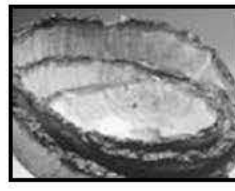




UNDERDOG NIRVANA
On Thanksgiving Day/ page 5



ARTS & ICICLES
Eclectic palettes / page 7

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YEAR 5 - NO. 9

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THE VOICE OF THE VILLAGES

NOVEMBER 30, 2006

Three Trustees Who Want to Become Librarians

BY DAVID DETMOLD ERVINGSIDE - In Erving, the three elected library commissioners have doubled - or tripled - as the town librarians for a good many years. Selectboard chair Andy Tessier recalls the town used to have a paid librarian once, but when no one could be found to take her place, the library commissioners stepped in to take her place. And they've been checking out books ever since.

only town in Massachusetts where the trustees run the library," send Marcia Bernard, one of the three.

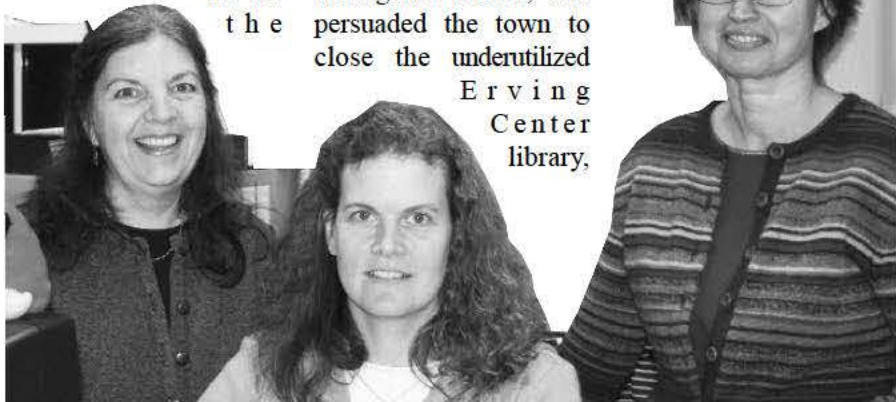
"We got rid of the two zip codes, the two area codes, now it's time to get rid of this," said Marion Overgaard, another trustee.

Along with Beth Bazler, Bernard and Overgaard have made impressive progress at the Erving public library in the last five years. For one thing, they consolidated operations at the Ervingside branch, and persuaded the town to close the underutilized Erving Center library,

which for a number of years was located in the basement of town hall. They modernized the collection, expanded the hours of operation, took courses in library science, and began tracking the steady increase in circulation that followed. They received state accreditation for the Erving Library in 2001, and began utiliz-

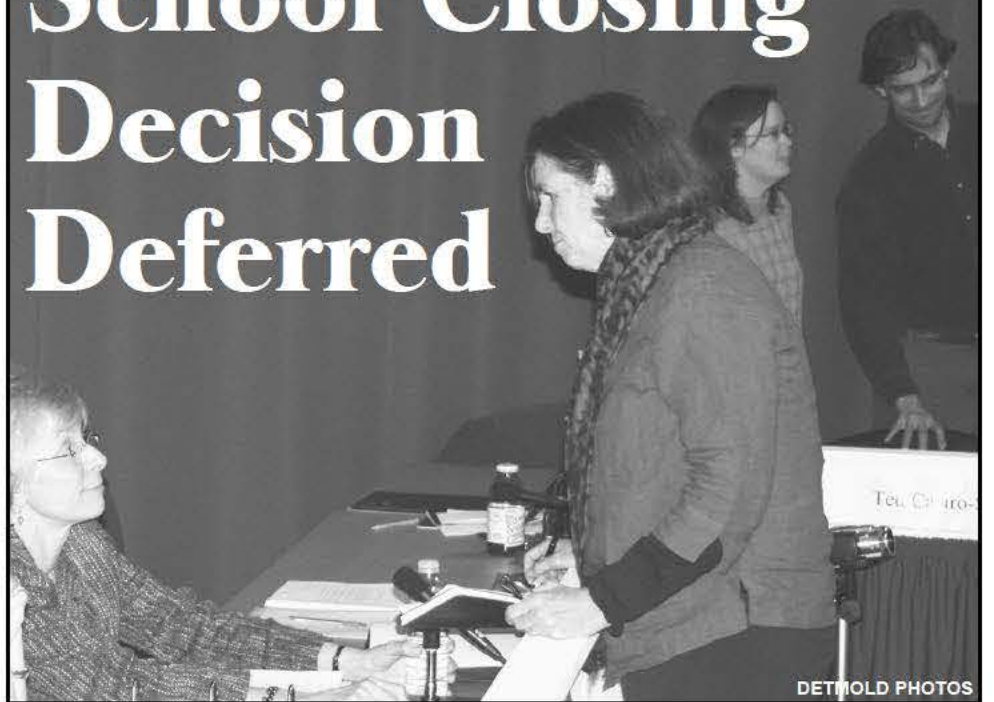
see **LIBRARY** pg 8

"As far as we know, we are t h e



Marion Overgaard, Beth Bazler and Marcia Bernard may be the hardest working library trustees in the Commonwealth. In the last five years, they have brought the Erving Library system in line with state accreditation standards. Now they want to be librarians.

School Closing Decision Deferred



Superintendent Sue Gee (l) confers with Montague selectboard chair Patricia Pruitt before the start of Tuesday night's school closing debate. Kris Boyle (l, rear) talks with Ted Castro-Santos.

THREE VOTES TAKEN; ALL FAIL TO GAIN MAJORITIES

School Committee Members Outline Positions

BY DAVID DETMOLD The Gill-Montague Regional School Committee failed to reach consensus on closing an elementary school in Montague on Tuesday, but several key members indicated a willingness to re-examine options in view of a projected \$800,000 budget gap looming over the district. The committee took

three votes on various elementary configurations, all of which failed to reach needed majorities. The first vote, on a motion by Mike Langknecht, seconded by Ted Castro-Santos, would have created an early education center at Hillcrest Elementary, where Montague pre-K students would be educated. Forty-five

pre-K students are presently schooled at Hillcrest, which is also home to about 125 students in grades K-2. Under Langknecht's proposal, the K-2 students at Hillcrest would move to Sheffield, expanding the grade span at that school from 3 - 6 to K-5 or K-6. The Montague Center School would also expand

see **SCHOOLS** pg 10

Selectboard Hears Main Road Complaints

BY DAVID DETMOLD GILL - Work is proceeding on the three mile, \$3.7 million overhaul of the north section of Main Road, but there have been a few bumps along the way. The selectboard heard complaints on Monday, November 27th about the lowering of the roadbed near Upinngil Farm and complaints of dust, inaccessible mailboxes, and residents unable to get out of their driveways in time for work or appointments.

"There may be some things we need to change to make things easier for our people," said board member Ann Banash.

Full depth road reconstruction will continue in spring north to the town line, so the board said residents will have to get used to living with inconvenience. Highway superintendent Mick LaClaire, the town's go-to guy for Main Road complaints, had a generally positive view of F&J Construc-

tion's work to date. "I'm pretty impressed with how much they've gotten done in a short time. All the (lateral) crosses and catch basins are in up to Mount Hermon Road."

Reached after the meeting, Cliff Hatch, proprietor of Upinngil Farm, said, "The access to my farm has been horrible. It's the first year I haven't sold all my pumpkins. People have to park down the road and walk up to buy

see **GILL** pg 3

Of Clams and Turtles



PHOTO BY JOSEPH A PARZYCH

BY JOSEPH A. PARZYCH GILL - Recently, residents of Main Road were surprised to find four-foot deep trenches appearing

overnight between the end of their driveways and the road reconstruction project on the north side of town. The prob-

lem has been aggravated in the vicinity of the Upinngil farm stand and

see **MAIN ROAD** pg 6

PET OF THE WEEK

How About a . . . ?



Quickie

Quickie is a 2 year old female greyhound in need of a good home. Quickie is a love. She wants to sit in your lap and give you butterfly kisses! She is very gentle and affectionate. Oh, and did we mention that she is absolutely lovely? She is almost peach colored. Quickie will do well in a home with kids over 10, cats and dogs. For more information on adopting Quickie, please contact the Dakin Pioneer Valley Humane Society at 413-548-9898 or via email at leverett@dphvs.org.

CARNEGIE LIBRARY NEWS

Make Gingerbread Houses

BY LINDA HICKMAN
TURNERS FALLS - Children of all ages and their families are invited to make easy gingerbread houses at the Carnegie Library on Saturday, December 2nd at 2 p.m. Bev Whitbeck

will run the free program and all of the materials, which include graham crackers, candy, and frosting, will be provided. For more information, please contact the Carnegie Library, 863-3214.

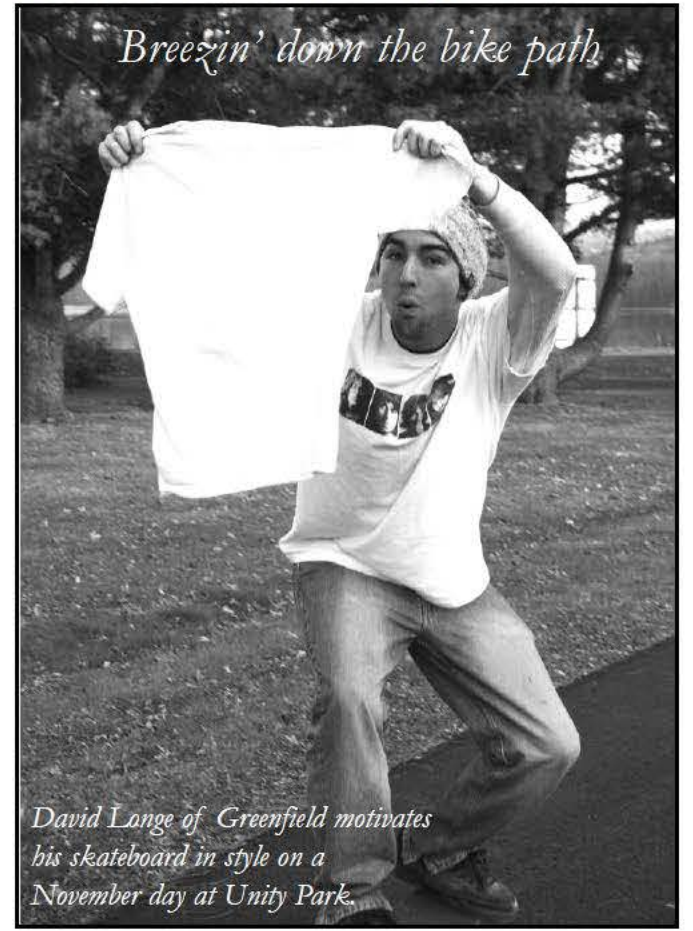
Preschool Story Hour Meets Wednesdays



PHOTO BY LINDA HICKMAN

BY LINDA HICKMAN
TURNERS FALLS - Korey Martineau of Turners Falls and other young children made multi-colored flowers at the Carnegie Library Preschool Story Hour on Wednesday, November 29th. They were inspired to mix colors after the reading of the story "Mouse Paint." The Story Hour meets every Wednesday morning at 10:15 a.m. For more information, call 863-3214.

FACES & PLACES



David Lange of Greenfield motivates his skateboard in style on a November day at Unity Park.

Residents of Gill Special Town Meeting

- Revising zoning bylaws to create
- Village commercial district
- Limits on big retail stores
- Flag lots
- Conservation development

Dec 11th, 7 P.M.
Town Hall

Montague Men's Basketball League

Captains' Meeting
Thursday, December 12th,
6:30 p.m.

A mandatory, pre-season captains' meeting has been scheduled for Thursday, December 12th at the Unity Park field house in Turners

Falls, at 6:30 p.m. Team registration will continue until Friday, December 22nd, when the team fee of \$535 and team rosters are due. Players must live or work in the town of Montague to be eligible to play. Teams will not be placed on the league schedule until the

team fee is paid in full. League games are played Monday and Wednesday evenings from January through March. Team representatives may contact the Montague parks and recreation office at 863-3216 to register and to receive more information.

UMass Basketball & Hockey Bus Trips

Montague Parks & Recreation Department - Be part of Minuteman Madness! Enjoy exciting family outings at the raucous Mullins Center on the UMass - Amherst Campus. Don't worry about the driving and parking issues. Join us on the bus. Register for one or both games - Now! - Tickets will certainly go fast! Families of all ages are encouraged to register; children must be accompanied by an adult 21 years or older.

The Men's Basketball team will be playing their archrival

Temple Owls on Saturday, January 13th at 7:00 p.m. This trip is co-sponsored by the St. Kazimierz Society of Turners Falls. Tickets are for reserved seating, and are \$13.00 per ticket for Montague residents, and \$15 per ticket for non-residents. Non-residents may register beginning Monday, December 11th.

The Men's Hockey team will be playing against the Providence Friars on Saturday, February 10th at 7:00 p.m. Tickets are general admission,

and are \$14.00 per ticket for Montague residents, and \$16.00 per ticket for non-residents. Non-residents may register beginning Tuesday, January 8th.

Fees for both events include ticket and transportation only. The bus leaves for both games from Unity Park promptly at 5:00 p.m. Trips are first come, first serve; registration deadlines and enrollment limits apply. Contact the MPRD Office to receive additional registration information and a Winter Program Flier at 863-3216.

SENIOR CENTER ACTIVITIES December 4th - 8th

MONTAGUE Senior Center, 62 Fifth St., Turners Falls, is open Mon. - Fri. from 9 a.m. to 2 p.m. for activities and congregate meals. Make meal reservations a day in advance by 11 a.m. Messages can be left on the machine when the center is closed (863-9357). Mealsite manager is Chris Richer. The center offers a hot noon meal weekdays to any senior. Transportation to the center can be provided. Special trip coordinator is Jean Chase. Make trip reservations by calling 772-6356. Payment and menu choice is due three weeks prior to trip.

Monday, 4th
10:15 a.m. Aerobics
11:00 a.m. PACE Aerobics
1:00 p.m. Canasta
Tuesday, 5th

9:30 a.m. T'ai Chi
Wednesday, 6th
10:15 a.m. Senior Aerobics
12:45 p.m. Bingo
Thursday, 7th
1 p.m. Pitch
Friday, 8th
10:15 a.m. Senior Aerobics
11 a.m. PACE Aerobics

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

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

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

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

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Belling the Cat on Avenue A

BY JOSEPH A. PARZYCH

TURNERS FALLS - Ludlow Construction superintendent Scott Pio decided 16 feet of ledge was too much to bang away with the hoe-ram on the Avenue A sewer project, so he called in O'Sullivan Blasting from North Smithfield, R.I. to drill and blast the ledge.

The only problem is the new sewer installation runs next to the old sewer line, which is live with a stream you could go white river rafting on. Breaking that would put the company in deep doo-doo, lots of it.

Flooding Avenue A with raw sewage just before Thanksgiving was too grim a notion to contemplate. Water mains also run on both sides of the sewer, as well as a gas main by the sidewalk. A worst-case scenario would be to have water and sewer breaks simultaneously.

Driller David Farr drilled a row of 2½-inch relief holes through the ledge, eighteen feet down, in anticipation of blasting, but the drill rig broke down.

Earlier this week a meeting was held with all parties involved in the project, resulting in no one wanting to take responsibility for breaking the live sewer. Blasting the ledge was a scenario reminiscent of 'Belling the Cat': a great idea, but....

Since the end of this phase of the sewer project is near, Pio decided the prudent course of action would be to have O'Sullivan's drill operator bore four-inch diameter holes two feet apart for the length of the trench to facilitate breaking up ledge using Ludlow's Allied hammer attachment on their Cat excavator.

There were three other options considered at the summit meeting:

1. An expanding compound, used in the past by Pio, which could be poured into the holes. But the job would be held up for the better part of a week to

allow the material to expand enough to fracture the ledge.

2. Dry ice and water could be put down the holes, but the fractured nature of the ledge would make that option largely ineffectual.

3. "Dynamite is the way to go," maintained driller David Farr, but he did not want to take responsibility for the possible consequences. Back to belling the cat.



PHOTO BY JOSEPH A. PARZYCH

Allied breaker jackhammering on Avenue A after the ledge is softened up by drilling 4 inch holes 18 feet deep, two feet apart. Watch out for that sewer main!

GILL

continued from pg 1
milk. And I look at the new level of the road and say, 'Oh, is this where we're ending up?' It's not going to work."

Hatch said the roadbed, which was supposed to rise by several feet in the original design, has now been dropped several feet in front of his farm-stand parking lot. The change in gradient has made it exceedingly tough for milk trucks or customers' cars to enter his lot, which is a very busy place come strawberry season.

The problem is also severe across the road at the Flaggs' residence, but there is more room on that side of the road to grade back the slope at which their driveway meets the new road level.

"Cliff's is harder to deal with," LaClaire admitted. He's afraid he's going to lose some parking. If we put a retaining wall up, that's a change on our part."

"That still needs to be addressed," said Banash. "Is it going to be fixed before winter?"

LaClaire was cautious. "They think so, yes. They're hoping to get the turtle box cul-

vert in."

Shirley Flagg and her daughter Joanne Rabideau came to the meeting after LaClaire had left. "We've got trucks parking in my fields and driveway," Flagg said. "I thought the gully was going to be leveled, but now it's way down. Why?"

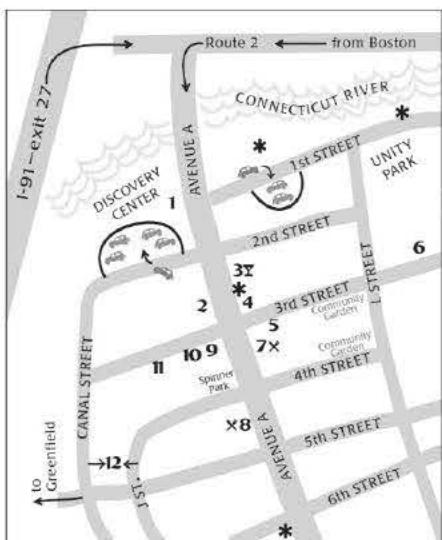
"The gully is going to be there a while," Banash told her.

Rabideau wondered how long it would be before a postal employee or news carrier drove off the road trying to reach a mailbox. And both women said, now that a temporary coat of blacktop had been laid down, people were speeding over the new stretch of road.

"The day they put the blacktop down, that night the police were there with radar," said board member Phil Maddern. He said the police would monitor the situation as needed.

In other news, Gill's tax rate has been set at \$13.54 per thousand. The figure is easy to remember: it matches the last four digits of Gill's zip code. Administrative assistant Deb Roussel said the tax rate had been moderated this year by the state's early 90% repayment for the high school building project.

ARTS & ICICLES TURNERS FALLS OPEN STUDIO & DOWNTOWN WALKING TOUR DECEMBER 2ND & 3RD 2006, 10AM-5PM



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| 3 JAY K'S LIQUORS | 9 GREAT LIGHTING |
| 4 HALLMARK MUSEUM OF CONTEMPORARY PHOTOGRAPHY | 10 THE BRICK HOUSE GALLERY |
| 5 SUZEE'S THIRD STREET LAUNDRY | 11 PETERMAN BASKETS AND BOWLS |
| 6 TIM DE CHRISTOPHER | 12 JACK NELSON, CARRIAGE HOUSE DESIGN |

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FOR GENERAL INFORMATION CALL EILEEN (413) 863-9499 OR KAREN (413) 863-9576

* TURNERS FALLS PUBLIC ART INSTALLATIONS
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Annual Appeal

The *Montague Reporter* is in its fifth year of publication. We have covered with diligence and honesty the news and events not only of the five Montague villages, but of Gill, Erving and Wendell: selectboards, school committees, finance committees, and town planning bodies. We've brought you profiles of interesting neighbors, related strange and wonderful events and reacquainted you with the history of the villages. We've opened and closed businesses with you, guided you through the maze of town politics and elections, sat by your side at the Shea Theater, helped you to garden, provided you with new recipes to try and new poems to enjoy. You are not only our readers, you are our friends and our neighbors. The *Montague Reporter* is not our newspaper, it is yours, a non-profit weekly that is your voice, which tells of your concerns and reflects your hopes for your community.

If you are now a subscriber, we know you will continue to support the fine work of our writers and editors. If you routinely have passed your copy along to friends or relatives, we hope you will urge them to subscribe themselves. And if you have purchased this paper as a single issue, we hope you will seriously consider buying a subscription; it is subscribers, not single issue buyers, who provide us the resources we need to research and produce the quality news writing you value.

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living away and would enjoy the news from home? Imagine how appreciated a holiday gift subscription to the *Montague Reporter* would be!

Please write out a check today while you are thinking of it, and within days you will again receive the news that is most relevant to you and your community. The regular subscription price is \$20 for 26 issues, or take advantage of the holiday rates for gift subscriptions, below.

It is only through your continuing support that we can continue to publish, to be your voice, the voice of the villages and the towns that we serve.

Most sincerely,

The Montague Reporter Board of Directors

Lyn Clark, Jonathan von Ranson, Patricia Crosby, Christopher Sawyer-Laucanno, Wesley Blixt, Ali Urban, David Brule, Veronica Phaneuf

American Dead in Iraq as of 11/29/06



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KAREN WILKINSON ILLUSTRATION

LETTERS TO THE EDITOR



Thank You for Supporting Seniors

Gill and Montague support the Senior Center in many ways, not only through tax money, but also by the seniors running an annual raffle and bazaar. From these fundraising efforts in the past few years, we have donated almost \$500 a year to Meals on Wheels, paid one-third of a new stove (\$700), paid half of two air conditioners

(\$400), paid \$300 for a lighted Bingo Board, and paid \$600 for a copy machine, which Gill and Montague people can use free of charge for a reasonable amount of copies.

We have provided funds to pay \$600 to have the Senior Center refrigerator repaired, paid about \$600 a year to buy coffee cups, placemats, Sweet

and Low and kitchen use necessities, paid \$100 for a kitchen floor safety rubber mat, and about \$200 for plumbing repairs.

We are proud of what we have done. Thank you for supporting seniors at the annual raffle and bazaar!

- Allan Adie Gill

Survival Center Thank You

Turkeys were flying out of the Franklin County Survival Center at 4th Street in Turners Falls on Nov. 17th, 20th and 21st, but they were of the frozen type. Two hundred and fifty-one families, which accounted for 725 family members, received a chicken or turkey with all the fixings this Thanksgiving. This

event was made possible through the donations of many individuals and groups.

The Survival Center continues to provide food for over 25 families and bread for over 100 individuals on a daily basis, and those numbers seem to be rising.

The Food Pantry side of the

center is open Monday through Friday, 10 a.m. to 1:30 p.m. and is staffed by volunteers.

Thanks to all who make this ongoing miracle of community support possible.

- Don Clegg Turners Falls

We welcome your letters.
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A Good Paper

I agree with the other people: it is a good paper. Keep it coming. I enjoy all the news you collect

and write about.
- Dorothy Black Erving

Wendell Holiday Fair

December 9th & 10th
Saturday: 10am-5pm • Sunday: 11am-4pm
Wendell Town Hall



Come holiday shop with local crafters, artists and business folks! Exceptional handmade, quality gifts including artwork, jewelry, hand blown glass and much, much more!

Musical entertainment:
Saturday 1-3 Kevin Skorpua • Sunday 1-3 Kellianna



This issue of the *Montague Reporter* is dedicated to the memory of Matthew Leighton, (11-28-06), of Greenfield, a true friend of all community endeavors. We are richer by your example, poorer by your passing. You always led the way.

GUEST EDITORIAL

Underdog Nirvana at the Turkey Day Game

BY DENIS BORDEAUX GREENFIELD - Wow! What a football game! From the bursts of offense in the first half to the smash-mouth defense in the second, this was a no holds barred hitting war. Every play produced hard cracks from plastic pads and every tackle sounded like it hurt. The two lines were totally spent by the fourth quarter, but were still pounding on each other.

Talk about pounding the football! Sean Boyle, (Greenfield) got 236 yards without playing the second quarter because he was spitting up blood. What an effort! With the misting rain, and soft muddy field, it was a classic the Mud, the Blood, and the Beer game.

As usual, the Powertown fans outnumbered the Greenburg fans and were twice as loud and spirited as usual. When the final gun sounded, nearly everyone stormed onto the field in absolute teary-eyed hysteria.

With my camera, I waded into the crowd to get a shot of my nephew Adam, and to con-

gratulate him for a great game. He passed for one touchdown, ran for another, and ended the day with one pick, a fumble recovered, numerous tackles and game MVP. The Turners team, sobbing en masse and alternately screaming defiant chants of victory in the midst of their rivals, was intoxicating to every Blue fan.

Why the fuss? Why the fuss!! First of all, you have to have the right situation. Rarely in life are we faced with a true David and Goliath test. Turners football players have that opportunity four times (grades 9 - 12). The chance to defeat Goliath. Some teams do, some don't. David vs. Goliath. A test so stacked against one side that only the slimmest chance for success exists. It's the Hickory High basketball team, it's *Rudy*, it's the '80 USA hockey team, and it's the '42 state championship base-



PHOTO: MIRANDA BASTARACHE
Denis Bordeaux and his nephew, MVP Adam Bastarache rejoice after Turners' Thanksgiving Day victory over Greenfield.

ball team from TFHS, back when there was only one division. It's all sixteen Turners teams that caught lightning in a bottle before last Thursday. It's underdog Nirvana.

And if it's a wonderful thing for the fans, for the players it's other-worldly. People through the years have suggested dropping the Greenfield - Turners Falls series because it's too one-sided. Utter heresy!

Over the years, I have devel-

oped a sympathy for Green Wave teams, for they are truly in a lose/lose situation. As Goliath, when they win, it's no big deal; they're supposed to win. Bigger town, bigger school, bigger teams. A Greenfield

'em right between the eyes, and Goliath falls, you come home as conquering heroes for the rest of your lives.

In Turners, nobody remembers the many Goliath triumphs, but only the sixteen David wins. For TFHS seniors, to win this one game not only makes their season, but makes their entire high school football career a success. For every Blue fan (and this is seriously true) the whole Thanksgiving feast tastes like manna from heaven. Christmas is jollier, and a few more toasts are drunk on New Years in honor of our giant killers. All spring chores, rather than being tedious, offer quiet times to drift back to Turkey Day memories. Drinking iced tea in August while watching pre-season football will make us smile in anticipation of another chance to climb Everest.

We were a club of sixteen teams (65 and 66 for my team). We hadn't had a new member in ten years. So congratulations Number Seventeen, and welcome to The Air Up There (06).

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MAIN ROAD

continued from pg 1

and Shirley and Skeezy Flagg's residence. In this area, the road surface has been lowered considerably in an attempt to level the dip in the road over an existing culvert that crosses beneath the roadbed.

The replacement culvert has been redesigned, after extensive deliberation, to allow for easier passage of wood turtles, a "species of concern" in Massachusetts. In past years, turtles have tried crossing the road, with predictable results, rather than go through the old culvert, which was not to their liking. Some new culvert designs have steps or a 'sidewalk' to accommodate turtles crossing, in the event the current of the stream is too strong for them to navigate, according to ecologist Ted Castro-Santos of Gill. He was not sure if this design was incorporated in the redesign of the Main Road culvert.

In the vicinity of the present culvert, Main Road dips, then rises as it goes past Upinngil and the Flagg residence. Common sense would dictate raising the road in the vicinity of the dip over the culvert. Rather than fill the dip, engineers have decided to cut down the road beyond the dip, hence the appearance of a sudden new chasm facing those properties.

There is the possibility that filling the dip would have required more study, permits and delays than cutting down the road, because the dip is over a stream wood turtles are known to frequent. From the residents' point of view, the present road elevation has been satisfactory to Gill residents for the past hundred years, or more, and they would have been happy to have it continue at the same elevation for the next hundred.

Castro-Santos, a member of the Gill conservation commission, works for the Silvio Conte Anadromous Fish Research Center in Turners Falls. He recently attended a species barrier assessment workshop in

Asheville, N.C., where he studied culvert design as it affects southeast fish and aquatic species, including turtles and mussels (fresh water clams). He furnished me with more information than I can process in a lifetime. Below are some interesting tidbits:

Fame if not Fortune

The wood turtles in Gill, that have gained fame if not fortune, are about 5½" to 8" in size. They live for 45 - 55 years, if not crushed by traffic. They reach sexual maturity in 14 - 18 years. Seven hatchlings in a clutch, in Massachusetts, is average. Survival rate to adulthood is 95%. They are likely to be more associated with rivers and streams than lakes and ponds. While the wood turtle's habitat is, generally, the woods, the name 'wood' comes from the appearance of the turtle's shell rather than the turtle's habitat.

Distance Roamed

Most wood turtles stay within a 1000-foot wide corridor on either side of their home stream. While a wood turtle seems to move as slow as - well - a turtle, the maximum recorded distance traveled for a male and a female wood turtle is 3200 feet for the male, and 1430 for the female. It is not clear who was chasing whom, or if there was any pursuit involved. Slow and steady apparently is the secret.

Collection or Sale Illegal

The collection and sale of wood turtles is illegal in a number of states. Even casual collection by individuals can have

a devastating effect on turtle populations. Though they are not endangered, their numbers are diminishing.

Road Kill

Road kills occur most frequently when female wood turtles travel in search of a nesting site. They are killed not only on highways but also on logging roads, by tree harvesting equipment, by construction near streams and by recreational vehicles. The cumulative effect in the increased mortality can cause a decline in turtle population.

Clam Population Falling

While we're on the subject of creatures with shells, who gives a damn if all the fresh water clams disappear? Probably few but Native Americans ever ate them. But clams are important in keeping our rivers and streams clean. They process pollutants through their bodies, thereby cleaning streambeds.

The Connecticut River, which spans New England from north to south, has a river bottom carpeted with fresh water clams. They are essential in cleaning pollutants from the river and stream bottoms, according to Castro-Santos.

Culvert Design

Culverts are a good way for turtles to avoid getting killed crossing a road. Culvert design is not as simple as it may seem.



ILLUSTRATION BY JESSICA HARMON

Too narrow a culvert may create too strong a current; too wide a culvert may mean water too shallow for fish and other creatures to cross. There are round and oval corrugated metal, Quonset-type open bottom metal corrugated culverts, concrete box culverts, arched open bottom culverts and other variations in metal, concrete and plastic.

Open bottom culverts, presenting a stream flow that most resembles the stream it is bridging, seem to work best. It is desirable to use gravel with stones that most closely resemble the streambed on the bottom of open bottom or embedded culverts to facilitate aquatic wildlife passage. Some culvert designs have a channel in the middle but provide a step on the culvert edges as a sidewalk for turtles to make their way through. The design of these culverts costs four times as much as corrugated round culverts, but they last much longer, making them effective when considering the cost of replacing failed culverts and the tangible benefit of protecting aquatic or amphibious wildlife.

Clam Travel

Getting back to those clams, migration is important not only for fish but for clams too. Clam larvae travel upstream by attaching themselves to fish gills, to hitchhike a ride to their destination. If fish cannot get

through a culvert because the water is too shallow, the clams don't get to travel either, and the clam population in that upstream area falls.

Culverts Require Approval

All culverts in Massachusetts need approval for installation. The standard Massachusetts Department of Environmental Protection formula for culverts is 1.2 x bank width + 2 feet more, Castro-Santos said.

Predators

Loss of wood turtles to raccoons and skunks has taken a toll, with the growth in population of these predators. They usually target turtle eggs or hatchlings. Turtle species whose habitat is ponds or lakes are safer from these predators than the largely terrestrial wood turtle.

Interconnection of Species

When confronted with the problem of protecting wildlife, a common reaction is, "So what?" The 'what' in this case is the fact we are affected by all life on this planet in one way or another, directly or indirectly, and it may be a good idea to learn a bit more about a species before dismissing it with scorn.

On the other hand, before prohibiting digging in the garden for fear of killing worms, we do need to keep in mind that the transcontinental railroads and our interstate highway system would probably never have been built if existing environmental regulations were in effect.

Repaving existing roads has increased in recent years because it often costs more to engineer a planned project - or even to do an impact study - than to simply repeatedly repave a crumbling road needing major remediation.

It is a pity we do not require the same environmental (and human) impact studies before launching a war as we do to protect turtles and clams before installing a culvert.



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Art and Icicles will Please the Eclectic Palate

BY CHRISTOPHER SAWYER - LAUCANNO

TURNERS FALLS - If you're thinking of heading to the mall this weekend to pick up some gifts for those on your Christmas list, think again. The place to shop for unique items this weekend is not in Hadley or Holyoke but right in Turners Falls. But if shopping isn't your priority, there's a lot more to dazzle the curious at this year's Arts and Icicles walking tour.

The participating artists this round are painter, sculptor and ceramicist Jack Nelson, stone sculptor Tim de Christopher, and woodworkers Mike Langknecht and Spencer Peterman. The Brick House Community Resource Center's consignment gift shop will have on display an affordable art extravaganza. On Saturday evening, Suzee's Third Street Laundromat will feature their annual fashion show of left-behind articles creatively reinvented by local designers. Post-fashion show, local bands will perform. Diagonally across from Suzee's, the Hallmark Museum of Contemporary Photography is showcasing its ongoing exhibition of Jean Paul Caponigro's "Reflections." Books & More and the Great Lighting Showroom will be welcoming those on the tour. Musicians will also be wandering the Avenue serenading art goers. In addition to the art and events, three local restaurants - Ristorante DiPaolo, Cup O' Joe, and Turners Falls Pizza House will provide an assortment of foods to nourish hungry art-goers.

Those who choose to visit Turners this weekend will not be disappointed. Nelson and de Christopher are nationally - even internationally recognized - artists. Langknecht and



The work of Spencer Peterman

Peterman are highly regarded as master woodworkers with clients worldwide.

Among the delights awaiting the public are Nelson's exquisite ceramics that range from whimsical sculptures to functional dinnerware. A number of his finely executed color-field paintings, as well as other art pieces will also be on display in his magnificent Carriage House Designs Studio, that is in itself a work of art. Designed and largely constructed by Nelson, the studio ranges over several floors, with each space dedicated to a different art form. Given Nelson's eclecticism, and his mastery over just about every conceivable art form, it's clear he needs several spaces in which to do his work.

Tim de Christopher, who began his career as an apprentice stone carver at New York's famous Cathedral of Saint John the Divine, and is now well established as one of the nation's foremost workers in stone, will also have a sampling of his work on display. De Christopher's masterful limestone carvings, that range from table-sized to the monumental, will be on view in his studio space in the former Chick's Garage on Third Street. These impressive sculptures, often resonant of history and mythology, are not to be missed.

Spencer Peterman, an internationally-recognized worker in wood, whose wholesale clients include Calvin Klein, will have on hand a number of his hand-

made burl bowls (in maple, cherry and black walnut) as well as a selection of his one-of-a-kind spaulted cutting boards. Peterman uses mostly local wood, some of it even from recycled or salvaged sources, to create his extraordinary objects that are both beautiful and highly functional.

Although Langknecht is best known for his hand-crafted mirrors and picture frames, since he began working with Peterman a few years ago he has begun to specialize in functional objects.

Next door to the Peterman/Langknecht workshop is the Brick House Community Resource Center's consignment gift shop which features art and objects by local artists that could please anyone on anyone's Christmas list. And you won't break the bank, either, as all the items are reasonably priced.

Also, not to be missed are the recently installed public sculptures that now grace the downtown. For those who missed the installation party a few weeks ago, here is the list: Powertown by James Rourke, at the end of 1st Street by the bike path parking area; Rock, Paper, Knife by Gary Orlinsky on 1st Street by the bike path and fish viewing facility; Doosel by Stephen Cahill in front of Hallmark Museum of Contemporary Photography; and Atlantic Salmon Mosaic by Cynthia Fisher in the newly redesigned and reinvigorated Peskeomskut Park at Avenue A and 6th Street.

So save on gas money, stretch your legs, support local art, and take in what Turners Falls artists have to offer you this weekend. It will be a lot less hectic and a lot more enjoyable than going to the mall.

HIGHLIGHTS OF THE WENDELL POLICE LOG Depot Road Disturbance

Monday 10-30

Motorist hit and killed a small deer on Depot Road.

Wednesday 11-1

Mountain Laurel Road resident reported neighbor had been threatening his father earlier in the day.

Saturday 11-18

Car fire on Plain Road. Fire Department responded and extinguished.

Saturday 11-25

Transfer Station attendants reported door kicked in and a quantity of copper wire taken.

Sunday 11-26

Disturbance at residence on Wendell Depot Road. Two juveniles removed and transported to grandmother's residence.

GREAT FALLS MIDDLE SCHOOL HONOR ROLL

1st Quarter - Grade 7
First Honors

Casey Banning
Jolina-Rose Blier
Zacharie Boisvert
Jenna Costa
Taylor Croteau
Haley Fiske
Megan Foster
Matthew Fowler
Christopher Gordon
Colton Hallett
Mark Hudyma
Lily Kane

Nathaniel James
Jessica Keene
Kyla Kelly
Serena Korpita
Patrick Moretti
Iancu Placinta
Kayleigh Turn

Third Honors

Anamaria Gonzalez
Breanna Miiller
Aria Roberts
Kiara Sampson
Ilya Shumilov

Joseph Lafleur
Yirka Mercado
Elysia Ollari
Katarina Palso
Daniel Skarzynski
Andrew Turban
Taylor Varilly
Natasha Vaughn
Kelsey Waldron

Second Honors

Nichole Baxter
Jordan Charboneau
Julianne Fisk
David Garcia
Chloe Gore
Kelsey O'Brien
Ryan Pelis
Emily Robertson
Danielle Whiteman

1st Quarter - Grade 8
First Honors

Rachel Ariel
Anna Bochamikova
Zhanna Bochamikova
McKenna Brunell
Erin Casey
Sarah Crowell
Nina Dodge
Makayla Dolhenty
Kristy Dunbar
Uriah Forest-Bulley

Sarah Foster
Nicole Fuller
Brooke Hastings
Vance Herzig
Julie
Howard-Thompson
Taylor Howe
Jack Hubert
Katherine Kuklewicz

Third Honors

Jordan Bryant
Katherine Burgin
Julie Clapp
Tyler Howe
Aubryanna Hyson
Illayna Perkins
Christopher Phillips
Andrew Podlesny
Ina Popovici
Kayla Weller
Cody Wells
Brittany Yolish

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LIBRARY

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ing the state grants for purchase of materials that followed. They joined the C/WMARS regional library materials sharing system, so patrons could get books, audiotapes and DVDs from any library in the area, and order materials from home. They added computers and high speed internet. They wrote and received grants and ran free programs ranging from beekeeping to chess club to a traveling zoo, which brought creatures great and small to a packed library filled with parents and awestruck children. They set up a summer reading program with over 100 participants. They are working to fully automate circulation at the library by February of 2007.

For this, the trustees have received a stipend of \$12,500 a year, to be shared as they see fit.

"It's a conflict of interest," said Bernard, who with five years in the post has served the longest of the current trustees. "The trustees' job is to administer, and oversee the library. The library directors' job is the hands-on operating of the library, writing reports to get state grants, dealing with patrons' needs and ordering books. We are overseeing ourselves."

The Erving Library is now open 18 hours a week. The trustees say they work many more hours than that, ordering materials, cataloguing books, delivering materials to housebound patrons. They estimate 27 hours of paid library work is required to keep the library running at its current pace, and they would like to offer themselves as the most experienced, most dedicated candidates for the job.

But in a meeting with the selectboard, who traveled to the library on Monday night (11/27) to hold a first of its kind meeting in Erving, selectboard chair Andy Tessier threw cold water on that plan.

"This is a repeat of a conversation we had five years ago. If you decide you don't want to be librarians anymore, hire a librarian," Tessier said.

"We don't want to be trustees anymore," replied Bernard. "We want to be librarians."

Trouble is, Tessier said, elected officials of a town can't hire themselves to work for the town: that would be a clear conflict of interest, and state law prohibits it. "I can't resign from the board of selectmen and hire myself for this cushy job," said Tessier, speaking rhetorically.

But the word 'cushy' struck Overgaard as uncaring. "That hurts," she told Tessier.

Overgaard said she had passed up paying jobs in her professional work as a sign language interpreter to take a 50-hour course in library science, to receive certification to be a library director in a town with less than 10,000 population. Bernard has already completed that course and received her certification.

"We've worked hard for the patrons of Erving, for the taxpayers of Erving, so this could be the best library it could be. And we have done that," Overgaard said. "We've made such changes and come so far..."

Standing on the front steps of the library after the meeting, Bernard and Overgaard recalled the condition of the town libraries in years past.

"For 34 years, a very sweet lady named Jacquie Felton ran the (Erving) library," said Bernard. In those days, the collection was not culled regularly, so books were stacked one in front of the other on the lower shelves, and difficult to find. New materials were purchased at Wilson's Department Store, or at discount book sales.

When Felton retired, Tina LaPenta ran for the library trustee opening, and took over her duties at the Erving library. The white building, shaped like a schoolhouse, was built as a library in 1961, with a small historical museum in a side room. The museum, organized by Felton, incorporates a vast collection of knickknacks and artifacts of domestic living, including a varied assortment of buttonhooks. The library is centrally located on Route 63 across from Veterans Park and

just down the way from the Senior Center.

It was LaPenta, Overgaard said, who really got the ball rolling for modernizing the library. For one thing, she cleaned out a ten by six foot storage closet and made it into a brightly decorated children's room, with Dr. Seuss murals on the wall.

One six-year-old patron, Danielle Lively, said this week she loved visiting the library and checking out materials from the children's room. "I think it's a nice place. There's cool books and nice movies," she said.

In 2002, Bernard ran for the seat on the library trustees held by Kathy Hammock, and beat her two to one. The next year, Overgaard ran against Daniel Hammock, a former selectboard member who also served on the library trustees, and won that race handily. The Hammocks were the trustees responsible for running the Erving Center branch library.

Although formal circulation records weren't kept until Bernard and Overgaard assumed the posts (Bazler joined them as the third elected trustee in 2004), Bernard said when she began working at the Erving Center branch, "No one was using that library. No one was purchasing new materials; the collection was ancient." The closely spaced shelves were stuffed with books that never circulated; overstock materials were piled on the concrete floors.

By town meeting vote, Erving decided to close the Erving Center branch library in 2003.

Focusing their efforts on the Erving branch Bernard and Overgaard, with Bazler's help, added programs, brought in videos, CDs, books on tape, computers, and new titles in adult fiction, non-fiction and children's books. The summer reading program saw 165 children and adults participate this year; total library patrons have risen to 658.

"That's 600 more than we had five years ago," Bernard

see LIBRARY pg 9

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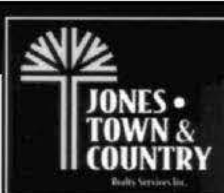
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LIBRARY
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told the selectboard.

"You chose to do the automation," said Tessier. "You chose to close the library in Erving Center and expand the operations down here. You're already elected as the trustees. If you want to hire a librarian, that money goes back into the line item."

Tessier was referring to the \$12,500 the trustees are splitting as a three-way stipend now. At 27 hours a week, the board calculated that would come to about 80 cents an hour for a library director.

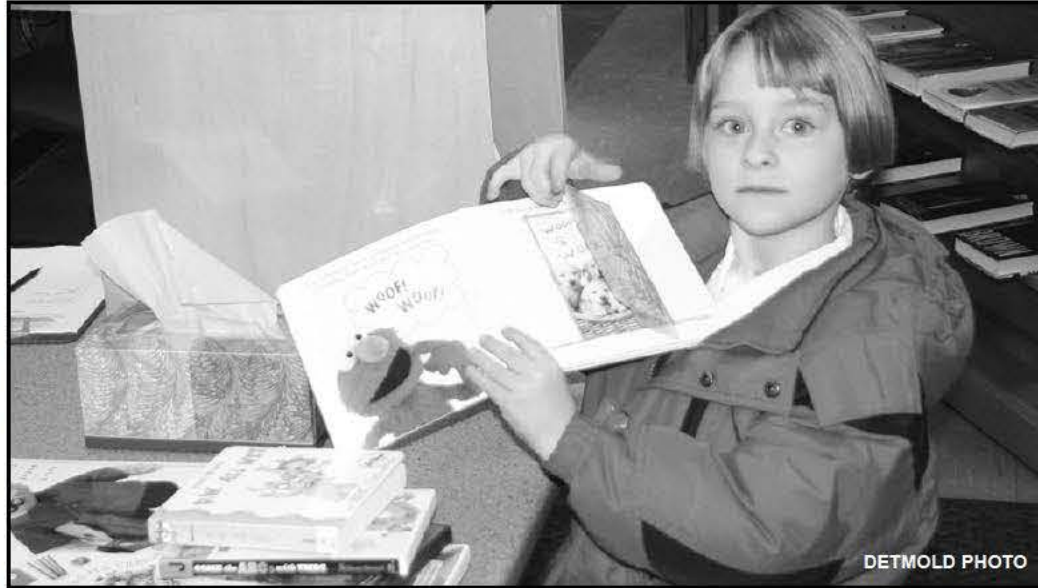
"It seems like a Catch-22 situation," said Tessier. "You can't hire yourselves. If you choose to quit (as trustees), you've just locked the door." Tessier said a retired town official would have to wait six months before being hired by the same municipality in order to comply with state law.

Bernard said, "We don't have the answers for how these

changes should be made. We just know the changes need to be made."

David Gray, of the Massachusetts Board of Library Commissioners, said trustees often pitch in to run a library when a director leaves or retires, but that is generally a temporary situation. In order to meet accreditation standards, library directors need to take steps to meet state education standards, which the trustees in Erving have done. So the Erving library is in compliance with MBLC standards, Gray said. "It is up to the town of Erving to make this decision on its merits," he said, referring to the choice to hire a library director.

Normally, Gray said, library



Danielle Lively, 6, likes the Erving Library, "I think it's a nice place. There's cool books and nice movies."

directors report to their board. "They need some supervision." Whether or not the board is paid or volunteer, private or public, elected or appointed, is up to the locality.

Bernard said if the town continued to rely on trustees to run the library, the quality of service would fluctuate as trustees finished their terms,

and their involvement waxed and waned. She also offered to supply names of as many as six library current patrons who would be interested in serving on an expanded board of library trustees, if the town made a move to paid professional librarians.

Tessier ended the meeting on a positive note. "You have

done a very good job," he told the trustees. "This is a difficult thing to change. Anytime you want to change a thing like this it has to go to town meeting."

The selectboard agreed to seek clarification from counsel as to whether and by what means members of the present trustees could make a transition to be hired by the town as library staff.

For the MBLC, Gray said, "We don't really tell a city or town how to run their library. We can advise them this is an unusual situation, and not an ideal situation, but they may not have the resources or the people who are competent enough to run it."

In Erving, at least, that does not appear to be a problem.



HIGHLIGHTS FROM THE MONTAGUE POLICE LOG

Domestic Assault and Battery

Wednesday 11-22

2:11 a.m. After a motor vehicle stop on 2nd Street [redacted] was arrested and charged with operating with a suspended license and speeding in violation of a special regulation.

Friday 11-24

1:30 p.m. Report of an assault at a 4th Street address. A 15 year old juvenile male was arrested and charged with domestic assault and battery and assault and battery with a dangerous weapon.

4:55 p.m. Report of general disturbance at a 4th Street address.

[redacted] was arrested and charged with domestic assault and battery, assault and battery with a dangerous weapon, and threatening to commit a crime.

Sunday 11-26

12:26 a.m. After a motor vehicle stop at the corner of 7th Street and Avenue A, [redacted] was arrested on a default warrant and also charged with being in possession of an open container of alcohol in a motor vehicle, failure to stop for a police officer, operating with a suspended license (subsequent offense), and possession of a class D drug.

1:16 a.m. After a motor vehicle stop at the corner of 5th and K Streets, [redacted] was arrested on a straight warrant.

5:02 p.m. While investigating a 911 hang up call at a West Chestnut Hill address, [redacted] was arrested on a

default warrant and also charged with domestic assault and battery, assault and battery, and intimidation of a witness.

9:17 p.m. Report of a domestic disturbance at a Davis Road address. [redacted]

was arrested and charged with 2 counts of assault and battery with a dangerous weapon, intimidation of a witness, assault and battery, and threatening to commit a crime.

Tuesday 11-28

7:31 p.m. Report of vandalism at an Avenue A address. A 15 year old juvenile was arrested and charged with being a minor in possession of a BB gun or air rifle, disorderly conduct, and wanton destruction of property under \$250.

HIGHLIGHTS OF THE ERVING POLICE LOG

Motel Money Missing

Tuesday 11-21

10:45 a.m. Employee at Erving Paper Mill fell and split his head open. Officer assisted Orange Ambulance. Subject transported to Franklin Medical Center.

Wednesday 11-22

8:45 p.m. Assisted Greenfield Police with warrant arrested of [redacted] on East Prospect Street.

4:35 p.m. Loose dog complaint on Gunn Street. Owner advised of leash law.

Thursday 11-23

12:00 p.m. Caller from French King Motel reported \$240 stolen from a motel room. Under investigation.

Saturday 11-25

9:00 p.m. Report of traffic lights on Lester Street not working properly. Officer observed lights for several minutes. Seemed to be working properly.

Tuesday 11-28

12:35 p.m. Arrested [redacted] on a warrant and transported her to court

HIGHLIGHTS OF THE GILL POLICE LOG

Racing Vehicles Spotted Near South Cross Road

Wednesday 11-22

2:50 p.m. Assisted disabled motor vehicle with a tow on French King Highway at the French King Bridge.

Saturday 11-25

12:55 a.m. Report taken for threatening phone calls received from a French King Highway residence.

12:01 p.m. Assisted Fire Department with gasoline spill at Mobil station on French King Highway.

6:33 p.m. Assisted French King Highway resident with emergency restraining order.

Sunday 11-26

10:45 a.m. Court process served at Mountain Road address.

3:10 p.m. Assisted Montague Police on French King Highway in town with motor vehicle stop.

9:47 p.m. Criminal complaint issued to [redacted] summoned for possession of marijuana, resulting from a motor vehicle stop on French King Highway.

Monday 11-27

5:05 p.m. Report of racing

vehicles in the area of South Cross Road, checked area, unable to locate.

9:05 p.m. Report of possible illegal gambling at Main Road business.

Tuesday 11-28

7:20 a.m. Assisted Greenfield Police with past hit and run accident, involving town resident.

4:20 p.m. Report of disabled motor vehicle on Main Road, as actually in Northfield, owner has tow enroute.

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JOE GRAVELINE

SCHOOLS

continued from pg 1

to a K-5 or K-6 school.

[School superintendent Sue Gee has proposed moving sixth graders to the underutilized Great Falls Middle School. Langknecht's proposal provided leeway for this change to Montague's grade configuration.]

According to the regional agreement between the towns of Gill and Montague, eight affirmative votes are required to close a district school. Langknecht's proposal avoided the necessity of reaching a 'supermajority' of the nine-member committee by leaving the Hillcrest School 'open' for the education of pre-K students.

"I'm not a big believer in consolidation. As I look across the river at a consolidated elementary school structure, it is actually something of a threat. If you close Montague Center, why does Gill get their own school?"

- Ted Castro-Santos

The school district's attorney, Fred DuPre, present at the meeting, said a simple majority of the quorum would be required to pass Langknecht's proposal. With all nine school committee members present and voting, five yes votes would have been needed for the proposal to pass, but when the roll call came only Richard Colton joined Langknecht and Castro-Santos in the affirmative.

Next, Valeria Smith proposed closing Montague Center School and leaving the Turners Falls campus intact, with a pre-K through grade 2 school at Hillcrest and a grade 3 through 6 school at Sheffield. Under this proposal, the 86 students at Montague Center would be absorbed into the two Turners Falls schools. School committee chair Mary Kociela joined Colton, Langknecht, and Castro-Santos in voting against this motion, which fell short of the required eight affirmative votes.

Finally, Terry Lapichinski

proposed a pre-K through K school at Hillcrest, and a grade 1 through 5 school at Sheffield, with Montague 6th graders moving to the middle school, and Montague Center closed. This proposal gained Kociela's support, and found Castro-Santos abstaining. With Colton and Langknecht voting no, the proposal failed to gain 8 affirmative votes.

MORE DATA SOUGHT

The school committee asked Gee for more financial data on the impact of the first and third proposals, since they represented variations on scenarios previously considered, which had showed a range of savings from \$89,000 for closing half of Hillcrest

School to \$255,000 for closing both Hillcrest and Montague Center. Closing Montague Center alone would save the district between \$139,000 and \$159,000, depending on how the Turners campus is configured.

With Glen Couture from the Massachusetts Association of School Committees facilitating, the discussion began with Langknecht stating, "To be sustainable, we need to grow the district, rather than shrink the district. This is not a school closing process but an elementary

configuration process. The mandate of the elementary school configuration committee was to establish the optimal configuration for the district independent of budgeting issues, then to fit that configuration into our fiscal reality."

He continued, "We need to increase the graduation rate, increase student achievement, raise scores on standardized tests, engage a broad range of student needs, and continue to expand community involvement, while meeting federal and state criteria."

Castro-Santos said, "I've sat through meetings on this question for two and a half years, and it's struck me this whole question of school closure is multi-faceted. People like to spin it one way or spin it another. Is it about money? Sure, it's about money. It's about one percent of our budget. But the vision (of educational goals for the district) is relevant. I'm hoping it will be front and center in our discussion."

He said he felt the move to

"There is a serious financial problem, not only in the schools but in the town and in every family's pocket that lives in the confines of the GMRSD."

-Valeria Smith

consolidate elementary schools in Montague in order to alleviate some "inequity" in the district "raises alarm bells. I'm not a big believer in consolidation. Whether I am a representative of Gill or a resident of Gill, even though people in Montague get to vote for me, in fact I do look out for my town, though I hope to make decisions for the good of the entire district. As I look across the river at a consolidated elementary school structure, it is actually something of a threat. If you close Montague Center, why does Gill get their own school?"

Castro-Santos asked if the committee was engaged in advancing "a vision of optimal elementary education," or "is it a social engineering question we're trying to deal with here? We have far-flung communities in our district. To create unity in Montague might actually create problems down the road for Gill."

Kociela responded to Langknecht's earlier remarks about the elementary school committee's mandate. "I do not remember saying that our decision would be independent of our fiscal situation. I need to say, there's a point where the fiscal situation *is* reality."

READY TO CLOSE A SCHOOL?

Couture ran through figures for the schools' looming budget crunch. Gee said the district had run up against a \$250,000 shortfall in this year's transportation, school choice, and special education budgets. The district is trying to overcome this year's deficit while grappling with next year's budget. The superintendent projected the schools' operating budget would grow by at least \$800,000 in '08, assuming no changes in staff or program.

Couture asked if the committee had consensus on the need to close a school.

After a silence, Kociela said, "We did come to a consensus we wanted a larger grade span: K-5, or K-6. Given that, do we have consensus on closing a school?"

Kris Boyle said, "There is a need to close a school. There is need for consolidation. The population of children under 18

is declining gradually (nationwide) and doesn't appear to be growing in this area." She asked, "Are all the schools in Montague filled to capacity? Or could we equalize classroom space, to be fair to our students and fair to our teachers, and cut down on expenses for the district?"

Couture phrased the question another way. "Is anyone opposed to the option of closing a school?" No one said yes.

Then he said, "OK. Let's have it. Is anyone opposed to closing a certain school?"

Smith said, "We need to look toward the needs of all of the district's children. There is a serious financial problem, not only in the schools but in the town and in every family's pocket that lives in the confines of the GMRSD. It's necessary that we bite the bullet and make a hard decision to let the townspeople know that we are willing to close a school, if we ever hope to get them to embrace us and trust us and go forward with an override. As chair of the budget subcommittee, I can't see closing a school is going to get us the money we need to close the gap. But we are willing to

"There is a need to close a school. There is need for consolidation. The population of children under 18 is declining gradually and doesn't appear to be growing in this area."

-Kris Boyle

make a hard decision."

Smith said she would not be willing to close Hillcrest School, saying the classrooms there are large and the building is handicapped accessible.

Boyle and Deb Bourbeau both stated they were in

agreement with Smith: opposed to closing Hillcrest. Lapichinski, suffering a bad case of laryngitis, appeared to take the same position.

Colton said, "I'd have to look at any school closing as only accounting for a small percentage of a budget shortfall. We're still looking at a \$800,000 shortfall." He claimed the only area of town where population was growing was in Montague Center, where space for new housing existed. "You would want to have an education center where there are new housing starts," said Colton, "in Montague Center, where the school has consistently had the highest educational performance, measured at the third grade level. With the least savings for the district, that's the school I would back off from closing."

Boyle and Castro-Santos got into a brief argument about whether the GMRSD owned enough land for the Montague Center School to expand on its current lot, with Boyle saying there was plenty of room for school expansion on the Turners campus, and Castro-Santos saying there was adequate room at Montague Center as well.

"Based on the (public) forums, I am leaning pretty heavily against closing Montague Center School at this point," said Castro-Santos.

Kociela said, "This is very hard. I absolutely feel we need to close a school. I think we should move 6th graders to the middle school. I think we should have intra-district choice. We could make it a positive change."

[Dupre affirmed it would require not merely a vote of a majority of the school committee, but a simple majority of town meetings in both Gill and Montague to change the district agreement to

allow intra-district choice, or to permit Gill 6th graders to attend the middle school. The present agreement calls for K-6 students to be educated in buildings within the borders of their towns.]

see SCHOOLS pg 11

SCHOOLS

continued from pg 10

Kociela continued, "For people who think we should not close Montague Center, I want to know how you plan to balance the budget. In my five years on the school committee, we've had two failed overrides. We've made painful cuts. It's either Hillcrest or Montague Center. I go back and forth. If I had to pick right now, I would probably choose (to close) Montague Center. I'm very sorry to say that." She repeated the last remark.

Grade Span

Sensing an impasse, Couture shifted the topic to the committee's preferred grade span model, hoping this would be a more productive avenue of discussion.

Mike Langknecht led off by saying all available data, including two-thirds of the 167 respondents to a random sample of district residents, support an unbroken grade span for elementary students, rather than the present arrangement (one school K-6 in Gill, a K-3 in Montague Center, a pre-K through 2 at Hillcrest, and a 3-6 at Sheffield). Langknecht said

"I would be happy to operate Sheffield and Hillcrest as contiguous K-5 or K-6 schools."

- Mike Langknecht

the absence of transitions between schools at the elementary level has been studied and shown to enhance student academic achievement. He said he would support a K-5 or K-6 school at Montague Center. He envisioned creating an early childhood education center at Hillcrest, and sharing that building with the town for use as a Senior Center.

He also said, "I would be happy to operate Sheffield and Hillcrest as contiguous K-5 or K-6 schools."

Castro-Santos said the idea of making Hillcrest an early childhood learning center would play to the physical strengths of the building itself.

Kociela said, "I'm not convinced you can't keep kindergarten in Hillcrest. If it's so set up for early childhood."

But Langknecht held to his position in favor of unin-

terrupted grade span schools, saying kindergarten is generally viewed as the introduction to a child's elementary school education.

Feeling stumped by the apparent lack of consensus, Kociela turned to Couture for guidance.

Reminding them of fiscal reality, Couture told the committee, "Make no mistake, the machete will fall, within the next two months," as the budget process for '08 begins in earnest and the school committee will likely face the task of cutting staff or programs, if no new revenues or savings are found.

"We can cut operational costs by closing a school," said Langknecht. "But closing schools may lose enrollment as well. We need to increase sales as opposed to cutting costs."

"This budget gap will require both," Kociela responded. "I want to grow the district, but it isn't going to happen in time for next year's budget."

INCREASING REVENUE

Since Gee and Kociela had both said further cuts to staff or program would be difficult to contemplate, after years of cutbacks, Couture took time out to look over possible sources of additional revenue for the district. Making projections at this early stage of town and state budget preparation is guesswork, Couture admitted, but he said an optimistic look at what could be

in the state aid pipeline for the GMRSD next year might include - at best - a \$75,000 hike in regional transportation funding and a \$140,000 inflation increase in Chapter 70.

Gee noted an increase in the number of students 'choicing in' to the GMRSD, from 65 over the last few years to 83 this year. But she said the final figures were not in for how many students had 'choiced out' of the district this year. Approximately \$5,000 follows a student choicing in or out of the district.

Couture estimated it would take 120 more students 'choicing in' to the district to make up the rest of the projected budget gap. He also estimated Pluto would become a planet again before that happened.

The only other new revenue source committee

"For people who think we should not close Montague Center, I want to know how you plan to balance the budget."

- Mary Kociela, chair, GMRSD school committee

members could cite as a possibility was an override of Proposition 2½.

"I see that as what this is about," said Castro-Santos. "(Closing a school) is the 1%, but it is a sacrifice. (So we can say:) 'Look, we've made the hard decision. Now, we need an override.'"

He reiterated his support for Montague Center, as a school with a track record of academic achievement and "an awful lot of community support."

Smith responded, "I could not support taking Hillcrest down to pre-K. We are assuming someone else is going to go in there, to take care of the numbers."

[Later, Gee said the projected savings of closing half of Hillcrest School, approximately \$90,000, could not be realized without another agency subleasing part of the building and sharing utility costs. Castro-Santos countered by saying the chief savings would be realized from cutting staff positions if the school were partially closed, not from utility costs.]

Boyle said, even if Hillcrest were partially closed, "I would still think we need to close Montague Center."

Langknecht argued new school choice revenues were a possibility, and the district could make gains by recovering students who live in the district but - for whatever reason - are not attending district schools. "Substantive changes in our program make a big difference in our enrollment. Greenfield Center School and Bement are carrying on a mass marketing campaign for our students. However you feel about it, we're in a market. We have data that suggests the residents of our town do not like split grade span schools."

LOSS OF STUDENTS

Langknecht detailed the loss of 250 students who live in Gill or Montague but presently are not enrolled in district schools. Of these, he said, 167 'choice out' to other area public schools, 21

are home schooled, 30 attend the Greenfield Center School, some attend Franklin County Tech and some drop out.

Bourbeau proposed two side by side broad grade span schools at the Turners campus, one specializing in the arts, the other in math

If half of Hillcrest School were to be closed:
"We have talked with the director of the Gill-Montague Senior Center about the possibility of moving there and she was enthusiastic about it. Nothing has been planned. Nothing has been decided. If you throw us that reality, we will find out what to do about it."

- Patricia Pruitt, chair, Montague selectboard

and science, to act as magnets for students.

At this point, Kociela said, "I'm stumped as to where to go. We know we don't have what we need for votes. I don't know how to bring this to a closure."

Castro-Santos reminded the committee that a supermajority of eight would not be needed to keep Hillcrest open as an early childhood education center, but worried whether this shortcut to the school closing process would be damaging to the integrity of the committee. He asked to hear from one member - Sue Henry, the newest representative, from Gill - who had not spoken yet.

"I flip flop," said Henry, comparing her stance to Kociela's. Henry said she was leaning toward closing Montague Center School.

Patricia Pruitt came to the

podium. Speaking as chair of the selectboard, she told the committee that if they adopted the option of closing part of Hillcrest School, "the part closed would become our responsibility. We have talked with the director of the Gill-Montague Senior Center about the possibility of moving there and she was enthusiastic about it. Nothing has been planned. Nothing has been decided. If you throw us that reality, we will find out what to do about it."

Pruitt said she had not heard of a possible town reuse for the Montague Center School building.

She also said, "I don't know anyone in town hall who has the heart to go for an override again. If we could keep the increase in the school's operating budget to 2½% (approximately \$330,000), that would be reality for us."

Kociela adjourned the meeting by urging members to return on December 12th ready to take up the proposals once again. "I think we did a lot tonight," she said. "We finally had some very good discussion (among the committee members). I'm looking forward to the next meeting to sift through the information and try to get some movement." 

MCTV to Air School Committee Meeting

The School Committee School Closing debate will air in its entirety on MCTV, Channel 17, on November 30th at 7 p.m., Friday, December 1st at 9 a.m., Tuesday, December 5th at 7 p.m., and Wednesday, December 6th at 8:30 a.m.

Turners Beats Greenfield in Bruising Battle

BY LEE CARIGNAN

GREENFIELD - The Turners Falls Indians defeated the Greenfield Green Wave 14-8 in the 80th meeting of their annual Thanksgiving Day game last Thursday. It was the first time Turners has won in ten years, and only the second time they have beaten Greenfield since 1985. It was a big win for Turners, who have had trouble putting teams away all season. But this time Turners would come up big defensively in the second half to upset the Green Wave.

The Indians came out hitting in this game, especially on defense. Turners played all morning like they wanted the game more than their opponents. The team seemed to be taking out their frustration on Greenfield, after a season of tough defeats. The extra week of preparation had Turners looking fresh, with renewed energy. They forced the Green Wave into 11 penalties and 3 turnovers, also forcing Greenfield star running back Sean Boyle out of the game because of a rib injury.

Turners quarterback Adam Bastarache won the John F. Harrington Most Valuable Player award for his phenomenal play on both sides of the ball. It was the first time a

Turners player has won the award since 1996. Bastarache had a sensational game helping the Indians in every phase of the game including quarterback, linebacker, and on special teams. He has become the Turners version of Troy Brown. Bastarache threw a 48-yard touchdown pass, returned a punt for a touchdown, and had a tremendous game at linebacker making big tackles and recovering fumbles.

Greenfield got off to a fast start in the early moments of the game, causing Turners' fans to get a little anxious. The Green Wave stopped Turners on their opening possession and received the ball on their 19-yard line. Greenfield's explosive running back Sean Boyle shredded Turners' defense with runs of 44, and 42 yards, the latter run for a touchdown to put Greenfield up 8-0 with 8:44 to go in the first quarter.

It seemed like it was going to be another long Thanksgiving Day game for Turners Falls. Making matters worse, the Boys in Blue fumbled on their next possession, giving Greenfield the ball at the Turners' 43-yard line. But the momentum of the game turned fast on a key fourth down situation. Turners managed to stop Boyle short of the first down, in



the process injuring the star running back's ribs. Although the courageous Boyle kept re-entering the game, he would never be the same.

Both teams' defenses tightened up, making it a field position game throughout the rest of the first quarter. Turners was clearly struggling to run the football against Greenfield, and the Green Wave couldn't muster anything against Turners after the Boyle injury.

Early in the second quarter Turners caught their first big break of the game when Boyle muffed the punt for Greenfield, allowing Turners to take over on the Greenfield 15-yard line. You have to wonder how much Boyle's injury played a role in the play, and whether he should have continued playing in the first place. Unfortunately the Indians could not take advantage of the miscue. On second down Scott Rau fumbled at the

goal line causing the ball to go out of the end zone for a touch back. It was a tough break for the Indians.

But Turners didn't allow it to affect their play as they continued to dominate the second quarter. On the first play of their next drive quarterback Adam Bastarache found a wide-open Tom Field and hit him with a 48-yard touchdown pass. Sunny Lucas missed the extra point keeping the score 8-6 with 4:49 left to go in the second quarter.

Turners' tough defense continued to gain momentum as they held Greenfield to another 3-and-out. Mike Clark punted with Greenfield backed up near the end zone. Bastarache fielded the ball at the Greenfield 35-yard line, got some key blocks, and exploded down the field for a touchdown to put Turners up 12-8 with 3:23 left in the second quarter.

Just before halftime, Turners had another golden opportunity to score when Bastarache intercepted a Nick Melendes pass and returned it to the Greenfield 4-yard line. But on Turners' first play from scrimmage Evan Brusio fumbled, turning the ball back over to Greenfield. It was the second time in the quarter Turners had a turnover near the goal line. Faced with poor field

position the Green Wave took a safety to make the score 14-8 at halftime.

Defense dominated the second half, as the rain came down, and the play became sloppy. Greenfield continued to shoot itself in the foot with holding penalties. Midway through the fourth quarter the Green Wave engineered a 9-play drive with solid running by Sean Boyle. But on a big fourth down and 2 situation the Indians' tough defense stuffed Boyle at the 29-yard line holding him short of a first down to help preserve their lead.

In the final minutes of the fourth quarter both teams continued to turn the ball over, allowing Greenfield to stay in the game. But with 1:38 left, Adam Bastarache recovered a Boyle fumble to seal the victory for Turners. Greenfield players and fans left the game stunned in disbelief.

With the big win Turners Falls improves their record to 2-8 on the season and finish on a positive note. Despite their tough season the boys in blue have a lot to be proud of, by beating Greenfield. It's always special day when Turners beats Greenfield on Thanksgiving: hopefully this momentum will carry over to next season.

HOME COOKIN'

Lamb Leftovers

Readers are always encouraged to send in recipes for this occasional column. Below is a favorite from Connie Day, of Greenfield.

Using the leftovers from a leg of lamb roast is sometimes a challenge, and I find this to be a delicious and hearty alternative to sandwiches. I use an old Corning Ware casserole that has tenaciously survived since it was presented as a gift in the early 1960's. It holds six cups comfortably and we needn't be concerned with chemical transference.

Soak 1/2 cup pearl barley overnight in 2 cups of water, covered.

Brown about 3 cups cooked bite-size pieces of lamb in the bottom of a covered casserole, with a teaspoon tarragon, 3-4 bay leaves, and a teaspoon fennel.

Add the barley with the water, and one 14-oz. can of beef broth, preferably low sodium. Simmer about 1/2 hour until barley is tender.

Add 4 peeled, chopped carrots, 4 stalks of chopped celery, 2 cups chopped onion, ground pepper, and simmer gently about three-quarters of an hour until carrots are soft enough to break with a fork . . .



MARY AZARIAN WOODBLOCK

OFF THE BEATEN TRACK

Allons Z'Enfants

BY FLORE - Let's start with a simple quiz about your knowledge of French culture!

How many of you know where the phrase: *Allons z'enfants* comes from?

What does it mean? Answer?

The opening line of the Marseillaise, *bien sur*, the French revolutionary national anthem, composed by Rouget Delisle!

Translation?

It means: "Let's go children of the homeland!" and it continues, "*le jour de gloire est arrivé*" the glorious day (of freedom) has finally come!

Thus sang the brave people of the French Revolution of 1789.

The French have been regarded since as an unruly bunch, (I know, because I am lucky to be one of them) being charged for practically putting wine in the milk bottles of their infants at an early age.

If you ask anyone walking in the streets of France, they would assert:

"Being French is having the right to veto any questionable, unclear, or fraudulent political matter..."

Yes, they were the same ones on the barricades in '68 and again early this spring, trying again to wake up the world to

liberté, égalité, fraternité!

Other nations see the French as totally infatuated with their own history.

Rather unusual, wouldn't you say?

They remain, in spite of all judgments, fearless, sticking to their guns and, *Mon Dieu*, worst of all, nonconformists.

When all solutions have been evaluated and dismissed, they shout, daringly:

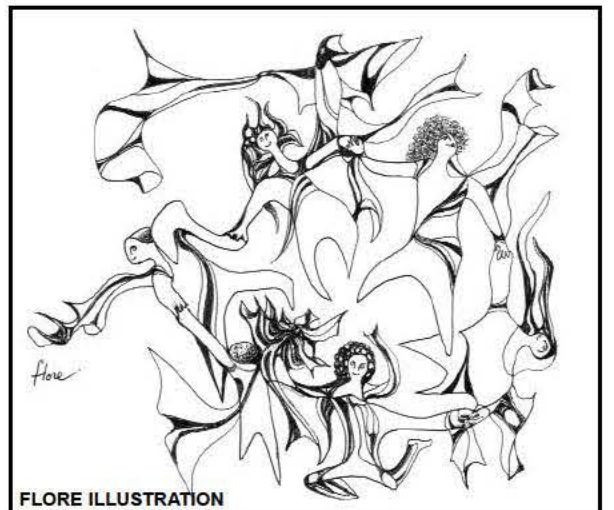
Vive La Liberté!

They also happen to be one nation you frequently encounter as you travel the globe.

Would you believe that this impetuous breed exists in our own backyard?

Based in both Greenfield and Brattleboro, the French association called La Ronde has been active since 1976. It was started with several goals in mind.

First, to welcome expatriates and their families living in this rolling part of New England.



FLORE ILLUSTRATION

After all, who named Vermont the green mountain? *Encore les Français!*

Second, to speak this extraordinary language, in order not to grow unaccustomed to their native tongue. Third, to provide an opportunity to share their warmth with Francophones in the region. Fourth, to socialize once a month around a plentiful potluck dinner. Interested?

Mark and reserve the second Wednesday of each month for this purpose.

And *sacré bleu*, don't forget, in the meantime, to toast to everyone's health, this week: *le Beaujolais nouveau est arrivé!*

For further information, contact Betsy Judson: rwc2esj@sover.net.

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FINDING BALANCE

Our Stories, Our Selves - or Not

BY JENNY CHAPIN

MONTAGUE CENTER - I was wandering around Wildwood Cemetery in Amherst last week, looking at names and dates on gravestones, wondering about the people underneath. Were a husband and wife happy together, and what was it like for one when the other died first, especially if the survivor lived on for years? When someone died young, what happened, and were the parents able to pick up their lives again after burying their child? Did the woman listed solo under her sister and brother-in-law have a love affair that ended in heartbreak, or was she an adventurer in a time when women didn't have both husbands and careers?

Some stones record professions (doctor, professor, priest), one says "servant of God, hop-

ing for immortality", another lists the date and place of marriage. These things are part of our identities, what makes our lives feel like they matter. As another stone declared, "a useful life completed."

So many stories, I think to myself; a story for every stone in every cemetery in the world, in pauper's graves and mounds marked only with a wooden cross and mass burials in wartime or plague. We decorate our gravestones with the barest information and hope we will be remembered after we die, hope someone notices the stone that is all that is left of us, just as we hope we are noticed while we're alive.

I don't know about you, but sometimes I cling tenaciously to my stories, to what I've decided is the truth about myself, someone else, or a situation. This



usually happens when some part of me feels threatened, when I don't feel seen or understood. The constant warfare - both large scale and one-on-one - on this beautiful planet demonstrates how some of us defend our stories with our last breath. "This is who I am," we proclaim, and persist in believing, even when that story brings our world down in ruins.

We persist because we think our stories are who we are, rather than our responses to what happens to us. Often we persist because we want some degree of control over our lives in the midst of a world that rarely allows us to choose how

events unfold. We want a measure of security and safety for which there is no guarantee - and when we try to orchestrate that non-existent state, we can box ourselves into up frustration and unhappiness.

We get so attached to our stories that we don't even question them. They start to run our lives, determining not only our present but our future. They become a broken record (remember those?), with content that becomes irrelevant over time but that we use nonetheless to justify our world view. We elaborate on specific memories and forget most of the rest, further skewing the picture.

But if we let go of the storylines, even for a moment, it's possible to tune into another view of ourselves, one that goes beyond our roles in relationship to others, and our assumption of

various qualities (young, old, important, enlightened, afraid, ignorant, etc.). Beyond definitions based on limited perceptions (are you really important, or ignorant, or any of those labels?), is the relief of no longer carrying around our ideas of who we are, and an openness to finding who we truly are, whatever our role.

Underneath all the stories we tell about ourselves, I think it is generally a simple tale: whatever we do, we want to be happy; the best way to be happy is to be fully ourselves; and it is the impact of our happiness on others that will outlive the stones raised over our dead bodies.

Jenny Chapin is an acupuncturist, bodyworker, and yoga teacher in Greenfield. Suggest a topic or question for her column at jgchapin@crocker.com.

THE HEALTHY GEEZER

Carbon Monoxide: Invisible Killer

BY FRED CICETTI,

LEONIA, NJ - Q. I had a bird's nest in my chimney and our heating guy told me we were probably getting some carbon monoxide in the house. He said that this is bad for your health. How bad?

Carbon monoxide (chemical symbol CO) is a colorless and odorless gas that can kill you. CO is a byproduct of combustion. It comes out of car tailpipes, gas ovens, fireplaces and heating systems.

That bird's nest was blocking the evacuation of CO out of your chimney from your furnace and hot-water heater. The gas was backing up into your house.

Red blood cells absorb CO more readily than they pick up oxygen. If there is a lot of CO in the air, the body may replace oxygen in blood with CO. This blocks oxygen from getting into the body, which can hurt



ILLUSTRATION: JESSICA HARMON

you and eventually kill you.

People with chronic heart disease, anemia, or respiratory problems are more susceptible to the effects of CO. And many seniors fit into one or more of those categories.

The most common symptoms of CO poisoning are headache, dizziness, weakness, irregular breathing, nausea, vomiting, chest pain, and confusion. You should go outdoors and breathe some fresh air immediately if you suspect CO

poisoning. Then get medical attention right away.

If you stay in the house, you could become unconscious and die.

The proper operation and maintenance of all fuel-burning appliances is the most important way to reduce the risk of getting dangerous CO in your home. When appliances are kept in good working condition, they produce little CO. Also, having your chimney checked regularly is smart.

Signs that might indicate improper appliance operation include:

- Decreasing hot water supply
- Furnace unable to heat house or runs constantly
- Sooting, especially on appliances
- Unfamiliar or burning odor
- Increased condensation inside windows

Here are some no-nos: leaving a car running in a garage even with the door open, operating a gas generator in the house, burning charcoal indoors, using a gas oven or dryer to heat the house, and putting foil on the bottom of a gas oven because it interferes with combustion.

And here's one that may surprise you. Do you have a car with a tailgate?

If you drive with a tailgate open, you must open windows to make sure air is moving through your car. If only the tailgate is open, CO from the exhaust will be pulled into the car.

Next to preventing the production of CO, the best defense against this lethal gas is a CO alarm. CO gas distributes evenly and quickly throughout the house. A CO detector should be installed outside bedrooms to alert

sleeping residents.

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

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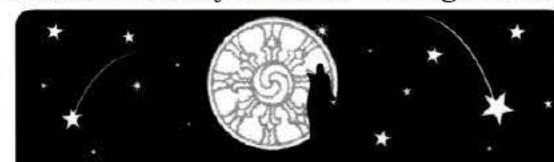


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Jep's Place: Faith, Hope and Other Disasters Part XII

The Old Green Car

BY JOSEPH A. PARZYCH GILL - After Julia died, Ma sent us out to play in the old green car, more and more. We spent hours and hours pretending we were royalty going for a ride. The car really wasn't old. In fact it still looked practically brand new. Pa had parked it out behind the barn when the engine bearings burned out. He went back to the Essex agency to buy another Essex - a tan one.

"For \$50, I buy a better Essex than the first one that cost \$1000," he said. "The Depression is a bad time. But if you got money, it's good. Everything is cheap."

I loved that old green car and made up my mind that someday I'd get a good motor somewhere, maybe in a junkyard, and I'd drive that car all over the country just like the

trips we imagined.

There was something magical about being inside the car. We were transported to another land away from the outside world. We became royalty, rich beyond belief, going on fabulous journeys to far off lands, attending Cinderella balls, royal weddings and tours to exotic places.

As driver, I was a skillful chauffeur and not a bad boy. I couldn't wait until I was old enough to fix up our friend, the old green car, and drive endlessly on real adventures. Parking that car out behind the barn was the best thing Pa had ever done for us kids. We never ceased to wonder at Mama's quick consent whenever we asked permission to play in it.

"Go, go. Play as long as you want. I fix you lunch."

The girls dressed up in the fancy cast-off clothes that people were forever giving Mama, nowhere near her size,

and usually some strange style. I don't know if they expected her to wear those gowns when slopping the hogs, but they were perfect dress-up clothes for our fantasy trips.

After my sisters got their finery on, I'd unsnap the top of my cap and play the part of chauffeur. I'd hold the door open for them as they climbed into the car in their grand attire. "To the opera, James," they'd say in a snooty voice, and we'd take off on our fantasy trip with appropriate engine noises provided by the chauffeur. We stuffed the emerald chariot's cut glass bud vases on the doorposts with daises or Indian paintbrushes.

I never dreamed that our beloved old green car would ever be gone. It had been a part of our lives as long as I could remember and I always thought it'd be there until the day I died.

...to be continued next week

MCTV Schedule

Channel 17: Friday, December 1st through Thursday, December 7th

Friday, December 1
8:00 am Montague Update-Lisa Doval
9:00 am GMRSD Meeting 11/28
12:30 am Family Friends
1:00 am There and Back with Karen Adams
6:00 pm NASA Destination Tomorrow #20
6:30 pm Mass Wildemess-Winter
7:00 pm This is Montague-Millers Falls Rod & Gun
8:00 pm TFHS Week in Review
8:30 pm On the Trail of the Fisher Cat

9:00 am Discovery Center Friends Coffee House Series
11:00 am Wild Edible Plants in Massachusetts
6:00 pm Over the Falls-Harvey Schaktman
7:00 pm Montague Selectboard LIVE
9:00 pm Steve Alves Western Mass. Film Collection
10:00 pm Massachusetts Parks-Access for All
10:30 pm Classic Arts Showcase

Saturday, December 2
8:00 am NASA Destination Tomorrow #20
8:30 am Mass Wildemess-Winter
9:00 am This is Montague-Millers Falls Rod & Gun
10:00 am TFHS Week in Review
10:30 am On the Trail of the Fisher Cat
6:00 pm Over the Falls: Harvey Schaktman
7:00 pm NASA Kids Science News Network:Return to Flight
8:00 pm The Well Being: Taking Care in a Relationship w/an Addict
9:00 pm Montague Historical Society Annual Meeting
10:00 pm Mass Wildemess: Autumn 2006

Tuesday, December 5
8:00 am Over the Falls-Harvey Schaktman
9:00 am Steve Alves Western Mass. Film Collection
10:00 am Massachusetts Parks-Access for All
10:30 am Classic Arts Showcase
6:30 pm TFHS Week in Review
7:00 pm GMRSD Meeting 11/28
10:30 pm This is Montague-Millers Falls Rod & Gun

Sunday, December 3
8:00 am Over the Falls: Harvey Schaktman
9:00 am NASA Kids Science Network: Return to Flight
10:00 am The Well Being: Taking Care in a Relationship w/an Addict
11:00am Montague Historical Society Annual Meeting
12:00 pm Mass Wildemess: Autumn 2006
6:00 pm Montague Update-Laura Eden-Patnode
7:00 pm Discovery Center Friends Coffee House Series
9:00 pm Wild Edible Plants in Massachusetts

Wednesday, December 6
8:00 am TFHS Week in Review
8:30 am GMRSD Meeting 11/28
12:00 pm This is Montague-Millers Falls Rod & Gun
6:30 pm NASA Destination Tomorrow #20
7:00 pm GED Connection #17
7:30 pm The Well Being: Taking Care in a Relationship w/an Addict
8:30 pm Montague Historical Society Annual Meeting
9:30 pm Prevailing Winds in Denmark

Monday, December 4
8:00 am Montague Update-Laura Eden-Patnode

Thursday, December 7
8:00 am NASA Destination Tomorrow #20
8:30 am GED Connection #17
9:00am The Well Being: Taking Care in a Relationship w/an Addict
10:00 am Montague Historical Society Annual Meeting
11:00 am Prevailing Winds in Denmark
6:00 pm Montague Update
7:00 pm Montague Selectboard 12/4
9:00 pm Waterfowl Identification
10:00 pm Wind Changes

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Parking Ban in Effect

The winter parking ban for Montague residents goes into effect Friday, December 1st until April 1st. There will be no parking on town streets anywhere in Montague between the hours of 1:00 a.m. and 5:00 a.m. Parking tickets are \$10.00. Towing for impeding snow removal costs approximately \$90.00. The Montague police will start enforcing the ban Friday night into Saturday. Also, a reminder that town-owned lots have restricted times for snow removal. Please observe posted signs to avoid inconvenience and expense.

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FRIDAY, DECEMBER 1ST
Bring The Children Home, performances by Ann Percival and David Cantieni of Wild Asparagus; Tom Nielson, folk singer, activist, educator; Bork, Kahn & Tinen, singer/songwriters; Rob Peck, professional juggler. Silent Auction, Food Table, Candle Lighting Ceremony, Door Prizes and more! \$10 - \$20 (no one will be turned away) children 16 and under FREE at the Montague Grange, Montague Center. 7 - 10 pm

SATURDAY, DECEMBER 2ND
 The Montague Community Band annual Holiday Concert held at Our Lady of Peace at 80 7th Street in Turners Falls. Special guests will be the MacDonald Family Singers. Admission is free; donations are appreciated. 7:30 p.m.

Instrumental guitar virtuoso, Francis Doughty, and his Special Guest, reknowned singer-songwriter Deb Pasternak perform at The Wendell Full Moon Coffeehouse, Wendell Town Hall. Benefit for the Wendell Free Library. www.wendellfullmoon.org (978) 544-5557 Shows Start at 7:30 p.m. with open mic; main act 8p.m. Donation \$6 - \$12

At The Bookmill, Montague Center. Swing Caravan returns in their mesmerizing style reminiscent of Django Reinhardt's gypsy jazz of the 1930's. 8 - 11:30 p.m. \$10 advance/\$12 door

SATURDAY & SUNDAY, DECEMBER 2ND & 3RD
 Arts & Icicles. Turners Falls open studio and downtown walking tour. 10 to 5 p.m. Pick up pamphlets in numerous locations including Great Falls Discovery Center, Books & More, Jay K's Liquors, Hallmark Museum of Contemporary Photography, Cup O' Joe, Ristorante DiPaolo or The Brick House. For more info



Francis Doughty at The Wendell Full Moon Coffee House, Saturday, December 2nd, 8 p.m.

call Eileen 863-9499; or Karen 863-9576 www.turnersfallsriverculture.org

Mill Street Art Works Studio Tour Visit Artspace and neighborhood artists' studios. A gift basket sale and refreshments will be available at Artspace. Furniture maker Julie Godfrey will give a lecture and slide presentation on marquetry, the age old tradition of piecing together pictorial designs on wood. Artspace is located at 15 Mill Street, Greenfield. Noon to 4 p.m. Info. 772-6811.

SUNDAY, DECEMBER 3RD
 Holiday program of songs ranging from American Shape Note and Appalachian traditions to English West Gallery songs. Music from Croatia and Bosnia performed by the 68-voice Greenfield Harmony at the All Souls Unitarian Universalist Church, Greenfield, 3pm. Benefit for the Tibetan Healing Fund. Ticket info, call Mary Cay Brass (802) 869-2438, mcbrass@vermontel.net.

Special Event noon to 4 p.m.- At Historic Deerfield. Create handmade gifts of a beeswax candle and stenciled wrapping paper. Listen to local choirs performing songs of the season (2 to 4 p.m.). Held in Hall Tavern located at Historic Deerfield 774-5581

MONDAY, DECEMBER 4TH
 Speakers Series "50 Great Native Plants for the Northeast" with Bill Cullina Award-winning author Bill Cullina is Director of the New England Wild Flower Society. He is currently working on his fourth volume on grasses, ferns, and mosses due to be published in 2007. Held at Conway Grammar School located at 24 Fournier Road in Conway. 7 to 9 p.m. 413-369-4044 x3 for information.

THURSDAY, DECEMBER 7TH
 An Evening with Starhawk, "Holding the Vision of Global Justice: Keeping our Spirit and Courage Alive" Helen Hills Chapel, Smith College, Northampton. \$12 general admission/\$6 student or low-income. 7:30 p.m. For more information jazzli@crocker.com Proceeds benefit the Men's Resource Center for Change, The Everywomen's Center and The Five Rivers Council.

FRIDAY, DECEMBER 8TH
 Rt. 63 Road House, Millers Falls, Heroes, classic and updated rock! 9:30 p.m. Come to dance!

FRIDAY, DECEMBER 8TH

TO DECEMBER 10TH
 Welcome Yule! at The Shea. www.theshea.org

SATURDAY, DECEMBER 9TH
 At The Bookmill, Montague Center, Robby and Rolf. Stylistic Counterpoint: Rolf Pechukas plays original acoustic soul after Robby Roiter's set of impressionistic free jazz. 8- 11:30 p.m. \$10.

The Montague Elks Lodge #2521 Annual Hoop Shoot at the Turners Falls High School Gymnasium. Registration is at 9:30 a.m., contest 10 a.m. The Hoop Shoot is free and available to all boys and girls ages 8-13 as of 4/01/06.

Rt. 63 Road House, Millers Falls, Factory Defect, rock & roll! 9:30 p.m. Come to dance!

SATURDAY & SUNDAY, DECEMBER 9TH & 10TH
 Wendell Holiday Fair at the Wendell Town Hall. Saturday 10 a.m. to 5 p.m. Sunday 11 a.m. to 4 p.m. Holiday shopping with local artists, crafters and businesses. Live music with Kevin Skorupa Saturday and Kellianna Sunday, both 1 p.m. to 3 p.m. Food sales to benefit the Wendell Women's Club.

SUNDAY, DECEMBER 10TH
 Scandinavian Dancing at the Montague Grange. Live music by Andrea Larson and friends. Dancers with all levels of experience are welcome. No partner necessary, \$8 donation. Celebration of traditional Swedish Pageant of Lights with Santa Lucia. 3 to 6 p.m.

The community is invited to attend Christmas Vespers, Candlelit in Memorial Chapel at Northfield

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Mount Hermon School. Traditional service of music, readings, & carols. Performances at 3:30 and 7 p.m. A Holiday feast will be served from 5 to 7pm in Alumni Hall. Guest fees for dinner are \$10 per adult and \$5 per child. There is no charge for admission to the concert, but donations will benefit local charities. Directions www.nmhschool.org or 413-498-3000.

ONGOING
 Hallmark Museum of Contemporary Photography, Turners Falls. Photographer/digital print artist John Paul Caponigro through December 17th.

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 3. THE QUEEN PG13 DAILY 7:00 9:10
 MATINEE FRI, SAT, SUN 12:00 2:15 4:30
 4. DECK THE HALLS PG DAILY 6:45 9:00
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 5. BORAT R DAILY 6:45 9:00
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SATURDAY, DECEMBER 2ND
 Montague Parks & Rec Stuffed Animal Workshop. 11 - 1 p.m.

FRIDAY, DECEMBER 8TH
 Winter Birds and Bird Feeders. Come and experience an opportunity to learn about winter birds' feeding habits and build a feeder to hang in the yard. 10 a.m.

SATURDAY, DECEMBER 9TH
 Adaptations of Birds in Exhibits. Discover how birds are adapted to each habitat and where they spend the winter. 2 p.m.

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WEST ALONG THE RIVER

Seven Thousand Years on the River

BY DAVID BRULE

ERVINGSIDE - "We have been here," *Tonipasqua* would say. And then she would drop her words and roll her right hand over and over in a circular pattern, extending her arm as she did so. The gesture was time, that time goes backward on occasion, forward on others... it simply is.

- John Mitchell Hanson
Ceremonial Time

Robins fill the late November woods, bringing the season to a close. The first here in March, they're the last to leave, gorging themselves on this year's unusually abundant winterberry crop that lends its holly-red brilliance to the somber landscape. November is always the season of reflection. The riot of color is gone; things get simpler outdoors; the mind dwells on remembering: All Saints' Day, the Day of the Dead, Veterans Day, Thanksgiving.

Before beginning preparations for the festive season of December, if you live here, close to the river in any of our villages, situated on ancient sites near water, you can see back into time past, if you like, and if you know how.

For example, down here on the Flat, with the leaves all down I can see far into the woods and conjure up my great-grandfather's fields along the Millers, before the great floods of the 30s, when the land was

clear. But that only goes back one hundred and thirty years. If you look further back, you see the terraces formed by the pre-historic river in this part of the original Erving Grant. One side of the river has a corresponding level on the other side where our river has cut down through the earth. Our house, and our neighborhood, sits on the edge of an ancient 5- to 10,000-year-old terrace plainly visible in the bare November woods.

Local historians tell us this part of our region was still wilderness in 1800, not yet settled by Europeans, unlike other parts of the valley, although meadow lands along the Millers had been cleared by native peoples, probably the Squakheag and their ancestors, thousands of years before.

Regardless, it came to be that houses were built on this terraced flood plain known as the Flat on Ervingside. This house went up in the 1870s, setting in motion, for the purposes of this story, a curious chain of coincidences involving a dog, a lilac bush,

and a grave.

Shortly after his house was built, great-grandfather Judah planted lilacs at the edge of the bank facing the river, which was also the edge of the backyard and garden. One day, a hundred years later, when it was our turn in the family history to live in this house, an unexpected key turned up that opened the door on a vision of this land more than 7000 years ago. It happened that a beloved first dog died unexpectedly, and was sadly laid to rest under the lilacs Judah had planted. Our dog had loved to find cool, green and shady escape there from the heat of the day, and so it was natural to bury him in his favorite spot. Digging down through the roots of the lilac,

we came upon a curious find: a spear-like projectile point, and a gnarled ball of glass with sand and debris imbedded within. After finishing the burial ceremony, I showed our find to an archeologist friend who promptly identified the point as a spear-



5000 BC! Our archeologist friend speculated the glass ball was lost at the same time as the point and was probably the hunter's personal talisman - a ball of glass formed by lightning striking a tree and sand thereby creating this misshapen ball.

And now, holding this point, chiseled and shaped by a hand thousands of years ago, something mysterious happens: I'm hurtled back in time at dizzying speed, houses and gardens fall away, the veneer of a mere 300 years of European presence falls away, and I'm standing where he stood, trying to see what he saw. What was he looking for the day he dropped his spear and good luck talisman? Elk, great Grizzly Bear, deer? The river could have been raging or calm as it is today this November. Perhaps he saw canoes slipping quickly down this current coming from the sacred mountain of Wachussett on the way to the Great Falls to fish. What language did they use to call out to each other on the river? I wonder if his people's children jumped and swam at the cliffs on the bend of the river like we do? Perhaps he was a sachem or a poet, a hunter or the hunted or all of those. Did he die here on the bank of the river 7000 years ago? That's unknowable, but through lucid wondering, somehow you can see.

With a bit of imagination you can try to see backwards, to get a glimpse of what went before,

to see how we fit into this river culture. When you look at our landscape here, and let the building and roads with their streetlights drop away before your eyes, when you see the undisturbed rock outcrops, the flood plains and the dunes, you become attuned to the experience of this valley. The river runs around and through our community.

The river is the reason why many of us are here; it's what drew the human race here more than 10,000 years ago. We still look up to see the wild birds flying high over our main streets as they have for 10,000 years. We still get a primitive feeling from the call of the wild geese flying over parking lot and the library to get from one part of the river to the other. Yet, in our villages we eat, work, and sleep and it is rare that we ever think of those who have walked here before in ancient times.

The Jurassic and Pleistocene lurk just a mile from the center of town, and it wouldn't take much for nature to reassert itself, to push up through the asphalt and concrete once our civilization has run its course. If you can imagine that, the passage of time has a different feel to it, you see where you fit into the scheme of things. You can almost feel like you've been here before.

Then again, that may just be the mood brought on by peering into the past at the end of the month of November.

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