



An oak leaf bowl, about 4 1/2 inches high by 7 inches wide...
 "I made an impression in plaster of an oak leaf, so I can press clay into the shape multiple times, maintaining the textural beauty of the leaf. I shape the bowl inside a clay form, laying down each piece individually to create what I hope is a beautiful swirling sculpture that is also utilitarian." -- Jaye Pope, Montague Center

ARTS AND LEAVES

Open Studio Tour Oct. 4th and 5th!
 Page 9

LAKE PLEASANT MILLERS FALLS MONTAGUE CENTER MONTAGUE CITY TURNERS FALLS

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YEAR 7 - NO. 1

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THE VOICE OF THE VILLAGES

OCTOBER 2, 2008

Ready for the Scrapyard Breakdown Leads to Budget Woes

BY DAVID DETMOLD

GILL - With the highway department reporting the breakdown of the town's 16-year-old front end loader, the Gill selectboard spent a large part of their meeting on September 29th bemoaning the town's budget straits. Most of their comments focused on the Gill-Montague school budget stalemate.

inspect that machine on Wednesday of this week. The town presently has \$265,000 in Chapter 90 funds set aside, but has delayed purchasing sand and salt for the winter due to the budget crisis.

The cost of salt has gone up 47% over last year's price, LaClaire reported. "Ouch!"

LaClaire said after the meeting,



Highway superintendent Mick LaClaire stands by the town's 16-year-old front end loader. "If it goes down, we can't do anything."

"We use the front end loader every day," said a frustrated Lee Stevens. The selectboard directed highway superintendent Mick LaClaire to use Chapter 90 funds to purchase a new used model. LaClaire said he has located a decent front end loader on a state bid of \$106,000, and went to

"The front end loader is the hub of our work, and if it goes down, we can't do anything. The center carrier bearing has broken, and the framework that holds it has broken several times and just had to be welded again. The transmission is starting to slip and the original see **GILL** pg 8

Captured in the Lens Lois Greenfield at Hallmark Museum



Lois Greenfield Image on Display at Hallmark Gallery 85

BY CHRISTOPHER SAWYER-LAUCANNO
 TURNERS FALLS

'Celestial Bodies, Infernal Souls' is the title of Lois Greenfield's 54 stunning photographs of dancers captured in mid-flight, or fallen back to Earth, on exhibit at the Hallmark Museum of Contemporary Photography through December 14th. While the show's title conjures up depictions of heaven and hell, according to Greenfield, who gave an illu-

minating talk about her work last Saturday, the concept is less about religion than about mythological notions of ascent and descent. In her show, bodies and souls are divided in terms of whether the figures seem to be ascending to the heavens or plunging to the depths of some nameless underworld.

In many ways Greenfield's images echo the classic mythological depictions present in Italian Renaissance painting and sculpture. Just as

in the work of Michelangelo or Botticelli, where interpretations of mythological or religious themes are stylized, gorgeous and evocative, so are Greenfield's. The more demonic sensibility of Bosch or Breugel are not admitted into her cosmic vision.

This show, an assemblage of photographs taken over a span of more than 20 years, is less concerned with categorical distinctions than with how a photographer has captured - see **HALLMARK** pg 11

Texas Hold 'Em at the Roadhouse

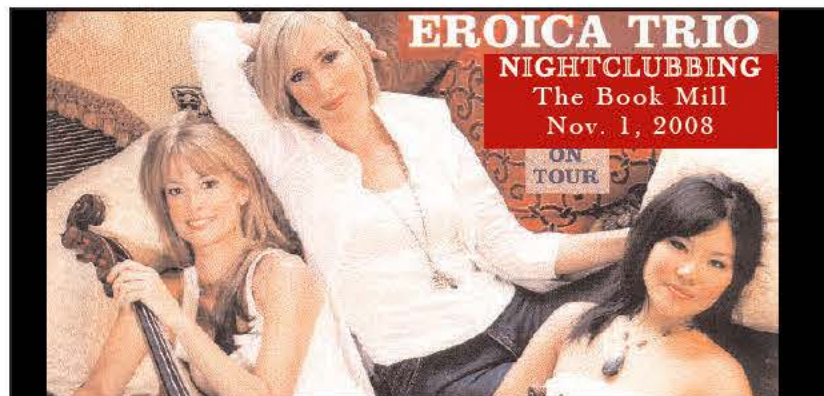
BY JOANNA FRANKEL

MILLERS FALLS - Every Tuesday night a regular group of folks head to the Route 63 Roadhouse in Millers Falls for a little legal poker playing and an all around good time. Beginning at 7:30 p.m. the Roadhouse hosts a weekly Texas Hold 'Em style poker game, a ten-week tournament

open to anyone who wants to join. Points are determined based on your standing at the end of the night (the game ends at 11:00 p.m.) and the top ten players at the end of the ten weeks compete at the coveted "final table." No money changes hands, and everyone there is just out to have a little fun at the begin-

ning of the workweek.

When I began playing poker at the Roadhouse I barely knew anything about the game. I had a few tutorials with my poker-maven friend from California, but still couldn't keep all the terms straight. (Big slick? Sounds like an oil spill. The nuts? see **POKER** pg 11



Sara Sant'Ambrogio, Erika Nickrenz and Susie Park

BY DAVID DETMOLD

MONTAGUE CENTER - They are used to playing Carnegie Hall, or at outdoor venues for thousands of people. But on Sunday, November 1st, the Eroica Trio will make an appearance at the Book Mill in Montague, as part of their American Journey club tour.

The Montague Book Mill?

Erika Nickrenz, the trio's pianist, said, "We'd like to play for the people who normally go to clubs, to hear jazz or rock or pop, and haven't heard much classical oriented music before. We're going to be playing Gershwin, "Porgy and

Bess Fantasy"; Leonard Bernstein, "West Side Story Suite"; and Mark O'Connor an incredible bluegrass fiddler, one of the most original musicians of our era." And there will be 40 lucky people who get a chance to hear them in one of the most intimate settings in the Valley. (Tickets went on sale yesterday; they are \$12, call 413-367-9206, and hurry.)

One of the most sought after chamber ensembles in the world, Eroica formed in 1986, originally with Adela Pena on violin.

see **EROICA** pg 12



"I'll see you," Tuesday night, at the Roadhouse

PET OF THE WEEK
40 mph Couch Potato



Fonnodor

Fonnodor is a three-year-old male brindle and white greyhound in need of a good home. Greyhounds are called "40 mph couch potatoes" because they are actually quite lazy! A good companion with kids over eight years. A medium-large dog companion would be ideal, but no kitties, please. For more information on adopting Fonnodor please contact the Dakin Pioneer Valley Humane Society at 413-548-9898 or via email lev-erett@dpvhs.org.

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CARNEGIE LIBRARY NEWS
Used Book Sale

BY LINDA HICKMAN
TURNERS FALLS- There will be a Used Book Sale at the Carnegie Library on **Saturday, October 4th**, from 10 a.m. - 2 p.m.
Thousands of books, including mysteries, suspense, non-fiction, and children's, will be sold at \$2 a bag. The proceeds go to the Friends of the Montague Public Libraries,

who help support the three libraries and their programs.
The sale is held in the basement of the Carnegie Library, at 201 Avenue A. The used book room is quite full, and the library staff would prefer not to accept any more book donations until after the book sale
For more information, call 863-3214.

Maple Valley School Q & A

The staff of the Maple Valley School in Wendell will be hosting a gathering for Wendell residents at the Wendell Free Library on October 8th at 7 p.m. This is an opportunity to learn about the school, the school's program and the children they serve.
Come and meet school administrators, supervisors and youth care workers. Find out what the Maple Valley

School is all about, ask questions and get answers. Refreshments will be available.
The Maple Valley School has undergone some important changes recently. This is an opportunity to discuss the school's relationship with the Wendell community.
For more information, call the Maple Valley School at 978-544-6913

Tech School Hosts Haunted Trails

Haunted Trails will run Friday and Saturday evenings from 7 p.m. to 10 p.m. on October 17th, 18th, 24th, and 25th. Tech school students and faculty have prepared an elaborate hike on the school's nature trails. Participants will be part of a search party trying to survive the ghouls and ghosts lurk-

ing nearby while attempting to locate students who have gone missing.
Along with the hike, there will be snacks and pumpkins for sale as well as an exhibition of carved jack-o-lanterns. This is a fundraiser for the class of 2009, who appreciate the generosity of the many local businesses



FACES & PLACES

DETMOLD PHOTO

The Friends of Gill peeled enough apples for 125 apple pies on Monday, September 29th, in the basement of the Congregational Church. Preparations are underway for the Arts & Crafts Festival in Riverside on October 18th and 19th. Pictured here (left to right): Debbie Loomer, Peggy Rewa, Rene Jenkins, Kathleen Raczynski, and Bill Burnham

GREAT FALLS MIDDLE SCHOOL STUDENTS OF THE WEEK

Grade 6:
Tina Souksananikone

Grade 7:
Ben Bocharnikov

Grade 8:
Anamarie Gonzalez
Troy Langknecht

AWE in Greenfield

The Artists of Franklin County will once again be gracing the town of Greenfield with their art. Storefront windows up and down Main Street, as well as Federal and Miles Streets, will offer a bonanza of creativity as local artists share their work with the community, through October 15th, during the fifth Artist Window Exhibit (AWE) presented in Greenfield since 2006. The program, funded in part with a grant from the Greenfield Cultural Council, couples area artists with Greenfield businesses that make storefronts available for artwork display.

WENDELL LIBRARY NEWS

The Healing Force of Music Lecture

On Tuesday, October 7th, at 7 p.m. Grant Scott, PhD will give a free talk about the transformative power of music for patients with Alzheimer's disease at the Wendell Free Library. Scott has studied

Alzheimer's both as a psychologist at Pace University and as a musician performing at nursing homes. He feels there is an opportunity for family members and professionals alike to reach Alzheimer's sufferers through

music.
Join him for this interactive lecture on the effects of music on Alzheimer's patients. Sponsored by the Friends of the Wendell Free Library. For more information call: 978-544-3559.

SENIOR CENTER ACTIVITIES -- Oct. 6th to Oct. 10th

GILL/MONTAGUE Senior Center, 62 Fifth Street, Turners Falls, is open Monday through Friday from 9:00 a.m. to 2:00 p.m. for activities and congregate meals. Council-on-Aging Director is Bunny Caldwell. For information or to make reservations, call 863-9357. Meal reservations need to be made a day in advance by 11 a.m. Messages can be left on our machine when the center is not open. Mealsite Manager is Chris Richer. The Center offers a hot noon meal weekdays to any senior. A reservation is necessary and transportation can be provided. Trips: Call the Senior Center 863-9357 or 863-4500.

Meeting
1 p.m. Canasta
Wednesday, 8th
9 a.m. - 11 a.m. Foot Screening Gill and Montague Residents only. Advanced registration needed. Fee: \$5.00
10 a.m. Senior Aerobics
11:15 a.m. Friends of Mealsite Meeting
12:45 p.m. Bingo
Thursday, 9th
1 p.m. Pitch
Friday, 10th
10 a.m. Senior Aerobics
11 a.m. Easy Aerobics

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 413-422-2584.

Monday, 6th
10 a.m. Senior Aerobics
11 a.m. Easy Aerobics
Tuesday, 7th
9 a.m. Walking Group
10 a.m. Brown Bag
1 p.m. Council on Aging

Trips: Call the Senior Center 863-9357 or 863-4500.

Monday, 6th
9:00 a.m. Exercise
9:45 a.m. Library
12 Noon Pitch
Tuesday, 7th
9 a.m. Aerobics
12:30 p.m. Painting
Wednesday, 8th
8:45 a.m. Line Dancing
12 Noon Bingo
Thursday, 9th
9 a.m. Aerobics
10:15 a.m. Pool

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

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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Warm the Seniors Golf Benefit Raises \$9000

MATT ROBINSON
SOUTHAMPTON - On a sunny Tuesday morning, September 30th, 128 golfers and several volunteers gathered at the Southampton Country Club to enjoy a round of golf, socialize and to help "Warm the Seniors." The money raised from the golf scramble - almost \$9,000 - will be used for fuel assistance for income eligible seniors in Franklin County.

Gathered on the links were representatives of area police departments, the Franklin County Sheriff's office and the Northwestern District Attorney's office. Just the people you want nearby when you need them. But thousands of Franklin County elders know that already, ever since the Franklin County Triad program began quietly helping elders in many ways.

"The Triad is an agency run by the Sheriff's Office, local police departments, and the District Attorney's office. We call on people for their well being, inform seniors about any scams, we do food distribution,

and provide cell phones with 911 for those who don't have phones," explained Jack Phelps of the Franklin County Sheriff's Office.

"The Warm the Seniors program provides relief from high fuel prices," added Alice Cowan, also of the Franklin County Sheriff's office. "We also help with tax relief for seniors, and we work in conjunction with Western Mass Electric Company for discount electricity."

The Triad program also provides magnetic File of Life magnets to seniors. "It has all the emergency contact information. The EMT's just take the magnet with them when they transport someone. We also do safety checks including smoke alarms and CO detectors," Cowan said.

Cowan estimated that Triad visits about 2500 Franklin County elders each year. Interested seniors or caregivers should contact the Franklin County Sheriff's office at 413-774-3235.

"Right now we have \$8,600



Marsha Odle, Sandy Guibault, Sandy Misiun, and Chris Geffin were among the staff who made the Warm the Seniors golf tournament such a success this Tuesday.

raised, but we anticipate a few more donations coming in. So we should have raised over \$9000," Montague police chief Ray Zukowski said after the golf scramble.

"I want to thank all the teams that played, and the multitude of businesses that sponsored holes and gave donations and all the volunteers from the Franklin County Sheriff's TRIAD division, Sheriff Fred MacDonald, Deputy Sheriff Parish Shippee,

who printed up the sponsor signs and the tournament posters, the Montague police, the District Attorney's Triad Office, and especially Larry Jubb, a retired Franklin County Sheriff Triad officer who put his heart and soul into this tournament," Zukowski added.

The winners were: First place: All women team of Lane Kelly, Terry Boyce, Mary McNally and Audrey LaBonte at 11 under par; second place:

Bob Zaikowski, Joe Mayrand, Bill Chapin and Josh Martin at 10 under par; third place: Ray Zukowski, Rifet Hasanbasic, Dave Dion and Bob Barnes at nine under. There were four teams at nine under, but with a match of the cards the third place team was determined.

Donations are still being accepted for the 'Warm the Seniors' campaign. Please contact the Montague Police Department at 863-8911 for more information.

ANNUAL BULKY WASTE COLLECTION

Saturday, October 4th from 9 a.m. to 12 noon.

The three drop-off sites are: the Buckland Recreation Facility on Rt. 112 South, the Northfield Highway Garage, and the Whately Transfer Station.

Disposal fees, cash only, will be collected from residents during check-in at each site. Businesses may participate. For more information call: 413-772-2438 or go to: www.franklincountywastedistrict.org

Water Quality Monitors Needed

BY IVAN USSACH
ATHOL - The Millers River Watershed Council will conduct its third season of biological water quality monitoring over the weekend of October 4th and 5th. This year's sampling activities will include sites throughout the Millers River watershed, from Gardner to Erving.

The sampling involves scraping stonefly, mayfly and caddisfly larva and other benthic macroinvertebrates (BMI) from the underside of rocks in stream and river riffle habitats. The presence or absence of various insects is a strong indicator of water quality. To ensure that all results meet state-approved quality assurance standards, all volunteers will need to attend a training session in the field on the morning of Saturday,

October 4th, beginning at 9 a.m., at a site to be announced. The training will be led by professional aquatic entomologist Dr. Michael Cole and covers sampling procedures, habitat assessments, and field sheet recording.

On Saturday afternoon or Sunday volunteers will break out in teams for sampling at various locations. The main focus area will again be the Otter River, which borders Gardner and Templeton before joining the Millers mainstem in Winchendon. Results from the 2007 monitoring round show moderate impairment of water quality at most Otter River sampling sites.

To register, contact the MRWC at council@millersriver.net or 978-248-9491. Space is limited.

Celebrate National 4-H Week by Joining 4-H!

More than 13,000 members of Massachusetts 4-H, along with more than 1,400 adult 4-H volunteers and collaborators, are inviting their young friends and neighbors across the Commonwealth to join them by becoming of 4-H members during National 4-H Week, October 5th - 11th.

Massachusetts 4-H offers a wide variety of youth programming - from clubs to afterschool programming support to overnight camps - for any youth ages 5 to 18. The 4-H is open to all. Adult volunteers and collaborators guide Massachusetts 4-H participants as they work on projects in the areas of science, engineering and technology, healthy living, citizenship, communications and community service. Members learn valuable life skills.

This fall, in cooperation with Cumberland Farms, 4-H'ers from across the Commonwealth will be conducting a food drive to help stock local food pantries. Be on the lookout for the donation boxes in your local Cumberland Farms near the end

of October. Nationwide there will be over 6 million young people celebrating National 4-H Week. Join them by contacting MA 4-H at 1-800-374-4446 or by visiting www.mass4h.org.

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Cut the School Budget

BY DAVID DETMOLD GILL - MONTAGUE - A few weeks ago, I told a member of the Montague selectboard I thought the school budget was destroying the town. She took exception to that remark. "This town is in better shape than when I moved here 20 years ago," she exclaimed. "We're building a new police station."

It's true. In many ways, the town is better off now than it was 20 years ago, and we are building a new police station. But that \$5.6 million project is hardly an example of prudent capital planning on anyone's part. Rather, it's an example of the taxpayers finally coming to the rescue of a valued town department that has been consigned to horrible circumstances for 30 years, working out of a basement warren that floods regularly, with burst sewer pipes, rodents, and short circuiting HVAC and computer systems tossed in for good measure.

When the police station building committee requested a modest level of support for the new building from the town's stabilization fund, they were turned down. The taxpayers had to spring for the entire sum out of their own pockets, hoping for a \$700,000 Community Development Block Grant that never

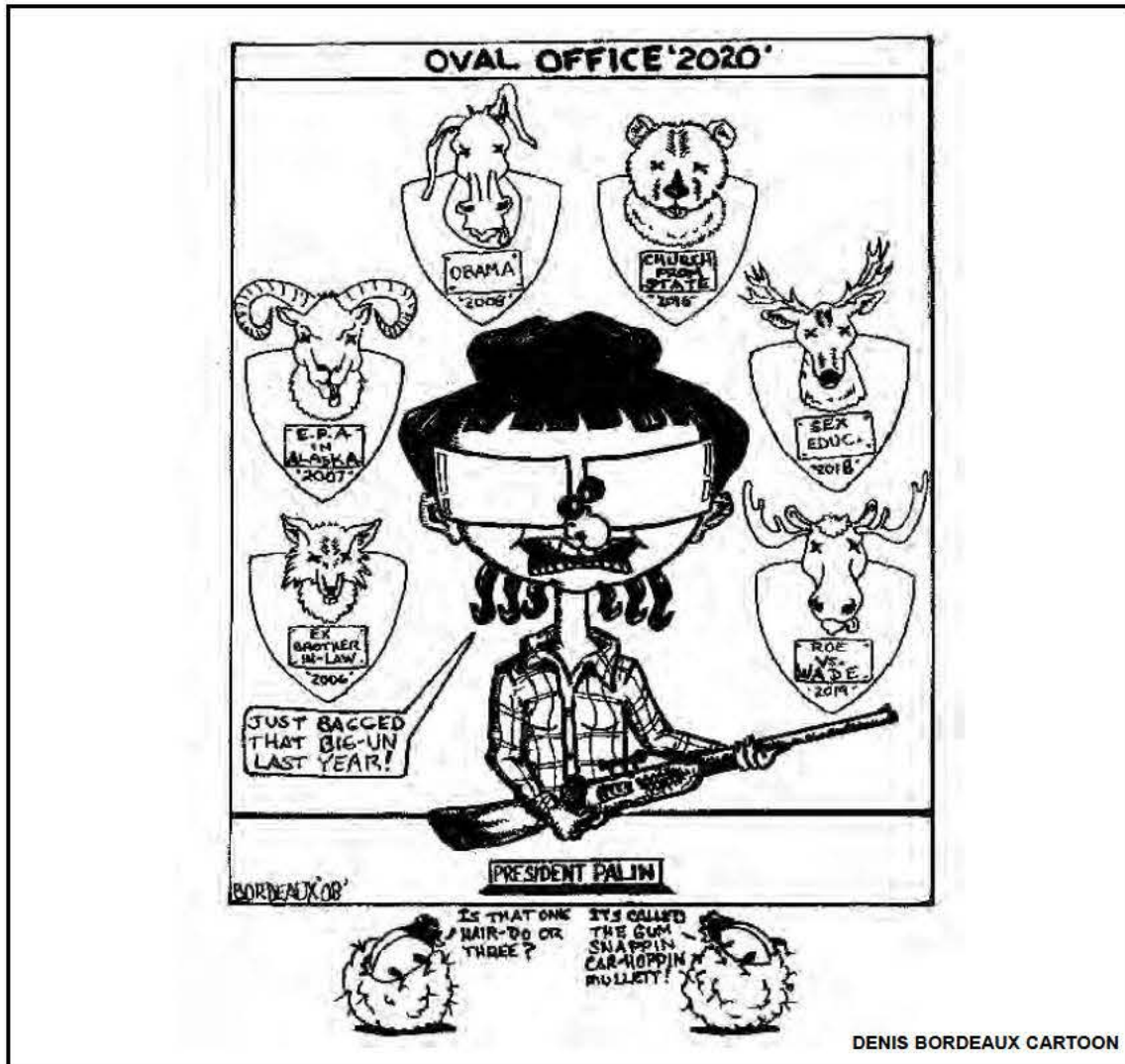
materialized to defray a little of the cost.

Why has Montague been unable to put aside the reasonable amount of reserves necessary to meet our basic capital expenditures?

For many years, town meeting member Barry Levine, from Precinct 3 in Turners Falls, has stood up at annual town meeting with a set of statistics showing how the growth of the regional school budget has steadily impacted all other town departments. The percentage of money we forward to the nine members of the school committee to educate our children has risen in the last decade from about 40% of our total town budget to a figure that now exceeds 50%. We have now come to such a pass where the town of Gill cannot afford the money to repair their fire truck or pay for the gas to train their firefighters.

How is it that we are able to provide a new track and night lighting for the high school playing fields - on top of a \$1 million renovation to the swimming pool - but we can't find a decent facility for the third of our towns' population who are over 60 year old to use as a senior center? Why can the schools afford a new part time nurse to oversee four fulltime nurses for the children, but the town of Montague can no longer find the pittance needed to hire a part time nurse to care for our elders?

For many years, school committee members have told us at town meeting, "Help us get through one more budget year; give us a chance to fix the problem." Town officials say, "The state is not shouldering its share of the burden by providing adequate funds for public education." That's true. But what makes anyone think Montague and Gill are going to convince the state to do more, in the current economic crisis, when every other municipality and school



DENIS BORDEAUX CARTOON

district in the Commonwealth is in similar straits?

We give town officials credit for trying. But if wishes were horses, beggars would ride.

In the meanwhile, we have to come to terms with the budget gap that exists today, which ranges from \$600,000 to \$850,000 or more, depending on whom you talk to in a given week. Whatever the actual sum, there is no fobbing off numbers that big for some future year, or papering them over with one time monies that will make the problem worse in the next budget cycle.

When the selectboards of Gill and Montague notified state officials that the '1/12th school budget' forced upon us by the Department of Elementary and Secondary would drive us into bankruptcy, that may be a difference in kind from saying the school budget is destroying our towns, but it's a fine distinction.

Let's face it. The state has given us all the money they are likely to give us to help us run our schools. We have lost 300 students in the last decade, and closed one and a half schools. We have to ask, where are the savings from these epochal changes to our district? They are not reflected in the \$18 million budget we see before us.

The school committee has to face the larger reality of the towns they serve. We all want an excellent education for our children, just as much as we want good roads for their school buses to travel on, and safe neighborhoods for them to play in. We need to provide for the needs of all our residents, from the same pot of money. Sit down with town officials in a spirit of fiscal realism, and go over the budget again, carefully, and see where it can be cut without sacrificing the delivery of education and needed school programs.

Is the school committee

telling us there is no room in an \$18 million budget to find such cuts? At the recent district meeting, the school committee chair promised us, "We are not asking for money we do not need." A week later, the school superintendent told us the loss of 36 more students to school choice, coupled with new special education student enrollment, had wiped out \$325,000 and eliminated "a great deal of any cushion we had" in the budget. Well, which statement is true?

Last year we were told, "The school committee has worked tirelessly to minimize spending and to cut costs," yet the schools ended the budget year with an estimated \$850,000 in excess funds. That's the kind of cautious budgeting that could fund a number of our town departments in their entirety.

Despite annual increases averaging 4% over the last decade, the Gill-Montague schools are shedding students at both ends. Adding the 36 school choice students we have just heard about to the 165 or so who have already choiced out results in a figure of more than 200 students going to other districts now to get their education, each one bringing an average of \$5,000 in state aid with them. Coupled with charter school tuition losses, this results in an annual drain on district revenues of about \$1.25 million. At the same time, Turners Falls High has one of the highest dropout rates in the state, higher than Springfield and Holyoke, at 22.9%. And in an \$18 million budget, we apparently can't find the \$10,000 needed to continue a successful after school program to retain these students.

The towns of Gill and Montague are not going to be able to pay their way to the standards of academic and administrative excellence we aspire to, and the state requires. Our towns' revenues go up 3% a year

at best, not 4%, not 5%. We've tried to keep up with the schools' needs since state aid flattened years ago, at the cost of all our other town priorities. There is nothing left in the cookie jar but crumbs.

The school committee needs to take a new, creative approach to solving the problems at our schools. Rather than picking up the tab for every grant program that expires, they should put out the call for more parental involvement, and tap into the rich human resources in our community. Instead of hiring a new reading or math specialist, they should bring a dozen qualified parents into the classrooms to tutor children in reading and math. Rather than hiring a nurse leader to oversee four other nurses, they should seek out retired, well-qualified nurses in our community to volunteer their time in the schools. If state regulations prohibit parents from serving in place of paraprofessionals in the classrooms, then let the state take the common sense step of paying for the programs they mandate. If they don't, we need to fill those tasks ourselves, and give the children the support services they need at a cost we can afford.

Smaller, but just as vital town departments, are being forced to cut back each year and still deliver the services the taxpayers require. And this year, they have found ways to cut their budgets even further to afford pay raises for their staff.

One thing is certain: if the school department is still planning on providing the 3% to 5% raises (totaling as much as \$400,000) they have budgeted for their employees, then they need to find ways to cut their budget to afford those raises, just as the town hall has done. In a year like this, as the towns teeter on the verge of bankruptcy, there is no other responsible course of action.

American Dead in Iraq and Afghanistan as of 9/30/08

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

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from the Massachusetts Department of Elementary and Secondary Education:

To the Selectboards of Gill and Montague:

September 19th - The Department of Elementary and Secondary Education (ESE) has been notified that the Gill-Montague Regional School District meeting held earlier this week was unable to reach agreement on a budget for the current fiscal year. The regional school committee has until December 1st to reconvene the district meeting to consider an amended budget proposal. Pursuant to state law, if the district has not adopted a budget by that date, the final budget for the fiscal year will be set by Commissioner Chester [of the ESE].

Because December 1st is well into the school year, when

budget adjustments are more difficult, it is our intent to begin consideration of this issue right now. We hope to notify the towns and the district no later than the end of October of the amount that the commissioner will approve if no local decision is reached by December 1st. Providing this advance notice will help the towns and the district prepare for the commissioner's budget should it be necessary.

To assist us in our review, your two boards are invited to submit comments and recommendations regarding the district budget. As you well know, setting a regional school district budget requires a careful bal-

ance between the educational needs of the children in your community and the fiscal resources available to the two towns. Your comments regarding your towns' financial situations will be extremely useful to the commissioner.

Please send your comments and any supporting information to my attention at the above address, and please do not hesitate to contact me if you have any questions about this process. Thank you.

- Jeff Wulfson
Associate Commissioner
Massachusetts Department
of Elementary and Secondary
Education

The Towns Respond:

On Tuesday, September 30th, the selectboard and finance committee of the town of Montague met at town hall with representatives of the selectboard and finance committee of Gill to come up with a joint response to the letter received from Jeff Wulfson, Associate Commissioner of the Massachusetts Department of Elementary and Secondary Education.

The boards and their representatives decided to send a letter to Wulfson, with copies to the state Department of Revenue, and local state legislators, and to the Gill Montague Regional School District officials inviting them all to a meeting in Montague on either Friday, October 17th or 24th, at

11:00 a.m., to go over the '09 school budget and the towns' financial situation, in light of the budget impasse with the GMRSD.

Gill administrative assistant Tracy Rogers said, "The DOR is watching this very carefully."

Gill selectboard member Ann Banash said, "If the towns are declared insolvent, it's not the DESE that takes over, it's the DOR."

Banash added, "I talked with [superintendent] Ken Roche at the district meeting after the school budget failed, and I told him, 'If you keep this budget, it's not going to pass.' If they keep this budget, there's no point in having another district meeting. Let it go right to the state."

National Fire Prevention Week

BY JOE KWIECINSKI

MONTAGUE - After 23 years of service with the Montague Center Volunteer Fire Department, you might think that Lieutenant Larry Peters, Jr. would more or less have settled into the routine of his duties by now. But you'd be wrong. Speaking with Peters on the eve of National Fire Prevention Week (October 5th through 11th), the interviewer was immediately impressed with his intensity and commitment to keeping local residents safe from the hazards of fire.

Despite heroic efforts nationwide, fire continues to be one of the greatest threats to life and property. In 2006 alone, departments throughout the United States answered the call to close to 400,000 home fires.

The Montague Center Volunteer Fire Department not only responds to house and other structural fires, but is also among the first responders on the scene to fight brushfires and to assist at river rescues, medical emergencies and car accidents.



Lieutenant Larry Peters, Jr. at the ready with Engine #3 at the Montague Center fire station

The Montague Center department is quartered in a modern building on Old Sunderland Road, dedicated in 2003. Quite a step up from the former fire station, a converted horse and buggy carriage house on Station Street that housed the department since 1941, where there was barely enough room to park the trucks.

Seated in the training room of the new fire station, Peters carefully explained what he considers to be the basic life saving tips for preventing and surviving home fires. "To get people out of a fire," he

stressed, "you need working smoke detectors, working carbon monoxide detectors and a family escape plan. I can't emphasize these things enough."

Lieutenant Peters stressed that the family escape plan should be developed and practiced by every family member. "The successful escape plan," he said, "has a meeting place outside, so you know whether everyone is out or not. This is immensely helpful to the responding fire department, since our number one priority is to save lives. If we know

everyone's out, then we can concentrate our efforts on extinguishing the fire.

"Once you come together at your meeting place, call 911 from a cell phone or a neighbor's house and never reenter the burning building for any reason."

In addition, Peters advised people to make sure flammable materials and liquids are store far away from furnaces, stoves, and gas appliances, including hot water heaters and clothes
see FIRE pg 6

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NOTES FROM THE ERVING SELECTBOARD

Erving Approves Library Director Salary

BY DAVID DETMOLD - Sixteen voters showed up at the special town meeting on Monday, September 29th, in the former library in the basement of Erving town hall, to approve spending an additional \$3,000 to hire a 17-hour a week, non-benefited director for the town's public library, which for the last six years has been consolidated in the Ervingside library on Moore Street. During that time, the library board of trustees, Marcia Bernard, Marion Overgaard, and Beth Bazler have provided both general oversight and circulation desk direction of the daily operations of the library, in the absence of a library director.

They may be the only library trustees in the Commonwealth to have operated a library for this length of time, and on Monday night they seemed relieved to see the vote pass. "It's going to feel really good to hand the keys over to competent hands," said Barnard.

Which is not to say the library hasn't been in competent hands right along. Under the direction of the library trustees, circulation at the library has increased from 2130 materials of all types borrowed in 2004 to 9089 materials of all types borrowed in 2008. The number of patrons has tripled over the

same period from 158 to 455, and the hours of operation has doubled from 414 to 880.

"We've been trying to transition from having the library trustee board running the library to having a library director run the library. We did not have a viable pool of candidates," during the first round of interviews, Bazler told the meeting prior to the vote. "We felt the salary was the factor." The board had initially advertised the position at \$12,000 a year.

Having advertised the position a second time at \$17,000 a year, pending town meeting approval of the additional funds, the trustees say they have completed interviews of six candidates for the post, all women, who applied from as far away as New Hampshire and Central Massachusetts. The trustees hope to have a director hired within two weeks.

Even after selectboard member Andrew Goodwin warned that the position would require an additional outlay of \$2,000 at next annual town meeting to match the \$17,000 salary for the full fiscal year, the motion passed unanimously.

Town meeting also approved spending \$10,000 for an offsite server and tech support to

manage data for town hall departments, which are currently running on stand alone computers.

The meeting approved adding \$20,000 to the line item to pay for legal fees. "We had to deal with the town counsel on a number of personnel issues, and on some land issues," explained selectboard chair Andy Tessier. "Also coming up is senior housing. We want to make sure it's done right, so we have senior housing for seniors and not low income families right next door, with children. The seniors don't want that."

Voters also approved a motion to place the selectboard in charge of issuing trench permits in town, pursuant to a new state law that stipulates oversight of trenches. "This is not to become another revenue source for the town," Goodwin assured the meeting. "We pay enough for everything already. This is purely a safety matter."

Richard Peabody, the town moderator, introduced the meeting with a reference to the nation's financial meltdown. "These are unique times for the country right now. Say your prayers, and keep your money under the mattress."

The selectboard met directly before the town meeting, and heard a report from

administrative coordinator Tom Sharp on a meeting held last week between the senior center and senior housing committee and project architect John Catlin. The committee was enthusiastic about the plans for the new senior center, to be located near the Erving Elementary School, and urged the architect to explore geothermal heating and cooling options, and to incorporate the possible use of solar photovoltaics.

The town will contract for diesel oil through the Lower Pioneer Valley Educational Collaborative, at \$3.71 per gallon for the coming year.

Franklin County Clean Sweep, large item collection day for Erving, Gill, Montague, Wendell and other towns will take place this Saturday from 9 a.m. - noon at the Northfield Highway Garage. Tires, scrap metal, appliances, upholstered furniture, mattresses, carpeting, construction and demolition debris, computers and other electronics, and BBQ grill tanks will all be accepted, for a fee. For more information and to find out about other disposal sites, go to www.franklincountysolidwaste.org.

The board issued business permits to Christopher's

Grinders to serve pizza and grinders at the French King Entertainment Center, and to James Stafford, of River Street, to conduct a home internet marketing business.

The board received a state grant for \$3897 to buy safety vests, and to purchase highway signage for the fire department.

The board signed a letter to Jim Hawkins, building inspector of the Franklin County Cooperative Inspection Program, and sent a copy to fire chief Mick LaClaire, asking those officials to use their authority to require Patriots Environmental Corporation, of Worcester, the owner of the Usher Mill, to improve site security at the dilapidated Arch Street complex.

The Usher Mill was the scene of an arson fire on July 30th of 2007. After the fire, which destroyed a main building fronting Arch Street, Patriots Environmental hired a 24 hour security guard for a few weeks, and set up a security fence, but the guard is long gone and a side fence has been taken down, so it is possible to enter the complex freely now.

"We're scared stiff some kid will crawl in there and get hurt," said town administrative coordinator Tom Sharp.

FIRE from page 5

dryers. Peters also advised people who smoke to take appropriate care when smoking inside their homes. "Never, ever smoke in bed," he said, "and always make sure your cigarette butts are fully extinguished."

Burning candles can also be dangerous, Peters warned. "People sometimes forget they've lit a candle. And it's also important to keep flammable materials away from a lit candle."

Stoves can be another major hazard, Peters said. He advised, "For any new wood burning or pellet stove, make sure you have a proper inspection done by your local inspection authority, to ensure safe and proper installation."

Stovepipes, fireplaces and chimneys also demand extreme caution. "For wood stoves and fireplaces, it's important to burn seasoned hardwood which

decreases sticky creosote buildup in your chimney, fireplace and stovepipe. Lack of proper stovepipe, chimney and fireplace maintenance is the leading cause of chimney fires. Your chimney, fireplace and stovepipe should be professionally cleaned and inspected once every heating season."

Another potential fire hazard, according to Peters, is the improper storage and use of fire extinguishers. "If you have a home fire extinguisher," he said, "put it near an exit door. That way, if you use it, but the fire is too big, the exit door is right behind you and you can get out and call 911 from a neighbor's house."

"We have a tremendously dedicated staff," Peters said of the nearly 30 men and women who comprise the on-call Montague Center volunteer firefighters under Chief John Greene.

Larry added, "People become firefighters for one simple reason: they want to help others in their community. You can be sitting down to your Thanksgiving Day dinner and get the call to respond. Or the call can come at three o'clock in the morning. You never know."

Although people recognize the role of the firefighter, according to Peters, not enough acknowledgment is given to the sacrifices made by an individual firefighter's family. "Every firefighter in Franklin County has a family. People don't think about that. Those family members deserve as much credit for providing the support structure for our firefighters."

If you have any questions about fire prevention and safety, please contact your local fire department, or call the Montague Center Volunteer Fire Department at 367-2757.



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BY DAVID DETMOLD

TURNERS FALLS - Building inspector David Jensen gave an update to the selectboard on Monday, September 22nd, on the progress of the town's case against Gary Kosuda, of Fort Lauderdale, owner of the derelict Railroad Salvage building in the Patch. Judge Dina Fein, of the Massachusetts Housing Court, found Kosuda in contempt of court on Friday, September 12th, for failing to follow the court's earlier injunctions to stabilize and secure the building and ordered him not to leave the state until he returned to court on Friday, September 19th.

On the 19th, Kosuda showed up in court with a structural engineer, Jensen said, and reported to the judge about the discussions he had held with a demolition contractor and an abatement contractor about removing asbestos from the accessible areas of the property.

"He has concluded that demolishing the four story section of the building was the preferred alternative at the moment," said Jensen. That part of the building - the major section - has been steadily collapsing in the direction of Power Street since May 27th of 2006, forcing the town to block off that road, one of only two access routes to the densely populated neighborhood known as the South End, or simply, the Patch.

More than 50 residents of the Patch signed a petition calling on the town to take action to reopen Power Street earlier this summer, and left a selectboard meeting in July with spokesperson Nancy Aubrey angrily denouncing the board for giving the neighborhood, "No satisfaction."

On the 19th, according to Jensen, Judge Fein allowed Kosuda two more weeks to produce an environmental assessment of the work that would be required to clean up, stabilize parts of the building, or demolish other parts of the structure, which was built in the 19th century as the Griswold Cotton Mill. The town asked to have a receiver appointed to administer the project at Kosuda's expense, but Jensen said, "The judge was wary of placing another level of bureaucracy on the situation. Mr. Kosuda's behavior is now under the direction of the court." He said Fein assured the town, "We're not going to drop the ball."

Kosuda was allowed to leave the state, before his next scheduled court appearance in two weeks. Jensen said the town is seeking to have Kosuda's name attached to the lawsuit, rather than naming only his limited liability holding company, Kosudaville LLC.

Jensen said the court was aware that the onset of winter would complicate cleanup operations at the building, which lacks a roof in most areas. "The judge took note that timeliness is important," he

said. "We're down to assembling numbers and a time schedule."

Strathmore Report

Moving right along the power canal, the board heard a presentation from Eric Benardin, an engineer from Fuss and O'Neil, of West Springfield, and Mark Sternick, architect, from Dietz Architects of Florence, discussing access, utility and structural issues relating to redevelopment of the Strathmore Mill. The report was prepared using \$80,000 the town received from a competitive state grant under the auspices of the Chapter 43-D special permitting law, offering technical assistance for the redevelopment of priority sites coupled with 120 day permitting. Montague is preparing for permitting the eventual redevelopment of the Strathmore with an additional \$20,000 from the same grant, according to town planner Dan Laroche.

In contrast to the Strathmore study produced by Finegold Alexander and Associates for the town of Montague in 2005, when the town was considering buying the property for \$300,000, Fuss and O'Neil's approach was characterized by an examination of the engineering issues, rather than the market feasibility of redeveloping the mill. The 2005 proposal sank under the weight of a \$14 million rehab estimate for the entire complex, \$12 million more than the level of debt financing the consultants said the project would be able to support in rents. Fuss and O'Neil's report did not take issue with the cost estimates employed in the earlier report, roughly agreeing with Finegold Alexander that the project could support approximately \$2,170,500 of debt for construction.

Of the cost estimates the new report did provide, the main emphasis was on repair or replacement of the existing pedestrian access bridge, which is structurally unsound. To correct the structural deficiencies and raise the footbridge to the level where it would no longer need stairs at either end, thus meeting ADA code, would cost \$619,000 to \$711,000, Fuss and O'Neil said. Repairing the existing bridge would be the moderately less expensive approach, although this would require the addition of a 60-foot truss support span at the Canal Street end of the structure. Replacing the entire structure with a 210-foot prefabricated steel truss span would cost only about \$100,000 more, the consultants said. Both alternatives would include a roof for the price estimated.

Fuss and O'Neil also examined the possibility of expanding parking for the Strathmore, both on the Canal Street side of the canal and on the roughly two acre mill site itself. With the demolition of an attached structure on the west side of Building #1 (now

standing alone, since the fire of 2007 that destroyed Building #10) additional space for onsite parking could be developed, with up to 29 spaces available on either side of that building.

Additionally, looking at the parking lots that are potential available within 300 feet of the pedestrian bridge, including at the former Dubois Garage lot, the consultants estimated it would be possible to create up to 234 parking spaces, although the use of part of the Great Falls Discovery Center lot would have to be negotiated.

As for utilities, the report concluded that new sewer, potable water, and electric lines should be hung off the pedestrian bridge. As for structural issues, the consultants conducted visual inspections of the mill buildings, and determined that the fire damage to Buildings #1 and #10 was not extensive, and could be addressed primarily by replacing the former elevator shaft in Building #1, where a new roof and roof support timbers have already been installed. Additionally, a new elevator and staircase should be built at the point where the new footbridge joins the mill complex, where Building #4 and Building #1 meet. From here, access to all the other contiguous buildings in the complex would be available. Extensive repointing and some repair of the existing masonry will be required, particularly in the area of the existing stairwell in Building 4 and the roof of Building #1, but much of the repointing work can be spread out over time.

The consultants believed the stand along building near Southworth, Building #11 would be ideally suited for artist live work space, with up to 20 units, including some lofts, if new staircases were installed at both ends of that building and some of the floors with low beam heights were altered.

The consultants suggested light industry in Building #1, left largely in as-is condition for the first phase of redevelopment, until rents or availability of capital allowed for further phases of renovation to the rest of the 244,482 square foot complex.

Additionally, Benardin and Sternick noted "several smaller buildings in disrepair," at the east end of the complex. "We recommend they be removed," Sternick said.

Town planner Dan Laroche said the new report emphasized repair or replacement of the existing footbridge because, "That's something the public sector is going to have to make work."

Selectboard chair Allen Ross said repair of the footbridge, currently owned by First Light Power, "is in the negotiation phase," with the utility company, which has a deeded responsibility to provide access to the mill site.

Ross called the Strathmore Mill "absolutely key to the

economic future of this town, in so many ways."

The Strathmore is currently owned by John Ancil, who has hoped to interest investors in his plans to renovate it and establish a state of the art film and video production facility and school, in a primarily pedestrian and bicycle accessed campus, at the site.

Town administrator Frank Abbondanzio said Ancil will be required to pay half the back property taxes that are still due at the site, a figure in excess of \$93,000, on January 1st of 2009.

Laroche said, "If Swift River Group [Ancil's company] isn't able to move forward with the Strathmore, we have something to provide a developer if the town decides to move ahead and market the site to a developer. The information [in the consultant's report] will make it more feasible for a developer," to consider acquiring the site. He also noted that it would cost between \$500,000 and \$600,000 to remove and dispose of the rubble from the arson fire of May 26th, 2007, since the debris was contaminated with asbestos.

Heritage Landscapes

In other news, Laroche received the board's support for a grant application he will submit this week to the Department of Conservation and Recreation to provide technical assistance to the town in developing an inventory of 'heritage landscapes,' which could be either rural or urban in nature. These vistas should have cultural and historic significance for the community.

LaRoche said a proposal from Native American tribes to have the town of Montague partner with them to make Montague a destination for 'preservation tourism' would be "a wonderful fit" for the heritage landscape program. He encouraged Native American groups to add their list of heritage landscapes to the town's inventory, if Montague received the competitive grant.

Selectboard chair Allen Ross is meeting with the United Southern and Eastern Tribes at their conference in Nashville, TN this weekend to discuss the preservation tourism idea.

Pastor Sohyung Ryu and Chong Collete, from the Greatness Life Korean Church in Millers Falls asked for and received a letter from the selectboard in support of Ryu's efforts to clear up his immigration status with the Immigration and Naturalization Service. The INS has disputed with the four year old church, which has fifteen members, whether the church is able to support Ryu as a full time minister. Collete said she was willing to support Ryu personally, if the church could not. The selectboard sent a letter saying they were aware of the church's activities in Millers Falls, and the documentation Collete had mustered to support Ryu's petition for legal resident

status.

Shea Sprinklers

Abbondanzio said the town had been recently informed, following an inspection of the Shea Theater, that the sprinkler heads in the fire suppression system had been rendered non-functional long ago when the theater was painted. The sprinkler heads also received a coat of paint, making them inoperable. The town will use \$5100 in program income money to replace the 51 sprinkler heads, and the work will be done as soon as possible. The fire chief was advised of the problem.

The board granted permission for Travis LeDoyt and the Lin Preston Band to play on the L Street side of Patty Cake Patty Cake on Sunday, October 5th from noon to 2:00 p.m. in conjunction with the Arts and Leaves Studio Walking Tour. The performance will be amplified, and LeDoyt will let the neighbors know in advance of the concert.

The board granted permission to the Peaceful Palm yoga studio to place a sandwich board directional sign at the corner of Avenue A and 3rd Street for a two week trial period. Ross spoke of his concern that a rejuvenating business district could become cluttered with such signs on Avenue A, and may require a tighter policy in time to come. Building inspector Jensen said the particular location of this sign could be problematic for handicapped access to the sidewalk, with the onset of winter approaching.

National Recognition for Community Atlas Project

BY JOSH GAMMON & LINDSEY WILSON
TURNERS FALLS -

Around this time last year, Hannah Neville's honors Earth Science class and a few of Deb Partridge's Microsoft Office students collaborated to create nationally recognized, award-winning maps for the Community Atlas Project. After overcoming some daunting obstacles, they were pleased to learn that theirs was the top entry among the participating high schools nationwide.

Hannah Neville, Deb Partridge, and Doug Finn, teachers at Turners Falls High School, took a course that outlined and described the uses of the ArcGIS program, which is mapping software developed by ESRI, the Environmental Systems Research Institute. Neville then asked her students if they would be willing to take on the monumental task of mapping their own community, using the software.

As senior Tranae Gallagher explained, "We were asked to make maps of our town and our community, to try and represent what our community means to us." Little did the students know at the beginning of last school year that they would have to learn the program and produce these maps by November 7th!

The class got started late and immediately ran into roadblocks. The program had

not been installed onto the school's server yet, nor had the

difficulties with the computers. "It was hard because we couldn't get a certain website to find pictures to show us examples," said Gallagher.

Each group of students had a different set of data to collect. For example,

one group identified where young people tend to gather and socialize by taking a "walk up and down the bike path," said senior Nicole Dubay.

Shortly after their inquiries around town began, they learned that the deadline to complete the mapping project was sooner than they had thought, making their task even more difficult. Throughout the process, the students encountered and surmounted many challenges.

After they successfully completed the maps, the participating students felt an immense sense of pride. Seeing some of the other entries, they realized the countless hours spent on their maps had paid off. After contending successfully against several other schools around the county, the class competed at a national level. As a prize for their labor, Turners Falls High School received free systemwide use of the ArcGIS software. More importantly, Turners became, "the national exemplar for 2007-2008," recounted Neville with pride.

students been taught how to use it. Nevertheless, they took on the daunting task with a "can-do attitude," Neville said.

Sarah Tourscher, a student teacher of Neville's, provided invaluable support due to her experience with the ArcGIS program. But even with her help and training, "It took us about two months to create our maps and complete them to the best of our ability," senior Eric Dumas recalled.

The students went through the towns using GPS navigators and collected the necessary GPS points, which took two days in itself. The process of transferring the points into the program did not always succeed, however.

"Evan [Bruso] and I were in China, according to ours," laughed senior Angela Marguet, reminiscing about wrestling with the GPS technology.

Along with hours spent during the school day, the students felt committed enough to this project to spend hours after school working on it as well. When asked what presented the greatest problem, students readily agreed it was



Open House at Sheffield

BY BRIDGET SWEET
TURNERS FALLS - A line of eager families formed outside of Sheffield Elementary School's doors beneath the Open House sign on September 25th. They were greeted warmly by PTO members Laura Cooper and Sue Dresser, who passed out the 2008-2009 handbook to all and sundry, offered sign-ups for the PTO Halloween festival and library work bee, and ballots for the 2008-09 school council members. Cherie Cloutier and Maureen Horrigan from Stop and Shop of Greenfield offered family sign-ups for their Bonus Bucks program.

Inside, families toured their students' classrooms. The hallways held a joyful buzz as old friends greeted one another, while music teacher Steve Damon played his recorder and students created headbands at art teacher Nancy Meaghan's table.

Abbe Bryant, the new director of the 21st Century Community Learning Center full day program offered sign-ups for the rest of the school year.

Former Montague Center students happily showed off to new friends their vibrant day and night nature murals outside the library and their ceramic nature tiles above the water fountains.

Students in each classroom displayed their work. Mrs. Calkins' third graders bounced about the room as parents signed up for parent teacher conferences; Mrs. Tucker greeted former students while answering questions from her new second graders' parents. Mrs. Hazlett's fourth graders' desks sported poster-sized self-portraits and writing samples.

Nancy Daniel-Greene's

computer lab room was especially busy. "All the students have their own log-ins and their own storage space on the network," she explained. "We received new furniture, new computers, and a Smart Board this year." Students peppered her with questions as she demonstrated how the Smart Board works.

Each class will have scheduled computer time.

By six o'clock, families filed into the auditorium for an all-school meeting, while Damon played, "The Ants Go Marching Two by Two, Hurrah," on the piano. Colorful peace banners hung from the balcony and added to the cheer.

Principal Elizabeth Musgrave thanked everyone for coming. "You have terrific children. We've had a great first four weeks. I know every child wants to show you their work. Two big goals for this year are to build community for our children, and we want to partner with you. I urge you to communicate with us. My door is open to you."

Physical education teacher Ron Wood arranged a bike helmet give away on Friday, September 26th, courtesy of the Greenfield Kiwanis Club. Over 100 Sheffield students attended and received free helmets.

Upcoming events include a Family Math Blast on October 16th, for parents of third, fourth and fifth graders, with math games in the cafeteria for the children, and MCAS support in the auditorium for the parents.

At the Open House, student Michelle Vassar summed up the sentiments of many as she left with her mother: "I like our school!" It looks like a promising year for the New Sheffield School.

HIGHLIGHTS FROM THE MONTAGUE POLICE LOG

Abandoned Bike, Auto Theft. Hmm...

Tuesday, 23

1:20 p.m. Report of trespassing at St. Ann's/St. Mary's Cemetery, Turners Falls. Investigated.

Wednesday, 9/24

3:22 p.m. Report of accident, pedestrian, in front of Bank of America on Avenue A, Turners Falls.

4:32 p.m. Report of accident with personal injury in Montague. Arrested juvenile, age 16. Charged with driving to endanger and speeding.

Thursday, 9/25

4:36 a.m. Officer initiated arrest of [redacted] on a default warrant.

9:45 a.m. Assisted other agency

arresting [redacted] Charged with probable cause for outside agency.

7:34 p.m. Report of domestic disturbance at a J Street address, Turners Falls. Subject taken into protective custody.

Friday, 9/26

8:51 a.m. Report of larceny at the Waste Water Treatment Plant, Greenfield Road, Montague.

2:14 p.m. Report of abandoned bike at a Vladish Avenue address, Turners Falls. Bike brought to station.

Saturday, 9/27

8:45 p.m. Following a traffic stop, arrested [redacted]

[redacted] Charged with operation of an unregistered motor vehicle, marked lanes violation, possession of class D drug, operating a motor vehicle under the influence of liquor, second offense and failure to wear seat belt.

11:07 p.m. Report of domestic disturbance at a Third Street address, Turners Falls. Investigated.

Sunday, 9/28

1:36 a.m. Following a traffic stop, arrested [redacted]

[redacted] Charged with motor vehicle lights violation, operating a motor vehicle under the influence of liquor, second offense, operating to endanger, leaving the scene of property damage, failure to

stop at stop sign and marked lanes violation.

2:36 p.m. Report of burglary / breaking and entering at a Third Street address, Turners Falls. Investigated.

4:15 p.m. Arrested [redacted] on a straight warrant.

4:25 p.m. Report of vandalism at a Millers Falls Road address, Turners Falls.

5:23 p.m. Report of larceny at St. Mary's Cemetery, Turners Falls.

7:27 p.m. Report of motor vehicle theft from Rendezvous parking lot, Third Street, Turners Falls. Investigated.

Monday, 9/29

2:15 p.m. Report of larceny from Montague Mini Mart, Main Street, Montague. Referred to an officer.

Tuesday, 9/30

11:22 a.m. Report of larceny from Rite Aid, Avenue A, Turners Falls.

3:00 p.m. Report of motor vehicle theft from a Franklin Street address, Millers Falls.

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GILL from pg 1

brakes are in need of replacement. It is starting to leak fluids, and the seals are getting weak. It is time to replace it. Heaven forbid it goes down this winter!"

Selectboard member Lee Stevens said if the front end loader is out of commission the highway department will be unable to spread salt and sand.

The towns of Gill and Montague have received letters from Jeff Wulfson, Associate Commissioner of the Department of Elementary and Secondary Education, informing them that the DESE intends to begin consideration of the issue of setting a final budget for the Gill-Montague school district immediately, and requesting input from the towns on the matter.

If the towns and the GMRSD school committee cannot reach agreement on a budget by December 1st, the state will set the budget for the schools and mandate the assessments the towns shall pay.

"The four boards need to get together to deal with the DESE letter," said selectboard member Ann Banash on Monday.

Tuesday at 5:00 p.m., a joint meeting of the selectboards and finance committees of Gill and Montague had convened in the Montague town hall.

Banash noted that Gill had received "about \$20,000" in relief on their school assessment for the temporary school budget, or about \$5,000 less per quarterly bill. As she made this comment, Banash raised her index finger in the air and twirled it around, expressing a degree of enthusiasm.

Before the Gill-Montague schools received a Pothole grant of \$255,000 from the state last week, half of which the school committee directed to be used to immediately reduce town assessments, Gill was being billed \$369,300.50 every three months to run the schools. After Gill received credit for 16% of half the Pothole grant, the town's quarterly bill dropped to \$364,200.50, according to administrative assistant Tracy

Rogers.

The adjusted assessment did not appear to placate the selectboard.

"When town meeting sets a budget, the departments have to live with it," Stevens fumed. "Then why in blazes doesn't the school department have to abide by it?"

"It's only regional school districts that don't," rejoined selectboard chair Nancy Griswold.

The town is still facing a budget gap of \$238,000 for the current year. "We're never going to get a \$238,000 override," stated Banash

The town presently has about \$95,000 in the stabilization fund.

The board went over departmental spending for the year to date with Rogers. Despite a lightning strike at town hall that prompted repairs to the alarm system, and the cost of an extra issue of the town newsletter in advance of the district meeting, "We'd be in line if we had a balanced budget," said Banash.

"But we don't," said Rogers.

This brought Banash back to the topic of the school committee. "They need help. They need somebody else looking over their budget."

Griswold added, "They don't understand our plight."

Fire chief Gene Beaubien came in to ask the board's advice on whether his department should send a fire truck to the Turners Falls High School Booster Day parade, on October 4th, and if so, how to pay for the gas, considering the board has instituted a spending freeze for non-essential travel. At first the board was inclined to have the fire truck stay home this year.

"We're sending a message: 'We can't afford to go because of you,'" said Stevens.

But when Banash pointed out, "Our kids go to the high school," the board relented and left it to Beaubien's discretion whether to have the department send a truck to the parade, and to the annual bonfire at Northfield Mount Hermon.

As they went through the town warrants, the board decided to send only a first quarter

payment on the bill for operating the Gill-Montague senior center for the current fiscal year. Gill's share of the senior center's '09 costs amounted to \$4,850; the board instructed Rogers to pay only \$1,212 of that bill for now. Gill's portion of the senior center is on a possible cut list, should the budget gap persist and an override fail by the end of the calendar year.

Sharing a Chief

As another possible cost-saving measure, the board continued discussing the possibility of sharing a police chief with the town of Bernardston, and now with the added possibility of sharing the position with the town of Northfield too. Earlier on Monday, Banash had met with representatives of the selectboards of both towns, who are in the process of seeking permanent chiefs, and discussed the possibility of sharing a chief; but only if that chief is Gill's current chief of police, David Hastings.

"We have David under contact," said Banash, who added it would make no sense for Gill to explore the possibility of sharing a chief if it were anyone other than Hastings.

"He has the personality to make this work," said Griswold.

"We all agreed it wouldn't work with just two towns. It has to be three. The only way any of us can save any money on this is in the chief's salary," Banash said.

Details of which town a shared chief would answer to, and how his salary and benefits would be paid for, remain to be worked out. The boards of the other two towns will discuss the proposal, and another joint meeting will be set up if they are interested in pursuing the matter.

"This could get us better coverage at less cost," Stevens opined.

Banash said that sharing a chief differs from regionalizing the police departments of the three towns, and should not

see GILL pg 11

99% of us think it's important to make clear family rules about teen drinking.

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Arts and Leaves

BY KAREN STINCHFIELD
TURNERS FALLS- With the trees along the Avenue in their autumn finery, the Arts and Leaves Turners Falls Open Studio & Downtown Walking Tour returns this weekend, featuring thirteen downtown Turners Falls studios, galleries, cultural centers, eateries, Saturday and Sunday starting at 10:00 a.m.

Along with long-time tour favorites Jack Nelson at Carriage House Designs, Great Lighting, Peterman's Baskets and Bowls, and Hotsapp Woodworks, this season's downtown walking tour is offering some new attractions, including the Deerfield Valley Art Association (DVAA) Gallery, the Peaceful Palm Studio, and the Montague

Business Association's Sunday morning Pancake Breakfast.

The DVAA Gallery displays the work of its many members, and will be featuring the work of five Turners Falls and Montague Center artists during this event. The newly opened Peaceful Palm Studio, which offers individuals and families support on their personal paths to wellness through movement and art, will feature the artwork of Andrea Mizula-Jones.

The Brick House Community Resource Center will again be offering the public the opportunity to purchase locally made, quality art and craft work through its Silent Art Auction. A wide variety of donated artwork will be available for viewing and bidding throughout the

weekend, beginning with a sneak preview and artist reception on Friday, October 3rd, from 6:00 to 9:00 p.m. Bidding will close on all items at 5:00 p.m. on October 5th, with proceeds benefiting the community-based programs at The Brick House. Auction items can be viewed at www.thebrick-houseinc.org.

The Hallmark Museum of Contemporary Photography, between Galleries 52, 65, and 85, will be exhibiting the work of Lois Greenfield and Paul Caponigro. The Great Falls Discovery Center continues to offer visitors the chance to discover the beauty of the Connecticut River Watershed as well as shop at the Museum Store for nature-themed books, toys, and crafts.

There's delicious food in the village too! In addition to the newly-formed Montague

Business Association's Sunday morning Pancake Breakfast, 2nd Street Baking Co., which will be celebrating its first anniversary with this event, will be serving up homemade treats and delicious soups. Visitors to the bakery will also enjoy the work of Turners Falls artist Ericka Almeida, who will be showcasing her handcrafted wearable lampworked bead art, as well as oil paintings by Bridget Bresnahan, and photography of Turners Falls by Courtney Goodrum. Patty Cake Patty Cake will be offering home-style breakfast with a side of live music on both days, as well as deli-style

sandwiches. The Rendezvous, which now opens at 11:00 a.m. for the lunchtime crowd, is good for dinner and a drink after a day of wandering the village. In addition to the 1930s artwork found during renovation, 'The Voo' will also exhibit paintings by Turners Falls artist Stephen Cahill.

"Arts & Leaves" brochures are available at locations throughout the Pioneer Valley. Visit www.thebrickhouseinc.org & download the brochure. Then, come spend your day & evening in the village of Turners Falls! "Come early and stay late!"

Recycling at the Franklin County Fair Benefits Hockey Team

BY AMY DONOVAN
GREENFIELD - Did you put your empty water bottle or soda can into a recycling bin at the Franklin County Fair this year? If so, you did your part in recycling almost a ton of beverage containers!

As part of a Massachusetts Department of Protection Municipal Waste Reduction Grant, this spring the Franklin County Solid Waste Management District received 20 special event recycling bins. These bins are made from 100% recycled PET plastic, which is the same type of plastic water bottles are made from. The walls and lid of the recycling bin are clear to show the public how much is being recycled.

These bins were strategically placed around the fairgrounds to capture plastic and glass bottles, aluminum cans, and foodservice cans and jugs from food vendors. Fair attendees were pleased to see recycling bins in use at the fair.

The Greenfield High School Hockey Team Parents' Association teamed up with the Solid Waste District to collect and sort recyclable containers at the fair. In exchange for their efforts, the hockey team redeemed the 5-cent returnable bottles and cans.

On Monday morning after the fair, Greenfield DPW staff picked up the non-redeemable cans and bottles, such as water and juice bottles, and transported them to the

Greenfield Transfer Station for recycling.

As a fundraiser for their upcoming season, the hockey team redeemed over 4500 cans and bottles. Almost 1900 pounds of cans and bottles were sent to the Greenfield transfer station.

Add in the containers that the Hockey Team brought in for redemption, and almost a ton of cans and bottles were recycled!

Recycling at the Fair didn't stop there. A local biodiesel vendor took the used cooking oil, more than 1.5 tons of cardboard was recycled, and 13 pounds of plastic bottle caps, which are not recyclable in local recycling programs, were sent to the Aveda Re-Cap program. (Mail plastic twist off caps to: ACA Waste Services, 40 EADS Street in Babylon, NY 11704)

The DEP-sponsored event recycling bins are loaned out,

free of charge, to events across the county; you may have seen them at the Free Harvest Supper, Riverfest in Shelburne Falls, the Bridge of Flowers 10K, or the Old Deerfield Craft Fairs. If you would like to borrow these or any of the District's recycling bins for your special event, please contact the District office.

The District can be reached by phone: (413) 772-2438 or e m a i l : info@franklincountywastedistrict.org.



Arts and Leaves Tour stop #4 is serving up Fried Dough with Maple Cream and the artwork of Holyoke native Bridget Brenahan and Orange native Courtney Goodrum

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More info: Pam Kostanski, 863-9900 or 863-8063

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Edith Hunsberger from Shutsbury
 Sheep
 Deerfield Valley Art Assoc Gallery

- Hallmark Museum Gallery 85
- Rendezvous
- Great Lightn
- The Peaceful

also at this location:
 Andrea Mizula-Jones



Stephen Cahill from Turners Falls
 Lost Letters & Rested Wings
 Rendezvous

- The Brick House House
- Silent Art Auction
- Jack Nelson @ Carriage House Designs
- Patty Cake Patty Cake
- Pancake Breakfast Montague Business Association
- 2ND Street Banking Co. *also at this location:* Maple Street Glassworks
- Peterman's Baskets And Bowls *also at this location:* Hotsapp Wordwork

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Uranium Mining in Australia

BY DAVID DETMOLD

NORTHAMPTON - Two anti-nuclear activists from Australia dropped by the Media Education Foundation in Northampton on Friday night, to educate a pre-presidential debate crowd about the state of nuclear affairs in the leading uranium producing nation and continent in the world.

Marcus Atkinson and Kerrie Anne (K.A.) Garlick, both from Melbourne, began their presentation by screening an overview of the global energy and climate crisis called *Climate of Hope*. The film was produced by Scott Ludlam, a Senator for the Greens Party from Western Australia. Among the facts brought out in the film are these:

Australia contains 30% of the world's uranium supplies. With the world price of uranium rising, the Australian Labor Party, recently returned to power, has decided to reverse a longstanding federal ban on new uranium mining, with a view toward boosting uranium exports. Australia presently has no nuclear plants, and had



The Ranger Uranium Mine, in the Northern Territory of Australia

located in a World Heritage listed area, due to the region's environmental sensitivity and proximity to a large Aboriginal population, that still uses the land for hunting and gathering.

In the southeast, the Beverly mine, operated by a U.S. company, General Atomics, continues to use a process called in situ leaching, pumping acid into the ground to liquefy and extract uranium ore as a slurry. This process has been banned in the United States and Europe.

The third operating mine, the Olympic Dam mine in Roxby Downs, also in the southeast, is slated for expansion, to become the largest operating uranium mine in the world. In order to make this happen, the industry plans to build a 500 kilometer pipeline to bring water from a desalination plant at Adelaide, by the ocean, to supply the mine, which is already the largest user of groundwater in the southern hemisphere.

"They have created a monster. I don't know how we're going to deal with it," said Garlick.

Atkinson and Garlick have been traveling the world by foot with an organization called Footprints for Peace, alerting people to the dangers of nuclear technology. They have been walking in various continents since 2003.

previously restricted uranium mining to just three locations, planning to phase these out when their recoverable yellowcake was depleted.

"Every stage of uranium mining is heavily dependent on cheap fossil fuels," the film's narrator intones. "With high grade uranium being swiftly depleted, more energy from fossil fuels is required to get the same amount of energy out, increasing greenhouse gas emissions for nuclear power to the level of gas fueled power plants. There is no way nuclear power can solve the climate crisis."

Nuclear power, which presently accounts for 16% of global electricity supplies, depends on enriched uranium as a fuel source. That is the same material, less highly

enriched, that is required to manufacture nuclear bombs.

To begin with, 666 tons of yellowcake ore is needed to produce one ton of uranium. Two hundred tons of uranium are needed to fuel an average nuclear reactor for one year, leaving 130,000 tons of radioactive waste behind at the mines. This debris, called tailings, are commonly dumped next to the mines, and contained by huge dams, some made of concrete up to five stories tall. The mines, commonly located in desert regions, are highly water intensive, using 33,000 tons of water a day, the largest water users in a country which has been stricken for decades by drought.

The largest mine, Ranger, in the Northern Territory, is

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HIGHLIGHTS FROM THE ERVING POLICE LOG

Erratic Fatigue on Route 2

Tuesday, 9/23
 9:10 p.m. Report of coyotes at Maple Avenue. Observed trash bags in roadway. Patrolled area, nothing found.

Wednesday, 9/24
 4:53 p.m. Citation issued to [redacted] for operating a motor vehicle with a suspended license,

subsequent offense.

Thursday, 9/25
 2:00 p.m. Report of nuisance barking at River Street residence and junk cars in yard. Spoke with resident and advised of unregistered motor vehicle bylaws.

Friday, 9/26
 4:15 p.m. Report of larceny of checks. Under investigation.

Saturday, 9/27
 5:00 p.m. Citation issued to [redacted] Greenfield for operating a motor vehicle after suspension of license.

9:10 p.m. Report of erratic operation of a motor vehicle on Route 2 westbound at Erving Center. Stopped same at French King Bridge. Operator fatigued.

10:39 p.m. Report of alarm on State Road. Checked same. Building secure.

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HALLMARK
from page 1

at 1/2000th of a second - moments of movement invisible to the naked eye.

Greenfield's split-second timing truly is remarkable. Indeed, the exhibition is a marvelous homage to human form, to movement, to transcendence of the mundane.

Greenfield's images — all unmanipulated — engage the viewer on a number of levels. First, there is the corporeal aesthetic itself. The lithe, incredibly agile figures in motion are themselves marvelous objects of beauty. Second, her sense of composition is continually arresting. Despite the need for the precision timing required to capture the moment, Greenfield is so accomplished a photographer that each image is situated so as to maximize the drama, the sweep, and the lines of force and motion. Finally, and perhaps ultimately most engaging, is the narrative inherent in the dynamic she has ensnared. Or as she noted, "I



Lois Greenfield, Celestial Bodies #22, at Hallmark Gallery 85

love impossible looking situations that allude to the moments before and after the shutter's click. I want the viewer to wonder, "Where is he coming from? How will he land?"

The combination of these

elements all contribute to a sense of awe and mystery. Each photograph is a unique event in both time and space, since the moment visible in the image existed in a time frame impossible to actually see with the naked eye. And it's highly

subjects. She has an utter belief in "staying open to chance or accident."

And what miracles have resulted. In "Celestial Bodies #22," for instance, her subject seemingly sits atop a fragmenting jute rope. In

unlikely that even Greenfield could capture that exact moment ever again.

While Greenfield carefully composes each photo, her work utilizes few props, mainly fabric, mylar and mirrors. A sense of composition, however, does not equate with staging. What she captures on film is the spontaneous and highly unpredictable ascent or descent of her

"Infernal Souls #18" blue fabric draped around two dancers creates a sense of mystery in which the bodies become objects. But are the trapped bodies attempting to move away from one another, or closer?

In her talk Greenfield stressed how what interested her most was not the moment when dancers reached the acme of their leaps; rather it was the moment just before, with the aspiration evident, or just after, as the tension is relaxed. The importance of this realization is that movement is more precisely visible while the motion is still gathering or already on the verge of dissipating. And this movement creates an extraordinary dynamic in which gravity is defied for at least one brief shining second. It's not so unlike a comment once made by one of the rope-dancing Flying Wallendas: "To be on the wire is life; the rest is waiting."

Lois Greenfield is adept at waiting in order to capture that exquisite moment on (or off) the wire.



GILL from pg 8 and should not require special enabling legislation.

Mariamante Marketing

The board approved a \$62,000 contract with the engineering firm of Tighe and Bond to come up with a conceptual design and marketing study for the town-owned 12-acre Mariamante property on the corner of West Gill and Main Road. "They had really prepared," for the meeting with the Mariamante steering committee, Banash said.

Tighe and Bond will study the capacity of the pumping station to handle extra sewer use, if water and sewer lines are extended to the property. A state grant may be sought to upgrade the capacity of the pump station. The engineering firm said it will work with UMass

Archaeological Services to determine the issues that may affect development on the site. "Avoiding the area," where Native American relics have been located, "will probably be the best solution," Banash said.

The money for the marketing study came from a state expedited permitting grant of \$100,000 for the Mariamante property. The study should be complete by June 30th of 2009.

The board decided to list the town's oldest police cruiser, a 2003 Crown Victoria, as surplus property. "Having four police cruisers and two fulltime guys makes no sense," said Banash. "It doesn't make any sense to park it and insure it."

The board also appointed Gill resident Robert Whittier as a part time police officer for the Gill department, a position he held in years past.



POKER from pg 1 What makes squirrels' cheeks look so darn funny? The river? That body of water next to the mill? So I was more than a little hesitant entering a tournament with folks who really seemed to know what they were doing.

Any nervousness I had quickly disappeared when I discovered what a friendly, easy-going group of people were involved in this game. Everyone was more than patient when I would flip a card while dealing or make a 'string bet' (calling a bet and then raising) without knowing it.

Over the course of weeks my game got better. I learned new strategies, and even began recognizing the various styles of play happening around me. I also got to know the regulars at the Tuesday night game, and looked forward to seeing the same faces week after week. Lo and behold,

I even made it to that famous final table once or twice.

I'd have to say the highlight, though, came only a few weeks in when I ended up with a straight flush, the second best hand you can have in Texas Hold 'Em (five consecutive cards of the same suit).

I barely even knew what I had, but when the time came and I flipped those cards, the folks at my table flipped as well. Tom, who was organizing the games back then, quickly pulled out his cell phone to take a photo.

Move over, Vegas! Even a straight flush with no money at stake can make a girl famous here in Millers Falls.

The Texas Hold 'Em tournament takes places every Tuesday evening from 7:30 - 11:00 p.m. at the Route 63 Roadhouse in Millers Falls. Be on time to get a seat!



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The Show Goes On

RECOVER PROJECT'S FIFTH ANNUAL SOBER MUSIC FESTIVAL

ALEX GOTTSCHALK GREENFIELD - Approximately 150 people braved drizzle and rain at the White Eagle Polish Picnic Grounds in Greenfield for the Recover Project's fifth annual sober music festival on Saturday, September 27th. Although the poor weather affected turnout, those who came were treated to a diverse roster of talent by local musicians, as well as fresh corn and potatoes from Hadley, coffee from Café Koko, ice cream from Bart's, a huge anniversary cake from 2nd Street Bakery in Turners Falls and chips and salsa

from Mesa Verde, along with all the hamburgers and hot dogs they could eat. Headlining the concert was Don White, out of Lynn, MA. Beginning the day on an introspective note, White performed a series of poignant and funny songs set off by tasteful acoustic guitar. White, who has recorded several CD's, also read from his recently published memoirs *Confessions of a C Student*. The passage, which related to White's prior drug use and subsequent rehabilitation, was enthusiastically received by the

crowd. Laurie Batog followed White with her own spin on the singer/songwriter genre, with a series of songs that drew from both traditional folk and darker acoustic indie rock. After Batog - who MC'ed the day's events - the duo Black Top Kenny brought forth a series of acoustic renditions of well known rock numbers that ranged from Blind Melon to an interpolation of The Doors' "The End" into Tool's "Sober".

Ratcheting up the intensity level, not to mention the volume, One Night Stand, a staple on the sober music circuit, blasted through the grey afternoon with a floor shaking set of blues and rock standards. Spearheaded by vocalists Lyssa Corey and Guy 'Spyder' Murphy, the Springfield area combo got the audience up and dancing.

Guitarist Mike Rondeau's muscular fretwork was particularly noteworthy.

Recently pared down from a

Stand, with their own brand of danceable blues rock. Their cover of Creedence Clearwater Revival's "Born on The Bayou" was an absolute highlight. Humble Streak brought not only a loyal local following, but was responsible for the sound system used that day, both of which were greatly appreciated by the Recover Project.

The staff of the Recover Project were happy with the outcome of the day. "Spirits were high despite the overcast weather... a lot of fun was had, we felt the recovery community was well represented. It's clearly obvious we have a great following who enjoy our events," said Dale

Jones, the Recover Project's volunteer coordinator, as she packed up her van.



Cutting the cake at the Recover Jam in Greenfield

five piece to a hard rocking power trio, Easthampton's Humble Streak maintained the energetic pace set by One Night

| MCTV Program (Ch. 17) Schedule: Oct. 3rd - 9th | |
|--|---|
| Eagle Cam: Not airing until further notice. | 10:00 am Valley Idols |
| | 12:30 pm White House Chronicles |
| | 6:00 pm Fabulous Maurice |
| | 7:00 pm Select Board |
| | 10:00 pm An Inside Look into Iran |
| Friday, October 3 | Tuesday, October 7 |
| 8:00 am Silly Wizard | 8:00 am Amanda |
| 9:30 am Special Town Meeting | 9:30 am Cal Ripken Baseball |
| 11:30 am The epics at the Vou | 11:30 am Children's mental health |
| 12:30 pm The Western Mass Democrat | 12:00 pm Fabulous Maurice |
| 6:00 pm On the Ridge | 1:00 pm Consider the Lilies |
| 6:30 pm Over the Falls | 6:00 pm Fossil Tracks |
| 7:00 pm GMRSD 9/23/08 | 7:00 pm GMRSD (9/23/08) |
| 9:00 pm Montague Update | 9:00 pm Montague Update |
| 10:00 pm Naturalist Laurie Sanders | 9:30 pm On the Ridge |
| 10:30 pm Physician Focus | 10:30 pm The Well Being: Sexual Abuse Healing |
| 11:30 pm On The Ridge | 11:30 pm White House Chronicles |
| Saturday, October 4 | Wednesday, October 8 |
| 8:00 am Why we were Born | 8:00 am White House Chronicles |
| 8:30 am Changing Face of Turners Falls | 9:00 am Wisdom Way Solar Village |
| 10:30 am GMRSD District Wide Meeting | 10:00 am UN Panel |
| 2:00 pm Independent Voices | 12:00 pm The Well Being: Sky Awareness |
| 6:00 pm Journey to Wissatinnewag | 1:00 pm Tiny Tim |
| 6:30 pm MCTV Video Camp | 6:00 pm The Western Mass Democrat |
| 7:00 pm Mohawk HS Performs at Disney | 6:30 pm Tiny Tim |
| 8:30 pm The Looming Crisis in Oil Depletion | 7:30 pm The Rise and Fall of Lake Hitchcock |
| 10:30 pm An Inside look into Iran | 8:30 pm Sue Mono Giri |
| Sunday, October 5 | 9:30 pm Safe and Green Campaign Forum |
| 8:00 am Reconciliation Ceremony | 11:00 pm Poetry Music Jam |
| 8:30 am Preachin the Blues | Thursday, October 9 |
| 9:30 am Silly Wizard | 8:00 am Silly Wizard |
| 10:30 am Senior Self Defense | 9:30 am Songs for Wee People |
| 1:00 pm Surviving the Vernon Reactor | 10:30 am Senses of Place |
| 6:00 pm Sustainable Energy | 12:00 pm Special Town Meeting |
| 7:00 pm Tapping Maple Ridge | 6:00 pm GCC Talent Show |
| 8:00 pm The Epics at the Vou | 7:00 pm Select Board |
| 9:00 pm The Flow of Time | 10:00 pm Independent Voices |
| 10:00 pm The Spirit of Lake Pleasant | 10:30 pm Discovery Center: Root Cellar |
| Monday, October 6 | |
| 8:00 am The Western Mass Democrat | |
| 8:30 am Underground Railway Concert | |

EROICA from page 1

Nickrenz said she first met the trio's cellist, Sara Sant'Ambrogio, at a summer music camp called Red Fox near Great Barrington. "We started performing together when we were pre-teens, and musically fell in love. We grew up together and managed to support each other musically and emotionally through all these years. We love each other's playing."

Following an injury that has forced Pena to take a hiatus from performing, Nickrenz and Sant'Ambrogio tried out a number of violinists before they found Susie Park, three years ago. "We understood each other musically from the first few notes. Sara and I just knew from the look in each other's eyes that we had found our perfect person. It's been a long honeymoon.

"She's like a musical soulmate now," said Nickrenz in a telephone interview from her

New York home. "Though she's from Australia, and younger than we are, we have some of the same background, and studied with some of the same teachers."

The club tour is an attempt to bring their music to new audiences in small venues from Columbus, OH to Providence, RI. They will play Club Helsinki in Great Barrington on November 2nd. And the tour will feature another "completely new departure for us," Nickrenz said, in that they will be putting aside their traditional acoustic instruments and performing on electric versions instead. Nickrenz will be at a Yamaha Motif keyboard, and Park and Sant'Ambrogio will be playing electric violin and cello. "They look space age. They're just wild! I'm like a kid in a candy store with all the new sounds," Nickrenz enthused.

The trio is using the club tour to launch their new CD, *American Journey*. Among the

original numbers they will perform is a four movement work by O'Conner, a collaborator of the late great Johnny Cash. O'Conner had been commissioned to write a piece for Eroica just at the time Cash passed away.

You can expect to hear many surprises from the trio at the Book Mill date.

"All his passion poured into the work. Each movement is a chapter in Johnny's life. "My June," a slow movement, is the heart and soul of the piece: you really feel the emotions of losing somebody."

The audience can expect to hear many new surprises from the trio at the Book Mill date. "They're not going to hear Schubert and Beethoven on electric instruments," Nickrenz promised. And if they concert doesn't sell out? "We'd love to play for five," she said.

Small chance of that.



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JESSICA HARMON ILLUSTRATION

THE HEALTHY GEEZER:

Is Laser Eye Surgery Safe?

BY FRED CICETTI

LEONIA, NJ - Q. *I'm thinking about getting LASIK eye surgery. Is it safe?*

LASIK, which stands for Laser-Assisted in Situ Keratomileusis, improves vision by reshaping the cornea, the clear covering of the front of the eye.

Using a laser, an eye surgeon can free patients of eyeglasses and contact lenses. The results of LASIK have been improving because of technological advances and the experience of surgeons. More than 90 percent of people who've undergone refractive (vision-correction) surgery don't have to wear glasses or contacts most of the

time.

LASIK is a relatively new technology. The first laser was approved for eye surgery in 1998. The long-term safety and effectiveness of LASIK is unknown.

According to the LASIK Study Task Force formed in 2007, studies indicate a 95.4 percent satisfaction rate among patients worldwide. The Task Force consists of the U.S. Food and Drug Administration, the American Society of Cataract and Refractive Surgery, the American Academy of Ophthalmology, and the U.S. National Eye Institute.

But of the 7.6 million people who have undergone the procedure in the United States since the 1990s, 140 have written letters of complaint to the FDA.

About 800,000 Americans underwent LASIK surgery in 2007, a slight increase from

2006.

Refractive surgery has risks that often require additional surgery. The following are some of these risks:

- Loss of lines on the vision chart that cannot be corrected with glasses, contact lenses, or more surgery.
- Diminished vision where there is low contrast, such as at night or in fog.
- Astigmatism, a condition in which the cornea is uneven and vision can be blurred. This can occur if your eye moves too much during surgery
- Glare around lights or double vision at night
- Severe dry-eye syndrome that causes discomfort and reduces visual quality.
- Infection
- Undercorrections
- Overcorrections

LASIK is an option if you are nearsighted, farsighted or have

astigmatism. Some people with presbyopia - a vision error that comes with age - may benefit from LASIK eye surgery. However, the surgery may give presbyopes clear distance vision, but poorer near vision.

Certain conditions preclude individuals from having LASIK. These include: cataracts, advanced glaucoma, corneal diseases, and corneal-thinning disorders.

During the eye exam prior to LASIK, the surgeon charts your eye to determine which areas of your cornea need to be altered. The surgery is then done with a laser programmed to remove the right amount of tissue in each location on the cornea.

During the surgery, you lie on your back in a reclining chair in an exam room. The surgery usually takes less than a half-hour. Often, LASIK is done on both eyes in the same sitting. In most

cases, your vision won't be better at first. Vision improves over several months.

After the procedure, your eyes may hurt, burn, itch or water for a few days. In addition, you may be sensitive to light and experience blurred vision for a week. You may also have dry eyes and difficulty driving at night for about four weeks after surgery. It may take up to three to six months for your vision to stabilize after surgery.

Refractive surgery is usually considered elective. Medicare and most insurance companies won't cover the costs. LASIK costs anywhere from \$800 to \$3,000 or more per eye.

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

Granny Lore



ILLUSTRATION: WEBSTER'S ONLINE DICTIONARY

BY KAREN ADAMS

GREAT FALLS - I call this column 'Granny Lore' for a number of reasons. First of all, I've now been a granny myself for four years, and I'm beginning to see one of the downsides of a life lived far away from our elders. There seems to be a lack of connection to grannies, who can pass on strategies for dealing with,

among other things, sick children. How does my daughter know when to call the doctor? Does she need to worry about how high the fever is, or more, how fast it climbs? What is a fever, anyway?

I remember when my little brother got croup. My parents set up a humidifier under a tent made by a sheet to help ease his breathing. Everyone had to be very careful to keep the door closed so the humidity wouldn't escape. The doctor came to our house, and as far as I remember he just monitored and let the illness run its course.

When my granddaughter got pneumonia, my daughter didn't know she could help by taking Zoe into the bathroom and running the shower to produce steam. She had books, of course, and she had the pedia-

trician. When was it necessary to see the doctor - who seems to be a very good doctor - but was she a bit over-keen to prescribe a drug? Would the steam from the shower trick have been enough, or did Zoe really need albuterol and prednisone?

Where do we get our information about medical care? I think that's a very good question. Most of us have an opinion about the health care industry, and often that opinion is critical. Most of us also have opinions about the pharmaceutical industry, and the usefulness of drugs. But where else can we get our questions answered?

When my child is having trouble breathing, what should I do? Is my mother or grandmother near enough to ask? If her opinion is different than the medical world's, how do I evaluate?

Earlier this year, I was asked to help prepare a presentation

on 'sustainable health care' for a conference at UMass. 'Sustainable health care'? What would that look like? Sustainability has been defined as 'a characteristic of a process or state that can be maintained at a certain level indefinitely'. It usually refers to ecological concerns, agriculture and development. Sustainability in terms of health care then becomes preventive care, or maybe maintaining-good-health care.

How much of that health maintenance can we do ourselves? When is it appropriate to seek out someone who specializes in health care? Would a granny count as a para-professional, based on her past experience in raising her own children, and the knowledge she may carry from her mother and grandmother?

I believe our bodies have an innate wisdom that, with proper support, will keep us healthy. I also believe that there are many

remedies for ill health that have been used for centuries that can help us do that.

I'd like to use this column to present this lore, collected by this granny. If your granny passed something on to you, please share it with others through this column.

And here's your tip for the day: cayenne pepper is a great energy booster, better than caffeine. Add a pinch of cayenne to a glass of water in the morning to get you going. Cayenne is also very high in calcium. (Here's the granny part.) I used to put a pinch of cayenne on my daughters' eggs - after the eggs were cooked; cooking the cayenne is what makes it hard on the stomach. Did that until they were two. They loved it!

Karen Adams is a local acupuncturist and a grandmother. You can reach her by email at kradams1@verizon.net at 863-0088.

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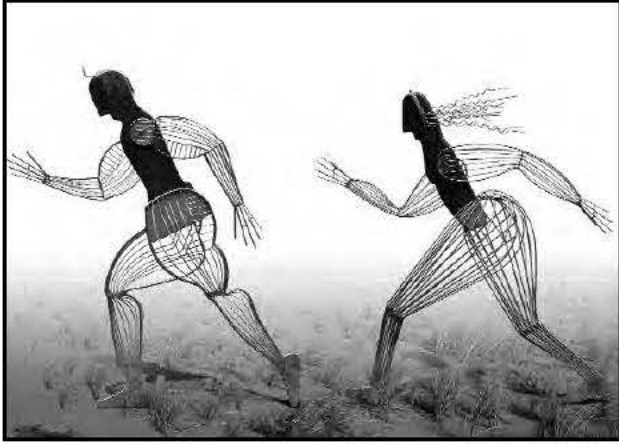
ARTS & ENTERTAINMENT



JACK COUGHIN ILLUSTRATION

FRIDAY, OCTOBER 3rd
At the Rendezvous, Turners Falls: Flashlight vs Dance or Die, \$3.

Deja Brew, Wendell: Reggae night: **Moss Production**, 9:30 to 11:30 p.m.



FRIDAY & SATURDAY, OCTOBER 3rd & 4th
Shantigar and Pilgrim Theatre presents Jean Claude van Itallie's, *The Tibetan Book of the Dead* or. *How not to do it Again!* Directed by Kim Mancuso, at The Maezumi Institute, Montague, 8 p.m. Directions www.zenpeacemakers.org. Continues 10/17 & 10/18 at 8 p.m. and 10/19 at 7 p.m. at Northampton Center for the Arts.

FRIDAY to SUNDAY, OCTOBER 3rd to 5th
Ja'Duke at The Shea Theatre, Turners Falls: *The Producers*. Co-written by Mel Brooks and Thomas Meehan. The Producers skewers Broadway traditions and takes on prisoners as it proudly proclaims itself an "equal opportunity offender!" Continues 10/10 to 10/12. Fri & Sat at 8 p.m., Sun. at 2 p.m. (413) 863-2281 ext. 2. Adults \$12/\$10 for 12 & under & 65 & older.

SATURDAY, OCTOBER 4th
Erving Fall Festival, Veteran's Field, 11 a.m. - 6 p.m. Fire Department serving hot dogs and hamburgers, cider-making demonstration, scarecrow and pumpkin painting. Old fashioned games, Karate demonstration,

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bingo, The Sundancers will Perform.

12th Annual Source to Sea Cleanup. Dozens of groups return for 4-state effort. Help out on the Connecticut River Watershed Council's Cleanup. 9 a.m. to noon, meet at the Discovery Center, Turners Falls, free. www.ctriver.org.

At The Rendezvous, Turners Falls: Doug Hewett Group jazz, \$3 cover.

Deja Brew, Wendell: Jazzy Blues with a taste of "Fist Fight Swing: **A Ghost Quartet**, 9 to 11 p.m.

Between The Uprights, 2nd Street, Turners Fall: Top 40 and Hip Hop music spun by DJ M.I.A. 10 p.m. no cover.

SATURDAY & SUNDAY, OCTOBER 4th & 5th
Arts & Leaves, Turners Falls Open Studios and Downtown Walking Tour. 10 a.m. til whenever you are finished! Open Artists' Studios, Bakeries with art and music, Great Falls Discovery Center, Hallmark Museum of Contemporary Photography and restaurants!

MONDAY, OCTOBER 6th
Hope & Olive Restaurant Soup & Games Night Benefit, 5. to 8 p.m. at 44 Hope Street, Greenfield. Free soup, bread, and board games. Entertainment by Arena Civic Theatre. A portion of the proceeds will go to Arena Civic Theatre. (413) 774-3150.

At The Rendezvous, Turners Falls: The Recyclers, guitar & tuba combo!

THURSDAY, OCTOBER 9th
Deja Brew, Wendell: Rock out with Betsy, Mark and Bruce to oldie cover tunes from the 60's and 70's with **Free Range**, 8 to 10 p.m.

FRIDAY, OCTOBER 10th
Great Falls Coffeeshouse: Francis Doughty. Sliding scale donation of \$6 - \$12. Great Falls Discovery Center, Turners Falls, 6:30 - 9 p.m.

SATURDAY, OCTOBER 11th

New England Forests and Global Warming. What role do New England forests play in the global warming story? Julian Hadley and Fisher Museum Coordinator John O'Keefe share expertise in forest canopy research and land use history. Followed by a 30 min. hike. Meet at Harvard Forest, Petersham. Limit 15 participants. To register: (413) 659-3714. Free. Ages 12 & up. 1:30 - 4:30 p.m.

At the Discovery Center, Turners Falls: Photographers' reception 1 to 3 p.m. Come meet wildlife photographers Don Cooper and Linda Henderson, exhibiting in the Great Hall this month.

Dancing With The Muse: Unique Evening of Contemplative Music and Movement with John and Miro Sprague, and Guests. 7:30 p.m. At The Maizumi Institute's House of One People, Montague. \$12.

SUNDAY, OCTOBER 12th
Rt. 63 Road House, Millers Falls: 2nd Sunday Comedy show. 7:30 p.m., 3 Comics for \$5.

SATURDAY, OCT 18th
Family Fun Day at Unity Park, Turners Falls, 1 to 3:30 p.m. Scarecrow stuffing, pumpkin carving, face painting and bake sale.

Wendell Full Moon Coffee House, Wendell: **Annie Hasset**. Benefit for the Montague Reporter.



"A travel guide to the afterlives a pendulum of fright and fun, it brings us face to face with the radiance and emptiness of our own minds." A special theater experience!! Jean Claude van Itallie's *"The Tibetan Book of the Dead"* performed by Court Dorsey, Kermit Dunkelberg, Susan Thompson & John vanEps. October 3 & 4 at 8 p.m. at the Maezumi Institute, Montague.

WEDNESDAY, OCTOBER 15th
The Greenfield Community College Chorus performance of music by Handel and Haydn at 12:15 p.m. The concert is part of the Mid-Week Music Series at All Souls Unitarian Church, Greenfield.

Great Falls Farmers Market: rain or shine, corner of 2nd St. & Ave A, Turners Falls. Farm products, baked goods, maple, crafts, 3 - 6 p.m.

Heart of the Valley Chorus Guest Night. Like to sing? We've got a place for you! At JFK Middle School, Florence, 7 p.m. No professional experience required. Info 665-0924, www.heartofthevalleychorus.org. **FRIDAY to SUNDAY,**

OCTOBER 17th to 19th
At The Shea Theater, Turners Falls: Arena Civic Theatre presents a hauntingly funny new musical *In Good Spirits*, by local author/composer Howard Odentz. Fri & Sat. at 8



Francis Doughty, an exciting folk instrumental guitarist performs at The Great Falls Coffee House, Turners Falls. At the Great Falls Discovery Center Friday, October 10th, 7 p.m.

p.m. Sunday Matinee at 2 p.m. Continues Oct.17th - 26th. Tickets \$13/adults, \$11 seniors & students.

FRIDAY, OCTOBER 25th
Nuclear-Free Jubilee, Brattleboro, VT. Beginning at 11 a.m. with a procession led by Bread & Puppet Theater, starting at Elm Street, between Flat and Canal, to the Brattleboro Town Common. Rally on the Common, speakers, music, info tables, and food! Musicians: MacArthur Family, Charlie King & Court Dorsey. Speakers Harvey Wasserman, Peter Shumlin, Gaye Symington, and Anthony Pollina. Info. at the Safe & Green Campaign, (413) 624-8858 rkehler@crocker.com

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FRI. 10/3 \$3 Flashlight vs. Dance or Die (disco-funk-indie-electro djs)

SAT. 10/4 \$3 Doug Hewett Group (jazz)

MON. 10/6 The Recyclers (guitar/tuba combo!)

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Saturday, 10/4, 9 - 11 p.m. Jazzy Blues **A Ghost Quartet**

Thursday, 10/9, 8 - 10 p.m. 60's & 70's Cover Tunes: **Free Range**

Friday, 10/10, 9 - 11 p.m. Indie Rock: **Wildwood Unplugged**

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- GHOST TOWN PG13**
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FRI, SAT, SUN 12:15 3:15
- NICK & NORAH'S INFINITE PLAYLIST PG13**
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Saving the Harvest



Basil is an extremely cold sensitive plant

BY LESLIE BROWN
MONTAGUE CITY - As I write this, we are experiencing our third day in a row of gentle, soaking rain. We actually needed it.

Once the July monsoons moved on, New England dried out well and began to enjoy an unblemished run of bright, warm days. Lately, the ground had become hard and dry and the lawn was threatening to turn brown. Now everything is bright green again and the trees have drunk deeply.

Yesterday, driving north in a light fog, I was surrounded by bright reds and oranges in the small trees at the edge of the road. The brilliant colors caught me by surprise. They are not yet showing in my yard or in my neighborhood. In fact, the local sugar maples look again as if they are succumbing to the disease which causes the leaves to curl and wither and turn a yellowish brown. Maybe they have been too dry for too long.

The brilliance as I traveled northward was in trees surrounding marshy areas, where perhaps there was a more con-

sistent level of water throughout the whole summer.

It's been an unusual garden season. I've lost more crops, especially my beloved tomatoes, to over-watering than in any year I can remember.

Three crops which have thrived this season are kale, leek and basil plants. These have grown to outsized proportions, and continue to produce beautiful lush leaves. As we approach the likely time of frost, even here by the Connecticut, it's good to plan to save some of this green beauty to please the palate during the long winter.

Basil is an extremely cold sensitive plant, so this is first on my harvest list. I plan to pick the most tender and unblemished lower leaves for pesto, a simple dressing for pasta, meats and fish that will put the taste of summer on your lips even in the dead of winter cold.

The leeks continue to grow and can take a light frost. I'll wait to pull them until warnings of a killing frost. Then they are easily saved for later cooking. Simply remove the root end and the leaves, peel the outside layer and freeze in plastic bags until ready to use in soup or any other cooking in which onions would be used. Don't thaw the leeks, just chop while frozen and use as you wish. The flavor

is milder than onion but adds a savory note. Many people find leeks more digestible than their stronger relatives.

Kale is a leafy vegetable rich in vitamins A and C. It can withstand very cold temperatures. If you mulch it before the snow falls, it can be harvested late into the winter and it will grow again in the very early spring. If you prefer to have some handy in the kitchen, it is easily blanched and frozen for later use.

Blanching either by steaming or in boiling water holds color and freshness. Pick the smallest, youngest leaves and steam or drop in boiling water for two minutes. Chill promptly in ice water so the kale doesn't continue to cook. If you have one, use your lettuce spinner to

dry out the chilled greens or wrap in paper towels before

packing in plastic bags. Freeze bags in a single layer until well frozen. If you tear the leaves before blanching, you'll have a crop ready to cook lightly and enjoy right out of the freezer.

This same method works equally well with spinach and beet greens.

Kale is delicious on its own as a side vegetable and is also another source of green vitamins in soups or stews.

Saving some of the summer harvest gives you fresh tasting and colorful vegetables that provide you with much better nutritional value than anything you can buy frozen or canned from the store. You'll also enjoy the gardener's satisfaction of putting the fruits of your own labors on the table.

Simple Pesto

- 3 cloves garlic, chopped**
- ¼ cup olive oil**
- 2 cups chopped, packed fresh basil leaves**
- ¼ cup pine nuts or walnuts (cheaper and still tasty)**
- ½ cup grated Parmesan cheese or soy substitute**

Combine the garlic and half of the oil in a blender or food processor. Add the basil and nuts and dribble in the rest of the oil to facilitate processing the basil leaves. Blend until smooth. Freeze in half-cup containers or by the tablespoon in an ice-cube tray. The pesto will smell so wonderful you'll have to have some right away!

The Gill Store & Tavern Opens Friday

BY KATHY LITCHFIELD - The Gill Store & Tavern, on Main Road in Gill, will be open starting Friday morning at 7 a.m., offering baked goods, simple breakfast items and Pierce Bros. coffee. The deli will be open for lunch. For dinner, enjoy sit down dining complemented by a full bar, in this freshly reno-

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