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Salad Bar at TFHS
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LAKE PLEASANT MILLERS FALLS MONTAGUE CENTER MONTAGUE CITY TURNERS FALLS

The Montague Reporter

YEAR 8 - NO. 8

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THE VOICE OF THE VILLAGES

NOVEMBER 19, 2009

Union #28 Superintendent Defends Her District



Union #28 Superintendent Joan Wickman

BY DAVID DETMOLD
ERVING – When Massachusetts associate commissioner of education Jeff Wulfson gave a speech about the benefits of regionalization at the Gill town hall on April 27th, he specifically mentioned Union #28, a district made up of four elementary schools serving the towns of Erving, Wendell, New Salem, Leverett and

Shutesbury, as a district in need of restructuring, since elementary students from Union #28 have no permanently guaranteed berth in upper grades at neighboring middle and high schools. The state apparently frowns on the hybrid arrangements that for many years have allowed elementary school students from Erving, Wendell and Shutesbury to attend upper grades at Mahar Regional in Orange, and elementary students from Leverett and Shutesbury to attend middle school and high school in Amherst.

In the months since, the superintendents of Mahar and Amherst have come calling to the selectboards of Union #28 towns. Mahar superintendent Michael Baldassarre, for example, told the Erving selectboard on September 21st that cost savings would result (he cited the savings from one fewer superintendent's salary) if towns with elementary schools but no high schools, like Erving, Wendell and New Salem, were to regionalize K-12 with Mahar.

But on October 8th, a consultant to the Mahar regionalization committee, Dave Tobin, reported the results of a financial analysis of K-12 regionalization for Mahar and found in the "best case scenario, total savings from K-12 regionalization would be approximately \$171,000 per year," with significant up front costs for Wendell and New Salem. That best case scenario see **UNION #28** pg 10

Beaver Pond a Problem for Two Towns



DETMOLD PHOTO

More lake than pond, this new wetlands has submerged the base of four utility pylons and a road that once ran between Leverett and Montague on Chestnut Hill.

BY BILL FRANKLIN
LEVERETT & MONTAGUE – Trapped and hunted to near extinction in the nineteenth century, beavers have been making a comeback in Franklin County – and not everyone is happy about it.

In the Chestnut Hill area, straddling the town line between Montague and Leverett, over the past three or four decades, intrepid semi-aquatic rodents have busily transformed approximately 20 acres of former farmland into a large shallow lake and bordering wetlands, swamping the mid-point of Richardson Road,

now impassable between the two communities.

This new habitat has been attracting a variety of species to the area. Neighbors with land adjacent to the lake have spotted blue heron, mink, river otter and American bittern – an endangered species. Canada geese have been summering on the lake. As winter comes, ducks call from the surface of the lake in the slanting sun.

A few of the neighboring landholders, including Dan Bennett and Robert and Boots Walker, have donated their adjacent land to the Franklin Land Trust to be

set aside for conservation and recreational purposes, and to preserve habitat for wildlife and waterfowl.

At the same time, however, the new wetland has attracted the more critical attention of Western Massachusetts Electric Company [WMECo], which has a permanent easement to maintain the towering double poled wooden pylons that carry power lines across the middle of the beavers' new lake. The bases of four of those pylons, at widely separated intervals, now lie submerged in

see **BEAVER** pg 7

Montague in the Running for Solar Site

BY BILL DRAKE – The selectboard voted on Monday to include town-owned land off Turnpike Road, including the town's former capped landfill and 34 adjoining acres in a utility survey of possible solar electricity generation sites.

Though the 34 adjoining acres have been permitted by the state for developing a new landfill, the town's landfill committee has opted to explore the potential for renewable energy generation at the site instead.

The present weak market for new landfill development (other than municipal solid waste disposal), coupled with the committee's concerns about truck routes, neighborhood and environmental impacts of a new landfill led to a decision to explore an alternative

energy use for the site.

Meanwhile, Western Massachusetts Electric Company has been surveying communities in its service area to determine suitable sites for photovoltaic generation.

"The process has begun," said town administrator Frank Abbondanzio. "It's competitive, but it's important to get our site into the running."

The Massachusetts Green Communities Act allows electric utilities to own up to 50 megawatts (MW) of solar facilities. WMECo received approval for six MW from the Department of Public Utilities in August of 2009. Under the DPU agreement, WMECo will focus on facilities larger than 200 kilowatts.

"WMECo plans to build three MW of solar generation in 2010," said WMECo representative Sandra Ahearn. "There could be a series of 1 MW sites or just one 3 MW site," said Ahearn, "it depends on the submissions. We hope to announce a winner early in 2010."

Montague's site proposal will be just one of the competing sites proposed for a solar facility.

"We sent a request to the 59 towns in our area and to some quasi-privately owned sites for site requests (RFS)," said Ahearn. "The RFS closes on Friday, Nov 20th. Then we'll evaluate each submission; which should take a week or so. The next step, then, is to issue the RFP [request for

see **SOLAR SITE** pg 7

Autumn Fest at the Burrito Rojo

BY TAMI STILES
TURNERS FALLS – Friday, on a rainy autumn night that foretold winter's chill, I arrived at the Burrito Rojo Autumn Festivus mid set up, amongst assembled and lighting going up. Unfortunately the lighting was left wanting, with only blue and red lights in which to spot the musicians, since the tech guy couldn't afford another primary color.

Just as I had finished my meal, the last sound check was complete and it was time for the show to begin. First on the stage was an all-girl band from Greenfield called The Feel. They offered covers and originals, one of which, "Arbor Day," caught my attention. The harmonies were dynamic, but I kept wishing I could hear more of the words. Musically they were tight knit, with a strong

sense of rhythm and a light-hearted 'Let's have fun!' attitude.

Speaking of fun, during their cover of a Jason Mraz tune, "I'm Yours," a spontaneous sing-along created a stir of laughter from both the band and their listeners.

Next up was Boy Cries Wolf, from Turners Falls. Close to the end of their set, Boy Curtis beat-boxed his way off the microphone, as people wildly cheered him on. I do believe there where a few white folk krumping on the dance floor.

And it did not stop there. Eli Bridges rambled to the floor, his harmonica locked in and acoustic guitar at the ready. Bridges had just returned to Northfield from Alaska, where he said he spent some time touring with a lesbian jug band. Could this be part of his

see **AUTUMN FEST** pg 8

PET OF THE WEEK

I only have Is for U!



Louise

Hi, my name is Louise and I'm a four-year-old shorthair cat in need of a good home. The staff here love me. I'd be a perfect companion for an adult who wants good company, or for a cozy family. I've lived with my sister cat so I should do fine with other cats as long as you introduce us properly – the staff here will tell you how it's done.

Anyway, the point is, my friend says I've been here long enough and it's sure time for my special someone to come and meet me and take me home! I can't wait to relax into your arms in my real forever home – please come soon!

For more information on adopting me, please contact the Dakin Pioneer Valley Humane Society at (413) 548-9898 or via email: info@dpvhs.org.

Great Falls Middle School Students of the Week

Grade 6

Riley Palmer

Grade 7

Hayley Black

Grade 8

Malcolm Smith
Heather McKenna

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WENDELL LIBRARY NEWS

Up!

The Wendell Free Library will offer a kids' movie night on Friday, December 4th, at 6:30 p.m. with a showing of the movie *Up*. Disney and Pixar animation studios take moviegoers up, up and away on one of the funniest adventures of all time in this animated fantasy. *Up* follows the uplifting tale of 78-year-old balloon salesman Carl Fredricksen, who finally fulfills

his lifelong dream of a great adventure when he ties thousands of balloons to his house and flies away to the wilds of South America. But he discovers all too late that his biggest nightmare has stowed away on the trip: an overly optimistic eight-year-old explorer named Russell.

Free. Bring pillows and blankets.

ERVING LIBRARY NEWS

Monet in Erving

On Sunday, November 29th, from 4:00 p.m. to 6:00 p.m. the Erving Public Library, 17 Moore Street in Erving, will host "Monet's Magic Garden," a free pastel painting workshop for adults; materials are included.

Award-winning pastel artist Gregory John Maichack will present Monet's Magic Garden: How to Pastel Paint as an Impressionist.

The workshop is designed both for beginners and advanced

participants.

Seats may fill quickly, so please call (413) 423-3348 to pre-register. Please bring an image to work from.

Participants will freely experiment with hundreds of artist's professional grade hard and soft Rembrandt pastels, pastel pencils and professional Canson pastel paper. Beginners to accomplished artists benefit, side-by-side, in this fun pastel painting workshop.

DICKINSON LIBRARY NEWS

Tellabration in Northfield

On Saturday, November 21st, at 7:00 p.m. storytelling takes center stage at the Dickinson Memorial Library in Northfield, when Laconia 'Lot' Therrio, Motoko and Eshu Bumpus come to town as part of the worldwide Tellabration! event. Storytelling enthusiasts all around the globe

will share their talents in cities and towns to celebrate the art of storytelling the week before Thanksgiving. Begun in 1988, Tellabration! brings together each area's most celebrated storytellers, as part of the revival of modern storytelling. For more information, call 498-2455.

MONTAGUE LIBRARY NEWS

Thanksgiving Week Hours and Programs

BY LINDA HICKMAN –

The Montague Center and Carnegie Libraries will close at 5 p.m. on Wednesday, November 25th. All of the libraries will be closed on Thanksgiving, Thursday, November 26th. The Carnegie Library will be open Friday, 10 a.m. to 5 p.m., and Saturday, 10 a.m. to 2 p.m., after Thanksgiving. The evening Sing-a-long at the Montague Center Library will not be held on Monday, November 23rd. Library Club at the Millers Falls Library on Tuesday, November 24th, from 3:30 to 4:30 p.m. will be held. There will be no Story

Hour at the Carnegie Library on Wednesday, November 25th. For more information, call the Carnegie Library, 863-3214.

LEVERETT LIBRARY NEWS

Young Poets

BY LINDA WENTWORTH –
A Young People's Poetry Reading will take place at the Leverett Library, 75 Montague Road, on Sunday, November 22nd, from 3 to 4 p.m. Young people in grades 1 through 8 will read their poems. Please contact the library at (413) 548-9220 if you would like to take part.

SENIOR CENTER ACTIVITIES – Nov 23rd to 27th

GILL / MONTAGUE
Gill/Montague Senior Center, 62 Fifth Street, Turners Falls, is open Monday through Friday from 9:00 a.m. to 2:00 p.m. Congregate meals are served Tuesday through Friday at 11:30 a.m. except at noon where noted. Meal reservations must be made a day in advance by 11:00 a.m. Messages can be left on our machine when the center is not open. Meal site Manager is Becky Cobb. Council on Aging Director is Roberta Potter. For information or to make meal reservations, call 863-9357. Feel free to call the senior center for information on any programs.

Don't miss the Senior Lunch at the Tech School on Monday, December 7th, \$10 per person, choice of entrée, call the Senior Center to reserve your tickets.

Monday, Nov. 23rd

10:00 a.m. Senior Aerobics
10:45 a.m. Easy Aerobics

1:00 p.m. SHINE Presentation (no Knitting Circle)

Tuesday, Nov. 24th

9:00 a.m. Walking Group
10:30 a.m. Chair Yoga
12:00 noon Lunch
1:00 p.m. Canasta
1:00 p.m. Painting Class

Wednesday, Nov. 25th

10:00 a.m. Senior Aerobics
12:00 noon Lunch
12:45 p.m. Bingo

Thursday, Nov. 26th

Closed for Thanksgiving

Friday, Nov. 27th

10:00 a.m. Senior Aerobics
10:45 a.m. Easy Aerobics
12:00 noon Lunch
1:00 p.m. Scrabble

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



DETMOLD PHOTO

Bev Demars and Bunny Caldwell are getting the craft table ready for the Christmas Bazaar at the Gill-Montague Senior Center,

Saturday, November 21st, 9 a.m.

to 1 p.m.; at 62 Fifth Street in

Turners Falls. The Bazaar will feature

raffles, food, and gift items;

and is one of the major annual

fundraisers to support programs at

the senior center. Stop by for some

early holiday shopping!

CARNEGIE LIBRARY NEWS

Gingerbread Houses

TURNERS FALLS – On Saturday, December 5th at 10:30 a.m., the library will be having a gingerbread house making party for children. All materials will be provided, and the houses will be easy to assemble. This is a great opportunity for children and adults to work together creatively on a holiday project. This is a free program. For more information, please call 863-3214.

CORRECTION

Due to a reporting error, an item in the Wendell selectboard meeting notes from October 28th (MR VIII #6) incorrectly stated the selectboard had appointed Pru Smith to the zoning board of appeals. In fact, Smith had only agreed to serve on the ZBA if Doug Simon could not take the post. But Simon can take the position, and at the November 12th selectboard meeting, the board signed his appointment slip. We regret the mistake.

THANKSGIVING TRASH & RECYCLING MONTAGUE - Due to the Thanksgiving holiday, the trash and recycling schedule will be as follows: Tuesday and Wednesday, No change. Thursday will be picked up on Friday. Friday will be picked up on Saturday.

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Local Briefs

JESSICA HARMON ILLUSTRATION

COMPILED BY DON CLEGG
TURNERS & ELSEWHERE – A Downtown Turners Falls Improvement Association is forming and will have its first meeting on Wednesday, December 2nd, at 7:00 p.m. at the MCTV studios, at 34 Second Street. People living and working downtown are encouraged to attend this meeting to discuss and express any concerns they may have about conditions downtown. Some topics of concern that have been raised informally include loitering, littering, vandalism, drugs, and residences with frequent police activity.

This will be an open meeting and if you are unable to attend or wish to keep your concerns more private, email Lisa or Don at downtownturners@gmail.com.

If you or your family are in need of a place to enjoy a free Thanksgiving Day dinner, contact the **Gill Congregational Church**, at 863-2970 or 863-8613. The Congregational Church is located on the common in the center of town. The meal starts at 1:00 p.m., but please call in advance to reserve your seat. For more information on the dinner, and other scheduled events at the church, go to

www.gillchurch.info
 Montague Community Television, MCTV, was invited to attend and video for rebroadcast a **TRIAD Breakfast Seminar** called "Rip-Off Alert" in Northampton this week. This is quite an accomplishment for your local station, to be asked to participate and videotape a forum that included the Northwest district attorney office, the sheriff's department, local police departments, the Federal Trade Commission and Sovereign Bank of Boston.

The program centered around the theme, "Don't get scammed by sending your money to crooks!" with special emphasis on the elderly. The presenters did an excellent job telling the 150 people in attendance, if you have a mail box, phone or home computer then you could be a target for crooks.

When you need a local cable access station to record an event like this, who you gonna' call? MCTV.

If you have an event that you believe should be broadcast on public access television, contact MCTV at 863-9200. Better yet, when you call the station, ask about becoming a member and get free training on video

and editing equipment, so you can tape events yourself for rebroadcast, and keep the public in public access television.

The **Thomas Memorial Golf and Country Club** in Turners Falls held a lively open house and event planning day on Sunday, November 15th. Participants included florists, hairdressers, formal wear outlets, bakeries, limousine services, entertainment services, and more. If you are planning a wedding, or any other major event, for a complete list of participants at the open house and their contact information, go to www.MontagueMA.net and click on the Montague Reporter selection.

The Golf and Country Club open house was also intended to let the public know that Thomas Memorial is in fact a public golf course, with nine holes and two additional ones just to change up the 'back nine' a little bit. Thomas Memorial also features a full restaurant, open daily even when there is two feet of snow on the golf course. There is also a large banquet hall that can be used for a casual or elegant event. For more information on the Thomas Memorial Club go to www.tmgcc.net or call (413) 863-8003.

The Food Pantry of the **Franklin Area Survival Center** on Fourth Street in Turners Falls will be closing on Tuesday, November 24th at 1:30 p.m. and re-opening Monday, November 30th at 10:00 a.m. The Thrift Store at the Center will only be closed

on Thanksgiving Day, November 26th.

The Survival Center would like to thank all the donors of non-perishable food items, including the local farmers who brought in late season fresh produce during these past few weeks. These donations are helping to stock the shelves of the pantry for what is shaping up to be a busy winter.

As reported last week, the **Great Falls Discovery Center** will present "Wild About Turkeys" on Saturday, November 21st, at 1:00 p.m. For those who will miss the annual Thanksgiving turkey giveaway at the Survival Center food pantry, canceled this year, don't despair! All who attend the Saturday presentation at the Discovery Center will receive a raffle ticket for a frozen turkey, which will be given away to one lucky attendee at the end of the program. Wild!

Local Briefs can be about tidbits about anyone living in or visiting our community, or any event going on in our coverage area. Twitter only allows 180 characters, but we have 180 characters living right on our block, so we allow 180 words – or more.... Whatever it takes to tell your tale! Family home for the holiday? Tell us what they are up to.

Send local briefs to reporter-local@montaguema.net

VOICES FROM CHERNOBYL

BY LAUREL FACEY

WENDELL – A dramatic reading of "Meltdown: Voices from Chernobyl" will be held on Saturday, November 21st, at 7:30 p.m. at the Wendell Town Hall. The staged reading presents an oral history of a nuclear disaster, adapted by Spencer Smith from the book by Svetlana Alexievich. The Wendell performance is directed by Court Dorsey and performed by Wendell area citizens.

The voices in the play are those of Chernobyl survivors, but the question they pose is very local: what might happen to all our individual lives if a meltdown happened here?

Participants involved in the readings include Court Dorsey, Mary-Ann Palmieri, Parker Cleveland, Jonathan von Ranson, Susan von Ranson, Nina Keller and Marcia Gagliardi. Speakers after the program include Hattie Nestel and Deb Katz of CAN.

Refreshments will be available. Donation requested.

MCTV

Channel 17

visit www.montagueTV.org
for complete schedule

INFORMATIONAL MEETING ON VY

BY RANDY KEHLER
GREENFIELD – The Safe & Green Campaign will host an informational meeting for Franklin County residents concerned about the future of the Entergy Corporation's "Vermont Yankee" nuclear reactor on Monday, November 23rd, from 5:30 to 7:00 p.m. in the Green Fields Market meeting room.

Campaign organizers will answer questions about the latest developments in the ongoing citizens' effort to retire Vermont Yankee by March of 2012, when its original 40-year license

expires. Entergy is attempting to gain permission from the Vermont legislature to continue operating the reactor for an additional 20 years.

The meeting will focus on ways that citizens of Franklin County can register their support for closing Vermont Yankee, including participation in a Winter's Walk to the Vermont State Capitol in Montpelier – entitled "Step It Up to Shut It Down." This 115-mile walk will begin in Brattleboro on January 2nd and arrive at the Montpelier state house on January 15th, just

after the legislature begins its 2010 session.

The Safe & Green Campaign, begun two years ago and sponsored by Citizens Awareness Network (CAN), Nuclear Free Vermont, and the New England Coalition on Nuclear Pollution, is a grassroots education and outreach effort within the Massachusetts, New Hampshire, and Vermont towns within 20 miles of the Vermont Yankee reactor.

For more information, call (413) 624-8858, or (413) 625-6967.

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REQUIEM FOR THE FALLEN

Before we leave Veterans Day too far behind, let us return to the origins of the holiday, once called Armistice Day.

We observe Veterans Day each year on the 11th hour of the 11th day of the 11th month of the year, to honor the signing of the armistice that brought World War I – the “War to End all Wars” – to a halt, with 16 million killed and 21 million wounded.

Since then, war has raged unceasingly around the globe, and claimed more than 170 million more lives.

On November 12th, 1921, three years after the First World War ended, British author H. G. Wells published a requiem for the fallen soldiers in the *New York World*, the conclusion of which we excerpt below:

“...What did the Unknown Soldier of the Great War think he was doing when he died?... He was still too young a man to have his motives very clear.... I cannot imagine many English boys using their last breath to say, ‘Rule Britannia!’ or ‘King George for Merry England!’”

“Some of our young men swore out of vexation and fretted; some, and it was not always the youngest, became childish again and cried touchingly for their mothers; many maintained the ironical flippancy of our people to the end; many died in the vein of a young miner from Durham with whom I talked one morning in the trenches near Martinpuich, trenches which had been badly ‘strafed’ overnight. War, he said, was a beastly job, ‘but we’ve got to clean this up.’ That is the spirit. I believe that was far nearer to the true mind of the Unknown Soldier than any tinpot *vivving* of any flag, nation, empire whatever.

“I believe that when we generalize the motives that took the youth who died in the Great War

out of the light of life, and took them out at precisely the age when life is most desirable, we shall find the dominant purpose was certainly no narrow devotion to ‘glory’ or ‘expansion’ of any particular country but a wide-spirited hostility to wrong and oppression....

“So far as the common men in every belligerent country went, the war was a war against wrong, against force, against war itself. Whatever it was in the thoughts of the diplomatists, it was that in the minds of the boys who died. In the minds of the young and generous millions, who are personified in the Unknown Soldier of the Great War, in the minds of the Germans and Russians who fought so stoutly, quite as much as the Americans, British, French, or Italians, the war was a war to end war.

“And that marks our obligation.

“Every speech that is made beside the graves of these Unknown Soldiers who die now in the comradeship of youthful death, every speech which exalts patriotism above peace, which hints at reparations and revenges, which cries for mean alliances to sustain the tradition of the conflict, which exalts national security over the common welfare, which wags the ‘glorious flag’ of this nation or that in the face of the universal courage and tragedy of mankind is an insult and an outrage upon the dead youth who lies below. He sought justice and law in the world as he conceived these things, and whoever approaches his resting place unprepared to serve the establishment of a world law and world justice, breathes the vulgar cants and catchwords of a patriotism outworn and of conflicts that he died to end, commits a monstrous sacrilege and sins against all mankind.”



KAREN WILKINSON ILLUSTRATION

“Why is this? Wherefore? What should we do? Come sir, to draw toward an end with you.”

LETTERS TO THE EDITOR

Thanks for Years of Service

After attending, with a small group of residents, the Veterans Day ceremony held in the village of Turners Falls this past week, something came to mind that I felt should be brought to the attention of all veterans who reside within the town of Montague.

With this in mind, I would extend my sincere thanks to two non-veterans who serve on the

trustees of the veterans memorial for the town of Montague. The trustees, by law, consist of three veterans, two non-veterans, and are chaired by the chairperson of the town of Montague select-board.

Donald Girard has served as a trustee going on nine years, and Chris Boutwell has served for fifteen years. Year after year they have assisted in honoring all vet-

erans alive and deceased on Memorial Day, and Veterans Day, and for the dedication that these two men display toward all veterans, with little or no thanks, I say, “Thank you for your years of service to all of us veterans and for your continued service to this community.”

– Art Gilmore
Millers Falls

Kennedy Completes Basic Training



Michael J. Kennedy

PARRIS ISLAND, SC – Private Michael J. Kennedy, 18, son of JoEllen Miner and Michael T. Kennedy of Hatfield, graduated from United States Marine Corps boot camp at Parris Island on October 2nd. Private Kennedy successfully completed 13 weeks of intensive basic training as one of 57 recruits in training platoon 2068. While in basic training, Private Kennedy earned the rifle expert badge and was awarded with platoon high shooter.

Following ten days home on leave and 14 days of recruiter’s assistance, he reported to Camp LeJeune for one month at military combat training, then military occupation specialty school.

Upon completion of training, Private Kennedy’s permanent duty station will be determined.

He is the grandson of Bob and Sandy Miner of Erving, Donald Rau of Northampton, the late Doris Rau, and the late Michael T. Kennedy Sr.

Biomass Boondoggle

I attended the informational meeting at the Bernardston Unitarian Church on Sunday, November 15th, regarding the proposed Greenfield biomass plant. Someone attending pointed out that our coal mining states

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– Walt Burnham
Montague Center

Montague Reporter

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REQUIEM FOR THE FALLEN

Before we leave Veterans Day too far behind, let us return to the origins of the holiday, once called Armistice Day.

We observe Veterans Day each year on the 11th hour of the 11th day of the 11th month of the year, to honor the signing of the armistice that brought World War I – the “War to End all Wars” – to a halt, with 16 million killed and 21 million wounded.

Since then, war has raged unceasingly around the globe, and claimed more than 170 million more lives.

On November 12th, 1921, three years after the First World War ended, British author H. G. Wells published a requiem for the fallen soldiers in the *New York World*, the conclusion of which we excerpt below:

“...What did the Unknown Soldier of the Great War think he was doing when he died?... He was still too young a man to have his motives very clear.... I cannot imagine many English boys using their last breath to say, ‘Rule Britannia!’ or ‘King George for Merry England!’”

“Some of our young men swore out of vexation and fretted; some, and it was not always the youngest, became childish again and cried touchingly for their mothers; many maintained the ironical flippancy of our people to the end; many died in the vein of a young miner from Durham with whom I talked one morning in the trenches near Martinpuich, trenches which had been badly ‘strafed’ overnight. War, he said, was a beastly job, ‘but we’ve got to clean this up.’ That is the spirit. I believe that was far nearer to the true mind of the Unknown Soldier than any tinpot *vivaing* of any flag, nation, empire whatever.

“I believe that when we generalize the motives that took the youth who died in the Great War

out of the light of life, and took them out at precisely the age when life is most desirable, we shall find the dominant purpose was certainly no narrow devotion to ‘glory’ or ‘expansion’ of any particular country but a wide-spirited hostility to wrong and oppression....”

“So far as the common men in every belligerent country went, the war was a war against wrong, against force, against war itself. Whatever it was in the thoughts of the diplomatists, it was that in the minds of the boys who died. In the minds of the young and generous millions, who are personified in the Unknown Soldier of the Great War, in the minds of the Germans and Russians who fought so stoutly, quite as much as the Americans, British, French, or Italians, the war was a war to end war.

“And that marks our obligation.

“Every speech that is made beside the graves of these Unknown Soldiers who die now in the comradeship of youthful death, every speech which exalts patriotism above peace, which hints at reparations and revenges, which cries for mean alliances to sustain the tradition of the conflict, which exalts national security over the common welfare, which wags the ‘glorious flag’ of this nation or that in the face of the universal courage and tragedy of mankind is an insult and an outrage upon the dead youth who lies below. He sought justice and law in the world as he conceived these things, and whoever approaches his resting place unprepared to serve the establishment of a world law and world justice, breathes the vulgar cants and catchwords of a patriotism outworn and of conflicts that he died to end, commits a monstrous sacrilege and sins against all mankind.”



KAREN WILKINSON ILLUSTRATION

“Why is this? Wherefore? What should we do? Come sir, to draw toward an end with you.”

LETTERS TO THE EDITOR

Thanks for Years of Service

After attending, with a small group of residents, the Veterans Day ceremony held in the village of Turners Falls this past week, something came to mind that I felt should be brought to the attention of all veterans who reside within the town of Montague.

With this in mind, I would extend my sincere thanks to two non-veterans who serve on the

trustees of the veterans memorial for the town of Montague. The trustees, by law, consist of three veterans, two non-veterans, and are chaired by the chairperson of the town of Montague select-board.

Donald Girard has served as a trustee going on nine years, and Chris Boutwell has served for fifteen years. Year after year they have assisted in honoring all vet-

erans alive and deceased on Memorial Day, and Veterans Day, and for the dedication that these two men display toward all veterans, with little or no thanks. I say, “Thank you for your years of service to all of us veterans and for your continued service to this community.”

— Art Gilmore
Millers Falls

Kennedy Completes Basic Training



Michael J. Kennedy

PARRIS ISLAND, SC – Private Michael J. Kennedy, 18, son of JoEllen Miner and Michael T. Kennedy of Hatfield, graduated from United States Marine Corps boot camp at Parris Island on October 2nd. Private Kennedy successfully completed 13 weeks of intensive basic training as one of 57 recruits in training platoon 2068. While in basic training, Private Kennedy earned the rifle expert badge and was awarded with platoon high shooter.

Following ten days home on leave and 14 days of recruiter’s assistance, he reported to Camp LeJeune for one month at military combat training, then military occupation specialty school.

Upon completion of training, Private Kennedy’s permanent duty station will be determined.

He is the grandson of Bob and Sandy Miner of Erving, Donald Rau of Northampton, the late Doris Rau, and the late Michael T. Kennedy Sr.

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GUEST EDITORIAL

Reducing Homelessness in Franklin County

BY FATHER STANLEY AKSAMIT, JANE SANDERS, & ROBIN SHERMAN – As we plan to celebrate our annual Thanksgiving meal with family and friends, an unprecedented number of our less fortunate neighbors will be spending the holiday in emergency shelters or hotel rooms.

More than 3,000 families in Massachusetts are homeless, the highest count ever. With shelters full, at least a third of these homeless families are living in motels,

costing the Commonwealth over \$3 million each month. In western Massachusetts, there are 519 homeless families. Another 20 to 30 become homeless each week.

The economy partly explains the explosion in family homelessness. Job loss and foreclosure are putting more households at risk, and these pressures are not likely to disappear soon. The good news is that a change in approach to the problem, with resources to support it, provides promise of long-term solutions.

This change is called 'Housing First'. The concept is simple: keep families and individuals in their homes or find them housing immediately, and provide them with the supportive services they need to be successful. This is in sharp contrast to the dominant approach for the past 25 years, which unintentionally drove families to shelters as the quickest gateway to housing and social services.

The Western MassNetwork to End Homelessness, one of ten state-funded regional networks, is leading the Housing First approach in Franklin, Hampshire, Hampden and Berkshire Counties. The Network, which includes service providers,

municipalities, state agencies and Housing Court, maximizes resources and shares best practices through collaboration, increasing chances of success.

In Franklin County, Community Action and the Franklin County Regional Housing and Redevelopment Authority have teamed up with the Interfaith Council to promote the new approach. Together, we try to identify families at risk of homelessness, and provide them with the assistance they need to stay in or move to safe, affordable housing. This strategy includes assistance such as payment of rent arrears, mediation to maintain an existing tenancy, or financial assistance to move

quickly to a new apartment.

The key to success is targeting resources to those at greatest risk of becoming homeless. While there are many families that could use some help toward housing costs, most do not become homeless. Instead, they minimize expenses, maximize income, and rely on support from family or friends. The goal of partners in the Network is to ensure that our increasingly limited resources are used to help the families who have exhausted other options.

The combination of homelessness prevention, Housing First, effective targeting of resources and use of data to plan and assess progress is working in communi-

see **HOMELESS** page 14

Legislature Rejects Governor's Expanded 9-C Budget Cuts PILOT Funds Secure

BY DAVID DETMOLD

BOSTON – On Wednesday, the final day of formal session for the state legislature, we spoke with representative Steve Kulik (D-Worthington) to get an update on the legislature's position on the governor's \$352 million in proposed mid-year budget cuts.

Governor Deval Patrick took action on October 29th to stave off an estimated \$600 million state budget gap.

Some of the governor's cuts – such as the \$18 million (44%) cut in transportation aid to regional school districts like Gill-Montague (which lost \$90,000 in this line item) – are within the governor's power to make on his own authority, Kulik noted. Others, such as proposed cuts to the Quinn Bill (which provides state and local matching funds, formerly on a 50/50 basis, to provide bonuses for police officers who take college courses) and to payments in lieu of taxes (PILOT) for state owned land in cities or towns, require the legislature's approval to enact.

"The Ways and Means committee, on which I serve, did not give him that authority," said Kulik, reached at the state house during a break in the action Wednesday evening. "We felt we wanted to retain control over any

additional budget cuts. Some of us were very disappointed in the cuts the governor made, including the cuts to regional transportation aid, which hit our region hard."

Kulik said the legislature would deny the governor's request for expanded authority to cut an additional \$5 million out of the Quinn Bill, which would have left localities on the hook to meet police contracts for additional incentive pay for education. He said the legislature would also turn down the governor's request to cut PILOT funding by \$10.2 million, or 40%.

"We've rejected that," said Kulik. "We feel it is a burden on local government, to a certain type of community that has state owned land, the same type of community that has been hit hard by the [loss of] regional transportation aid."

Kulik said the legislature will wait until January to propose any additional cuts to the state budget. "The October revenue came in a little higher than projected, and it's holding steady in November," following a \$214 million shortfall in the first quarter of the fiscal year. The legislature will take a wait-and-see approach for now, and "do what we need to do in January," Kulik said.

Charter School Cap

On the governor's bill to lift the cap on charter schools, Kulik said, "We have put off consideration until early January," on that one, too. "There is no need to rush and produce a haphazard bill. We've heard from many local school and town officials who are really concerned about the charter school proposed to be located in Franklin County, which is in general experiencing decline in public school enrollment, and where there is overcapacity in all school systems."

He predicted the legislature would deliver a bill to the governor on charter schools in time to make the January 19th, 2010 deadline to apply for federal funding under the Race to the Top initiative.

"There's a lot of divided opinion on the charter school question. I am not really comfortable with the system of funding charter schools in general," Kulik added. "It undermines the funding of public schools. There is tremendous pressure to reform public schools both from the government and the business community. But we need to deal with the funding mechanism if we're going to expand charter schools."

Discovery Charter School

The Department of Elementary and Secondary Education will hold a hearing in Greenfield on Tuesday, December 1st to gather testimony from the public on the K-6 Discovery Charter School proposed for Franklin County. According to Kulik's aide, Paul Dunphy, the hearing, to be held at the Greenfield Youth Center, 20 Sanderson Street, from 4 to 6 p.m., will allow time for elected officials, educators, business leaders, students and parents to comment on the proposed charter school, the assertions made by the school's "founders" in their application, whether the proposal duplicates offerings in local public schools, and the projected impact on public school and municipal finances. A member of the state Board of Education is expected to attend.

Death Penalty Denied

In news, Kulik said an attempt by Senate Republicans to bring up the death penalty as an amendment to the sentencing reform bill failed when Senate President Therese Murray ruled it out of order yesterday. Kulik said the high water mark of support for the death penalty in Massachusetts, reached 12 years ago when a death penalty bill failed on a tie vote in the House (80 to 80), after John Slattery (D-Peabody) switched his vote on reconsideration, has ebbed in years since, with more and more cases coming to light of falsely convicted prisoners being exonerated from death row.

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NOTES FROM THE WENDELL SELECTBOARD

Waiting, Waiting

BY JOSH HEINEMANN – After the December 2009 ice storm, which resulted in a days-long interruption of electric service throughout town, Wendell officials decided to protect town buildings with generators to keep furnaces operating and pipes from freezing in any future power outages. So far, one generator is installed and operational at the town office building, another at the highway garage. A third generator is in place at the town well where it will provide emergency electricity for the pump, and to heat above ground standing water. That generator is waiting for Amerigas to come with tanks and propane fuel.

The library and town hall are still waiting for their generators.

In July 2009 state representative Steve Kulik told the selectboard that Governor Deval Patrick was not going to veto the

\$150,000 the legislature authorized in emergency funds to compensate Wendell for clean up after the July 2006 tornado.

Wendell is still waiting for that money, and with announced mid-year budget cuts, the wait may have been extended. But Godot is coming soon.

Conservation Restrictions

The November 12th selectboard meeting began with Brandon Vickery from the Franklin Land trust discussing two new conservation restrictions (CRs) on private land on the east side and west side of town.

Mary McBride, who lives on West Street, came to the meeting with Vickery to put 17 acres, including 500 feet of road frontage, under a conservation restriction to be held by the land trust. McBride will reserve enough land from that parcel to

use as a building lot; the CR will be attached to the property's deed as long as Massachusetts stays consistent with its own laws. (He's coming.)

On the east side of town, Dave and Betty Richard are adding 15 acres on the west side of Jennison Road to the land they already have under a CR on the east side of the road. They too plan on keeping enough land out of the CR to allow them to build.

The selectboard approved both CRs, which will reduce the tax revenue the land generates, but avoid future costs to the town for providing services had houses been built on the protected land.

Pole Dispute

Scott Burns from Verizon and a representative from National Grid met the selectboard for a hearing regarding the location of three poles to provide electricity to a potential homesite on New Salem Road, west of Jennison Road. Highway supervisor Dave Bak, and highway commissioner Mike Gifford attended the hearing and protested they wanted the poles to be placed further back from the road. Ideally the poles would be six feet, not three feet from the road as marked, to be out of the way of snow plowing, but Burns objected that moving them that far might require bracing on private land, and other engineering difficulties.

Bak allowed that moving the poles further back less than six feet might be acceptable, and he agreed to meet with utility engineers and the highway commission at the site to see what could be worked out. The selectboard offered their approval conditional on agreement being reached between these parties.

Wandering Free Box

Runway Paving Complete

BY DAVID DETMOLD - After a three week hiatus, work has resumed on the \$5.1 million Turners Falls Airport runway replacement project, and runway paving has been completed as of Wednesday.

The Federal Aviation Administration shut down work at the airport the week of October 19th, after an electrical subcontractor began working in an area that had not been cleared by Native American tribes for arche-

Clearwater Liberty and Barbara Caruso met the selectboard to ask that the Free Box be moved from its current spot next to the senior center. They hoped it could go to the Wendell Recycling and Transfer Station (WRATS) for the winter, where it would be available only two days a week, but where its use would be under regular supervision.

The Free Box is meant for clean useable clothing only, but as a neighbor Caruso has seen televisions left there, a weight bench, and plain household trash. She said once a single piece of trash is left outside the box it acts as a magnet for more trash.

Caruso is one of the volunteers who maintain the Free Box, sort out excess and inappropriate items. At the meeting, she modeled an elegant dress she found there, but she said often enough, clothing is dirty or torn, or inappropriate items are left in the box.

The selectboard agreed the Free Box could go to the WRATS for the winter, and move to the back of the town office parking lot come spring.

As organizer of the annual holiday craft fair, Caruso asked that town hall rental for the fair be reduced from \$50 to \$25 for the two day event, so more money could be donated to the beneficiary, the Swift River School arts program.

Selectboard chair Christine Heard said her concern was the cost of maintaining the town hall, especially paying for heat in winter. Heard was sympathetic to the thought of giving more money to the school, but worried about setting a precedent of failing to meet town expenses in support of good local causes.

The selectboard stayed firm at \$50, but board member Jeffrey

Pooser said he would pay \$12.50 of the difference out of his pocket, and resident Patti Scutari, in the room waiting for a hearing, said she would contribute another \$12.50 so the town gets its full fee.

All Alcohol OK

Stephen Broll, Dvora Cohen and Diva Skydancer came to the liquor license hearing the selectboard held for the Deja Brew pub. All three supported owner Patti Scutari, who is asking the board to approve a new license for the pub to allow on premises sale of all alcoholic beverages, instead of just beer and wine.

Four years ago, when the Deja Brew pub got its pouring license, the Scutaris agreed to sell just beer and wine, due to neighbors' concerns. Since then, the selectboard has heard no complaints about patrons' behavior. They agreed to the new license request, which now goes to the Alcoholic Beverage Control Commission in Boston for approval.

Pooser asked if the pub would now be serving pear brandy.

Three of the five members of the town energy committee, Gloria Kegeles, Jonathan von Ranson, and Bob Schulman, met to discuss a conservation banner to alternate with the Full Moon Coffeehouse banner on the town common. The committee would also like to put up 'Burma Shave'-type signs, as other towns have, promoting energy conservation, alongside Wendell Depot Road on the north common. Heard suggested the energy committee speak with the highway commission regarding the signs.

The selectboard agreed to work with New Salem to conduct an energy audit for the Swift River School.

The selectboard appointed Christine Texiera to the website committee, and closed the meeting by going into executive session. Their next meeting will be on the eve of Thanksgiving.

HIGHLIGHTS FROM THE LEVERETT POLICE LOG

Assisted Shutesbury

Wednesday, 11/11
2:00 p.m. 911 mis-dial from a Broad Hill Road residence. No problem.
Thursday, 11/12
7:30 p.m. Assisted Shutesbury police department with a warrant arrest.

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99 Years on the Avel

NOTES FROM THE ERVING SELECTBOARD

Level Funded Budget Forecast for Fiscal 2011

BY BILL FRANKLIN – On Monday, November 16th, the Erving selectboard voted to adopt a level funded budget for the upcoming fiscal year, which begins July 1st of 2010. Level funding means literally keeping next year's town spending at the same \$7.1 million level as this year, a difficult feat to accomplish in view of rising costs and contractual raises for employees.

The board complicated that task by voting in the same meeting to adopt a 2% cost of living increase for town employees, believing the town could meet this additional expense.

In a letter to all department heads, dated November 2nd, the finance committee requested all departments to submit preliminary level funded budget requests by December 15th. The letter also requested a line item breakdown of spending, and an explanation to accompany any increases over last year's costs.

Acknowledging the hard economic times affecting all governmental entities and the anticipated loss of state aid, the board dis-

cussed a number of concerns surrounding the budget freeze. Finance committee member Stan Gradowski questioned whether the town should have a contingency plan, in case of a revenue shortfall, to cut the town's budget by 10%. He said the town should anticipate a "worst-case scenario," adding the town would be better positioned by doing so, "if things get worse."

Board member Andrew Goodwin countered the town "should be very conservative on budgets and deal only with known facts," and not base its decisions on "speculation and fear." He noted the education budget, for example, along with other salary-based expense lines, is fixed and difficult to cut.

Assessor's assistant Jacquie Boyden addressed the board, stating in the past some departments have responded to level funding requests by submitting a "level services" budget. Level services, put simply, means a department proposes no new hires or projects, but anticipates the cost of existing expenditures will rise

due to inflation and contractual increases. This, said Boyden, makes it difficult to adhere to the level funding model.

For many years, Erving has been able to base its budget largely on the town's own revenues, without relying heavily on state aid. Because the Northfield Mountain pumped hydro station accounts for approximately 85% of Erving's taxable income, the town has generally been able to maintain lower tax rates than nearby towns, while still pursuing big ticket capital improvements like a new elementary school, police station, and sewer upgrades.

In other matters, the board discussed the proposed new senior center. The existing plans for a 7000-square foot center to be built on town owned land north of the elementary school on Route 63 at a cost of \$2.4 million failed by four votes to gain the two-thirds majority needed for passage at town meetings earlier this year.

Andrew Goodwin said he would like the seniors to come

back with "some changes" to the proposal, adding, "Do we really need to spend that much money?"

But board chair Andy Tessier pointed out the town was obligated to repay a \$167,000 federal and state CDBG grant used to develop the architectural plans for the project, if the senior center is not built according to those plans. Tessier has laid out a plan to apply for an additional \$600,000 CDBG grant to defray the cost of constructing the new building, and said the rest of the money could come from \$1 million that could be found in free cash next year, and \$800,000 from the town's annual reimbursement check from the state for the construction of the Erving Elementary School.

Taking money from these three sources to make up the \$2.4 million price tag of a new senior center would not require a two-thirds vote, only a simple majority of town meeting, according to town administrator Tom Sharp.

Agreeing the existing senior center, located on the first floor of a former elementary school in Erving, is inadequate and noting that Erving has an increasing elderly population, the board

concurred Erving seniors need a new facility.

In another matter, finance committee member and cemetery sextant Dan Hammock asked whether the town should consider creating a new cemetery on land at the intersection of Route 2 and Mountain Road, across from the existing cemetery. The land was given to the town with the express desire it be used for this purpose. Hammock suggested the land be cleared and plots prepared for sale.

Town treasurer Margaret Sullivan has initiated a petition drive to ask Mass Highway to remove a recently installed traffic island at the intersection of Route 2 and Route 63. "People are concerned that as you're travelling west and preparing to take a left onto Route 63, they might get rear-ended," as they wait to enter the narrow turning lane created by the island, Sharp explained.

Mass Highway engineer Rich Massey and state representative Chris Donelan plan to attend a public meeting about the traffic island on Monday, November 23rd, at 6:30 p.m. with the selectboard, at town hall. For more information, call 422-2800, extension 100.

BEAVER from page 1
water, creating maintenance and repair problems for the power company.

About a year ago, WMECo came before the Leverett conservation commission with a proposal to remove the beaver dams and drain the lake. According to conservation commission chair David Powicki, the commission asked WMECo to return with a less drastic proposal that would leave the beaver's lake intact.

WMECo returned to the commission this past summer with a proposal to replace their existing wooden pylons with metal poles. [Repeated attempts to contact WMECo officials by phone and in person for comment on this story have been unsuccessful.]

As of now, the habitat around the Chestnut Hill beaver lake is not designated as priority habitat for rare or endangered species, although nearby areas are

Montague conservation commission member Donna Petersen is calling for a state-sponsored study of the new lake and its immediate environs to determine exactly what species and wildlife now call the area home.

Ultimately, however, Powicki said, "You can't just get rid of the beavers. There must be a public health issue," to do that.

He said the board of health would have jurisdiction over any permits to alter the beaver lake.

There is also a problem of public safety, Powicki noted. The ponds contain over twenty acres – thousands of gallons of water – at an elevated level, threatening a flood should the dams be accidentally breached. The town's emergency planning committee is looking at that issue, and the potential effect of a dam break on lower elevations in Leverett.


Complicating matters further, the town line between Montague and Leverett runs right through the center of the lake, creating jurisdictional issues. According to former Montague town planner Dan Laroche, a joint meeting between the two towns to address the matter is needed.

For now, Richardson Road is well maintained by both the Montague and Leverett highway crews. The steeply sloped dirt road has been smoothly graded in recent days on the Leverett side, from the intersection of North Leverett Road to a point about a mile up the hill where the road levels off. Old stone walls on both sides of the roadway continue on and disappear into the lake.

Several hundred yards further north, along a winding forest track, a three-foot tall standing stone with a painted L on one side and a painted M on the

other marks the border between the towns. Two hundred yards north, more or less, giant stone foundations mark the site of a long abandoned barn. Richardson Road picks up again from this point on in Montague, with a new surface of oil and stone.

But in between, the road bed turns to bog and swamp and

finally slides beneath the black surface of the lake, lost to vehicle or foot traffic. Along where the roadbed once ran, dead pines or hemlocks rise above the water in a withered fringe, some standing tall with broken limbs, others felled to points a few feet from the surface by the sharp teeth of aquatic engineers. 

SOLAR SITE from pg 1
proposals]. That RFP will be a turn key project."

The town's former landfill site and the adjoining acreage could be such a turn key project. Landfills are one of the locations highlighted in the Green Communities Act for possible solar installations.

"Typically, [landfills] don't have trees on them, and they aren't usually suitable for other development," said Ahearn. A solar site, however, is a low impact facility and could be developed on top of the capped garbage. "A solar facility wouldn't pierce the membrane that caps the landfill," Ahearn explained.

The Montague site has other features that could make it an attractive location for the utility. High-tension wires skirt the former dump's southern flank; their proximity could reduce what WMECo refers to as "interconnection issues." The 40 capped acres should provide enough room for any proposed WMECo facility, though selectboard chair Patricia Pruitt said the town would support consideration of the entire site – including the 34


acres approved for new landfill development – for photovoltaics.

The town tried unsuccessfully to develop the 34-acres adjoining the former landfill several times in the past, with no success. In 2006, the site was considered by a number of developers as a possible incinerator ash dump, or a contaminated soil landfill, but no responses to the town's RFP were considered acceptable.

"There is a strong desire to create an income producing site," at the town-owned land off Tumpike Road, said Abbondanzio.

In other selectboard news, Standard and Poors has upgraded the rating for the town's \$5,095,000 general municipal bond for the new police station and the new roof on the former Montague Center School.

"The bond upgrade was from A-, raised two grades up to A+, the highest rating in a single A bond," said Abbondanzio.

"This particular bond," said Abbondanzio, "over the 20-year payback period, would save the town \$300,000, or \$15,000 each year over the 20 years." 

HIGHLIGHTS FROM THE MONTAGUE POLICE LOG

Motor Vehicle Theft Reported

Wednesday, 11/11

12:43 a.m. Arrested [redacted]

[redacted] Charged with operating a motor vehicle with a revoked registration, without a license and without insurance.

8:21 p.m. Report of vandalism at F.L. Roberts station on Third Street. Arrested [redacted]

[redacted] Charged with vandalism and malicious damage or defacement of property.

Thursday, 11/12

9:48 a.m. Following a traffic stop, arrested [redacted]

[redacted] Charged with operating a motor vehicle while under the influence of liquor and speeding.

9:20 a.m. Following a traffic stop, citation issued to [redacted]

[redacted] Charged with operating a motor vehicle with a revoked registration, without insurance, without a license, failure to wear a seat belt and speeding. Citation issued to [redacted]

[redacted] Charged with operating a motor vehicle with a revoked registration, without insurance and without a license.

6:53 p.m. Assisted environmental police with arrest of [redacted]

[redacted] Charged with operating a motor vehicle while under the influence of liquor and speeding.

[redacted] Charged with operating a motor vehicle with a revoked registration, without insurance and without a license.

[redacted] Charged with operating a motor vehicle while under the influence of liquor and speeding.

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A Forest Tour

BY DAVID DETMOLD

GILL – Eighteen people gathered at the entrance to the 160-acre town forest on Hoe Shop Road in Gill on Wednesday afternoon, November 11th. Trail guide Ray Purington said 20 more had turned out the previous Sunday, too, to hike the newly acquired, permanently conserved land, donated to the town in September by the Franklin Land Trust for passive recreation.

Purington said the new town forest trails will be improved over time, and asked for volunteers to serve on a town forest committee to help manage the property. The conservation restriction placed on the property by the Department of Conservation and Recreation (DCR) stipulates no commercial activity can take place on the land, and no motorized vehicles can travel on the trails, but hunting and fishing is allowed, and logging may be permitted after the conservation commission

approves a forest management plan.

By last week, most of the deciduous trees had dropped their leaves, revealing the gentle contours of the land. Standing by the overlook to Otter Pond, Purington pointed out various species, including black cherry, shag bark hickory, sugar maple, and catalpa, planted, perhaps, by Red Sevene, who used to live in a five-room house there. There is nothing but a grassy clearing where his house once stood.

DCR insisted the house come down and it did, in May, as a condition of DCR purchasing the development rights to the land, Purington said. The view from the hillside overlooking the pond explained why.

Purington picked up a chestnut from the drive, and pointed to the 30-foot tree from which it fell. Whether a native that so far has escaped the blight, or a hybrid, he did not know.

A short hike to the south brought the group to the first of

blunt and darkened stumps of many trees gnawed through by beavers in seasons past, including one black birch felled at a height of more than three feet, during winter when the snow pack lay thick on the land. The tree's fallen trunk lay toppled beside the stump, stripped of its bark in places, but otherwise untouched.

Our trail guide took us down toward the Fall River, atop a glacial esker that snaked along for a quarter of a mile. Eskers, Purington explained, are ridges of sand and gravel left behind by melting glaciers, that form streams and eventually, as the glaciers that birth the streams melt away, deposit sediment in sinuous ridges, like railroad embankments twisting above the level of the land.

The trail sloped down to the riverbank through a forest of young hemlock, towering pines,

and fern brakes, whose spring-like green still relieved the shifting palette of brown leaves underfoot: oak, beech and maple. Passing through a field of tall and dusty goldenrod, brittle by hard frost, we came to a beach with hardback wooden chairs set out as for a picnic, facing a scenic bend in the Fall River.

On the Greenfield side, high water had eroded the bank and felled a giant hemlock, caught by the broken trunk of another tree twenty feet above the stream, and still growing, at an improbable angle, in a sylvan tableau reminiscent of Apollo and Daphne. The river flowed smooth and green in the soft afternoon light beneath.

Beside the wooden lawn chairs, a small improvised altar of found objects from the river lay on a raised refrigerator shelf: green bottle glass, utility pole insulators, and other objects rounded by the river, including a shard from a British marmalade crock.

Beauty is where you find it, and you'll find it in abundance in the Gill Town Forest.



Ray Purington holds a log gnawed by beavers, by an old impoundment.

four abandoned beaver ponds, now turned to swamp. Purington speculated several families of beavers had worked the land and dammed the streams in recent years, stripped the nearby trees of bark and moved on. Walking through pine needles, partridge berries, and deer scat, we passed the

AUTUMN FEST from pg 1 standup routine? Part comic, part musician, and 100% fun, Bridges packed a whole lot of energy into the room.

After his opening song, a Josh Ritter tune "Stuck to You," Bridges was met with loud applause, with many a glass raised in appreciation, and a few jaws dropped because of his ability not to get tongue tied on such a fast-paced, word-heavy song. He must have had a few Red Bulls before the show, as his level of intensity kept rolling along, never faltering throughout the set.

He kept the crowd going with that famous classic, "Yakity, Yak" with an enthused audience responding in time with, "Don't Talk Back!" When his time was up, he took a well deserved sip of his IPA and settled back into the crowd.

In the meantime, The Oyster Stars made their way to the floor and provided a funky

groove, which later heated up as they rocked out on their last song.

The crowd continued to diversify through the evening, with young and old and everyone in between intermingling, enjoying the musical harvest and the talents of so many.

After a brief pause, the next band set up and people started milling back through the doors to hear what was up. Arriving nameless to the floor, the group came to a quick consensus to call themselves The Pickle Machine, which surprised everyone. Comprised of members of The Ghost Quartet, with Sam French, Zack Holmes and Kevin Smith, and featuring Ali



TAMI STILES PHOTOS

The Feel

Schelin from Infinite August on vocals, Peter van Sieten on flute and electronic oboe, along with the Rojo's own J.D. Keating on trombone and John Tibbles on guitar. With a hodgepodge of the right stuff, this eclectic group came together and continued to heat up the revelers on such a chilly night.

Ali Schelin is a direct channel to the late Janis Joplin, while maintaining a smooth vocal styling all her own. The synchronicity during their performance was spot on, making room for each member of The Pickle to come forward and blend into a bread and butter mix of music.

As the evening progressed,

random people from the audience got up on the microphone, including Sophie Rehms and Claire Donohue Myer. The young women provided a harmonic, down-tempo Gershwin favorite, "Summertime," to balance out the evening quite nicely, and leave a warm glow in their wake.

The last act to make its way to the floor was the Jen Holmes band. Again it was a case of being unable to hear the vocals. And so the Microphone God (aka the poor tech guy) came down from his electric heaven and spoke, directing Jen to sing into the mic. So she did, and it was good.

Beyond any doubt it was an



Eli Bridges

evening worth pulling on the woolies and making my way down to Burrito Rojo for the Autumn Harvest

Festus. I left with a satisfied belly, due to a finely crafted burrito, and my ears full of promising talent located right here in our corner of the Valley.

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What's Your Story?

Lesléa Newman at Greenfield Community College

BY JULIE BRITTON – “It’s important to know where you come from,” said Lesléa Newman, speaking on November 12th as part of Greenfield Community College’s visiting writer series.

The room was full of students from Joanne Hayes’ Women in Literature class, along with community members who came just to hear Newman read.

Reading poems written for her grandparents, and from her short story, *A Letter to Harvey Milk*, Newman’s voice slid in and out of Yinglish – English sentences mixed with Yiddish words and syntax – and in and out of a Brooklyn accent.

“It’s important to know where you come from,” she said again. The students sat utterly still, their unlined faces open as the morning sun. The woman sitting next to me cried and nodded as the words rolled through the room.

Newman is the author of over 57 books, including the 2009 novel, *The Reluctant Daughter*, *Mommy, Mama, and Me* and

Daddy, Papa, and Me – both of which have just come out as board books for toddlers, and the poetry collection *Nobody’s Daughter*. She wrote the children’s classic *Heather has Two Mommies*, which is celebrating its 20th anniversary with a full color illustrated edition put out by Alyson Books. She is the recipient of numerous literary awards and fellowships, and is coming to the end of a two-year reign as Poet Laureate of Northampton.

In the short story, *A Letter to Harvey Milk*, Harry Weinberg, a 77-year-old Jewish man, takes a writing class at his senior center in which he reckons with the pain and beauty of his past. In so doing, he and his writing teacher, a young Jewish lesbian, are transformed. This short story won second place in the Raymond Carver Short Story Competition and has been adapted for the stage and

film. You can find it both in the short story collection *A Letter to*



Lesléa Newman

Harvey Milk, published by Terrace Books, and in the *Best Short Stories of Lesléa Newman*, by Alyson Books.

Raising questions about how to live with one’s secrets and how to reconcile the awful things that happen with our ability to love, the story is as timely today as when it was first written over

20 years ago.

Because Newman’s stories frequently tumble around themes of identity and belonging, I asked what she thinks about the recent loss of marriage equality in Maine.

“It’s unfortunate that we still have to struggle for basic human rights,” she said. “I do believe, however, that we will have gay marriage on a national level. The tide is turning. Every generation shows more respect for tolerance. It’s a question of time. I don’t know if it will happen in my lifetime, but some-

day people will say (and here, her voice slides into that lovely Brooklyn twang): ‘What? Gay marriage was illegal?!’ Just like they now say, ‘What? Interracial marriage was illegal?’”

Later, Newman quoted the poet Muriel Rukeyser, who said: “The world is not made of atoms.

It’s made of stories.” In this era of Facebook, Twitter, and other means of superficial communication, Newman believes we are not listening in a deep way.

“We all have a primal need to be heard. It is my belief that everyone has a story to tell and the ability to tell it.” And yet, some people think they have nothing to say, no story worth telling. To these, Newman says, “Write the story you would never want your mother to read.”

Concluding the presentation at GCC, Newman asked for a show of hands of those who have living grandparents. As she wrote in the poem “Legacy,” ‘Where I have come from, I will go.’ A third of those present raised their hands. “How many of you know their stories?” she asked. Fewer still raised their hands. “Ask,” she charged. “Ask them their stories.”



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Zipride.com is Going Places



Kristina Dickinson

BY ELIZABETH NASH

MONTAGUE – Kristina Dickinson knew just what she wanted to accomplish a year ago when she started Zipride.com, a free ridesharing website that matches people who need rides with people who want passengers. Her goal: Give people a convenient, comfortable way to get around, while lowering their carbon footprint by sharing transportation.

One year later, and how’s it going?

“Really well,” said Dickinson. “We went national within a year. Our site can now be found on college and university campuses across the country.”

Zipride is for everyone, not just students, but the schools lease custom versions of the site, and the fees they pay sustain the little company.

Dickinson’s inspiration for Zipride came from her own student days at McGill University in Montreal. “I needed something

like Zipride on a regular basis,” she laughed.

After getting Zipride going in Montague, Dickinson learned that ride-matching databases are pretty common across the country. The concept is simple: Set up an easy-to-use website where people can post information about their transportation resources and needs, get in touch with each other, and make their own arrangements. Some people have a one-time need. Others make long-term commuting arrangements.

Anyone can scan the Zipride postings, but to post or respond to a posting, you need to fill out a simple registration form. On a recent day, Zipride’s postings included 55 drivers looking for someone to commute with them in their cars, 23 people wanting to commute in someone else’s car, and 10 people interested in sharing driving.

Also on the Zipride boards were a dozen people wanting one-time rides from the Pioneer Valley to other Massachusetts see **ZIPRIDE** pg 10

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UNION #28 from pg 1

assumes regional transportation aid from the state at 82%; on October 29th the governor cut the reimbursement level for transportation to 29% of district costs.

On October 26th, senator Stan Rosenberg, an early proponent of regionalization for smaller school districts – Western Massachusetts school districts in particular – told the Gill selectboard the state push for regionalization was now on the back burner because “All reports are coming back saying the same things: minimal savings and lots of angst.”

So is it time for Union #28 superintendent Joan Wickman to relax? With four school committees, more than 150 staff, and 650 students under her supervision, Wickman doesn't have that luxury.

Last month, Wickman took some time out of her day to set the record straight on what she views as the strengths of the present arrangement between the five member towns of Union #28. That arrangement has proved to be an enduring one. Four of the towns joined the union in 1902; Shutesbury joined one year later.

Primarily, her thesis is this: “We can focus all of our energy on elementary education.” In K-12 regions, “Upper schools get more focus, unless you add administrative staff for the elementary grades. In many ways, we send a better prepared student to the middle school, because we make it our focus to make sure they get a better elementary edu-

cation before they reach middle school.”

Though this is Wickman's first superintendency, she is speaking from experience. Before coming to Union #28, she served as a shared principal for two elementary schools in the Gateway district, at a time when three principals served the five elementary schools in that district, which straddles Hampshire and Hampden County and serves the towns of Huntington, Montgomery, Russell, Blandford, Chester, Middlefield and Worthington. Now, with budget cuts, there is only one principal covering the administrative needs of all five elementary schools in Gateway.

“Regionalization doesn't work,” Wickman said emphatically.

At Union #28, she said, “Because we don't have a lot of layers, we interact directly with personnel. Each of our communities has local control over their school budget, so I feel our budgets are healthier in tight financial times,” because townspeople know their tax dollars are “going to their kids, their grandchildren.” And, if need be, in their own elementary schools, “They know where to pare back; the decisions are made locally.”

Wickman said three of the elementary schools she oversees are doing very well in terms of adequate yearly progress markers under the No Child Left Behind act, and only one, Leverett, is experiencing difficulty with AYP

goals in math. Again, because of the small size, the teachers at Leverett are able now to focus on that particular class closely.

Wickman said the results are in from this spring's coordinated program review of special education, civil rights, English Language Learner, and Title I programs for the district, during which the state Department of Elementary and Secondary Education looked at hundreds of indicators at Union #28. “We did extraordinarily well, with only one very minor finding, about the location of a special education classroom, across from the library at the Leverett Elementary School, which the review team felt was too isolating for the special education students there.

About 15% to 17% of Union #28 students fall under the category of special education, Wickman said, and one of the schools has about 30% of students qualifying for free lunch programs as low income, with the percentage dropping in the other three schools. She said more children are choosing in than choosing out of the two elementary schools in the district that allow school choice – Swift River and Leverett – and she said all the elementary buildings are in good physical condition.

Moreover, all the elementary schools in Union #28 have undergone a recent energy audit, and custodial staff are working to make sure they operate as efficiently as possible in terms of energy usage. All the schools

recycle, conserve water, and participate in composting programs. Shutesbury Elementary has solar panels to reduce electricity costs; Leverett and Swift River have gardens where food is grown for use in the school lunch program.

Each of the Union #28 schools has a computer lab and fulltime technology staff to instruct the students and support the staff. All students, K-6, receive computer training.

All the elementary schools have arts programs, with every student receiving at least one traditional art and music class each week, with instrumental music classes offered as well. When artist in residence programs were lost to budget cuts, local PTOs found the funding to restore them.

Of more concern to Wickman at the moment than the prospect of forced regionalization with neighboring districts is the threat she sees to her district schools from the new K-6 charter school proposal, to found a Discovery Charter School of Sustainability somewhere in Franklin County. If this proposal is eventually approved by the Department of Education, and the school is established, Wickman said it could easily draw students away from her district, taking \$12,000, on average, in state funds with them each year. “When you start cutting \$12, \$24, \$36,000, that's very painful, and it goes up quickly.”

For now, the populations of the four schools are holding

steady, each at about 150 to 190 students. Per-pupil cost of educating the students at Union #28 might be higher than state averages, Wickman admitted, because there is a principal at each of the buildings in the district, but she bristled at the suggestion that money spent on administration was somehow qualitatively different than money spent educating students in the classroom.

“I feel very connected to my staff, because it is such a small organization. I know every staff member, and many of the students,” she said. Teachers from around the district meet quarterly, each time at a different school, to discuss best practices and go over curricula with their grade level colleagues. Although not all the elementary schools have identical curricula or textbooks, she said the teachers help decide the programs at their schools, “so the buy-in is really good,” and all curricula are aligned to state educational frameworks.

Wickman did not appear much impressed with the arguments made by Baldassarre and other superintendents from larger districts, who argue that forming K-12 regions would provide for a smoother transition to the upper schools by imposing uniform curricula in the lower grades.

Wickman pointed to the excellent educational outcomes of Union #28 students, and said, “If the end results are good, how you get there is not terribly important.”



ZIPRIDE from pg 9

locations, as well as to locations in Vermont, Virginia,

Washington DC, Washington state, and North Carolina. A couple of people were even seeking

or offering rides to and from locations in other states.

Groups who want to encourage members to share rides can sign up, too. The group roster currently includes the town of Wendell, a dance camp, and a political group planning a march on Albany, NY.

“People have been really receptive to the ride-sharing idea,” Dickinson said. “We've taken the inconvenience away by putting the system online and making it easy to use.”

Some people, she said, won't share rides because they have safety concerns. “But it's a small percentage,” she added. To allay such concerns, the website offers safety tips, user profiles, driver/passenger ratings, and experience points (number of

rides a person has participated in, as driver or passenger).

Dickinson is proud that Zipride helps people save on gas, get where they need to go, and meet their neighbors. She's just as proud that her company helps reduce environment-damaging greenhouse gas emissions and preserve natural habitats by reducing, even if just a little, the need for new roads. “My family was the first in our neighborhood to recycle,” Dickinson said, “so I've been interested in environmental issues for a long time.”

Another source of pride is Zipride's contribution to the community. Each month, Zipride donates a certain amount of money (depending on how many new users sign up) to local organizations. October's recipi-

ents were Seeds of Solidarity, which helps people grow food in their own communities, and Community Involved in Sustaining Agriculture (CISA), which helps support local farms. Both are important organizations to Dickinson, who came to Montague from the Boston area to start an organic farm.

What's in Zipride's future? Dickinson would like to work with others in the transportation business. She'd also like to find green advertising partners and to make Zipride available on more college campuses.

Judging by the success she's achieved in one short year, she'll handily do all that, and more.

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Postcard from France

Back to the Future Perfect – 1609

BY DAVID BRULE

PARIS – It's not often you can catch up with a 400-year old ancestor. It can happen, though, if you've got some imagination and a fondness for historical speculation.

As fascinated as we Americans are with genealogy and ancestral origins, it's startling when you pick up the trail of a forebear in a faraway place. That happened for me just the other day on a Paris street called the Rue St. Honoré.

Family history can be very instructive. It helps explain who we are by telling us where we've been, and sometimes tells us even where we're going. The search is something of a mystery novel, and the trail this time led to No. 129 Rue St. Honoré.

The ancestor in question lived on that street, just outside the walls of the Louvre, which is now a museum. But in Louis Hébert's day, it was royal palace, and a place of dark and deadly intrigue.

Louis was born at No. 129 in 1575, or at least that's what the plaque affixed to the outside of the building stated. The house in those days was called the Mortier d'Or and Louis lived there with his father Nicolas, his mother Jacqueline, and various brothers and sisters. Louis was an adventurous sort, luckily for about 1000 of us who count him as a progenitor and ancestor, because he brought our DNA from Paris

to New France in the New World in 1607.

We descendants of Louis Hébert can point to that year with pride. We're a bit tired of the Anglo-Saxon bragging of those whose ancestors came over on the Mayflower in 1620. We French Canadians beat the Pilgrims by 13 years, crossing the Atlantic with Samuel de Champlain.

By 1617, we had already started a small settlement called Kébec, where Louis and his wife and children were surviving as best they could in a new land, ravaged by fiercely long winters. Take that Miles Standish, Priscilla Mullins, and John Alden!

Back in Paris though, there were years of bloody goings-on outside Louis' doorstep on that busy street in the late 1500s, and it's little wonder that men like him were more than ready to head out to the New World to make a fresh start.

His childhood was spent in unsettled times, and his father's shop, an apothecary, surely served as a meeting place for political discussion. The wars of religion between Catholic and Protestant had been raging ever since Martin Luther posted his objections about the Catholic Church on a church door in Wittenberg.

One of the most gruesome chapters had its start just outside the family's house in 1572, a few

years before Louis' birth. Full of intrigue, conspiracy, murder, massacre and general mayhem, this chapter set in motion a chain of events that would lead to the opportunity for Louis to seek his fortune in the wilds of Canada.

You can't make up a story like this. King Henry II, father of a number of princes and at least one princess, managed to get himself killed in a friendly joust just outside the Louvre, to start the latest round of trouble. His sickly and weak son became Charles II. Henry's widow, Catherine de Medici, was now the Queen Mother.

She was the daughter of an Italian banking family, disciples of Machiavelli, and well known for their skill in inventive uses of poisons to kill off their rivals. Catherine was pulling the strings in the realm, and decided to marry off her Catholic daughter Margo to the Protestant King Henry of Navarre.

The wedding was held in Notre Dame and the Louvre in August 1572, and was ostensibly planned to put an end to the religious war by means of this mixed marriage. However, once the Protestant guests arrived for the uneasy matrimonial ceremony, Catherine and her son Charles launched the infamous Massacre of St. Bartholomew on August 25th.

The bells of St. Germain l'Auxerrois began tolling at midnight, the signal for Catholics to

begin eliminating the Protestant wedding guests. Thousands died that night, just outside the doors of the Hébert household on Rue St. Honoré, and all over Paris.

Henry of Navarre, the groom, was saved only by his forced conversion to Catholicism. He and his new wife Margo, who despised each other quite mutually, left Paris for his kingdom in Protestant southern France.

Three years later, our ancestor Louis was born and baptized in the same church that announced the beginning of the massacre. He grew up during a time of pestilence, plague and more upheaval. Charles II had died within a year of the massacre. His brother became king as Henry III, a somewhat scandalous transvestite, who was in turn assassinated a few years later. This cleared the way for the return of Henry of Navarre to become Henry IV, one of France's most beloved kings, and a sponsor of Samuel de Champlain, whom some say was his illegitimate son. Like I said, you can't make this up!

So the stage was set. By 1600, Champlain, fascinated with the New World, was eager to explore that part of it called New France. He put together a crew, and needed a few specialists to help in settling and starting up a colony. He hired six stone masons, a tinker, a blacksmith, and an apothecary. Louis Hébert, having followed in his father's footsteps as a pharmacist, was the man for the job.

He was more than ready to leave his shop and seek adventures in a new land. He was recruited by Champlain to serve as doctor and maintain the health of the crew, and eventually to care for the well being of the new

settlement.

After a number of round trips with Champlain beginning in 1607, he settled in Port Royal (modern Annapolis) in Nova Scotia, and later in a remote site called Quebec, with his family. He learned new herbal cures from the Amerindians, and took up farming, out of necessity to survive. For many years, Louis, his wife Marie Rollet, and his children were the first and only European family that survived in the harsh climate and long winters. His house and farm were located at the current site of the basilica of Quebec.

There is a monument to Louis Hébert near the site, honoring him and his wife as the first family to be established in New France. His children produced many descendants who populated Quebec, and down through the generations, some of us ended up in this small town in Massachusetts called Montague.

So it was with no little emotion that I read the plaque on Rue St. Honoré the other day, stating that this is where a part of the family story started. It did state that this is the house in which Louis was born. As for me, having completed the circle of a centuries-old voyage begun here, it might also have said: "Enfant du pays, by the time you get back to read this, I will have been gone for 400 years." There's the future perfect tense for you. I knew I'd get back to it somehow!

Women Wellness Gathering Saturday



Kiran Bhowmik and Venus Free at the Leverett Crafts and Arts Center

BY TAMI STILES

LEVERETT – In 1997, with the publication of her novel *The Red Tent*, Anita Diamant refocused attention on the time-honored practice of women gathering together to rejuvenate themselves, to restore balance within and maintain cohesion as they

go about their daily lives. The title of her book refers to the tent where women would gather while menstruating or giving birth, to find support amongst grandmothers, mothers, sisters and aunts.

On Saturday, November 21st, 2009 from 10 a.m. to 10 p.m. at the Barnes Gallery, in the Leverett Crafts and Arts Center, a Women, Wombs and Wellness conference will serve as a fundraiser for the Pioneer Valley Red Tent Temple (PVRTT) and the LCA. This all-day event will honor the energy that exists in all women: the power to nurture, the power to heal, and the strength of self preservation.

According to Venus Free,

director of the PVRTT, the women wellness movement incorporates "time and space for serious self-care, along with being your own advocate in the process. My mission with the project is to help women understand what it means to take time for yourself, not just once a month, but every day."

Saturday's conference will feature a wide variety of mini-workshops for women, from yoga, herbal care tutorials, preperinatal massage, mandala drawing to focus on the vision within, sound healing, and even Mayan Abdominal Massage technique. Local massage practitioners and herbal specialists will be on hand for massage or consultation. Art from women artists Emily Field, Jan Gruber, and Mira Nausbaum and many others will adorn the walls of the Barnes gallery, providing a suitable backdrop for the event.

Free said, "We are offering a

wide range of tools, products and networking services to educate those in attendance on what is available to women to promote their own health and well being." One of the sponsors of the event is Avena Botanicals, which is donating women's health products such as teas, supplements, creams and oils. Deb Soule founded Avena in 1985 and is recognized widely for her biodynamic gardening technique and botanicals.

Besides workshops, the event will feature belly dancing class- see GATHERING pg 14

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Student Award Winners Honored

BY ELLEN BLANCHETTE GILL-MONTAGUE - The Gill-Montague school committee opened their meeting last week with a ceremony to honor student winners of the John and Abigail Adams scholarships.

As superintendent Carl Ladd read out the names of those receiving the scholarships, students in attendance came to the front of the room for a handshake and an award certificate from school committee chair Michael Langknecht.

Recipients are eligible for the scholarship based on their performance on the grade 10 MCAS English Language Arts and Math tests. To qualify, a student must score Advanced on one exam, and either Proficient or Advanced on the other, and rank within the

top 25 percent of students in their district.

Class of 2010 John and Abigail Adams scholarships are Ashley Bailey, Hannah Brown, Nataliya Buhakova, Jaryd Buzzell, Danielle Dolhenty, Lucas Foley, Mackae Freeland, Oengus Gallagher, Matthew Garber, Billie Lada, Joshua Lapachinski, Mitchell MacConnell, Benjamin Mailloux, Katherine Morris, Olivia Nicotra, Evan Pleasant, Kathleen Rinaldi, Dustin Rivard, Christopher Shattuck, and Alex Westfall.

These students now qualify for a tuition waiver for eight traditional semesters of undergraduate education at the University of Massachusetts, the eight state colleges, and the fifteen community colleges.

Gill-Montague to Consider Energy Performance Contract

BY DAVID DETMOLD - The Montague selectboard met with G-M superintendent Carl Ladd and members of the Montague energy committee on Tuesday to consider moving forward with an energy performance contract with Siemens Corporation. Siemens conducted an initial audit of school buildings earlier this year, and found potential energy savings that could be included in a performance contract, but the school district declined to go forward to an investment grade audit of the buildings, due to uncertainty around which school buildings would still be in service over the long term, and whether the push for regionalization with other districts would mean a loss of control over school buildings now operated by the GMRSD.

Now, with the state of Massachusetts offering Green Communities access to a \$10 million annual fund for additional grants to make energy improvements, energy committee chair Chris Mason pointed out that the towns of Montague and Gill would be better positioned to receive grant funds if their school district also completed a baseline energy audit and participated in an energy performance contract.

This would allow for capital improvements to be paid for out of long term energy savings, rather than through town funds.

Montague town administrator Frank Abbondanzio will arrange a meeting between a Siemens representative and Ladd early next week, prior to seeking school committee approval.

Turners Falls High School Greenhouse Class Cuts Costs with Lunchroom Greens

BY MCKENNA BRUNELL & JULIE THOMPSON

TURNERS FALLS - For the past few months, students in the Turners Falls High School greenhouse class have been working hard to bring garden-fresh produce to their cafeteria's salad bar. Robin Harrington, Earth Science teacher, and her greenhouse class, along with food services manager Jim Loynd, teamed up at the beginning of the school year in an effort to provide the school with a fresher, tastier, more nutritious lunch. Now, with temperatures dropping to the 20s at night, the high school greenhouse is still brimming with student-built beds of greens.

The class has been growing lettuce, chard, peas, kale, spinach, and herbs, some of which are included in the cafeteria salads. They also produce potatoes, catnip, and flowers.

In order to grow the greens, the students first mixed the soil and planted the seeds in the framed beds made by Jeffery Jobst's woodshop class. After about two months, the vegetables matured enough to be harvested. Students in the class cut, wash, and dry the lettuce and other produce before the greens are served in the cafeteria.

Asked if she had tasted their produce, senior Cassie Rounds replied, "I have. It's not too shabby." Other students in the greenhouse class have said the greens they grow taste fresher and better than the produce they purchase at the store.

Not only have students in the



DETMOLD PHOTO

Seniors in Robin Harrington's Earth Science class have been growing salad greens, culinary herbs and vegetables in the high school greenhouse. The greens are used to make healthier lunches in the school cafeteria. Left to right: Amanda Garey, Alex Peterson, Mackae Freeland, and Matt Garber, holding a planter with lacinato kale

greenhouse class enjoyed the greens themselves, but faculty and students have also commented on the quality and taste of the produce. Mary Lynne Brown, who supervises the cafeteria, said she has noticed an increase in the number of people buying salads.

This project is contributing to the good health of the Turners Falls High School while saving the school money at the same time. Loynd estimated that receiving produce from the greenhouse class has saved the school about \$50 a week.

Harrington, a plant ecologist who taught at UMass for the last ten years, has been busy imparting horticultural techniques to the seniors in her class, who clearly know their way around the greenhouse. Her class plans to continue growing vegetables through the remainder of the

school year. A new batch of spinach and lettuce is just peeking through the soil in some of the beds, while in others, chard and kale is ready to be harvested. The lettuce beds have just been thinned of much of their produce, but more will be ready soon.

The most rewarding aspect of this experience, for senior Cody Pease, has been, "knowing people are enjoying our hard work." Through hard and satisfying work, this project has taught students in the greenhouse class that it's good to help their school.

Asked what she had learned, senior Chelsea Tela replied, "The best greens are fresh greens."

McKenna Brunell and Julie Thompson are juniors in Karl Dziura's journalism class at TFHS.

Got an Engineering Problem?

BY CHRIS WINGS

WENDELL - Maybe the Swift River School STEM RAYS (Science, Technology, Engineering, and Mathematics Research Academies for Young Scientists) can help solve your problem.

The Swift River School STEM RAYS is a group of 4th, 5th, and 6th grade students, studying engineering with a focus on biomimicry. Last year, our STEM RAYS students designed acoustical solutions to the noise

problem in the school cafeteria. The group is looking for engineering design projects for the remainder of this school year. We will consider any problem, big or small.

Perhaps you need a better way to assemble, store, distribute, or protect materials. Or you might need a piece of equipment adapted to meet your particular needs. To submit a proposal: briefly explain the problem using words or sketches. Include any solutions

you have tried. Be clear and concise.

Email proposals and contact information to: wings@swiftroverschool.org

Or mail, or deliver to: Swift River School - Attention: STEM RAYS; 201 Wendell Road, New Salem, MA 01355.

The deadline for submittals is November 23rd.

We will choose one or more suitable projects from among those submitted.



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JESSICA HARMON ILLUSTRATION

THE HEALTHY GEEZER:

Countering Vision or Hearing Loss

BY FRED CICETTI
LEONIA, NJ – Q. I'm concerned that I may not be seeing as well as I used to. What should I do?

There are many signs that indicate possible vision loss. Under normal circumstances, do you have trouble recognizing faces of people you know? Is it difficult for you to read, sew, match the color of your clothes? Do lights seem dimmer than they used to?

Vision changes like these

could be early warning signs of eye disease. Usually, the earlier your problem is diagnosed, the better your chances are for successful treatment and maintaining your vision.

Regular eye exams should be part of your routine health care. However, if you think your vision has changed, you should see your eyecare professional as soon as possible.

Devices and rehabilitation programs can help you adapt to vision loss. They may help you maintain your lifestyle.

These devices include: adjustable lighting; large-print publications; magnifying devices; closed-circuit televisions; electronic reading machines; computer systems with voice-recognition; telephones, clocks and watches with large numbers.

Q: I'm beginning to have trouble with my hearing. Is there anything I can do short of getting hearing aids?

There other "hearing aids" you should consider. There are listening systems to help you enjoy television or radio without being bothered by other sounds around you. Some hearing aids can be plugged directly into TVs, music players, microphones, and personal FM systems to help you hear better.

Some telephones work with certain hearing aids to make sounds louder and remove background noise. And some auditoriums, movie theaters, and other public places are equipped with special sound systems that send sounds directly to your ears.

Alerts such as doorbells, smoke detectors, and alarm clocks can give you a signal that

you can see or a vibration that you can feel. For example, a flashing light can let you know someone is at the door or on the phone.

Q: Recently, my pharmacist told me to take my statin before bedtime. She said that was the best time. It made me think what other information she has that I should ask her about. What questions should I ask?

Don't be afraid to throw a lot of questions about your medicines at your doctor, nurse or pharmacist. Here are some good ones:

When should I take it? As needed, or on a schedule? Before, with or between meals? At bedtime?

How often should I take it? How long will I have to take it?

How will I feel once I start

taking this medicine? How will I know if this medicine is working?

If I forget to take it, what should I do?

What side effects might I expect? Should I report them?

Can this medicine interact with other prescription and over-the-counter medicines—including herbal and dietary supplements I am taking now?

And, ask your pharmacist to put your medicine in large, easy-to open containers with large-print labels.

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

Absentee Ballots

Absentee ballots are now available at town clerks' offices for the December 8th state primary election to fill the U.S. Senate seat left vacant by the death of Edward Kennedy. The deadline to apply for absentee ballots is noon on December 7th.



KAREN WILKINSON ILLUSTRATION

BY NEIL SERVEN

GREENFIELD – A principal at a Massachusetts high school made national news last week when he banned his students from using a word. That word was "meep." According to the Associated Press, the students were planning to use the word as a means of disrupting their classes, until a Facebook page was discovered that gave away their plan.

Given all of the possible ways available to students to interrupt a class, the fact that they chose "meep" momentarily warmed this writer's heart. "Meep," after all, was the single word that Beaker, the character from the Muppet Show, used to commu-

nicate. You remember Beaker, don't you? The reluctant, red-haired, test-tube-shaped lab assistant to Dr. Bunsen Honeydew, Beaker always ended up as the guinea pig to his scientist partner's experiments gone awry. Whenever he could sense the experiments weren't safe – usually by the time it was too late to back out of them

– Beaker's "meeps" grew more panicked in pitch.

Alas, the students at Danvers High School did not have that lovable Muppet in mind when they chose "meep" as their word of disruption. A student at the school, Mike Spiewak, told NPR that a fellow student made up the word at a video-game party, and it spread like wildfire.

The interjection might be the most underappreciated part of speech in the English language. That's because on the surface, interjections seem meaningless – an animal noise, the kind of word you utter involuntarily – but deep down, they contain a great deal of information and nuance. Beaker's use of "meep"

The Rogue Editor
When I Say Meep, I Mean Meep

may be one of the more striking examples of just how much information can be conveyed through a single word. The meaning of "meep" shifted with the inflection of his voice. A brief, confident "meep" connoted agreement; one with a slow vocal rise at the end expressed skepticism or incredulity; and a stretched-out, high-pitched "meep" indicated sheer terror. Using these tricks of inflection, Jim Henson was able to create one of his more memorable characters without the benefit of a vocabulary.

Interjections are tricky to define, which is why many dictionaries don't define them at all. They don't have the kind of lexical meanings nouns and verbs have. Instead, they earn their distinctions via how they are used – say, to express surprise (as in "wow" or "whoa"), confusion ("huh?"), deliberation ("hmm"), or anger ("argh"). That is why dictionary editors convey the meaning of such words via usage notes.

A few years ago, Merriam-Webster entered "d'oh" – made famous by Homer Simpson – in the Eleventh Collegiate Dictionary, with the note "used

to express sudden recognition of a foolish blunder or an ironic turn of events." And when you think of Homer Simpson, that's exactly how he uses "d'oh" – for the times he gets outsmarted by Bart or thwarted by bad luck. And while there are a lot of words in English we use to express frustration – most of which cannot be printed in a family newspaper – none of them express the specific kind of frustration distilled by "d'oh."

The next interjection on the horizon – in some dictionaries but not all of them – is "meh." This word, used to express indif-

ference or boredom, has already gotten under the skin of a lot of commentators. It carries the same kind of flip disrespect that "whatever" carried about 20 years ago, and conveys that disrespect effectively through what little effort it takes to pronounce its single, measly syllable. That loaded meaning is precisely what makes it work as an interjection – and why it is probably going to stick around for a long time.

Neil Serven is an Associate Editor for Merriam-Webster, Inc., in Springfield

HIGHLIGHTS FROM THE ERVING POLICE LOG

Mill Fire and Car Fire

Wednesday, 11/11	3:38 a.m. Report of a car vs. deer accident on Route 2 in front of police station. Deer left the scene.	Moved same along. 12:10 p.m. Arrested [redacted] Charged with operating a motor vehicle after license revoked.
Thursday, 11/12	7:45 a.m. Searched area of Dorsey Road for wounded deer from earlier accident. Unable to locate same.	Sunday, 11/15
Friday, 11/13	11:00 a.m. Disabled vehicle on Route 2 just west of Erving Paper Mill. Vehicle caught on fire. Erving fire department responded. Vehicle towed away.	9:22 a.m. Suspicious vehicle at Copper Angel Restaurant. Checked same.
	Saturday, 11/14	10:10 a.m. Suspicious juveniles at the Usher Plant hydrant house.

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Sokolosky Realty Moves to Avenue A



Sokolosky Realty has found a new home on Avenue A

BY DAVID DETMOLD

TURNERS FALLS – After more than 60s years on 4th Street, in a one-story brick building that looks as if it might have been the model for Charles Dickens' *Old Curiosity Shop*, Sokolosky Realty has moved around the corner to 159 Avenue A.

By sharing quarters at that address with Rist Insurance, owned by her husband Chuck Donovan, Sokolosky's owner Jean Donovan will not only be able to take advantage of the shared clerical pool and conference room Rist can provide, she is also closing the circle of family business that began when Rist Insurance was founded in the former haberdashery shop on Fourth Street in 1888 by Albert Rist, who diversified into real estate.

Albert left the combined realty and insurance business to his daughter, Marguerite. In turn, Marguerite hired Jean Donovan's father, Chester Sokolosky, to work for her as a salesman. Chester's passion was in real

estate, so when Chuck Donovan eventually came along and bought out the growing insurance end of the business in 1979, Chester's wife, Alice, and their daughter, Jean, maintained the real estate arm as Sokolosky Realty, keeping that business located on 4th Street.

Jean and three other agents continued running the realty there until two months ago, when she decided to share office space again with Rist, now on Avenue A. So the family business circle is complete.

"The move to Avenue A gives us the opportunity to be out in the community more, and visit with people who might want to have an agent come over to their home before deciding whether to put their house on the market. That's a service we offer."

Donovan said housing prices have remained relatively stable in Franklin County in relation to the rest of the country through the recent economic downturn, and activity on the local housing market has picked up through the fall, with all signs pointing to a

busy spring.

"There are wonderful opportunities with federal programs to assist first-time home buyers. I don't believe we're going to see a rise in prices in the spring. There are some excellent bargains on multi-families in the area."

But what about the little brick building that was home to Sokolosky Realty all these years on Fourth Street? "That building is close to my heart," said Donovan.

She is not selling it, but renovating with an eye to renting to a retail shop. With newly finished floors and an efficient gas furnace recently installed, it offers 700 square feet on one floor, with two front offices, easy parking and storage space. Ideal for anyone starting out in business, or looking to relocate to a business district on the move. Call 863-4393 for more details.

Anniversary of Welcome Yule

TURNERS FALLS – Twenty-five years ago a small group of Valley residents began celebrating the return of the light at mid-winter with music, dance, songs and stories. A reunion cast of adults and children, plus a few newcomers, bring this year's 25th anniversary performance to the Shea Theater for three days in December. The show will feature many of the all time favorite songs from years past, including the Gloucestershire Wassail and Lord of the Dance, as well as dancing of all kinds – spooky, serious, and riotous – a mummies play, and stories for all ages.

As art imitates life, the stories and plays within this year's show highlight the pleasures of passing on the seasonal tradi-

tions of family and community. The children play an important role, welcoming newcomers and making some mischief to make the celebration their own. Audience members can join the singing, laugh at the mummer's play, and enjoy stories intended to appeal to all ages.


"Welcome Yule: a Midwinter Celebration" will be performed at the Shea Theater, 71 Avenue A, Turners Falls, on December 11th and 12th at 7:30 p.m. and Sunday, December 13th at 2 p.m. Reserve tickets at (413) 863-2281 or purchase in advance at Jones Library in Amherst, Broadside Books in Northampton, the World Eye Bookstore in Greenfield. For information, call (413) 665-3206 or check www.welcomeyule.org.

HOMELESS from pg 5

ties across the country. In Columbus, OH, family homelessness dropped 40% between 1995 and 2004. In Hennepin County, Minnesota, the number of homeless families fell by 43% over four years, and New York City experienced a 19% decline in just three years.

Closer to home, we've seen the success of a Housing First model for chronically homeless individuals in Springfield, where the number of homeless individuals without children is down 18% since 2007, despite the economic downturn. Springfield has been nationally recognized for its successful Housing First approach.

The recent fire on Chapman Street in Greenfield is a sobering local reminder of the tragedy of

homelessness. We and our partners in the community are working to ensure that all those in need of assistance receive it. We also commend those of you who have reached out to help your neighbors in need. We hope and trust that by this time next year, more families and individuals will have a Thanksgiving table to call their own.  We all deserve a home.


Father Stanley Aksamit is Pastor of Our Lady of Peace Church in Turners Falls, and a member of the Interfaith Council of Franklin County. Jane Sanders is Executive Director of Community Action. Robin Sherman is Executive Director of the Franklin County Regional Housing and Redevelopment Authority.

GATHERING from pg 11

es with the Vadalna Tribal Dance Troupe, henna body art by Emily Millsbaugh, and a Birthing from Within meditation lead by Beth Fairservis. Fairservis hopes this guided journey may enable participants to more easily bring their ideas and visions into fruition in the world. Capping off the evening will be a performance by Gaia Roots, a women's world music ensemble.


LCA program manager Kiran Bhowmik added, "This event will provide a place to unite and respect one another, whether you are dealing with an emotional challenge, or seeking a spiritual path. We are hoping for women of all ages to provide insight, and for our elders to serve as role models for young women."

Donations for the all day event will be accepted. The sliding scale welcomes those in attendance to give what they can for the opportunity to avail themselves of the education, awareness, and camaraderie to be found among women of diverse backgrounds. If you only want to attend the Gaia Roots concert, which starts at 7 p.m., the cost is five dollars at the door.

"This conference is about providing the information, tools, and resources for women to create the best possible life we can have as human beings," according to Free. For further info on the conference, go to www.lev- 

HIGHLIGHTS FROM THE GILL POLICE LOG

Another Fuel Spill on French King Highway

Wednesday, 11/11 4:51 p.m. Vandalism to house on River Road, under investigation.	complaint sought against 	Street.
Thursday, 11/12 7:39 p.m. Assisted Bernardston police with arrest on Brattleboro Road.	Charged with operating a motor vehicle with a suspended license, open container of alcohol, operating an unregistered motor vehicle, and failure to display headlights.	10:59 a.m. Report of past breaking and entering on Pisgah Mountain Road.
Friday, 11/13 7:01 p.m. Criminal	Saturday, 11/14 9:35 a.m. Report of a stolen motor vehicle and larceny from Walnut	Sunday, 11/15 6:01 p.m. Responded to medical emergency on Vassar Way.
		Monday, 11/16 10:26 a.m. Fuel spill on French King Highway, fire department requested.

DEP DIVISION OF WETLANDS AND WATERWAYS PUBLIC NOTICE

Pursuant to 33.U.S.C.1341 and MGL c21 §43, notice is given of a 401 Water Quality Certification application for pond reclamation at 12 Chestnut Hill Loop, Montague. The project will entail limited dredging of a private pond, with all dredged materials remaining on site, and all dredging happening in a single day. Additional info may be obtained from Glenn Hinson at the above address, or at (919) 451-3950.

Written comments should be sent to: Ken Chin / Dept of Environmental Protection / Div. of Wetlands and Waterways / 1 Winter St. / Boston, MA 02108 / (617) 292-5635 within 21 days of this notice.

Any group of 10 persons of the Commonwealth, any aggrieved person, or any government body or private organization with a mandate to protect the environment that has submitted written comments may also appeal the Dept.'s Certification; failure to submit comments before the end of public comment period may result in the waiver of any right to an adjudicatory hearing.



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THURSDAY, NOVEMBER 19th
At the Rendezvous, Turners Falls: *Quarterly #3*. All-star gala benefit for North Star Self-Directed Learning. 9 p.m. \$5

Live jazz every Thursday at Ristorante DiPaolo, Turners Falls. 6:30 to 9:30 p.m. 863-4441.

Burrito Rojo, Turners Falls: *Ray Mason*. Ray and his road-worn 1965 Silvertone guitar have been tirelessly touring since 1982 playing his roots rock music! 7:30 p.m.



Cliff Eberhardt performs at Burrito Rojo in Turners Falls on Sunday, November 22nd at 7:30 p.m. \$17 advance; \$20 day of show; www.cliffeberhardt.net Photo by Denn Santoro

FRIDAY, NOVEMBER 20th
The Nature of New England at the Discovery Center, Turners Falls, 7 p.m. Within its small geographic range, New England's sculpted mountains, river valleys, and varied shorelines provide for a surprisingly rich and varied flora and fauna. A strong emphasis in the program is on the perceptions people have in favor of some groups of animals (like birds) at the expense of other equally interesting ones (like snakes).

Gill Cheese Tasting Night at Gill Congregational Church, Gill Center from 7 to 9 p.m. Visitors will sample cheddar cheese made by students of The Farm at Northfield Mount Hermon (NMH) School in Gill; cheddar made by Cliff and Sorrel Hatch at Upinngil Farm; and a mild goat's cheese made by Daniel Botkin at Laughing Dog Farm. Suggested donation: \$2/person. This family-friendly event is alcohol-free and children are encouraged to attend with their parents! Info. 863-2850.

Route 63 Roadhouse, Millers Falls: *Evenspeak*, original/classic/southern rock, 9:30 p.m.

Burrito Rojo, Turners Falls: *The Stone*

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Coyotes w/ *Santina Kling*. The Stone Coyotes are a bare-bones rock family trio who have taken the road less travelled ever since they gave back songwriter Barbara Keith's major label advance years ago. 9 p.m.

The Rendezvous, Turners Falls: *The David Wax Museum* (Mexo-Americana from Somerville) and *Ameri-mf-cana* \$5 cover.

Deja Brew, Wendell: *Josh Levangie* singing all your favorite Johnny Cash tunes and many more, 9 to 11 p.m.

At the Bookmill, Montague Center: *Red Heart the Ticker* and *Oweihops*. *Red Heart the Ticker* is the musical collaboration of Robin MacArthur and Tyler Gibbons, a husband and wife duo from Marlboro, Vermont. Their music, often compared to Will Oldham, Gillian Welch, and Iron and Wine, is, in many ways, a reconciliation between their verging musical tastes. *Oweihops* creates sparse, acoustic-based music that's both earthy and dreamy. 8 p.m. \$10 at the door.

SATURDAY, NOVEMBER 21st
Wild About Turkeys Why were turkeys reintroduced into the area? What roles do they play in the ecological system as well as being your tasty Thanksgiving dinner? At the Great Falls Discovery Center, Turners Falls. 1 to 2 p.m.



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

The Rendezvous, Turners Falls: *Rockit Queer* the dance party! \$3, 9:30 p.m.

Deja Brew, Wendell: *Kristen Ford Band*, Indie Rock, 9 to 11 p.m.

Montague Phantom Brain Exchange #22: Special show, special venue. Felix Kubin, Gerty Farish, Schurt Kwitters, lecture by Deborah Frenkel, DJ Byron Coley. 8 p.m. \$7 at the National Spiritual Alliance Hall, 2 Montague Ave, Lake Pleasant. Also!

Echo Lake Coffee house: Ethan Miller. Held in the Leverett Town Hall, 9 Montague Rd. Pot luck at 6:15 p.m., show starts at 7:30 p.m. Admission is \$8, or \$10 at the door. Info. (413) 548-9394. With hard-hitting analysis and high-energy acoustic guitar, Ethan performs fiery songs of hope, justice and struggle.

Burrito Rojo, Turners Falls: We start our Saturday music at 3 p.m. with local metal band *Bringing Back the Guillotine*. Then at 8 p.m.: *Mid Range Trio*. Jazzy, Bluesy just play amazing!

The RECOVER Project hosts an Open Mic Night, 9 p.m. to midnight. Join us for an evening of music and entertainment for people in recovery, their friends, and family. \$3 suggested donation to benefit the RECOVER Project, a community open to all concerned with drug and alcohol addiction. Snacks and soda for sale. This is a family friendly, drug and alcohol free event! Info. (413) 774-5489 x12.

SUNDAY, NOVEMBER 22th
At Burrito Rojo, Turners Falls: *Cliff Eberhardt* playing songs from his new Americana release *500 Miles: The Blue Rock Sessions*. With *Heather Maloney*. 7:30 p.m. Tickets: \$17 advance, \$20 day of show. See www.burritorojo.com.

MONDAY, NOVEMBER 23rd
Meeting about the future of the Entergy corporation's "Vermont Yankee" (VY) nuclear reactor. 5:30 to 7 p.m. in Green Fields Market's upstairs meeting room. How can we make Vermont legislators and their constituents aware of our passion to see VY closed in 2012 at the end of its intended lifespan? More info: Randy Kehler, 624-8858 or John Hoffman, 625-6967.

TUESDAY, NOVEMBER 24th
At the Rendezvous, Turners Falls: Craft night. Join other crafty people working on projects.

WEDNESDAY, NOVEMBER 25th
Deja Brew, Wendell: *Thaddeus Hands*, Rock Fusion, 9 to 11 p.m. and Knitting & Crafts Night, 7 to 10 p.m. Any craft and any skill level welcome. Get a chance to win our monthly crafty gift with every \$5 you spend at Craft Night. Drawings held on the last Wednesday of the month.

Route 63 Roadhouse, Millers Falls: Thanksgiving Eve rock & roll with *Heroes in Trouble* no cover, 9:30 p.m.

The Rendezvous, Turners Falls:

Montague Phantom Brain Exchange 9 p.m. \$3 cover.

FRIDAY, NOVEMBER 27th
The Rendezvous, Turners Falls: PLAY w/ DJ Lance (house music & more) all night long. \$3 cover.

SATURDAY, NOVEMBER 28th
Wildlife Tracking 1 to 2 p.m. Learn how to identify track features and track patterns. This program is designed for individuals new to wildlife tracking. No registration needed. Great Falls Discovery Center, Turners Falls. (413) 863-3221 or www.greatfallsma.org.

The Rendezvous, Turners Falls: LOLFM (a new Eric Hnatow project), *The Rub Frontways Caravan of Stars* and *This Wrong Needs Heroes*, 9:30 p.m. \$3 cover.

Deja Brew, Wendell: *Nexus*, Harmonic Eclectic Rock, 9 to 11 p.m.

SUNDAY, NOVEMBER 29th
Family Dance 3:30 to 5:30 p.m. at the Montague Grange, Montague Center. Family-style contra dancing with caller Cindy Green and live music with *Shingle the Roof*. \$4/person or \$10-15/family. Info: (413) 367-9608.

Deja Brew, Wendell: *Steve Crow, Peter Kim & Joe Fitzpatrick*, Acoustic Trio, *Warped Americana*; 8 to 10 p.m.

MONDAY, NOVEMBER 30th
Deja Brew, Wendell: *All Small Caps*, A Night of Spoken Word. Open mic starts at 7 p.m. Guest Readers 8 to 10 p.m. Special Poetry night menu available, bring a friend and your appetite!

THURSDAY, DECEMBER 3rd
The Greenfield Community College Peace and Social Justice Club & The Traprock Center for Peace and Justice present: John (Dr. T) Tierney, GCC professor with his eclectic blend of philosophizing, humoring, storytelling, poeming, fluting, tromboning, musiking and the psychology of care, compassion and kindness. "Dr.T." will feature selections from his most recent CD *Bone Therapy*. At Traprock Center for Peace & Justice, Miles St. Greenfield.

FRIDAY & SATURDAY, DECEMBER 5th & 6th
Steve Martin's play, *Picasso at the Lapin Agile*, presented by the Greenfield Community College Theater Department, Sloan Theater, 8 p.m. \$8/\$5 students & seniors. Continues 12/11 to 12/13.

THRU DECEMBER 6th
The Gallery at Hallmark, Avenue A, Turners Falls: Michael Zide photography display *Illuminated Ground*.

THRU DECEMBER 15th
In the great hall at the Great Falls Discovery Center: *Massachusetts Junior Duck Stamp* exhibit. Thru 12/15.



Ameri-mf-cana performs at the Rendezvous, Turners Falls on Friday, November 20th. Also performance by *The David Wax Museum*, 9:30 p.m.

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- 2. 2012** PG13 in DTS sound DAILY 6:30 9:30 FRI, SAT, SUN 12:00 3:00
- 3. A CHRISTMAS CAROL** PG DAILY 6:30 9:00 in DTS sound FRI, SAT, SUN 12:00 3:00
- 4. CAPITALISM: A LOVE STORY** DAILY 6:45 9:15 R FRI, SAT, SUN 12:15 3:15
- 5. PARANORMAL ACTIVITY** R DAILY 6:45 9:15
- 6. THE BLIND SIDE** R DAILY 7:00 9:45 in DTS sound FRI, SAT, SUN 12:30 3:30
- 7. TWILIGHT: NEW MOON** PG13 in DTS sound DAILY 7:00 9:45 FRI, SAT, SUN 12:30 3:30

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FRI: 11/20 9:30 PM | \$5
The David Wax Museum (Mexo-Americana from Boston)

SAT: 11/21 9:30 PM | \$3
ROCKITQUEER (THE dance party!)

WED: 11/25 9 PM | \$3
Montague Phantom Brain Exchange

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TALKING PICTURES

Bad Education



1 eagle = the pits 4 eagles = the heights



Carey Mulligan & Peter Sarsgaard flirt with child abuse in An Education

BY TODD DETMOLD

CHICAGO – Did you hear the one about how this year’s Academy Awards will consider ten Best Picture nominees instead of five? I make no secret of my disdain for the political machinations of the Oscars. I get a morbid thrill when a development like this is announced – year after year, a hallowed tradition of my movie-loving youth manages to lower itself deeper into its slum (wink).

You know what actual hallowed traditions and sacred institutions don’t need to do? Re-brand. But since fewer people are watching the Oscars every year, (and nobody wanted to host

them, either, as you also may have heard) they’ll keep coming up with these desperate pleas for relevance and ratings.

It’s a fair bet that one of those ten slots will go to *An Education*, a ‘polite’ British *Bildungsroman* about a sweet and innocent sixteen-year-old girl and the creep in his thirties who wins her virginity.

Carey Mulligan is the little-known but striking young actress who inhabits Jenny, our moppet protagonist. I’ll say it is rather fun to watch her dance around an ensemble of prestige actors.

The crux of this morality tale, as we’re told seven times in the trailer and several more in the

film proper, is between Jenny’s application to Oxford (boring!) and her romance (fun!) with Peter Sarsgaard’s David, a charming man at least a decade older than she.

It’s Mulligan’s precocious charisma that lends the film its spare moments of depth and ambiguity. It’s plainly obvious that this is a naïve girl making bad decisions despite the warnings of her Academy Award-nominated elders. But if Mulligan is so special and clever, maybe she should be allowed to make an unpopular decision. Perhaps she knows something we don’t.

Formulating a plot summary makes my skin crawl, but here I go (by the way, I’m gonna spoil this one). Jenny’s father is overbearing and expects her to get into Oxford. She’s the smartest girl in her class by a long shot, but she’s hot so she still has friends. She has an overbearing teacher and an overbearing headmistress. She meets David one day when he offers her a lift home from school in his fancy car. He lays on the charm pretty thick, and it’s not long before he’s sweet-talked her parents into letting her go to Paris with him for the weekend and he’s trying to deflower her in a dingy airport hotel room with a banana. (I can’t make this stuff up.)

It’s a profoundly unpleasant film. I’m not sure what’s more unsettling: the dramatically fas-

cinating premise of borderline child abuse (age of consent in England is 16) or the fact that nobody involved in making the movie seems to be aware of how creepy Jenny’s situation is. The storytelling here is just a curtain held over what amounts to little more than a vaguely conservative “Stay in School” PSA. The choice between David, the lying con-artist thief who’ll break your heart, and Oxford, the prestigious university, is a pretty obvious one to those of us playing Aesop in the audience. But here we sit, having our noses rubbed in it.

Jenny has four female role models: 1) her mother, who cowers at her father’s tantrums; 2) her teacher, who doesn’t want to see her throw her life away; 3) the headmistress, played by Emma Thompson, still kicking; and 4) David’s best friend’s blonde philistine idiot girlfriend, who asks why she reads books when she could read magazines. Surrounded by ciphers such as these, it’s easy to see why our young heroine is so confused.

A smidgen of dramatic tension comes from the slow leak of David’s secrets. First he’s charming, then he’s creepy, then he’s an art thief, then he’s perpetrating elaborate real estate fraud, then there’s the bit with the banana. I kept waiting for the other shoe to drop. He’s already married, of course, and Jenny won’t discover this until she’s

dropped out of school for him. Poor, naïve girl should’ve listened to Emma Thompson.

It doesn’t matter, though, that he’s married, and after that revelation David is never seen again. There are no consequences to her juvenile hedonism. What matters is that she partakes in a final-act “studying montage” and gets into Oxford.

An Education is Oscar Bait. It’s mediocre filmmaking with a conservative heart and a British accent, a bit of lavish period detail and a tidy happy ending. It also has the secret ingredient of middlebrow morality, with just enough distance from the actual issues to render the whole affair offensive to anybody who cares about what movies are actually capable of. The fact that Nick Hornby wrote the thing I must ascribe either to the increasingly-believable notion that High Fidelity and About a Boy were flukes, or that he just doesn’t know anything about women. Either way, I don’t know why we put up with this tripe. No doubt there will be nine more good reasons to watch *Sunday Night Football* next March.

COMEDY AT THE SHEA



Joe Wong
Saturday, November 28th
He’s Back! following his appearance on the Late Show with David Letterman appearing with Dan Crohn, Dave Decker, and Nick Lettice.

The Shea Theater, 71 Avenue A, Turners Falls. Showtime 8 p.m., doors open at 7 p.m. Tickets \$15, available on-line at www.shea-comedy.com, and at the World Eye Bookshop, Greenfield. Beer and wine served in the lobby before the show. Call the Shea: (413) 863-2281.

Wendell Town Meeting Approves Simple Living Resolution

BY JOSH HEINEMANN – Over 40 Wendell citizens attended a special town meeting Wednesday, November 18th and approved every article on the warrant, all but one unanimously.

Although it called for no specific action, Article 9 generated the most discussion, and gained the only dissenting votes, two.

As passed, this resolution read:

The voters of Wendell hereby recognize the right of its citizens to live using little or no manufactured fuels or electricity, reminding all of us that there are safe technologies for living a healthful, fully integrated life in the community that minimize cost and known harmful environmental impacts. We urge the effort of Wendell officials in establishing that right, limited only by potential endangerment to others.

This article derived from an effort by Jonathan and Susan von Ranson to build a non-elec-

tric apartment for themselves as part of renovated barn on their property, using a composting toilet, and to make it legal for others in town who may want to reduce their environment impact to pursue similar approaches to the same goal.

Board of health member Martha Senn asked if the intent of the resolution was to have board members disregard laws they are elected to uphold. Jonathan von Ranson said town boards have a lot of authority to work within the law, and he mentioned the situation in Leyden where the board of health tried to stop a man from living without hot water, using an outhouse, before finally allowing him to use a composting toilet, and live without electricity, heating his own water as needed.

Nina Keller said the state sometimes looks to the towns for direction, and the resolution is just a leaning, not a binding instruction.

Bob Schulman said, “If we wait for the federal or state governments to act, we’ll be buried.”

Jim Slavass said he was

uncomfortable with the underlying accusative tone the resolution showed to board members, who serve essentially as volunteers.

In the other articles the town paid bills of prior years, corrected an accounting error, and authorized taking \$9,000 from stabilization to insulate the town hall. Speaking as a member of the finance committee Slavass said the new town library used

800 gallons of oil last year, and the town hall, which is used far less, used 2,500 gallons.

Voters authorized the creation of an emergency management committee of five members to assist the emergency management director. People have been meeting with the emergency management director since the ice storm of last winter, and the committee would give those meetings official status.

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