mount Hermon. Eight of them were lifeguards as well.

Sarah Merva, an Americorps volunteer at MCSM and The Kids' Place, said Montague LAPPS was a great opportunity for children to learn to swim or to increase their swimming skills. "We live in an area where there is dangerous water (the rivers), and a lot of children could not access these services" without the LAPPS program, she said. "Thanks to Ali all these kids are learning to swim. It's so great."

Charles Williams of Turners Falls, the grandfather of two of the swim students, emphasized the importance of knowing how



Michelle Vassar, 8, a second grader at Hillcrest Elementary School, enjoys the Turners Falls High School pool with volunteer instructor Katherine Kuklewicz, a stand-out swimmer on the TFHS varsity swim team. Both participated in Montague LAPPS.

to swim. "Everyone should know how to swim because you never know when you'll need to," he said. "Swimming is also

an excellent exercise for the whole body. It's important to have a healthy body."

WENDELL

continued from pg 13

been addressed.

Keller also noted other opportunities he said Anderson had to address the setback issue and the placement of the building, including the town meeting of June 2005, the special town meetings in the fall of 2005, and the special town meeting of the spring of 2006, where the town offices were discussed. "Brian did attend at least one of those meetings," Keller contended, "and the diagram of the building showed exactly, and to scale, where the building would be located in relation to Morse Village Road." Keller said Anderson did speak up at the town meeting and oppose the town office building proposal on financial grounds. "He didn't mention anything about the setbacks."

Keller said the town is willing to do what it can to improve the vegetative screen for Anderson. He said, in his opinion, Anderson's best view was out the back of his building, to the north, not to the east.

"He can see Mount Monadnock from there; he can still see it." By moving the town offices closer to the road and closer to Anderson's house, Keller said, "We actually did our best to minimize the impact on Anderson's property, by keeping the parking lot on the far side of the building. It's a fairly respectful stance to his property."




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Thanks especially to Montague Catholic Social Ministries, the Kids' Place After School Program Staff and all our dedicated volunteers.

Turners Falls High School Girls Tennis

BY SALLY DELANEY

ERVING - Watching the TFHS girls tennis matches is exciting each and every time. Many times this season the athletes that play the singles positions found themselves up against boys from other schools. Although many thought this wasn't fair, the TFHS girls didn't flinch at all. They played tremendous games against the out of town boys and often sent them home wondering what had struck them. The answer to that is Nicki, Laurynn, and Steph. When the second meeting came around, some of those boys opted to play doubles or even sit out the match. Nice job ladies.

For the second season, Coach Vic Gonzales has led the Lady Indians. He brings 37 years of coaching experience with him to work with his tennis athletes. Cool, calm and collected is what

best describes him as he makes his way to each of his students to give them encouragement and tips during the matches.

The team thought it was only fair that Coach Vic had to answer the same questions they did for this newspaper article, so here goes:

Coach Vic started playing tennis when he was eight years old. He began as a doubles player, summer nights with his buddies, and he got hooked on the sport. He also said he started playing tennis because he wasn't any good at baseball or basketball. That's hard to believe with his height!

Coach Vic said he likes tennis because "It's a sport of a lifetime, and you never stop learning."

The team sends Coach Vic many thanks for a wonderful season.



SALLY DELANEY PHOTOS

The Turners Falls High School Girls' Tennis Team

Front row l-r: Ashley Sears, Nicole Couture, Laurynn Zellmann, Tranae Gallagher
Back row l-r: Carlynn Perry, Natasha Buhakova, Steph Joly, Molly Perry, Katy Eddy, Abbey Daniel-Green, Katherine Kuklewicz, Elena Rushford

Katherine Kuklewicz plays doubles and is in her first year playing tennis. She is in the 8th grade and is also on the swim team. Coach Vic comments: "She is rapidly rising in her skill level." Why Katie likes tennis: "Tennis is a fun sport that lets you work hard and improve skills. It's nice to feel like you belong and always get a great laugh."

Nicole Couture plays first singles and is a graduating senior. She has been on the tennis team for three years and plays soccer as well in the fall. She is undecided about her college plans at this time.

Coach Vic comments: "Nicki is the best athlete in the Valley."

Why Nicki likes tennis: "It's fun and challenging and I can't blame anyone else for my mistakes."

Laurynn Zellmann plays second singles, moving from first doubles last year. She is also a graduating senior. Laurynn has been on the tennis team for six years and is another outstanding athlete on the courts. Laurynn will be attending Bridgewater State College this fall.

Coach Vic comments: "She did a tremendous job of converting from a doubles player to 2nd singles."

Why Laurynn likes tennis: "I enjoy

spending time with the team and all the good times we have together. Also it is a good stress reliever."

Stephanie Joly plays third singles. Last year she started at second doubles and moved into third singles part way into the season. She is a junior and this is her second year of playing tennis. Steph plays field hockey



Steph Joly at the net

and is on the swim team. She hates to see Nicki and Lauryn leave the team, however she wishes them the best in their futures.

Coach Vic comments: "She had the best record of all the players and worked the hardest in her matches. She played a solid 3rd singles position this season."

Why Steph likes tennis: "Because it's a lifelong sport and the team is always extremely supportive of each other."

Abbey Daniel-Green plays doubles. It is her first year on the tennis team. Abbey also plays field hockey in the fall and is on the swim team. She is a junior. When she is not wielding a racket you can see Abbey nurturing a lost baby squirrel at the tennis courts in Forest Park.

Coach Vic says: "She made a lot of progress in her first year. She played well and tried very hard at doubles."

Why Abbey likes tennis: "Because it is a good game."

Katy Eddy plays doubles, and it is her first year on the tennis team. She is a junior and also plays field hockey in the fall. You can always see Katy smiling throughout the match, no matter what the outcome is.

Coach Vic comments: "She's a gutsy player and she makes up in effort for what she might lack in skill."

Why Katy likes tennis: "It's a new sport for me to get into and something fun to be able to play throughout my life."

Molly Perry plays first doubles. It is her first year on the tennis team.; she's a junior. Molly also plays soccer in the fall and is on the swim team in the winter. As a former softball player, Molly often dives for the ball to get the point. I'm certain she agrees that a tennis court is not 'knee friendly'

Coach Vic comments: "One of the hardest working players on the team. She really improved her game over the season."

Why Molly likes tennis: "Tennis is a game you can continue to play for the rest of your life."

Tranae Gallagher plays doubles. It is her first year on the tennis team. She is in the 10th grade.

Coach Vic comments: "She worked hard through her strokes and she will be a good player next year."

Why Tranae likes tennis: "I think it's just an all around fun sport."

Natasha Buhakova plays doubles and this is her second year on the team. She is in the 9th grade and plays soccer in the fall.

Coach Vic comments: "She has a great positive attitude towards improving her strokes."

Why Natasha likes tennis: "It's really fun and I love to work hard to succeed. Tennis is a perfect way to

show it."

Carlyn Perry plays doubles and this is her first year on the team. She is in the 9th grade.

Coach Vic comments: "She has great natural talent."

Why Carlyn likes tennis: "Because it's fun and there are great girls I get to play with."

Ashley Sears plays doubles and has been on the team for two years. She is in the 9th grade and also plays soccer in the fall.

Coach Vic comments: "She's a very dedicated player and she also practices extremely hard."

Why Ashley likes tennis: "Because it's a fun sport and the girls on my team are awesome!"

Elena Rushford plays doubles and is in her first year of playing tennis. She is in the 9th grade.

Coach Vic comments: "She's a dedicated worker and has made some significant improvements over the season."

Why Elena likes tennis: "I like to play tennis because it gives me an opportunity to take on a new challenge and get to know the tennis girls better, especially the seniors who helped all of us."

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ILLUSTRATION BY ANJA SCHUTZ

BY KARL MEYER

COLRAIN - I'd just headed out cycling when this puff ball flashed out of the woods, shooting across my bow. My first thought was - that was close - but in a split second it was all over. A pick-up truck heading in the opposite direction pummeled the darting bird in its grill; the driver likely had no clue. I didn't think there was much chance it survived - I glanced back as I coasted downhill, watching the bird tumble to a stop near the center stripe. Riding on for a few seconds, guilt slid in. I spun my bike around - knowing that, in no uncertain terms, I would never attempt to nurse an injured bird in a shoebox.

What I figured I'd be doing, perhaps the most odious thing people ask of themselves when confronted with injured wildlife, was putting an end to suffering. Sometime back I had made a vow to do at least that, when it was appropriate. Still, the idea makes me queasy. It

was a busy road, but just one car passed in the other lane. I rode up to the lump. Fully expecting a chickadee, I saw a bird on its back, hyperventilating to beat the band, and flapping one wing frenetically. It was a male chestnut-sided warbler, chickadee sized, but with marvelous rust and green and yellow and black markings.

Chestnut-sided warblers breed in New England each spring after hazarding the journey back from Central America. The cadence and lilt of their calls sounds roughly like, "Pleased, pleased, pleased, TO MEET YA!"

I don't know if this creature even knew I was there. I lifted it by its silky-soft tail feathers. My first ghoulish thought was that I might have to dispatch it. Luckily, there seemed a decent spark of life in the bird. We were both spared contemplation of some awkward mercy killing. That deal was sealed when I brought it over to the grass and gently nudged it down, right side up. It didn't exactly stand, but it didn't tip over either. That



Chestnut-sided warbler

warbler kept breathing fast, staring straight ahead, whether from shock or deep injury, I'll never know.

I left it in the sunlight on a cool afternoon, and wished it well. Maybe it just had a concussion and would shake it off. And if there was a female, a nest mate somewhere, she would at least be able to discover what had happened to her mate, live or die. Otherwise, I felt certain a wild predator would soon come along and dispatch it quickly.

I imagine I stopped because I was once injured at a roadside; strangers stopped to help me. Somehow, that translates to animals too. I rode off, but looked for the bird two days later when I came through. It wasn't there.

It at least had had a chance.

Throughout May I've been watching songbirds off the back deck - yellowthroats and rose-breasted grosbeaks, redstarts and yellow warblers, orioles, chimney swifts and tree swallows - to name a few. They've all flown north to these riverside woods for a chance to breed. The colors are great, the songs lovely. All seems right with the world. Except some afternoons I look out into that tangle and I think: they don't stand a chance. And it's not because of a crow that's been patrolling the neighborhood dawn to dusk, mapping out where all the vulnerable eggs, nests and young might be. I admire crows, but I do hate them some during May when they terrorize local nests - carrying off nestlings as food for their own young - or piercing and gobbling undefended eggs.

The real problem as it is in every rural and suburban neighborhood across the globe, is cats. Domestic cats, feral cats, barn cats, abandoned cats. I looked out one day and saw three cats amusing themselves

with the prospects of bird killing - stalking a little stand of trees and brush from three directions. Studies from the 1990s revealed that individual cats kill upwards of 100 songbirds per summer, per cat, when left to roam freely outdoors in nesting season - early May through July. Cats don't do it out of hunger or meanness; they do it instinctually. They are human-introduced hunters that have no natural place in the food chain. Their Friskies comes in a can.

Cats are deadly recreational hunters. One experiment, for rural Wisconsin alone, showed that upwards of 100 million songbirds are killed each year by roaming cats in the Cheese State. That same slaughter is going on right now, right here, and world-wide really.

A solution? Keep cats indoors, or at least from May to early August.

Cooling thought: don't use the AC in the car, particularly below 40 mph. It'll save gas, and a breeze alone is a greatly under-appreciated gift.

THE HEALTHY GEEZER

Tobacco: There is No Safe Use

BY FRED CICETTI
LEONIA, NJ -

[Second in a three-part series on smoking.]

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 doing my part by offering this unusual series of columns. No scolding or exaggerated scare tactics. I'm giving you just the facts in a chain of bulletins.

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

Here are more:

Cigarette smoke contains 4,000 chemicals, including more than 60 known to cause cancer. Some of the chemicals cause heart and lung diseases.

Included in the list of chemicals are cyanide, benzene, formaldehyde, methanol, acetylene, ammonia, nitrogen oxide and carbon monoxide.

Any amount of smoke is dangerous. Even smoking as few as

one to four cigarettes a day can increase your risk of dying sooner.

Smoking cigarettes with lower tar and nicotine provides no clear health benefit. Smokers who buy these cigarettes often inhale more deeply, inhale more often and smoke them down to their fingers to compensate for the lower tar and nicotine.

Menthol cigarettes are more dangerous than other types because they diminish the cough reflex and mask a dry throat. This enables smokers to inhale these cigarettes more deeply and more often, too. People who smoke menthol cigarettes are less successful quitting.

Hand-rolled cigarettes are not safer than commercial brands.

Cigarettes billed as "all natural" have not been proven to be safer than any other cigarettes.

Herbal cigarettes produce tar



JESSICA HARMON ILLUSTRATION

and carbon monoxide and are dangerous to your health.

Clove cigarettes, also called "kreteks," contain about 65 percent tobacco and about 35 percent ground cloves, clove oil, and other additives. They are a tobacco product with the same health risks as regular cigarettes.

"Bidis" are hand-rolled, flavored cigarettes imported mainly from India. Bidis appear to

have all of the same health risks of conventional cigarettes.

Nicotine, the addictive ingredient in tobacco, constricts arteries and plays an important role in increasing smokers' risk of heart disease and stroke. However, other ingredients in tobacco cause cancers.

Anyone who starts smoking is at risk of becoming addicted to nicotine.

With regular use of tobacco - smoked or chewed - nicotine accumulates in the body. Daily consumers are exposed to nicotine effects twenty four hours a day, seven days a week.

Nicotine, like cocaine, increases the level of the neurotransmitter dopamine, which affects the brain pathways that control reward and pleasure.

Smoking cigars and pipes causes cancers of the lung, oral cavity (lip, tongue, mouth, throat), larynx (voice box) and esophagus. Pipe and cigar smokers, who often don't inhale, are still breathing the

second-hand smoke that surrounds them.

Smokeless tobacco can cause cancer of the gums, mouth, pharynx, larynx, and esophagus. People who dip or chew smokeless tobacco get about the same amount of nicotine as regular smokers.

Hookah smoking involves burning flavored tobacco in a water pipe and inhaling the smoke through a long hose. Hookah smoke contains varying amounts of nicotine, carbon monoxide, and other hazardous substances.

Several types of cancer have been linked to hookah smoking.

When smoke contacts live cells, it hurts them. There is no safe way to use tobacco.

[In the last part of this series, I'll give you some statistics and information about quitting.]

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

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

Home Brewed Ordnance

BY JOSEPH A. PARZYCH GILL - After the phony government agents left, Pa smashed the still to bits and buried the whole mess in the woods. He was so irate at the

attempted shakedown that he reported the phony agents to the authorities. Big mistake, real government agents then showed up. They wore dark suits, shiny black shoes and had real badges. In searching the house, the agents found a bottle capper and a big box of caps. One of them demanded to know what we were doing with the bottling apparatus.

"Ketchup, we bottle ketchup," Mama answered.

"Looks like you folks are planning on eating a lot of ketchup," the G-man said.

"Well, we got a lot of kids." Actually, the bottling apparatus was for bottling home-brewed beer, which Pa had been planning to try next. In fact, the hops were growing

like grape vines out behind the hen coops the very day the G-men poked around the cellar. Up close, hops hanging from the vines look like tiny concertinas. There were some tense moments as the search continued. Fortunately, the G-men didn't get a close look at what was growing on the "grape vines" out by the hen coops, visible from the house.

Making homebrew also resulted in disaster. The beer fermented in the bottles to the point where most of the beer ended up on the kitchen ceiling when Pa tried opening the first bottle. Soon, bottles stored in the cellar began exploding. They sounded like a shotgun going off. No one dared open the cellar door to look. From time to time, explosions sounded, day and

night, until every last bottle of beer shattered into smithereens. Pa waited a few days after the last detonation before risking a look.

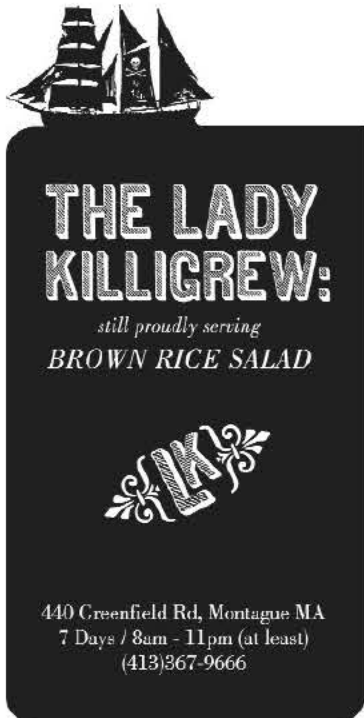
Beer soaked the cellar walls, floor and ceiling. The house reeked like a brewery for months after. Ma worried that the G-men would return before the smell of beer faded.

Whenever a strange car turned down our road, Ma would get all nerved up. She just knew the agents would be back, and she was convinced that only her prayers would stave off the time before they did. I'm sure she offered up a special prayer of thanks the day Prohibition ended.

With Prohibition over, Pa's chance to regain his position of relative wealth evaporated. His luck with horses did not turn out to be much better than his attempt to cash in on Prohibition.

- Continued next week

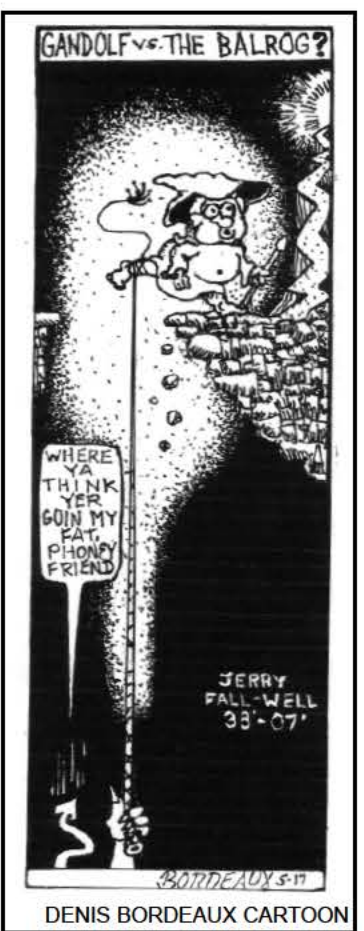
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ARTS & ENTERTAINMENT



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.

Rt. 63 Road House: *Uncle Billy's Smokehouse Rockers* from Worcester, 9:30 p.m. www.unclebillysmokehouse.net

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 Musical 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 \$1000 grand prize winner! At the Shea Theater, 8 p.m.

Deja Brew, Wendell: *Ndigo Moon Jazz*, 9 to 11 p.m., no cover.

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

TUESDAY, JUNE 5TH

Common People Concerts on the Gill common. 7 p.m., free. Sponsored by the Gill Cultural Council. Tuesdays through August. Info: dmons_of_gill@yahoo.com.

THURSDAY, JUNE 7TH

Concert at The Bookmill, Montague Center: *Balla Tounkara*, griot & master kora player. Malian blends African, Latin, funk, reggae, jazz and blues. \$12/\$15, 8 p.m.

COOP Concerts in the Round at Greenfield Energy Park, Miles Street, Greenfield. Featuring *Jeff Martell*, *Roland LaPierre* and *The Ambiguities*. 6 to 8 p.m. free.

FRIDAY, JUNE 8TH

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



Rich Hamilton, Al Stapleford, Bob Dean & Carl Jacobs are the Stillhouse Jammers at The Montague Bookmill. 8 p.m. on Saturday, June 9th.

Rt. 63 Road House: *Curly Fingers Dupree Band*, 9:30 p.m. Come to dance.

FRIDAY & SATURDAY, JUNE 8TH & 9TH

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

SATURDAY, JUNE 9TH

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. \$10/\$12.

Rt. 63 Road House: *Loose Change*, come to dance! 9:30 p.m.

SATURDAY & SUNDAY, JUNE 9TH & 10TH

The Great Northern Tier Geocaching Tournament. Over 50 new caches at each event - hiking, biking, water caches and prizes. For novices and pros, families, teams and individuals. The Franklin County event is based in Greenfield. 773-9393, 773-5463.

MONDAY, JUNE 11TH

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

THURSDAY, JUNE 14TH

Orange Farmers' Market Featuring local produce, plants, baked goods and crafts. Support local agriculture - you'll be delighted with the results! At Butterfield Park, East River Street, Orange. 3-6 p.m.

COOP Concert featuring *Kathy & George Chapman*, *Julia Burrough* and *Katie Clark* and the *Green River Band*. Three 40-minute gigs each night from the Franklin County

Artists are invited to Matthew Leighton's Studio, 9 Mill Street, Greenfield, 9 to 5 p.m. to take materials to create a work in his memory. The memory pieces will be exhibited in the fall at Artspace. Artists may also take materials for their own art creations. Recycled materials in every texture, shape and type are abundant at the studio. These are the things that Matthew had collected over the years for his assemblage work. If you are interested in participating in either creating a work of art in memory of Matthew or in using his collected materials for your own work, call Artspace at 772-6811.

FRIDAY & SATURDAY, JUNE 15TH & 16TH

Artists are invited to Matthew Leighton's Studio, 9 Mill Street, Greenfield, 9 to 5 p.m. to take materials to create a work in his memory. The memory pieces will be exhibited in the fall at Artspace. Artists may also take materials for their own art creations. Recycled materials in every texture, shape and type are abundant at the studio. These are the things that Matthew had collected over the years for his assemblage work. If you are interested in participating in either creating a work of art in memory of Matthew or in using his collected materials for your own work, call Artspace at 772-6811.

FRIDAY TO SUNDAY, JUNE 15TH & 17TH

Arena Civic Theater presents An Evening of One Acts: *Hedda Gabler Has Left the Building* a one-act comedy by local playwright Jessamyn Smith and several short works by Richard Ballon. At the Shea Theater, Turners Falls. Friday & Saturday 8 p.m. & Sunday 2 p.m. 863-2281

SATURDAY, 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. Rain or shine. 1-4 p.m. ages 12 and older, \$30 per person. Pre-register 800-859-2960

Concert at The Bookmill, Montague Center: *Mawwal*, Spirited Middle East-inspired world folk & groove. 8 p.m. \$10/\$12.

Echo Lake Coffee House, Leverett Town Hall. Singing CIA Agent George Shrub and satirical songster, Dave Lippman, brings the Counter-Intelligence Cabaret! Get ready for high-end pop parodies and some very wise cracks. \$12/\$10 seniors. 7:30 p.m.

UNTIL SUNDAY, 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.

BEGINNING THURSDAY, JUNE 21ST

Hallmark Museum of Contemporary Photography hosts a two-week Benefit Exhibition and Print Sale, through July 1st. A Public Reception will be held **Saturday & Sunday, June 23 & 24**, from 1 to 5 pm. All are welcome to the free exhibition. The entire proceeds from the print sale donated to aid the international humanitarian medical organization, *Doctors Without Borders/Medecins sans Frontieres*.

SATURDAY, JUNE 23RD

Benefit concert for the Montague Veterans Memorial featuring the *Commander Cody Band*, *Lonesome Brothers*; *Dad, Come Home*; and *Nexus*. At the Schuetzen Verein grounds, Gill. Cash bar, food. 5 p.m., \$20. Tickets available at the Turners Falls Fire Department, Montague Police Department and World Eye Bookshop.

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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 life-long connections with wildlife study. "Over 170 books and 15,000 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. SATURDAY, JUNE 2ND Annual Family Fish Day! Free fishing day with fly-tying and spin cast demonstrations, and raffle for fishing poles and tackle boxes. 10 to 2 p.m. THURSDAY, JUNE 7TH Nature in Danger? Books that made a difference: Rachel Carson. Celebrate the pioneering contribu-	tions 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. FRIDAY & SATURDAY JUNE 8TH & 9TH Sense of Wonder: Early Summer Explore the activities and beauty of wild things in honor of conservationist Rachel Carson. For all ages. Free and open to the public. 2 to 3 p.m.
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WEST ALONG THE RIVER

A Morning Along the Sawmill

BY DAVID BRULE

MONTAGUE CENTER - People are lucky, who live along a river. And luckier still, I suppose, are those who have the sense to appreciate it! Lucky is the river, too, if there are people nearby willing to organize and fight to protect it. Rivers are powerful, capable of destroying any obstacle in their path to the sea. Rivers are fragile, too; they can be abused, poisoned or killed, if their neighbors aren't vigilant.

Saturday, May 26th, the sun peeked up over the rim of our valley, spreading green light, reflected from two-week old late May foliage, through yards, woods, rushing water. Down went the morning cup of black coffee, up the street we went, through Millers Falls and off to our sister village of Montague Center, where river people were gathering to walk the length and width of the fields and floodplain that make up the Sawmill River Access Area.

Down at the end of North Street lie 36 acres of grasslands, historic flood plain forest, and wet meadows, saved in the late

'90s by a concerted community action led by the Friends of the Sawmill and the Montague Grange, a far-sighted landowner (the Garbiel family) and a little help from the state Division of Fisheries and Wildlife. This morning, brilliant New England warblers of grassy meadows and river margins called, as the group started out: chestnut-sided, blue-winged, and yellow warblers were staking out

nesting territories. Would the bobolinks, indigo buntings, maybe grasshopper sparrows be there too?

The walk was led by Colleen Sculley and Chris Polatin of the Montague Grange. Mark Girard, a landowner with the Sawmill River for a front yard, lent quiet commentary about every nook and cranny, hillock and boggy depression on the parcel. He, as others, had gained this firsthand knowledge through years of mowing, cutting, walking and living along this winding river.

The Montague Grange



Conservation minded residents walk the Wildlife Management Area in Montague on Saturday, May 26th.

recently received a \$10,600 grant from the US Department of Agriculture Natural Resources Conservation Service, this morning represented by Diane Petit, to restore and preserve the grasslands habitat along the Sawmill. These meadows, hayed and farmed for generations by the Garbiels of Montague Center, had been acquired as part of the Montague Wildlife Management Area, but since pasturing and mowing have ceased, many non-native invasive species have gained a foothold and are threatening the

habitat. The names of the culprits are familiar: Japanese knotweed, Japanese barberry, as well as some other species that are gentler-sounding and sweeter-smelling but just as relentless, for example the honeysuckle and multiflora rose. These escapees from gardens, aided by unwitting conservation-minded

groups who, years ago, placed them everywhere in the belief that these species provided food, cover, and erosion control, are now out-competing native species. Along with burning bush and autumn olive these vigorous non-natives are taking over the Montague meadows. The grant will finance control and eradication efforts, and add further research data in the fight to minimize the negative impacts of the invaders.

A stone's throw from the common, the grass flows and shimmers as do the limpid waters of the Sawmill meandering through town on the way to

the Book Mill and the Connecticut. Tree swallows surf the waving grasses, warblers call from the willow banks and sycamores, vesper and grasshopper sparrows, ever elusive, haunt the secret corners of this place. And if you're lucky enough to live in the village, all you have to do is step out your back door and into this timeless meadow.

At day's end, back home on the Millers, the shadows lengthen in the rainforest-green woods. Our river still swirls noisily from last week's rain, but the fluting of the wood thrush echoes and floats over the current's voice. Off on the hill, the young owl is getting hungry and impatient, hoping his parents will wake up to come and feed him. A doe steps gingerly out along the shore to nibble at sweet new grass. Greenwood depths here, while out along the Sawmill, golden light covers the old river pastures. And thanks to the Montague Grange riverkeepers, bobolinks and indigo buntings crisscross the fields, joyous and secure in their ancestral home.

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talent at that. In 2006, Gobillot was honored along with other designers and builders with the Most Beautiful Kitchen Award from *Luxury Living Magazine*. In addition to countertops, Gobillot directs the creation of custom flooring, vanities, fireplace surrounds, islands, and sinks - all using concrete. Each piece is custom built to fit precisely in its location and to fit the unique requirements and tastes of customers.

By using concrete, Gobillot's team can make any shape, thickness, or color for countertops or any other cus-

tom object. Compared with other building materials like stone, concrete is unique that way. Customers can get involved in the design as much as they like, or rely on the design experience of Alpha Stone.

A quick tour of the 11 Street shop and showroom revealed a huge range of color choices, unique finish options, and many works in progress. Employees Turk and Al Zraunig were experimenting with red, black, blue, and yellow color ratios in order to get them just right. I especially liked the French's yellow mustard and purples that were emerging in the sample con-

crete slabs, but had to work very hard to resist making a handprint in the concrete.

Acid etching, however, is a much more popular means of creating a unique look than my imaginary handprints. In-depth explanations of all of the processes used at Alpha Stone Concrete are posted on their website at www.alphastoneconcrete.com.

For acid-etching, the acid, including metallic salts, is mixed into the concrete and reacts with hydrated lime in creating color that is a permanent part of the hardened concrete. The results are gorgeous, truly unique finishes reminiscent of marble or lichen.

Alpha Stone has created many one-of-a-kind sinks that are occasionally "totally not practical" for the customer who is "bored with the conventional and wants beautiful objects to surround themselves," explained Gobillot. You certainly won't find anything at Home Depot like what Alpha Stone creates.

While custom concrete countertops are only just emerging as a top design choice for savvy designers, architects, and homeowners in the last few years, concrete itself is among the oldest building materials, and it lasts a long time. Gobillot explained that the unique finish and patina of

concrete tends to look better over time whereas some countertops look worse with use and age.

Perhaps green would be the most appropriate color for the countertops that Alpha Stone Concrete creates, given the environmentally friendly outcome. "Portland cement is made from one of the most abundant minerals on the earth." The rest is sand and stone. They add "a little bit of fiberglass and steel for strength, but it's ninety percent recycled or recyclable," Gobillot explained.

Visit the Alpha Stone showroom on 11th Street to learn more.



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