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YEAR 9 - NO. 4

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THE VOICE OF THE VILLAGES

OCTOBER 21, 2010

Closed Door Discussion of G-M Teacher Contract Disputed

BY DAVID DETMOLD

GILL-MONTAGUE - A dispute played out in open session – and perhaps in executive session too, although the public cannot determine that – on Thursday night, October 14th, as the Gill Montague school committee grappled with a pending collective bargaining agreement with district teachers and staff.

“This contract has a huge impact on our budget and the long term fiscal stability of the district,” said committee member Jeff Singleton. “It should not be done in secret. The public has a right to know about it.”

Not so fast, said district legal counsel Russell Dupere. “We’ve been threatened with litigation, depending on which way this turns out.”

That threat is coming from bargaining units for teachers and staff, who are concerned about unfair labor practices. The head of the G-M Education Association, Karl Dziura, was present at the meeting and taking notes.

“I maintain until we have an agreed upon contract, we are still in negotiations,” insisted Jane

Oakes, a member of the school committee’s bargaining group.

“In a sense, the school committee controls the finances, and the townspeople have very little way to weigh in on the budget. Why not be as open as possible with the public?” asked Marje Levenson.

The school committee had first scheduled an executive session to discuss the final ratification of contracts with teachers and staff on September 28th, but that session was derailed when the state Department of Elementary and Secondary Education weighed in. The DESE directed superintendent Carl Ladd to advise the school committee to hold off on voting on the contracts until the state’s review of the district was complete, by the end of October.

The DESE assumed fiscal control of the G-M schools two years ago, when the towns of Gill and Montague failed to approve an operating budget for the district schools. By law, the DESE now has the right to approve contracts greater than \$25,000 at the Gill Montague

see **CONTRACT** page 11

The Orange Candidates Debate



Steve Adam (R), Genevieve Fraser (I), and Denise Andrews (D) are in the running for 2nd Franklin State Rep.

BY DAVID DETMOLD

GREENFIELD - No one mentioned headless bodies in the desert. None of the candidates admitted to dabbling in witchcraft. The debate between the Republican, Democratic, and independent candidates for state representative from the 2nd Franklin District was a tame affair, compared to some of the Tea Party fueled races for governor or Congress enlivening the air waves this election season. But tame or tepid, the debate at Greenfield Community Television on Wednesday, October 13th (followed by another taped live at Orange-Athol Community TV on Monday, October 18th) provides voters with the clearest snapshot

of the views of the three people in the running to succeed retiring state representative Chris Donelan in the November 2nd election.

The candidates – Republican Steve Adam, three term member of the Orange selectboard and a quality control manager at Nypro, an employee-owned plastics manufacturer based in Clinton; Democrat Denise Andrews, a former manager for Procter & Gamble who runs a private consulting firm; and independent Genevieve Fraser, former aide to state senator Robert Wetmore and now an online professor – took turns fielding questions from host Drew Hutchinson in the GCTV studio.

As to those views, some of them appear to be evolving. No one blinked when Adam told Hutchinson, “On the 3% sales tax initiative [Question #3, which would cut the sales tax from 6.25% to 3%], I do think it goes too far.”

Yet on August 25th, at a candidate debate at Greenfield Community College, Adam said he supported Question #3 without qualification. On that occasion, he said he thought the state could make up the expected loss of \$2.5 billion in sales tax revenue that would follow passage of the ballot initiative by reducing government waste. “We have to find a way of reducing government on

see **DEBATE** page 12

Wendell Senior Center Reorganizes, as Swaim Steps Down



Kathy Swaim, shown here at the opening of the new Wendell Senior Center, is retiring from the COA after 10 years.

BY KATIE NOLAN

WENDELL - After ten years filling the role of chair of the Wendell Council on Aging, Kathy Swaim is stepping down from active COA membership.

In her tenure as COA leader, Swaim scheduled events and programs at the Wendell senior center, wrote the monthly senior newsletter, supervised the center’s medical equipment sharing program, applied

for the annual grant from the state Executive Office of Elder Affairs, kept track of how many people use the center, and documented how the grant money is spent. She oversaw the move from a shared space in the old town offices to the senior center’s comfortable new quarters in the former town library building.

Swaim took over the director job in January 2001. Looking back over

the last ten years, she said her favorite senior center project was “refurbishing the old library. I’ve felt very good about that.”

Nancy Spittle, who will assume many of the tasks Swaim has been handling for the senior center, said that for several years before the move, Swaim shopped for tables, chairs and other furnishings for the new location, “getting great deals.” Spittle praised Swaim’s “energy, talent, and generosity” as primarily responsible for today’s cozy and pleasant senior center.

Under Swaim’s watch, the center began hosting “Soup-er Suppers” – free suppers and game nights for local seniors during the winter – and senior movie nights at the Wendell library.

Also in recent years, the center has begun to offer a greater variety of programs, such as Tai Chi classes, special programs and speakers, and a nature walk around Fiske Pond with a guide from Mt. Grace Land Trust.

“The state still assumes

see **SWAIN** pg 13

Repairs to Fifth Street Canal Bridge May Be Postponed



Earlier this week, workers readied a section of the Gill-Montague Bridge for concrete, laying the bridge deck grid onto stringers and tying into re-inforcing bars at left

...but G-M Bridge Repair is “On Schedule”

BY DAVID DETMOLD

TURNERS FALLS - Do you want the good news first? The Gill-Montague bridge repair is proceeding on schedule. But repairs to bring the 5th Street bridge over the power canal back up to its former weight limit may have to wait until the G-M bridge work is complete – four years from now.

Since the Gill-Montague bridge closed to outbound traffic this summer, the main detour for cars leaving downtown Turners Falls is the White Bridge to Canada Hill, a winding route that takes you up the hill to Greenfield and the French King Highway. But just before construction got started on the Gill-Montague bridge, Mass

Department of Transportation (DOT) downgraded the weight limits on the short span that extends 5th Street across the power canal to the White Bridge, blocking trucks leaving town from using that route. This has complicated parking problems at the Housing Authority, which must leave an emergency route open for fire apparatus to reach the island via 6th Street, and forced Southworth Paper to bring all deliveries in and out of the mill around the difficult bend from Canada Hill. Meanwhile, all truck traffic exiting Turners now must proceed to Millers Falls, Montague Center, or Cheapside, where a low railroad overpass forces many trucks to halt, execute a difficult three point turn while blocking traffic, and find a way back to the highway over Mountain Road.

An earlier inspection of the 5th Street canal bridge revealed weaknesses in the riveted gusset plates. In July, Mass DOT district director Al Stegeman said the need-

see **BRIDGE** pg 8

PET OF THE WEEK Cow Cat Rescued



Harriet

My name is Harriet and I'm a six-year-old female short hair cat in need of a good home. I haven't had an easy time of it. I was rescued from a hoarding situation and was in rough shape when I came to Dakin. I'll brighten the lives of my new family with cheery cow-cat markings and my pretty yellow eyes. It will feel so good for all of us as the love between us just grows and grows! I do want you to know that I have a bit of a heart murmur; my Dakin friends will explain to you about that. I promise you - my heart may be murmuring, and yet I know it's also saying "I'm a good, good cat, I can't wait to love and be loved, and have the happy life that I deserve." That's the real story. To find out more about adopting me, please contact the Dakin Pioneer Valley Humane Society at (413) 548-9898 or via email at info@dpvhs.org.

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Local Subscription Rates:
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SLATE MEMORIAL LIBRARY NEWS Halloween Harvest Party

A Halloween Harvest appropriate to all ages will take place at the Slate Memorial Library in Gill on Saturday, October 30th, starting at 10:30 am. For more

information call (413) 863-2591. Program funded by the Gill Cultural Council, a local agency supported by the Massachusetts Cultural Council, a state agency.

CARNEGIE LIBRARY NEWS Fire Safety and Prevention at Story Hour



LINDA HICKMAN PHOTO

Leo of Montague Center and Edward and Orrin of Turners Falls enjoyed the annual visit of a Turners Falls fire truck to the Carnegie Library Story Hour on Wednesday, October 13th. Firefighter (and Edward's mother) Trish Mieczkowski discussed fire fighting, fire safety and prevention with the Story Hour families. Story Hour is held weekly on Wednesdays at 10:15 a.m. For more information, call 863-3214.

BP Oil Disaster's Impacts on Wildlife

ATHOL - In the aftermath of the BP oil disaster in the Gulf of Mexico, photographers Shawn Carey and Alex Couter took a first-hand look at its impacts on wildlife and local residents, reporting their findings to Mass Audubon.

On Wednesday, October 27th at 7:00 p.m. they will also report their findings at the Millers River Environmental Center, 100 Main Street in Athol.

Sponsored by the Athol Bird & Nature Club, this special presentation is free and open to the public. Of his time in the Gulf, Cary said he was "shocked to learn the effects and extent

this oil has had on birds and other wildlife, much of which people outside the immediate



SHAWN P. CAREY PHOTO

Can a hermit crab live through an oiling of its beach?

area are apparently completely unaware of."

More info about the ABNC is available at www.millersriver.net. New members welcome.

Eat Out and Support Erving Elementary School PTO

Join us on Wednesday, November 10th between 5:00 and 8:00 p.m. at Friendly's on the Mohawk Trail in Greenfield and help support Erving students. A portion of the proceeds will be donated directly back to Erving Elementary School's PTO which helps fund student field trips.

Fundraising baskets filled by children in each grade will be

available for viewing and for the purchase of raffle tickets. Raffle tickets will also be available for turkey raffles as well as for an original Tomasetti painting.

You do not need to have a child in the school system to participate. This event is open to the public.

(Coupons will not be accepted during this event.)

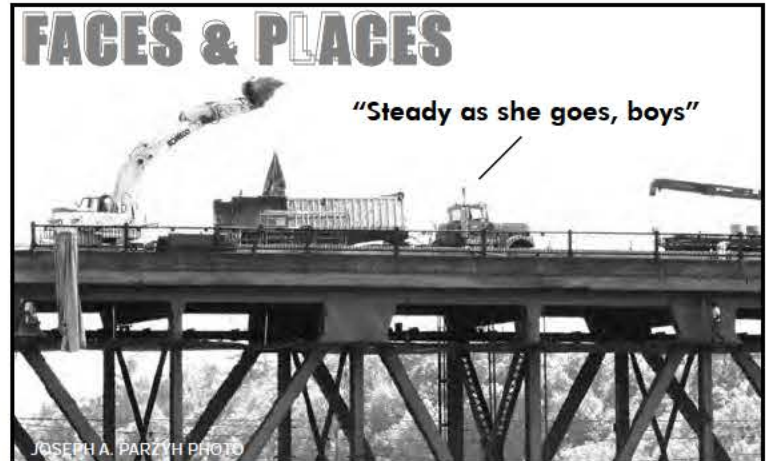
SENIOR CENTER ACTIVITIES - October 25th - 29th

GILL/MONTAGUE Senior Center, 62 Fifth Street, Turners Falls, is open Monday through Friday from 9:00 a.m. to 2:00 p.m. Congregate meals are served Tuesday through Friday at Noon. Meal reservations must be made a day in advance by 11:00 a.m. The Meal Site Manager is Kerry Togneri. All fitness classes are supported by a grant from the Executive Office of Elder Affairs. Voluntary donations are accepted. Council on Aging Director is Roberta Potter. For more information, to make meal reservations, or to sign up for programs call 863-9357. Messages can be left on our machine when the center is not open. There will be a SHINE presentation on Medicare changes on Thursday, October 28th. Please call the Senior Center to sign up.

Monday, October 25th
10:00 a.m. Senior Aerobics
10:45 a.m. Chair Exercise
1:00 p.m. Knitting Circle

Tuesday, October 26th
9:00 a.m. Walking Group
10:30 a.m. Chair Yoga
1:00 p.m. Canasta
1:00 p.m. Painting Class
Wednesday, October 27th
No Aerobics today
12:45 p.m. Bingo
Thursday, October 28th
9:00 a.m. Tai Chi
10:00 a.m. SHINE presentation
1:00 p.m. Pitch
Friday, October 29th
10:00 a.m. Senior Aerobics
10:45 a.m. Chair Exercise
1:00 p.m. Scrabble
1:00 p.m. Writing Group

ERVING Senior Center, 18 Pleasant St., Erving (Old Center School, 1st Floor), is open Monday through Friday from 8:30 a.m. to 2:30 p.m. for activities and congregating meals. For info and reservations, call Polly Kiely, Senior Center Director, at (413) 423-3308. Mealsite Manager is Jim Saracino. Lunch is daily at 11:30 a.m., with reservations 24 hours



SPS New England's Kobelco excavator balances a slab of concrete decking above a 'bathtub' dump truck on the Gill-Montague bridge, as workers balance on the catwalk, far above the river, on a recent fall morning.

Chair Yoga Classes

Chair Yoga classes with Jean Erlbaum will be held at the Montague Senior Center, 62 5th St., Turners Falls, Ma. on Tuesdays from 10:30 - 11:15 a.m. on the following Tuesdays: October 26, November 9, 16, 23, 30, Dec. 7 and 14. These classes offer a good stretch and strengthening for muscles, oiling for joints and fun! People from all towns are invited and of all skill levels, including folks in wheelchairs. Suggested donation is \$1.00 for each class. Pre-registration is not required. For more information, please contact Roberta Potter at 413-863-4500.

Art Exhibit and Presentation at Congregational Church MONTAGUE - Local artist Louise Minks will speak about two of her paintings currently on exhibit at the First Congregational Church of Montague on Sunday, October 31st during the 10:00 a.m. worship service. One is about the Pueblo Revolt. She will speak about its impact on the early development of Christianity in America and the subsequent reconciliation between Christians and American Indians.

The paintings on display range in topic from the religion and spirituality of ancient Greece to the native Pueblo people of New Mexico. They can be viewed Wednesdays from 4:00 to 6:00 p.m. at the church at 4 North St, Montague Center. Please enter through the Center Street door. Call (413) 367-9467 for more information.

in advance. Transportation can be provided for meals, shopping, or medical necessity. Please call the Senior Center at (413) 423-3308 to find out when the next flu clinic will be held.

Monday, October 25th
9:00 a.m. Tai Chi
10:00 a.m. Osteo-Exercise
12:00 noon Pitch
Tuesday, October 26th
8:45 a.m. Chair Aerobics
12:30 p.m. Painting
Wednesday, October 27th
8:45 a.m. Line Dancing/Zumba
12:00 p.m. Bingo
Thursday, October 28th
8:45 a.m. Aerobics
Friday, October 29th
9:00 a.m. Bowling
11:30 a.m. Lunch - Halloween Tea - Pot Luck

WENDELL Senior Center is located at 2 Lockes Village Road. Call Kathy Swaim at (978) 544-2020 for hours and upcoming programs. Call the Center if you need a ride.

Great Falls Middle School Students of the Week
Grade 6
Nolan Courtemanche
Jennifer Suarez
Grade 7
Hailey Whipple
Grade 8
Mackenzie Salls

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JESSICA HARMON ILLUSTRATION

Local Briefs

COMPILED BY DON CLEGG - The Gill - Montague Senior Center would like to thank to all the wonderful folks who responded to a last minute plea to help Allan Adie with the Brown Bag distribution earlier this month. Last year, the Reconnecting Youth class from the Turners Falls High School pitched in once a month to help bag groceries from the Western Mass Food Bank at the senior center on first Thursdays, and carry the Brown Bags to senior's cars. But that class has been rescheduled this year, and a number of regular senior volunteers were out with knee injuries or family visits as October's Brown Bag distribution date approached.

Center director Roberta Potter said eight or nine people responded to a last minute plea to MontagueMA.net corkboard and the Brick House Community Center, and helped make the distribution go off without a hitch. But regular volunteers are needed for upcoming Brown Bag dates, starting November 4th, from 9:45 - 11:00 a.m. Can you help? Call Potter at 413-863-4500 at the senior center and she will gladly sign you up!

Join the **Greenfield Women's Hockey League** at

the Collins-Moylan Arena in Greenfield this winter for an exciting season of fast paced ice action. Open to all women, 18 and older. Hit the ice hard each week during the regular 14-game season, and then win it all during the highly anticipated semi-finals and finals. Registration runs until Friday, November 19th: www.FMCicesports.com

Lisa's Handcrafted Soaps at 100 Third Street, in Turners Falls will be opening for business on Tuesday, November 2nd. Lisa Adams has been making soaps for more than 13 years, and has been working hard to prepare for the store opening. The store will be stocked with a wide variety of handmade soaps, and soon with candles, body lotions and bath salts, too. A grand opening is planned for December.

Fans of the National Football League have been seeing all players wearing some form of pink on their uniforms this October, which is **Breast Cancer Awareness Month**. Between the Uprights Sports Bar on the corner of 2nd Street and Avenue A in Turners Falls will be celebrating Pinktober on Saturday, October 23rd. All funds raised from raffles, drawings and games that day will benefit the Baystate Franklin Medical Center

Oncology Department and Franklin County breast cancer survivors' events.

Between the Uprights staff will participate in the Rays of Hope Walk in Greenfield on Sunday, October 24th.

The last **Great Falls Farmers Market** of the season on the corner of 2nd Street and Avenue, in Turners Falls will be held on Wednesday, October 27th. This year's market saw a decrease of about 25% to 40% in sales and vendor participation from last year. Some of the decline is no doubt the result of the down economy, but the rest could be a direct result of work on the nearby Gill-Montague bridge, and the resulting detours.

The Greenfield Farmers Market held on Saturday mornings in Court Square has extended their season until Saturday, November 20th.

Are bats really scary? Do they actually get stuck in your hair? Learn answers to these questions and more during an hour long celebration of bats at the Great Falls Discovery Center, 2 Avenue A, in Turners Falls on Saturday, October 30th, starting at 1:00 p.m. Children will be able to hear a story, investigate a bat mystery box, learn what it is like to be a bat through various games, and make their own bat mask. This program is aimed at ages 4-11, although everyone is welcome. While at the center, pick up a Halloween treat.

Send items for local briefs to: reporter-local@montague-ma.net

NOTES FROM THE WENDELL SPECIAL TOWN MEETING

All Articles Approved

BY JOSH HEINEMANN - Besides narrowly approving funding for the a trial year of a new position of town food coordinator, at \$5,000, the October 6th special town meeting passed every other article on the warrant passed, most by unanimous vote.

The 43, or so, voters who turned out approved spending \$500 to pay for the remainder of the town's FY'10 audit, \$110 to pay a prior bill to Howard Laboratory for water testing, \$1,900 to pay the Franklin Regional Council of Governments for help in updating the open space plan, \$2,700 for a storage trailer for cemetery maintenance tools, which are too many to keep with the highway equipment.

Finance committee chair Michael Idoine said he experienced some "sticker shock" at the cost of \$26,000 for a new 3,000 gallon poly tank for the fire department tank truck, but neighboring town fire chiefs are looking forward to Wendell again having the largest tank truck in Franklin County for mutual aid. The old steel tank has had leaks repaired and repaired to the point where further repair is now impossible, and deputy fire chief Bob Bowers saved the town thousands of dollars by removing the old tank from the truck cab and chassis, in his own time.

Voters agreed to reduce the number of members on the open space committee from seven to five, which will allow the three members who regularly meet to achieve a quorum and take action for the committee.

Voters also followed the finance committee's recommendation and approved \$5,000 to hire a money management consultant for town hall, and \$2,800 to pay the salary of a financial director, a position that was a major recommendation of the money management study committee, which met through the winter and spring.

A motion to spend \$2,500 to replace windows in the police station with new thermopane windows was also approved. After much discussion about

what type of heater would be best, voters approved \$3,000 to replace the leaking hot water system in the town hall. Since use of hot water in the town hall is very sporadic, a demand system was recommended from the floor. Moderator Kathy Becker said the article authorizes the money and the selectboard's job is to choose the most appropriate system.

Selectboard chair Christine Heard invited citizens to come to a selectboard meeting and help make that decision.

Voters approved changes to zoning bylaws, and rescinded articles from the annual town meeting that would have used stabilization to pay off the purchases of Fiske Pond, the Meltzer property (town office building lot), and the new fire engine, all of which would have been done with stabilization money. After some research, the finance committee had learned that pre-paying these notes would not be legal.

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HIGHLIGHTS FROM THE GILL POLICE LOG
Breaking and Entering in Riverside

| | |
|--|---|
| Monday, 10/11 1:29 p.m. Report of trespassing and assault and battery at a Main Road residence. 9:20 p.m. Report of breaking and entering and larceny at a Riverside address. | person on Oak Street. 6:45 p.m. Report of pedestrians causing a hazard on French King Highway. |
| Wednesday, 10/13 6:52 a.m. Report of illegal door to door salesman canvassing in town. | Friday 10/15 7:28 a.m. Unattended death on Mountain Road. 5:25 p.m. Roadway flooded on Ben Hale Road, advised Highway Department. |
| Thursday, 10/14 6:50 a.m. Gun shots complaint taken for hunters in Barton Cove. 12:20 p.m. Past report of suspicious | 10:45 p.m. Assisted Northfield Police Dept with arrest. Saturday, 10/16 9:43 a.m. 9:31 p.m. Assisted Erving police with arrest and accident. |
| | Sunday, 10/17 3:31 p.m. Medical emergency at craft fair on French King Hwy. 8:10 p.m. Animal complaint on West Gill Road. |

Monday, 10/18
9:15 a.m. Report of loose dog running in traffic on Main Road.
1:01 p.m. Assisted with accident on Gill-Montague Bridge. Bus struck barriers.

Tuesday, 10/19
12:31 p.m. Report of traffic being obstructed by vehicle on Main Road.

Wednesday, 10/20
11:15 a.m. Assisted with funeral traffic at Main Road and Gill-Montague Bridge.

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David Detmold
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Going Up

Next week, the cover price of the *Montague Reporter* will go up from 50 cents to 75 cents, and a slight adjustment in the rate of subscriptions will go into effect. The dollar amount charged for subscriptions will not rise, but we will ask subscribers to renew their subscriptions at the end of each calendar year, instead of at the end of 52 issues, as has been our practice until now.

The *Montague Reporter* publishes every week except in July and August, when we adjust to the slower pace of local news and publish only twice a month. So the change to calendar year subscription renewals will represent a small but significant increase in the annual revenue we hope to receive from subscribers, a change which might have passed largely unnoticed had we not called your attention to it now.

We bring these changes to your attention in advance for a reason. You have entrusted us with your confidence by subscribing, or by purchasing the newspaper each week at the stands. In return we owe you the assurance that we will make the needed adjustments over time to keep the paper coming to you, and to keep the paper growing in its ability to serve you by gathering the news of our community reliably and reporting it for you accurately, engagingly and informatively.

The newspaper's board of directors approved these changes in order to strengthen our ability to bring you solid reporting of the events, institutions and individuals that affect our daily lives and shape our towns and villages.

The *Montague Reporter* is a nonprofit, community owned newspaper, founded in 2002 to serve the readers of Montague, Gill and Erving. Three months after we began publication, we expanded our coverage to include the town of Wendell. We took this step only after discussing the prospect of helping meet that community's need for news reporting with many of the people who had been responsible for producing the *Wendell Post*, a great community paper

that had ceased publication less than a year before.

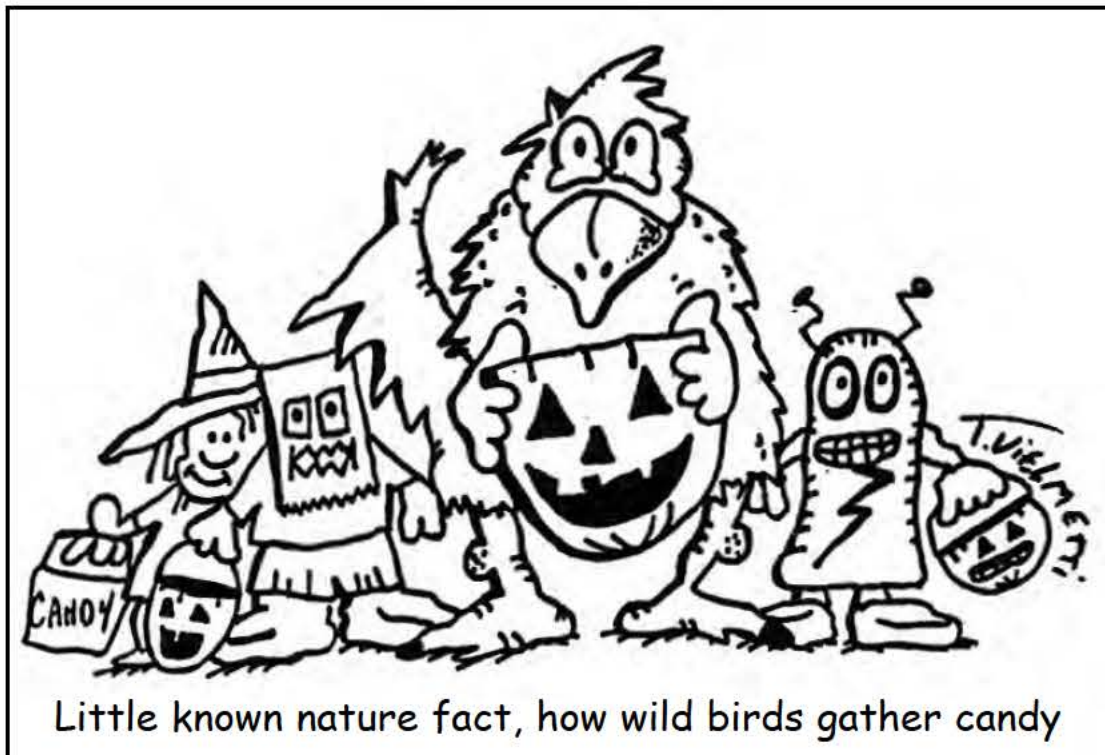
We added Leverett to the masthead in the fall of 2009, and have worked steadily to meet our responsibility to gather and print the news from that town, which we felt had too often fallen into a black hole of news coverage by the local dailies.

Throughout this period of incorporation and growth, the *Montague Reporter's* community board has kept a primary focus on delivering the news to readers as inexpensively as possible. The paper now claims 2400 regular weekly readers, and we are on the brink of 900 paid subscribers. But printing and production costs have risen steadily, mailing rates have climbed steeply, and we need to raise revenue to better compensate our writers, so we can carry on the task our readers expect from us.

Like newspapers everywhere, we have relied from our first issue on the support of the business community in Montague, and the surrounding villages and towns, to gather and print the news each week. But as our paper has grown, we have kept our cover price and subscription rates low to build readership as quickly as possible, not only because that fulfills our mission to bring local news and views to as wide a reading audience as possible, but also, quite frankly, because our business advertisers need the support of that broad pool of readers to thrive.

We are all in this together. That fact is never more apparent than today, as economic cross currents buffet our nation and silence the presses at far bigger newspapers, and threaten our community as well.

We sincerely hope the 25 cents extra per week at the newsstand will not deter anyone from buying the paper. (Call 413-863-8666 if the rise in cover price will make it difficult for you to buy the paper at your local store; we have a few donated subscriptions available for readers with limited means.) For regular readers, the rise in the cover price will make the



Little known nature fact, how wild birds gather candy

TIM VIELMETTI CARTOON

LETTERS TO THE EDITOR

Keep the Alcohol Tax

With the state facing a serious budget deficit, Massachusetts should not repeal its sales tax on alcohol.

Almost every state in the country has a mainstream sales tax on alcohol. Since Massachusetts ranks 43 out of 45 states with a broad-based sales tax, due to exemptions on food, most clothing, and services, voters should vote No on Question 1.

Massachusetts is in the highest percentiles for the rates of alcohol and drug abuse in the country. Every penny of the sales tax on alcohol produces dedicated funding for substance abuse, prevention, recovery and public health services.

Repeal of the alcohol sales tax would mean complete elimination of a broad spectrum of designated prevention and treatment services for Massachusetts residents with behavioral health problems relating to alcohol. A hundred thousand people received services last year.

benefit of buying a subscription for regular home delivery more attractive, even with the slight shift in renewal rates taken into consideration.

Indeed, we are less than five subscriptions away from reaching our 900th paid subscriber. Each time we gain 50 new subscribers, the *Montague Reporter* gives the lucky 50th a free \$50 gift certificate to an advertiser of their choice, emphasizing the circle of support that sustains us all. Who will the lucky 900th subscriber be?

Lucky reader, it could be you.

If alcohol were untaxed, minors especially would drink in larger numbers. Numerous studies have shown that an alcohol tax deters underage drinking.

Parents and grandparents in particular will want to vote no on Question 1, because they know well that with increased alcohol consumption, the already high rates of deaths of teens from car accidents, falling, suicide, and homicide will increase further.

Alcohol is not a necessity. It neither feeds nor clothes you, nor does it deserve a special tax exemption. It makes no sense and is unfair to give alcohol a special tax exemption when every other non-necessity is taxed.

If any products should be taxed, cigarettes and alcohol should be. Vote no on Question 1, to keep the socially useful alcohol tax.

John Furbish
- Turners Falls

Country Fair at Turners Falls Congregational Church

Save the date!

Come and do your Christmas shopping at the Country Fair on Saturday, November 6th from 9:00 a.m. to 2:00 p.m., First Congregational Church, 148 L Street.

Coffee and muffins will await you. The fair will include baked goods, jewelry, gifts, old and new treasures, Happy Bags,

quilts, silent auction, raffle, afghan, crafts and locally grown vegetables. A free drawing with a great prize will be awarded on the hour for those present. Plan to remain for a luncheon of chowder, sandwiches and dessert from 11:00 a.m. to 1:00 p.m.

See you at the fair!

Gertrude Woodard
- Turners Falls

Vote for Denise

Over the years I have watched and participated in many political campaigns. Denise Andrews has impressed me with her honesty, her work ethic, her willingness to listen and her ability to find answers to questions when she doesn't readily know the answers. She is the only one of the three candidates who has taken the time to really get to know Gill. She attended our town meeting and

has spent time with all three people on the selectboard really getting to know the issues she will be dealing with when she goes to Boston. I have no doubt she will be a tireless advocate for the towns in the Second Franklin district, and hope you will join me in voting for Denise Andrews on November 2nd.

Ann Banash
- Gill

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LETTERS TO THE EDITOR

Back Fraser for State Rep

In the 12 years I have known Gen Fraser, we have had many lively political conversations. She always knows both sides, and you can tell she has studied them extensively. Most politicians today are following the view of their party, and couldn't give you a studied view of their opponent's side if they tried.

On a more personal note, Gen is a loving, caring, witty individual who will fight to death's door for something she believes in. We would not have the Greenfield to Gardner transit system in our area if she hadn't fought so hard to get it.

She believes very strongly

that it is possible to rejuvenate the wood industry in our area. She will work with the industry and fight for regulations to protect the use of our forests in a well-planned way that will bring back jobs.

Gen has a very informative website expressing her views. I urge people to visit Fraser4Rep.com. If you have questions, email her; I guarantee you will hear back.

Please consider voting for Genevieve Fraser. She has common sense, not just a party plan.

- Caryl Thurber
Athol

NOTES FROM THE MONTAGUE SELECTBOARD

Community Development Strategy Approved

BY JANEL NOCKLEBY - The Montague selectboard approved the 2011 Community Development Strategy presented by town planner Walter Ramsey on Monday. The document paves the way for the town to continue to apply for Community Development Block Grants in upcoming funding cycles.

Ramsey said the town's top priority will be securing funding for Unity Park improvements, including new play structures, playing fields, reconfigured parking areas and access paths, a perimeter trail, rain garden, and a permanent skate park. The town narrowly missed getting approval for CDBG funding for the first phase of the planned improvements at Unity Park this year. The town applied for \$640,000 for the first phase, in the same grant as the Montague Catholic Social Ministries sought \$50,000 for new programs, but MCSM's request did not score high enough with reviewers to enable the overall grant to receive approval.

This is the second time in three years that Montague has failed to receive the discretionary federal CDBG funding, administered by the state's Executive Office of Housing and Community Development and intended to benefit low and

moderate income residents. A 2008 grant for \$700,000 to help the town defray construction of the new police station also failed to gain approval from EOHCD.

Ramsey said at least 1260 residents returned completed surveys to help the town determine the priorities of the Community Development Strategy, out of 4100 surveys distributed. Among the top priority projects in the strategic plan are: Railroad Salvage building demolition and site clean-up (private funds), reconstruction of the Gill-Montague Bridge (federal and state highway funds), improvements to Unity Park (CDBG funds), access management and trail improvements on the Montague Plains (DCR, Fish and Game, private funds), and housing rehabilitation (CDBG funds).

Additional projects in the works: Greenfield and Hatchery Road improvements, an energy performance contract, a Native American cultural heritage center, a park in Montague City along Rod Shop Road, a master plan for downtown Turners Falls, and a new Turners Falls senior center, since the lease on the present center is set to expire in 2016, and the center is approaching capacity.

The complete list of projects see MONTAGUE pg 7

GUEST EDITORIAL

BY FARSHID HAJIR - The Leverett selectboard, finance committee, and school committee are cordially inviting residents to a joint meeting of these boards on Tuesday October 26th, 7 p.m., in the elementary school gym.

The meeting will also serve as a public forum on a number of important education issues confronting the town at this time.

The boards will consider a joint appointment of an education study committee for the town of Leverett, in accordance with the recommendations of the Regionalization Study Committee (www.arsp.org/node/1661) and seek the opinions of town residents on this and other matters.

Reconfiguration

Over the past three years, the position of Leverett officials has been to engage in dialogue with our counterparts in neighboring towns, as well as with our legislators and the state education hierarchy regarding various changes in school governance structures that have been promoted in our area and around the state.

In recent months, most of the voices seeking change are local, stemming from Amherst. In particular, several Amherst school committee members have been arguing for withdrawal from Union 26, the superintendency union that has governed the elementary schools of Amherst and Pelham jointly since 1901, a move which could have consequences for Leverett.

Such an action would necessarily invoke the involvement of the Department of Elementary and Secondary Education. Some Amherst school committee members have said they want to consider the withdrawal in order to attract the state's involvement. Such scrutiny may well induce an examination by that department of the entire K-12 structure of the local schools, which would involve Leverett and Shutesbury as well, due to our participation in the Amherst-Pelham Region.

Sixth Grade

In a separate development, on September 28th, the Amherst school committee created a task force to examine the educational, legal, and financial aspects of

Leverett Residents Invited to Forum on Education Issues

moving the Amherst 6th grades from their three elementary schools to the Amherst Regional Middle School (ARMS). The move is being contemplated for the fall of 2012. Such a move would not necessarily dictate that Leverett, Shutesbury or Pelham follow suit, but the work of the task force certainly requires the regional school committee to consider the issue from multiple angles and seek the input and viewpoints of residents from all four towns.

The Leverett school committee, and especially our representative on the region, Kip Fonsh, seek Leverett residents' perspectives on these proposals.

There are at least two possible paths to implementation. If all four towns agree to move their sixth grades to ARMS, a revision of the regional agreement would be contemplated. If, on the other hand, some of the towns do not wish to sign on, then the other towns may seek to perform the transfer of their sixth grades by compensating the region for the use of space and supervisory staff.

Such a move would equally require serious considerations by, and consent of, the regional school committee.

School Choice

At the October 26th forum, Kip Fonsh will update us on the

latest news from the regional school committee, including recent close votes on hiring an Illinois firm to conduct a superintendent search, and on the choice of legal counsel.

Also, the three boards will hold a general discussion about the financial aspects of school choice for Leverett.

Of course, any decisions about future participation in the school choice program would in no way affect the children who are already enrolled at Leverett Elementary through this program.

Finally, at the state level, the Municipal Relief Act saw the creation of a commission "to examine efficient and effective strategies to implement school district collaboration and regionalization" from multiple perspectives. I have been appointed as the representative of Massachusetts School Committees on this commission, which is due to begin its work in the next few weeks. No schedule of meetings has yet been set, but if I have any updates, I will provide them.

We hope to see you on Tuesday, October 26th!

Farshid Hajir is the chair of the Leverett school committee. The opinions expressed here are his own, and do not necessarily reflect those of any other member of the school committee.

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NOTES FROM ERVING SELECTBOARD

Erving Reverses Vote on Montague's Request for Treatment Plant Info

BY KATIE NOLAN - At its October 7th meeting, the Erving selectboard decided not to sign a \$5,000 contract with Tighe and Bond to compile information requested by the Montague selectboard. Montague had asked for detailed information about the capital costs for the recently completed improvements at the Erving water treatment facility, in response to a request from the Erving board to discuss sharing costs for the upgrades.

At their October 14th meeting, the Erving selectboard changed course and signed a contract with Tighe and Bond for up to \$1,600, to provide Montague with the requested information.

The selectboard discussed a letter from the Franklin County Cooperative Inspection Program (FCCIP) regarding the movable stage used for the new Friday and Saturday band nights at French King Bowling Center.

Selectboard members disagreed with FCCIP's assertion that a building permit was required for the movable stage. "It's a completely portable stack of boxes I would consider furniture," said chair Andrew Goodwin. The

selectboard did not take any formal action in response to the letter.

Union 28 superintendent Joan Wickman asked the selectboard to quantify the amount of an expected increase in rent for the Union 28 central office in the second floor of Erving's current senior center on Pleasant Street. She wanted the costs for planning the fiscal year 2012 budget.

Selectboard members voted for a 3% increase in the \$4,800 per year rent for fiscal 2012 and another 3% increase for the following year. They also voted that the rent should be divided between the three other school districts (Leverett, New Salem/Wendell, and Shutesbury) in Union 28, but not by Erving, because Erving is paying for the building's heat and electricity.

In a follow-up interview, Wickman said the Union 28 budget and personnel subcommittee had met to review Erving's proposal, and would recommend it to the other member school districts.

"Erving had not raised the rent in about ten years," said Wickman. "They proposed to go up just 3%, if the other towns will consider taking them out of the rent line item, which seems

fair, since Erving is paying the utilities. It's a great deal."

Wickman and the selectboard scheduled to meet again at the October 28th meeting, so she could inform the selectboard of current Union 28 issues.

Town coordinator Tom Sharp pointed out the results of recent energy efficient upgrades at the town offices building. He was especially pleased with the new thermopane windows in the selectboard offices. Other upgrades include installation of 12 inches of insulation in the ceiling, demand hot water heaters in the bathrooms, and energy efficient ventilating fans for the boiler. In the future, he said, the town offices will change over to LED light bulbs.

Sharp reported that Erving's 2010 open space and recreation plan had been accepted by the state, opening up the potential for grants from the state Department of Conservation and Recreation.

The selectboard ended the open meeting shortly after 8 p.m. and went into executive session to discuss complaints against an individual employee and also to discuss a revenue sharing agreement with Erving Paper Mill.

NOTES FROM WENDELL SELECTBOARD

Library Tree Work and Playground Issues Discussed

BY JOSH HEINEMANN Woodsman, spare that tree! Or at least, those saplings.

The Wendell Free Library's neighbors to the north, Bob Schulman and Kate O'Kane, came to the selectboard on October 13th to ask the board to preserve the screening some smaller trees provide between the new library and their home, during the time it will take for young plantings of arbor vitae to reach their full height.

The new library was allowed to be built closer to the north border of the lot than zoning allows because it went up on the same footprint as the building that had stood there since 1846, before Wendell adopted setback requirements.

Local tree expert Matt Edwards said the large maple with a hollowed out core growing near the center of the playground behind the library is healthy in spite of the hollow, and only needs a trim of dead branches up high, and minor cabling of the crown. He said an ash south of the slide has some branches that also should be removed, but the tree itself is sound. A larger ash on the north side of the library should come down, Edwards said, as some of its branches are ready to drop on the library roof. Edwards offered to perform all the needed tree work at the library at no charge, and to take down the saplings on the north side at the same time.

Schulman agreed the large ash on the north side should be cut, and said there is also a cherry that could come down; but he said cutting the saplings and removing what little screening they provide would create an unwelcome loss of privacy.

Both Schulman and O'Kane said they are supporters of the library, and enjoy having it next to their home. But they mentioned that teens, occasionally disruptive and foul mouthed, have ignored the boundary between the two properties and come into their front yard.

O'Kane said she appreciated the library's effort to provide a positive influence for Wendell teens, and to give them a place to build community in the Teens and Tweens program, but she hoped they could be a bit more restrained.

Schulman said things have been taken from their car, and for the first time in 30 years they have decided to lock both car and house. The saplings and brush at least put an obstacle in the path of anyone wandering their way.

The board agreed to tell Edwards to leave the saplings and brush between the two buildings standing, when he comes to do the other tree work. The board also offered the firewood to Schulman and O'Kane, and said they would use the chipped smaller branches as padding in the playground.

Librarian Rose Heidkamp said the fire truck climbing structure a recent insurance inspection called an entrapment hazard has been removed from the playground. She said work is in progress to level the playground's slide and complete adding new woodchips beneath play structures.

Phil Delorey, planning director of the North Quabbin Coalition, and Rebecca Bialecki, executive director of the North Quabbin Loan Fund, in Athol, came to the meeting to once again bring the loan fund to the town's atten-

tion. The loan fund was created in 1984 with state money as a grassroots response to a previous economic downturn. Loans and business advice are available to create or retain jobs, with up to \$25,000 available for each job. The fund can offer credit in situations where a bank may not; repayment can be flexible, and interest rates are comparable to those of local banks.

As loans are repaid, the money becomes available for new borrowers.

Delorey said so far the loan fund has an unblemished track record on borrowers repaying their loans.

The only goal of the fund is to work to improve the economy of the region.

Underwriting services and technical assistance are provided by RCAP Solutions.

For more information, or to begin the application process, interested residents may call (978) 249-3703, or email Bialecki at rebecca@nqcc.org.

Town coordinator Nancy Aldrich told selectboard members the state offers an amnesty program for property owners who are delinquent with their taxes. A town meeting vote must adopt the measure before delinquent taxes may be paid - without penalty or interest - if payment is made before June 30th, 2011.

Board member Dan Keller thought that might be enough incentive to bring in some overdue taxes, and suggested discussing it with the tax collector, the treasurer, and the finance committee, before possibly offering the measure as an article for a January special town meeting. As she gave a copy to each selectboard member,

see WENDELL pg 7

HIGHLIGHTS FROM THE ERVING POLICE LOG

Arrest Following Motorcycle Accident

Wednesday 10/13

10:30 a.m. Report of breaking and entering and larceny into an East Prospect Street residence. Under investigation.

10:25 p.m. Report of male with altered mental status walking on Lester Street. Transported to Franklin Medical Center.

Thursday, 10/14

1:30 a.m. Suspicious motor vehicle traveling slowly up and down North Street. Spoke with same. Was resident looking for lost dog.

Saturday, 10/16

10:10 a.m. Report of felony larceny at French King Entertainment Center. Report taken. Under investigation.

10:50 a.m. Tree down blocking East Prospect Street. Found a branch and removed it.

9:08 p.m. Motorcycle accident on Route 63 near Pratt Street. Criminal application issued to [redacted]

[redacted] for third offense of operating a motor vehicle under the influence of alcohol, reckless operation of a motor vehicle,

operating a motor vehicle after suspension for OUI, operating an unregistered motor vehicle on a public way, and operating a motor vehicle without insurance on a public way. Sunday, 10/17

3:15 p.m. Report of unwanted female party at River Street residence. Subject removed.

6:35 p.m. Report that bonfire from Fall Festival was still burning. Visible flames. Erving Fire responded to extinguish the burning embers.

10/18

7:05 a.m. Report of two car motor vehicle crash at Erving Paper Mill, East Main Street.

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MONTAGUE from pg 5

in the strategic plan and the community needs survey results can be found in the town planning section of the montague.net website.

The town gets bonus points in the CDBG application process for having completed several non-CDGB funded projects recently, including (by default) the new public safety complex, blocking off Williams Way for future Unity Park and skate park improvements, predevelopment planning and zoning changes for the Montague Center School property, development of a town Geographic Information System, and a completed open space and recreation plan.

In other news, the pumpkins are coming! Selectboard chair Pat Allen reminded Franklin County Pumpkin Festival participants to bring pumpkins to Avenue A, from 3 - 9 p.m. on Saturday, but to please also bring them back home after the festivities are done. The pumpkins are leaving!

The sun boxes are coming!

And the selectboard has approved Craig Colorusso's installation. The Turners Falls RiverCulture sponsored project "is a solar powered sound installation. It's comprised of twenty speakers operating independently, each powered by the sun via solar panels."

The sun box schedule is: November 5th - 7th at the lawn of the Great Falls Discovery Center, November 12th - 14th at Peskeomskut Park, and November 19th - 21st at the lawn at the beginning of the bike path along the river on 1st Street. Here comes the sun sound!

The elections are coming on November 2nd, (and the selectboard has signed the election warrant) which includes initiative questions regarding repealing the sales tax on alcoholic beverages, comprehensive permits for low or moderate-income housing, and reducing the sales tax from 6.25% to 3% by January 1st.

Additionally, the 30 year tradition of the Rag Tag Parade on Halloween continues in Turners Falls. The selectboard

approved event will be held on October 31st on Avenue A from Food City to Second Street from 4 - 6 p.m.

And, as if there weren't enough going on in our vibrant villages, the Harmony Lodge Chase'n a Mason 5K race and 2 mile walk has been also been approved by the selectboard, for this coming Saturday at 9:30 a.m., for the walk, and 10 a.m. for the race, starting at the Masonic Lodge in Montague City. Race organizers say, "The course will run on the Turners Falls bike path along the waterways of town. Each participant receives an imprinted beer glass. Age group and overall awards will be presented for the 5K race." Proceeds will benefit the Harmony Lodge Charities, which includes a food bank, summer camp scholarships for special needs children, and the Wetland Outdoor Classroom.

Oh wait, there's more! Don't forget the Turners Falls High School Booster Parade at 11:15 a.m. on Saturday, too.

See you there.



River Banks More Stable Since Northfield Mountain Shutdown

BY JOSEPH A. PARZYCH GREENFIELD - The banks of the Connecticut River from south of Northfield Mountain seem a lot more stable since the Northfield Mountain hydroelectric project was shut down for maintenance on May 1st, at least according to several regional officials who attended an October 14th meeting of the Connecticut River Streambank Erosion Committee (CRSEC).

At the same time, however, a utility official repeated long-standing assertions that erosion is caused by motorboat wakes, and not by fluctuations in water level initiated by the hydro project.

For most of the 40 years since the Northfield Mountain pump storage hydroelectric facility was built on the east side of the Connecticut River north of the French King Bridge, both river water and controversy have eaten away at the banks of river in Gill, Northfield and Montague, and at the relation-

ship between riverfront land owners and the utility running the plant.

That utility was Northeast Utilities, which drafted erosion mitigation plans under a federal mandate. Now, that utility is FirstLight GDF Suez, which bought the facility and is now carrying out a third phase of streambank restoration projects.

The CRSEC was created by the Franklin Regional Council of Governments (FRCOG) in 1994. Its members represent landowners, regional planning agencies, state resource agencies, the Connecticut River Watershed Council (CRWC), and FirstLight. The CRSEC meets several times a year to discuss issues related to the operation of Northfield Mountain and its effects on riverbank erosion.

Charles Momnie represented FirstLight at last week's meeting, accompanied by Karro Frost, a botanist working for the consulting firm New England see **RIVER** page 11

WENDELL from pg 6

each selectboard member, Aldrich said she thought very little of the report of Siemen's Building Technologies' energy audit of town buildings was useful. The initial audit, performed at no cost to the town, is the first step in a project designed to reduce energy use in towns and school districts around Franklin County.

In Wendell, the energy audit pinpointed an inefficient hot air heating system in the senior center, and recommended replacing the heating boxes in the highway garage and fire station with radiant heat, which warms objects in a room and warms the air indirectly.

A copy of the report is going to the energy committee.

The energy committee will also receive a copy of the National Grid report on electricity use in private residences in town since 2008, forwarded to the selectboard at the committee's request. The report will provide the energy committee with a baseline to measure the effect of energy conservation measures

undertaken by Wendell residents over time.

Dog officer Maggie Houghton reported more complaints about a dog on Kentfield Road, who continues to break free of his lead and harass neighbors.

At a hearing in spring, the owner was told the dog had to be restrained, and the complaints had to stop or the selectboard might require the dog be removed from town. Because the owner had been cooperative, and had made an effort, selectboard chair Christine Heard suggested calling Houghton to see what she recommended before taking additional steps.

In an email to the selectboard, Jerry Barilla asked to be part of the committee being formed to oversee the town playground behind the library, although he admitted to being an obstructionist. Barilla said he would like to see the basketball court reduced to half its present size.

Keller said, "Cutting the court size before the fence was repaired would have been cheaper."

The basketball court does get regular use, even by people who

put their dogs in there for off leash playtime with other dogs.

Heard said the selectboard should accept his offer, and possibly hold a public hearing before major changes are made to the playground.

Board members moved and seconded a motion to hire Janet Swem to create a job description for the town financial director, a position authorized by the October 6th special town meeting, and then to extend town coordinator Nancy Aldrich's hours by up to two hours a week to fill that position until the end of the fiscal year.

Keller said that he, coordinator of buildings and grounds Ted Lewis, and highway commissioner Harry Williston looked at the drainage situation between the police station and town hall. As the buildings stand now, rain water drains from both buildings to the narrow alley in between, splashes up from the pavement and deteriorates the siding of both buildings. From there, roof runoff drains to a neighbor's field, where it makes an unwanted wetland.

The three recommended putting gutters on the buildings, and running the water through down pipes into a pipe running under Center Street and out to the drainage lines on the side of Morse Village Road.

Keller suggested the money for that work should come from the town building maintenance fund, but Aldrich said that fund has been hit pretty hard already.

Before putting an article on a

special town meeting warrant, Keller said the selectboard should consult with the finance committee.

Representatives of the agriculture commission asked to be included with the energy committee for the process of hiring a food coordinator, as authorized in the October 6th special town meeting.



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Standing Room Only for Annie

BY DAVID DETMOLD

TURNERS FALLS - Four and five year old girls outnumbered the adults at the sold out Shea Theater at the Sunday matinee of *Annie* on October 17th. Even after the staff pulled out folding chairs and put them in every last nook and corner of the hall, dozens were turned away.

The standing room only crowd had turned out to see Arena Civic Theater's revival of a musical based on a comic strip about an orphan who gets adopted by Daddy Warbucks, the wealthiest man in America, during the depths of the Great Depression. If theater provides an escape from the cares of life, *Annie* gave them more than their money's worth, as America grinds on through the most severe economic downturn since 1929. Sure, it's a "Hard Knock Life," but with a little pluck and perseverance, you too can become part of the household of a major military contractor.

Playing the part of the winsome young redhead, who has been to the hair stylist to have her

famous curls straightened in this production, Annie (Stephanie Craven) won the audience - especially all those little girls - from the first note of "Maybe," sung in the company of half a dozen winning waifs, as the dawn lit up the backlit cityscape of NYC, in 1933.

It is always a risk to mount a stage production, but it takes a higher degree of chutzpah to open a musical with a stageful of children, no adults in sight. Toss in a stray dog and chaos can ensue.

But director Martha King-Devine had her orphan ensemble well rehearsed, as did musical director Susanne Anderson and choreographers Melanie Reneris and Cara Leach. None of the girls dropped a line, and from their first big dance number - "It's a Hard Knock Life" - to the closing curtain call the young stars proved themselves to be true professionals, more than able to hold their own with the likes of the redoubtable Jerry Marcano, (Daddy Warbucks) and other veterans of the ACT lineup.



The line stretched around the block at ACT's matinee of *Annie* on Sunday!

Like Su Hoyle, who played the villainous matron of the orphanage, Miss Hanagan, with a gleefully cracked demeanor. She could have upstaged lesser lights, but her "Little Girls" more than held their own in the spotlight.

And three cheers for Sandy, the most lovable stage hound since Asta. This well-trained golden retriever first resisted the call of runaway Annie, then, in the nick of time, came when she was called, gave her new mis-

stress a high five, and rolled over and played dead when the thwarted police officer who would have hauled her to the pound pantomimed a gunshot to show what the pooch's likely fate would have been if Annie had not adopted her.

Three cheers are not enough for Craven. She was smart, sassy, and self-assured, with a beautiful singing voice. She was the perfect counterpoint to the jaded Warbucks, and soon found the

soft spot in his 24-carat heart. Craven was completely at home on the stage, as if she had lived there all her life. And for an orphan with her winning ways, what better place is there to live?

Annie continues with 8:00 p.m. performances on October 22nd and 23rd. But if you want to bring your four year old to the Sunday matinee on the 24th, take a tip. Get there early.

ACT has another smash hit on their hands.

BRIDGE from pg 1

ed repair work would not be difficult. "It wouldn't take us very long to do this," he said on July 21st.

But last Thursday, at a meeting in Montague town hall between Gill and Montague officials, representatives of the DOT, G-M bridge contractor SPS New England, the Montague Business Association and concerned residents, Stegeman said if repairs to the 5th Street canal bridge required closing the span for any period of time, then he would opt to put off the repairs until the Gill-Montague bridge is open for two way traffic again. Four years from

now.

Stegeman said if an ongoing peer review of the DOT's plan for repairing the 5th Street canal bridge permits, the work might be able to proceed more swiftly, by closing one lane of traffic at a time, or closing the bridge only at night, while repairs are underway. On the plus side, Stegeman said it would be possible to replace the defective gusset plates from above, eliminating the need to drain the power canal during repairs.

Regarding progress of major construction on the Gill-Montague bridge, resident DOT engineer Bob Demers said, "We're on schedule, and very optimistic." Although he later quoted former defense secretary Donald

Rumsfeld, saying, "Stuff happens. It's not always a perfect system."

There was a lot of discussion about the best way to clear snow from the bridge, with only one lane open. Stegeman said the standard operating procedure will be to have a small plow truck push the snow over to the Montague side, where it will be removed by a state contractor. If snow gets tossed up on the sidewalk in the process, that will not be DOT's responsibility, as they do not clear sidewalks on any of the Connecticut River bridges, Stegeman said.

"I have a concern with the sidewalk," said Riverside resident Claire Chang. "I walk across it. People walk across it."

Montague town planner Walter Ramsey said, "There are pedestrians who use the sidewalk year round. There has been an increase in pedestrian traffic since bridge construction began."

Stegeman said if the citizens of Gill and Greenfield wanted to

increase his budget he would hire more workers, but right now he had a road clearing crew of 30 for the entire district, and "They're in plows."

Gill selectboard members and residents asked for improved signage leading up to the bridge, saying it is not uncommon to see cars begin to enter the long one way, take a look at all the construction equipment, and then back up or try to turn around against oncoming traffic.

Considering that a bike lane will be installed on the widened bridge deck, Ann Banash asked the DOT to add a bike and pedestrian crossing at the Route 2 intersection. John Ward wanted to know who would be responsible for paying the bill for street lights on the bridge, since DOT pays the bill at other Connecticut River crossings. Claire Chang asked for simultaneous left turn signals at the Route 2 intersection, rather than the current staggered signals, which tend to cause traffic to back up on the eastbound side. Gene

Beaubien said, "We need a 'no right on red sign,' at the signal, rather than a dozen yards or more back from the signal where the sign stands now."

Numerous complaints were aired about the signage saying, "emergency conditions exist when light is flashing; obey extended red signal." These signs are intended to keep motorists from entering the long one way from the Gill side, when Turners emergency vehicles are called across the bridge to assist Gill firefighters or police. The only time this system was tested, at 3:00 a.m. when a house burned down in Gill, it failed to prevent a motorist from trying to cross from Gill at the same time Turners fire trucks were entering from the other side.

Ray Purington said the message should be revised to read, "Do not cross bridge when light is flashing."

On the subject of confusing signs, Holy Smokes owner Lou

see **BRIDGE** pg 9

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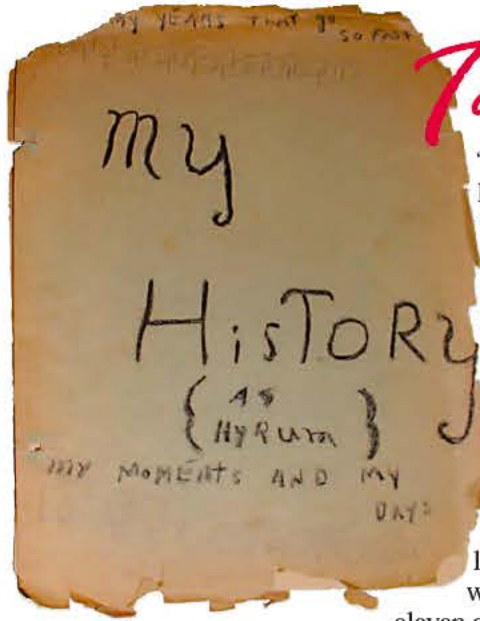
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Tattered Treasure

"tattered treasure" from long ago. I was going through some old papers of my mother's when I discovered my own treasure — one, I am certain, has absolutely no monetary value. It was likely a written school assignment from elementary school saved by my mother: a short, chronological autobiography, written at the age of eleven experienced years!

Though not terribly imaginative, this 57-year-old document contained some interesting writing and publishing lessons. I must have, even then, had some interest in writing. Or maybe my perception now is swayed by tricks of the trade I could not have known then.

First, as every publisher knows, a book is partly judged by its cover. Mine was made of art construction paper, brass prong bound and lavishly illustrated with a mixed media of pencil and black crayon. Eleven sequentially numbered squares outlined the top and bottom, with

the words, "My years that go so fast" placed on top. (If I had only known how fast the next five decades would pass!)

The title "My History (as Hyrum)" wasn't particularly exciting (one word titles seem to be the rage). Still, the subtitle, "My Moments and My Days" arguably held some promise for the reader.

In order to maximize word count, I began with a rather flowery introduction, thanking my readers in advance and suggesting that I would be grateful if they would "remember thy brother (myself) who wrote this book."

This was followed by a short dedication to my mother and father and "to all the people who have helped to make my life as happy as it has been." I'm sure I excluded my pesky smaller siblings deliberately, since at that time I usually viewed them as contributing to anything but my happiness.

Seven chapters follow. The first, My Babyhood, was honestly approached by stating, "I do not know very much about myself until I was three years

old." This chapter, aside from the cliché, transitions nicely to the next, My School Life, with the sentence: "But you know how time flies and I had started school before I knew it." Don't let the reader put the book down until you have them curious about the next plot development.

"My School Life" points out a few accomplishments, such as once winning fifth place in a spelling bee. The autobiography itself, with its scratched out words and misspellings, indicates the spelling bee must not have included any difficult words.

There is nothing candidly reflective or balanced in this chapter; I brazenly praise my then current school and teacher as being "especially nice." I also pointedly make mention of how much I personally like school, thus hopefully placing my work in marked contrast to some of my schoolmates.

Chapters on "My Pets" and "My Favorites" note that I liked dogs, but my sister preferred cats. Now, we have switched positions. Or, maybe it's because I live in New England and the cat doesn't need to be walked.

My favorite heroes, too, are listed in a carefully punctuated sentence of names: Rocky Lane, Roy Rogers, Rod Cameron, and

Gene Autry. (We had real-man heroes in those days.)

As a final favorite, I wrote, "I like art, but I am not very good at it." At last, a mildly critical self-revelation! The sentence is still true too, making for a timeless piece of writing. Both these chapters continue the same repetitive transition sentence style of, "actor, singer, or clown." I go on to write that I have always known about war and, "I know that all of the defending forces are bad on your nerves," but I decided to take the Air Force if possible. Of course, I subsequently didn't, nor could I act or sing all that well either.

So, I was left with the tattered treasure of being just a clown. What do you think?

BY HYRUM H. HUSKEY JR. THE PATCH - *What do you think? Is there a treasure in your attic?*

At one time or another, most of us come across something in our home we surmise may be an 'antique,' or at least monetarily valuable. Such musings usually result from an attic or other storage area cleaning, or a long-delayed sorting of a deceased parent's or grandparent's belongings from a dust-laden box.

A recent home sale was the impetus for my discovery of a

BRIDGE from pg 8

Ekus suggested changing the Route 2 signs that read "Montague businesses open during construction," to "Bridge to Montague open during construction."

Ekus also wanted clearer signage leading out of town to Route 91, via Cheapside, especially while the southbound ramp to 91 remains closed for repair at Exit 27. (That ramp will be open by Thanksgiving, the DOT predicted with some confidence.)

Signs were on the minds of Montague officials, too, who wondered whether the promised wayfinding signage to direct tourists into and out of town had gotten lost in the long and winding procurement process.

When Deval Patrick had come to town for a photo op against the backdrop of the bridge repair on June 25th, Demers had assured him the wayfinding signage would be

in place before repairs forced the bridge to close one lane of traffic. But those customized signs are still not here.

"Worst case scenario?" demanded Stan Rosenberg. "First or second week of December, installed," replied Demers.

Business association president Chris Janke said business owners he had surveyed were generally impressed with the fast pace of progress on the bridge repairs so far.

Some report no impact to their cash registers from the traffic detour and bridge construction, others report significant impacts. "But we're in a pretty significant economic downturn, so it's hard to tell."

Janke also said he had heard positive reviews on the reconstruction of the gateway bridge. "I've heard it's going to look gorgeous. A heck of a lot better than jersey barriers and rusting railings."



Confluence Convocation Fri. Oct. 22 5 p.m.
The Gallery at Hallmark 85 Ave A Turners Falls 5 p.m. free

EXPHRASIS (ART ABOUT ART)

PAUL TEELING PHOTO; CLAUDIA WELLS COLLAGE

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

- William Carlos Williams

The editors would like to thank the following
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Readers are invited to send poems to the
Montague Reporter at 58 4th Street,
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or email us your poetry at
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design by Boysen Hodgson

Sleeping in Tongues

In no uncertain words
I am three
The descending dove and the flame
Only in the two
Do I become
the third
The mother of all ships
Is the harbor

Touched by flame or finger
Or white bird's wings
The flood of fantastic words
Twitching spouters
Spewing ancient
chatter
On carpeted dreams

In two, I am three
In every, I am each

One

—Jim Dunn
Beverly, MA



Sonnet VII

Dank fens of cedar, hemlock branches gray
With trees and trail of mosses, wringing-wet,
Beds of the black pitchpine in dead leaves set
Whose wasted red has wasted to white away,
Remnants of rain and droppings of decay,
Why hold ye so my heart, nor dimly let
Through your deep leaves the light of yesterday,
The faded glimmer of a sunshine set?
Is it that in your darkness, shut from strife,
The bread of tears becomes the bread of life?
Far from the roar of day, beneath your boughs
Fresh griefs beat tranquilly, and loves and vows
Grow green in your gray shadows, dearer far
Even than all lovely lights and roses are?

—Frederick Goddard Tuckerman
Greenfield, MA

**You've Been Asked to Join the Group
"Vampires Aren't Sexy. They are Monsters."**

Kids, burn your LeBron jerseys
500 Internal Service Error
Hey, it's your funeral / my trial
Male clitoris juicy in the wispy roar of dew
I was blind-copied on _that_
Poem that wishes to awaken the nipples
Of the audience
As if one cried out "nipple" and
All nipples would answer
I left you tied up all day while I was at work
Just some Bowery girl
A publicist named Xenophon
She'll wash you whiter than snow
Are dogs smoking tampons funny?
A mass grave full of clowns, with their
Little car upside-down on the top
Like a cherry / My mom lets me bring
Girls home as long as I call them my
Fiance / Dance with me, El Chupacabra
During the 7th inning stretch as
It's Phil Plantier Bobblehead Night
Celebrating his sitting on a toilet
Batting stance/ I'm Jim Behrle and
I approve this message
I have a soft spot for evil bitches
And love means shopping at Home Depot
On like Wednesdays
I want werewolves in serious relationships

—Jim Behrle
Brooklyn, NY

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Jim Behrle

Jim Dunn

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CONTRIBUTOR'S NOTES:

Jim Behrle lives in Brooklyn. His chapbook *SUCCUBUS BLUES* was released from Editions Louis Wain in early 2010.

Jim Dunn is the author of *Soft Launch* (Bootstrap/Pressed Wafer 2008), *Convenient Hole* (Pressed Wafer 2004) and *Insects In Sex* (Falling Angel Press, 1995). His work has appeared in *Gerry Mulligan*, *Process*, *Polis*, *The Café Review*, *can we have our ball back?* and *Meanie*, among others. He lives in Beverly, Massachusetts.

Frederick Goddard Tuckerman (1821 – 1873) wrote many of his poems celebrating the natural world from a perch (now named, in his honor, "Poet's Seat") overlooking the Connecticut River Valley. The Slope Editions Reading Series at The Rendezvous will feature his work on November 14th at 5 p.m.



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Testing the Water with CRWC

An Interview with River Steward Andrea Donlon

BY IVAN USSACH
GREENFIELD

The Connecticut River Watershed Council (CRWC) has a new Water Laboratory at its Bank Row headquarters in Greenfield.

During this year's first summer sampling season, the lab processed and analyzed surface water samples for bacterial content - *Escherichia coli* (*E. coli*) to be precise. *E. coli* is the preferred indicator for the presence of 'pathogens,' biological organisms that can cause harm if ingested during recreational activities like swimming.

I visited recently with Andrea Donlon, CRWC's River Steward for Massachusetts, to discuss the new lab's importance to the community.

Montague Reporter: Where did the idea for the lab come from?

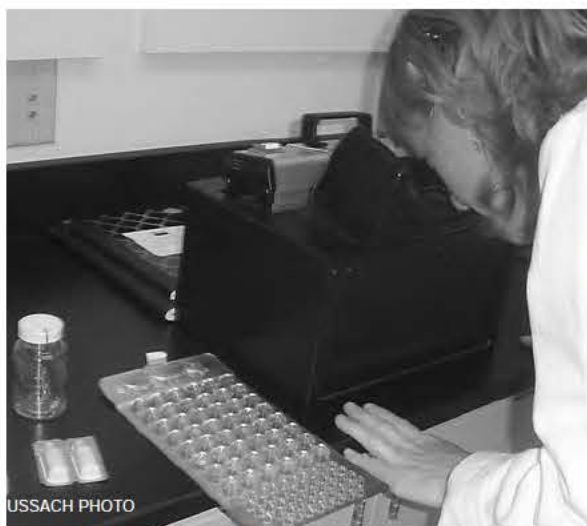
Andrea Donlon: It originated

with the Deerfield River Watershed Association. They were doing testing in someone's basement and wanted a more permanent location.

MR: Why the focus on bacteria?

AD: Bacteria is an indicator organism for pathogens in water, and a known pollutant in many sections of the Connecticut River. The river is used heavily for recreation, and bacteria is the thing most people want to know about. Is it safe to swim? To go boating? We couldn't give them a good answer. We've been planning for this since 2005. Except for a little testing by the Massachusetts Department of Environmental Protection once every five years, no one had been doing regular testing for bacteria in river bodies when we started planning the lab.

MR: Are there certain areas



USSACH PHOTO
CRWC's Andrea Donlon processes a bacterial water quality sample at the new water lab in Greenfield.

where the threat of contamination is serious, or is the pollution threat more general?

AD: Combined Sewer Overflows (CSOs) have caused problems in cities like Springfield, Holyoke and Chicopee, where the same pipes can carry stormwater runoff and

sewage if the capacity of waste treatment plants is exceeded after a heavy rain. Some progress has been made in these cities - they all have administrative orders requiring them to reduce or eliminate bacterial loading into waterways. Chicopee and Holyoke

recently built satellite treatment plants where they zap bacteria with chlorine. Montague had two little CSOs that have been largely eliminated now. The Connecticut River south of the Holyoke Dam is definitely a hotspot after a heavy rain.

MR: What have you been able

to do in response?

AD: Following an EPA Targeted Watershed Grant that allowed several organizations (not CRWC) to regularly test for bacteria along the mainstem of the Connecticut River, CRWC has been collaborating with the Pioneer Valley Planning Commission (PVPC) and UMass Water Resources Research Center on a project to conduct weekly sampling on the Connecticut River and other testing on tributaries. The project is funded by Mass Department of Environmental Protection using federal stimulus dollars, and CRWC's part has involved using volunteers to test some of the Connecticut's tributaries - either known hotspots where we try to identify bacteria and its sources, or places that are of interest because no one has tested them.

For example, in Greenfield there is an underground stream called Maple Brook. Most of see **WATER** pg 13

STABLE from pg 7

Environmental, who was hired to design and oversee the bank stabilization work.

The group discussed the stabilization of the Connecticut River banks in the lower section of Split River Farm in Gill, across and slightly downstream from Northfield Mountain Pumped Storage Facility's tail-race tunnel. That project was completed last year, with the exception of certain plantings yet to be done.

At issue is the relative success and failure of using "large

woody debris and large woody debris with intact root systems," commonly referred to by lay people as "logs and stumps."

This project was among the first in Massachusetts to use this technique, recommended in a study commissioned by FirstLight several years ago. Over the years, erosion control projects in the so-called 'Turners Falls Pool' (the 22 mile stretch of the Connecticut River between Turners Falls and Vernon, VT that First Light considers 'the lower reservoir' of Northfield Mountain) have ranged from the use of tires to

rip rap by the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers in the 1970s, to coir logs and more natural looking techniques. Using large woody debris is an attempt to create habitat, catch sediment, and create a barrier to the erosive forces of river fluctuations and boat wakes.

Kimberly Noake MacPhee of FRCOG questioned Momnie as to whether higher water levels and cessation of pumping this summer, with the accompanying absence of fluctuating water levels, had resulted in more stable banks.

John Bennett, from the

Windham Regional Commission and the Franklin Conservation District, said his personal observation was that the banks between Vernon and Turners Falls were the most stable he has seen them in awhile.

Tom Miner of the Franklin regional planning board asked for a general statement about whether the lower Split River site is working, and whether improvements could be put in place to make it better. Momnie stressed the site is a success. At present, the toe of the river bank slope has been very stable, according to Momnie.

"But I wonder if when pumping resumes, undercutting will occur," MacPhee said. MacPhee recommended a plan be put in place in case fluctuating water levels do undercut the toe of the slope.

Momnie reiterated that motor boat wakes were the cause of bank erosion.

Asked about a date for resumption of pumping at the pumped storage facility, Momnie said, "They'd like to have seen it last week, but it won't be for six to eight weeks more."



CONTRACT from pg 1

schools, until such time as the member towns and the school committee come to an agreement on an operating budget.

They will have another chance to do that at a special district budget setting meeting on Thursday, November 18th at 6:30 p.m., at the Turners Falls High School auditorium, to which all Gill and Montague voters are invited to attend.

On October 14th, Michael Langknecht, who is also on the school district's bargaining committee, argued that the school committee had not forfeited its right to negotiate and approve contracts when the state took over fiscal oversight of the G-M schools, and he urged the committee to move forward and approve them forthwith. He also said, "I would not have any problem explaining my decision making process," in public. "There needs to be some clear explanation why we are where we are."

Joyce Phillips said the school committee had been joined in past negotiating sessions by representatives of the selectboards of

Gill and Montague, but that had not happened this time around, although the selectboards would be invited to be present for the final ratification.

Committee chair Emily Monosson said, "I don't totally disagree that some of the discussion should take place in public." But she said the committee had agreed to ground rules with the unions on how the negotiations would be handled this year, and though she would not allow those ground rules to be specified in public, presumably they weighed against a public discussion of the pending contracts.

A wave of school reform measures, coupled with huge budget shortfalls in state capitals and local governments across the country have led to a growing demand by open government groups and taxpayer associations to open up the process by which school boards ratify teacher contracts to prior public comment, once tentative agreements have been reached between the bargaining units and the boards. Personnel costs make up the lion's share of any school district,

generally in the range of 75% to 80% of the total budget.

"Because taxpayers are footing the bill for these costs, they need to have input," said Lise Bang-Jensen, of the Empire Center for New York State Policy, a taxpayers' watchdog group, cited in the *Syracuse Post Standard* earlier this year, in a typical example of efforts being made to open up the process across the country.

School committees typically vote on tentative contracts, often multi-year contracts, before the public ever gets a chance to view the terms of those contracts, or express an opinion on them.

On Thursday, October 14th, the Gill-Montague school committee voted 6 - 2 against "discussing the ratification of the tentative agreements in public," with Singleton and Levenson in opposition, and Langknecht abstaining.

Singleton made a motion to tape the final executive session, presumably so the tape could be made public after ratification of the pending contracts, and that motion carried.

Turners Rod & Gun Seeks Dock Permission

CONCORD, MASS. - Turners Falls Rod and Gun Club is seeking a permit from the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers to retain and maintain seasonally-installed, bottom-anchored floating docks and ramps leading to the Connecticut River at 15 Deep Hole Road in Turners Falls. The proposed project will impact approximately 1,341 square feet of essential fish habitat for various species and life stages. This habitat consists of shallow open water over a silty and sandy bottom. However, the Corps has made a preliminary determination that the site-specific adverse effects

will not be substantial.

Public comments on the Corps permit review (File # NAE-2010-0264) should be forwarded no later than November 19th to the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers, New England District, Regulatory Division (Attn: John Sargent), 696 Virginia Road, Concord, MA 01742. Additional information available at (800) 343-4789 or by email to john.c.sargent@usace.army.mil.

Subsequently, the committee agreed to bring the contracts to a vote at their next meeting, on October 26th, pending input from the bargaining units for the teachers, secretaries and administrative assistants, cafeteria workers, and custodians on the school committee's intent to take that vote prior to receiving the OK of the DESE.



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DEBATE from pg 1
 the backs of working people," Adam said on August 25th.

But by October 13th, Adam had moved toward the middle on Question #3. "If it were to actually pass, the impact on the state budget would be a 5% reduction," in revenue, Adam said, citing the more conservative benchmark used by the Alliance to Roll Back Taxes rather than the 8% reduction the Massachusetts Taxpayers Foundation predicts

All sides seem to agree Massachusetts already faces a \$2 billion budget gap for the upcoming fiscal year, having already cut \$2 billion from state spending since the economic downturn began in 2009.

Adam reiterated, "I do believe it goes too far," but

qualified that stand by saying defeat of Question #3 should not be interpreted by lawmakers as evidence that the voters support the current 6.25% state sales tax. "I don't think that's true at all. People are living on the edge. Nickels and dimes add up."

Both Andrews and Fraser have consistently opposed Question #3.

On October 13th, Andrews said she is, "Committed to no new taxes for the district."

Fraser spoke against Question #1, which would abolish the sales tax on alcohol. "The money raised is used to fund alcohol and drug abuse education programs." Fraser, the former chair of the Quabbin Regional Task Force on Alcohol and Drug Abuse, added, "I do believe in the decriminalization of marijuana."

However, Adam said, "I am in favor of repealing the alcohol tax. We live in a district bordering [sales tax free] New Hampshire. There is nothing to prevent people from popping across the border. It has an adverse effect on [Massachusetts] stores selling wine and beer."

Adam claimed "1500 jobs have been curtailed as a result of this particular tax in Massachusetts."

Asked whether the right of gay citizens to marry should be

extended nationwide, Fraser said, "I believe that gay rights are human rights. Our constitution affords people the right to be who they are. Any kind of discrimination is essentially wrong."

Adam said he is the son of conservative Christian missionaries, and belongs to a "very strict Bible-based" denomination. "Yet I have friends who are actually in committed same sex relationships. They're wonderful people." Adams denounced recent hazing incidents that have led to suicides among gay students, and said, "There is civil marriage, and there is holy matrimony. I don't think the state should be dictating you will go down this path."

Andrews said, "I am proud to live in a state that gives basic human rights. I don't believe in Don't Ask, Don't Tell. President Obama has committed to abolish it; he needs to step up." Speaking of the federal Defense of Marriage Act, Andrews said, "Families in same sex marriages do not have the same rights as other marriages do in terms of wealth transfer, health visits, bullying and oppression."

At this point, Adam took the opportunity to add, "There was a marriage petition in 2004," to amend the state constitution and outlaw gay marriage. "I was one of the signers of that," he said. "I don't regret that. I sign what-

ever petition comes my way. I support the initiative process," to give citizens the right to vote on matters that concern them.

Andrews replied, "You will not find me signing something that does not align with my values. I believe in democracy, and full engagement," but, "there are times when the majority is hurting the minority. I won't sign for that."

None of the candidates spoke favorably of allowing casino gambling in Massachusetts, although Adam said, "If you go to Foxwoods, you see quite a few Massachusetts license plates there. Why shouldn't they spend their money here?"

Though Adams said he opposed allowing casinos in the Commonwealth "in principal," his support would depend on how the eventual bill is written. "If there was a provision to deal with gambling addiction, that might help."

Andrews said, "Casinos are not what I favor... Personally, I'd like not to create casino jobs. But it will apparently be on the books next year."

She added, "I worked for a company that produced durable goods, Procter & Gamble." [In Franklin County,] "We have factories. We have the workforce. We need to go aggressively after federal and state and private money to build thriving communities with a strong economic


base. That's what I'll work on."

Fraser said, "I find casinos to be exploitive. We need to build our local economy. That is money being drained from the local economy," while negatively impacting local businesses like restaurants, and bringing in "unfavorable elements."

On education reform, Fraser sounded an optimistic note on Massachusetts' recently approved federal Race to the Top initiative. "The language includes collaboratives: this district can join with that district to share resources and drive down costs." She suggested charter schools, like the Four Rivers School, could collaborate with the local high school to expand curricula and share costs on programs like special education.

Andrews said Massachusetts, and the nation as a whole, has lost the edge to compete internationally due to declines in public education investment. "We need to increase funding from kindergarten through college, and we need to get the best value for our money." She said even though charter schools offer "critical and valuable innovation," still, "my preference would be to spend that money for [mainstream] public education." She said the state should make good on promises to fully fund regional transportation, and similar mandates.

see DEBATE pg 14



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HIGHLIGHTS FROM THE MONTAGUE POLICE LOG
Unlawful Possession of a Firearm

Tuesday, 10/12
 7:37 p.m. Arrest of [redacted] for possession of a Class D drug with intent to distribute and on a default warrant.
 9:59 p.m. Domestic disturbance on Fifth Street. Peace restored.

Wednesday, 10/13
 12:28 a.m. Open door or window at the Montague Bookmill. Secured building.
 7:42 p.m. Runaway on Coolidge Avenue. Referred to an officer.

Thursday, 10/14
 8:39 a.m. Larceny on Taylor Hill Road in Montague Center. Report taken.
 10:21 a.m. Illegal dumping on Cemetery Road. No police service necessary.
 8:40 p.m. Structure fire on Montague City Road. Referred to other agency.

Saturday, 10/16
 12:47 a.m. Fight on Avenue A. Investigated.
 12:50 a.m. Fight on Avenue A. Investigated.
 1:58 a.m. Loud noise disturbance on Fourth Street. Services rendered.
 2:29 a.m. Warrant arrest on Third Street. Unable to locate.
 1:54 p.m. Drug/narcotics violation on Third Street. Referred to an officer.
 6:36 p.m. Disorderly conduct in front of the Millers Pub on East Main Street. Services rendered.

Sunday, 10/17
 12:31 a.m. Loud noise disturbance outside the Rendezvous on Third Street. Services rendered.

1:30 a.m. Arrest of [redacted] on a default warrant.
 5:18 p.m. Warrant arrest on Third Street. No such person can be found.
 4:26 p.m. Suspicious auto on Old Northfield Road. Investigated.
 6:31 p.m. Suspicious auto near Railroad Salvage building. Referred to other agency.
 7:35 p.m. Arrest of [redacted] for carrying alcoholic beverages as a minor, possession without a license of a large capacity firearm, unlawful possession of ammunition, carrying a dangerous weapon, and defacement of a firearm serial number.

8:21 p.m. Suspicious auto on Alice Street. Services rendered.
 9:12 p.m. Domestic disturbance on Fifth Street. Services rendered.

Monday, 10/18
 7:28 a.m. Arrest of [redacted] for domestic assault and battery, and assault and battery with a dangerous weapon.
 9:03 a.m. Loud noise disturbance at railroad crossing in Lake Pleasant. Report taken.
 1:52 p.m. Shoplifting at Food City. Investigated.
 4:53 p.m. Larceny on Avenue A. Referred to an officer.

Tuesday, 10/19
 12:57 a.m. Fire behind the Shady Glen on Second Street. Referred to other agency.
 4:14 p.m. Missing person on Eleventh Street.

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JESSICA HARMON ILLUSTRATION

THE HEALTHY GEEZER:

Whole Foods Are Your Best Sources of Minerals

BY FRED CICETTI

LEONIA, NJ - Q. Should I take minerals?

It's important to talk with your doctor before you take mineral pills, especially if you take prescription medicines, have any health problems or are elderly. Taking too much of a mineral can cause problems with some medical tests or interfere with drugs you are taking.

Minerals are "micronutrients" your body needs in small but steady amounts. Your body can't make most micronutrients, so you must get them elsewhere.

Minerals come from the earth

or from water. Plants and animals absorb them to get nutrients. The "major minerals" are calcium, phosphorus, magnesium, sodium, potassium, sulfur and chloride. They are considered major minerals because adults need them in large amounts.

The "trace minerals" are chromium, copper, fluoride, iodine, iron, manganese, molybdenum, selenium and zinc. Your body needs them in smaller amounts.

Whole foods are your best sources of minerals. It would be hard to "overdose" on minerals you get from the foods you eat. But if you take supplements, you can easily take too much.

Q. Aren't some people making a bit too much out of second-hand smoke?

Secondhand smoke — also called environmental tobacco smoke (ETS) — is made up of

the 'sidestream' smoke from the end of a cigarette, pipe, or cigar, and the 'mainstream' smoke once it is exhaled.

Nonsmokers exposed to secondhand smoke absorb the same 4,000 chemical compounds smokers do. More than 60 of these compounds are known or suspected to cause cancer.

Each year, in the United States alone, secondhand smoke is responsible for about 40,000 deaths from heart disease, and about 3,000 lung-cancer deaths.

Secondhand smoke causes increased cardiovascular risks by damaging blood vessels, decreasing your ability to exercise and altering blood cholesterol levels.

Some research indicates that people exposed to a spouse's cigarette smoke for several decades are about 20 percent more likely to have lung cancer. Those exposed long-term to secondhand smoke in the workplace or social

settings may increase their risk of lung cancer by about 25 percent.

Q. You never hear about lumbago anymore. Has it been cured?

Lumbago is lower back pain. The song is just about ended, but the malady lingers on.

Back pain affects about eight out of ten people. Back pain is more common among people who are not physically fit. Weak back and abdominal muscles may not properly support the spine. If you are sedentary most of the time and then exert yourself on rare occasions, you are more likely to injure your back than someone who exercises daily.

If you're carrying a big belly, you put added stress on the muscles in your lower back and are a candidate for agony.

Some back pain, including disc disease, may spring from your genes. Race can have an influence, too. African-American

women, for example, are two to three times more likely than white women to develop spondylolisthesis, a condition in which a vertebra of the lower spine slips out of place.

Your job can be a major influence on back health. If your work requires heavy lifting or sitting all day, you risk hurting your back. Many sanitation workers and writers suffer from back troubles.

Mechanical problems can cause back pain. Perhaps the most common mechanical cause of back pain is disc degeneration. The cushioning discs between the vertebrae of the spine break down with age. If there is stress on these compromised discs, they press against spinal nerves and you may experience what feels like a toothache in a buttock. At almost any age, an injury can force these discs to bulge or rupture, causing the same kind of pain.

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

SWAIN from pg 1

we have 80 seniors 60 years and over in Wendell," said Swaim, in a follow-up interview. "But we have between 180 and 190 seniors, so the population has more than doubled in that time."

The senior center moved to its new location and held an open

house on the day Obama won the election in November of 2008. At that time, the center distributed a survey to Wendellites asking what sort of programs the new center should offer, for a more active demographic of seniors.

"All the things we've been doing were mentioned in that sur-

vey," said Swaim, "from exercise programs to senior film nights to nature programs. Monthly health clinics continue on the first Wednesday of the month, with a foot technician and a nurse who comes and checks blood pressure and body mass index."

At the senior center reorgani-

zation meeting on October 13th, COA treasurer Ginny Schimmel told Swaim, "We should give you big thanks for all you've done." Dorthee agreed saying, "I came here tonight because I want to thank Kathy for all she's done."

Starting this month, Spittle will take over most of the center

coordination tasks, and Byron Ricketts will be in charge of the monthly newsletter. Doug Dawson will coordinate the monthly movie night.

To find out more about senior center programs, call: Nancy Spittle at 978-544-6760.

WATER from pg 11

urbanized Greenfield's stormwater runs off into Maple Brook underground. The brook daylighted down near the former Wedgewood Gardens, off Colrain Street, and then enters the Green River. Maple Brook has consistently had very high bacteria levels — probably coming from leaky sewer lines that cross the brook. So obviously that situation is a concern, especially now the town has bought some land and plans to eventually put in a boat launch nearby.

We've also tested a section of

the Mill River in Florence that people use for swimming, and found high bacterial counts. The city of Northampton was concerned, and posted signs warning people not to swim in certain areas. They have done some follow-up work to positively identified at least one house with a sewer line incorrectly connected to the storm drain. That means raw sewage from this home has been draining into the Mill River since the house was built, I think in the 1950s!

MR: I heard about some testing being done at Barton Cove.

AD: Yes, as part of that PVPC project there's been three years of weekly sampling at the state boat ramp at Barton Cove on the Gill side. Last year, and the year before that, there were some pretty high readings. This summer, we added four new sites that were tested three times, and the results at the new sites and the weekly readings at the state ramp were consistently very low. We tested around the cove on the Montague side, and on the Gill side by the Franklin County Boat Club docks and the Barton Cove Campground, and Unity Park in

Turners. So there's a bit of a mystery there.

MR: How can local folks get involved if they think there is a problem?

AD: The public should always contact their local officials first, and their local watershed group. The CRWC lab has a strict quality control procedure to follow, and needs to run its tests in medium to large batches to be affordable. So it's not well-suited to an individual bringing in one or two samples. However, we can work with watershed groups or other community groups to organize a

sampling and testing program with volunteers, if the costs can be covered, as we did this past summer with the West River Watershed Alliance in Vermont.

MR: The Millers River has had very little bacterial testing done over the years.

AD: That's right, and I'll be speaking about a possible testing program there at the annual meeting of the Millers River Watershed Council in Athol on October 28th at 7:30 p.m. at the Millers River Environmental Center.

I'll see you there!

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GO GREEN FAMILY

Episode 29: Heat Challenge—The Results!

BY JEANNE WEINTRAUB-MASON

MONTAGUE CENTER – WGBJ host Sam Lively, seated at a round table with the competition judges, ran a comb through his wiry hair before indicating to the cameraman to begin filming.

“Once again we have invited Bill Bingman from the Pioneer Valley Electric Company (PVECO), and Jen Hillard from the Massachusetts Sustainable Energy Society (MSES) to be our judges for this challenge. Jen, how about telling us about the Bartlett family’s approach?”

“The Bartlett’s geothermal heat system is a really fine green backup heating source for a pas-

sive solar house. Geothermal works like a reversible refrigerator, using that constant underground temperature to heat or cool the house, depending on the need. Since there is no combustion or exhaust, geothermal heat is a very clean source of energy. However, the Bartlett’s system didn’t come cheaply — it will have a twenty-five year payback time.”

Our viewers should keep in mind that the ideal time to install a geothermal system is when a house is built, so that the excavation for pipes and pumps can be done at the same time as the foundation (and septic, if included). Similarly, it really makes sense to consider passive solar heating when you are first plan-

ning to build a home — orienting a house to face south and installing extra windows on the south side don’t have to add significantly to the cost of building.”

“Thanks, Jen. Bill, the Robbins-Levine family really took advantage of WMECO’s weatherization program. Would you comment on the work they’ve done?” asked Sam Lively.

“Well, Sam, the Robbins-Levine family’s decision to hire an energy auditor and take advantage of WMECO’s weatherization program should go a long way in reducing their home heating load, while minimizing their out-of-pocket expenses. I also applaud their decision to change over to natural gas. Home heating

oil releases twenty-three lbs of carbon for every gallon burned, whereas natural gas releases about twelve lbs of carbon for the equivalent number of BTUs delivered.”

“You know, what’s really impressive, Bill, is that they managed to complete all this work, even after surviving a house fire. Fortunately, no one was hurt,” added Sam.

“But it’s time to talk about our heat challenge winners. Once again, the Tinker family wins the day. With their deep energy retrofit, they’ve dramatically

improved the energy performance of their house — they expect to reduce the energy needed to heat their home by at least 65%. Together with Beyond Green, the Tinkers have addressed moisture problems, sealed leaks to prevent infiltration, and super insulated their walls and attic. To top it all off, they’ve replaced an old oil boiler and backup wood stove with a small, efficient wood pellet stove. They have earned the prize for this challenge: a complete set of custom installed insulating window blinds.

Continued next issue ...

Heat & Energy Links

For more information on Massachusetts energy savings programs, go to www.energybucks.com

To learn more about deep energy retrofits: Cozy Home, Northampton, MA <http://www.mycozyhome.org/contact>; Beyond Green, Easthampton, MA <http://www.beyondgreen.biz/>

To learn more about geothermal systems: Deerfield Valley Heating and Cooling, Greenfield, MA www.deerfieldvalley.com/; Wilson Services Inc., Northampton, MA www.wilsonph.com

DEBATE from pg 12

Adam agreed, “American students are not up to par with their international counterparts. Education needs to be looked at, and we need to reform.” But Adam said he departed from the party line on school choice.

“Education is the largest chunk of municipal budgets, bar none. When students opt to go to other schools, money leaves with them. You are actually hurting your community. Let’s not kick a man when he’s down. Send your child to another

school, the parent bears the responsibility to do that.”

Fraser spoke favorably of charter schools, saying they represent, “People who are driven. They have a vision to put something together and give it to the kids. In public schools, it’s more generalized.” But she spoke highly of the Swift River School in New Salem, where her granddaughter goes to school. “They pick a foreign country and live, eat, and drink that country, and at the end of the year, they hold a festival for the parents and students.

Passion creates a great school.” Adam said he thought snapshots were more valuable than standardized tests to get a true picture of student performance. “I’d like to see languages taught at

an early age. Our children will be competing internationally,” he added.

On energy, Fraser favored small scale biomass plants that provide district heat as well as electricity, and a responsible end use for forest products.

Adam said he would like to see more focus on hydro electric power. “Electricity demand is rising; we have old dams that need to be rebuilt; we need construction jobs – to me it’s a triple play that actually wins.”

Fraser was critical of Adam on hydro power’s potential to the area. “There are extremely low flows right now. For hydro to be effective, rivers have to be dammed. Fish and Wildlife is concerned about letting our rivers flow free.”

Adam countered that aligning federal and state licensing procedures would remove roadblocks from developers who would like to revamp existing dams. “Doug Starrett spent over \$100,000 going through the regulatory process,” to upgrade the Crescent Street Dam in Athol to provide up to 30% of the Starrett Company’s electricity needs. “That money could have been spent hiring workers.”

Adam made no reference to objections raised by Trout Unlimited on the effect on fish migration from the Athol dam upgrades.

Andrews said, “We need to figure out how to reduce dependence on fossil fuels and get more green technology in. We need to come up with solutions now, not five years from now.” She added, “We have to reduce consumption. Get involved with Greening Greenfield,” she urged the GCTV audience.

Adam parted company with his opponents on the subject of single payer health care. “I’m not in favor of single payer. One of the things that disturbed me about Mitt Romney,” [no follow up on what the other things that disturbed him about Mitt Romney were] “was that he signed onto universal health care as a political move, mandated punitively, without enough revenue. We can do better.”

How? Adam was vague on that, but he did say, “If someone walks into an emergency room, he has the right to health care. But I as an individual have the right not to have to pay for someone else’s health care.”

So what’s the solution? “Tort reform,” Adam concluded.

The candidates did agree on one thing. “We’re all from Orange,” as Andrews pointed out.

“I won’t hold that against you,” replied GCTV’s Hutchinson.

Adam, Andrews and Fraser

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Christina's Pizzeria, Erving: *TNT Karaoke* @ 8:30 p.m. to 12:30 a.m.

Deja Brew, Wendell: *Bill Downes*. Acoustic Classic Rock. 9 to 11 p.m.

The Rendezvous, Turners Falls: *Nobody's Fat / Groove Shoes*. 9:30 p.m.

All Soul's UU Church, Greenfield, *Phil Ochs Song Night*. mc'd by Sonny Ochs, Phil's sister. With: Kim & Reggie Harris, Magpie, David Roth, John Flynn and Greg Greenway. 7:30 p.m.

Hallmark Gallery, Turners Falls: Friday Evening Biennial Events Continue with *Confluence Convocation: A Celebration of Ekphrasis (art about other art)*. Curated by Dee Jaye Selah. 5 to 8 p.m. See www.turnersfallsriverculture.org for full schedule of performances.

SATURDAY, OCTOBER 23rd
Great Falls Discovery Center, Turners Falls. *Wildlife-themed gourd decorating*. 10:30 to 11:30 a.m. Come learn about local wildlife while decorating your very own wildlife-themed gourd!

Franklin County Pumpkin Fest, Turners, Avenue A. Crafts, food, entertainment, 3 to 9 p.m. Main Stage: 3:00 - 4:00 - *Dave Loomis & the Green River Gang*, 4:20 to 5:20 *Fancy Trash*, 5:40 to 6:40 - *the Sushi Brothers*, 7:00 to 8:00 - *Ruby's Complaint*, 8:20 to 9:20 - *Curly Fingers Dupree*.

Route 63 Roadhouse, Millers Falls. *Cottonwood*, country music at its best. Their only area show. 9:30 p.m.

Wendell Full Moon Coffeehouse: *The Lonesome Brothers*, 7:30 p.m. \$6 - \$15 Partial proceeds benefit Shutesbury's Spear Memorial Library. (978) 544-5557.

Deja Brew, Wendell: *Mother Turtle*. Soul Rock. 9 to 11 p.m. .

Burrito Rojo, Turners Falls: *St. Mix vs the Industrial Revolution*, 8 to 11 p.m.

The Rendezvous, Turners: *The Fine & Dandy Trio with the Suitcase Junket (Matt Lorenz)*. Bluegrass/funk. 9:30 p.m.

French King Bowling Center, Erving: *Metal Night. Zamia* at 7:30 p.m., *Force Fed Lies* at 8:30 p.m. *Junt* 9:45 p.m.

SUNDAY, OCTOBER 24th
The Rendezvous, Turners Falls: *TNT Karaoke*, 8 p.m. to midnight. Free.

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

MONDAY, OCTOBER 25th
The Rendezvous, Turners Falls: *Open mic*. 8 p.m. Sign up at 7:30 p.m. Free.

Deja Brew, Wendell. *All Small Caps, a Night of Spoken Word*. Open mic starts at 7 p.m. Featured readers: Jim Dunn and Jim Behrle.

TUESDAY, OCTOBER 26th
The Shea, Turners Falls. *Crabgrass Puppet Theatre's production of Anansi, Spiderman of Africa*. 10 a.m. & 1 p.m.

WEDNESDAY, OCTOBER 27th
Last chance for the season! Great Falls Farmers Market. 2 - 6 p.m. Corner, Avenue A & 2nd; Turners. Support local

farms!

The Rendezvous, Turners Falls: *Montague Phantom Brain Exchange*, Featuring: Bimbo Shrineheads, Kieran Lally, Jessica Ciocci, Jo Dery and Mary Carol. 9 p.m. \$5.

THURSDAY, OCTOBER 28th
Burrito Rojo, Turners Falls: *Ray Mason*, 7 p.m.

Bookmill, Montague: 8:30 p.m. *Writers Read Their Work*. Chris Ward, Atlanta Duncan, and Jensen Beach. Free.

Route 63 Roadhouse, Millers Falls: *Open mic* with Host Band Peter Kim on bass,



Jimmy Arnold on drums and special guest guitar that changes every week. All levels welcome. 9 p.m.

Deja Brew, Wendell: *Larry Kopp*. Country & City Blues Guitar w/ Vocals. 8 to 10 p.m.

FRIDAY, OCTOBER 29th
The Rendezvous, Turners Falls: *Lake Street Dive*, 9:30 p.m.

Burrito Rojo, Turners Falls: *Heather Maloney and Naia Kete*, 8 p.m.

Bookmill, Montague: \$6 *Carrie Ferguson & Chris Scanlon*. 8 p.m.

Route 63 Roadhouse, Millers Falls: *Outerspace Band Halloween Show* Don't miss this great night in space! (413) 659-3384. 9 p.m.

Deja Brew, Wendell: *Eric Love*. 8 to 10 p.m. Acoustic Guitar. Singing all your favorite oldies from the 60s & 70s just the way you remember them.

SATURDAY, OCTOBER 30th
Great Falls Discovery Center, Turners Falls. *Halloween Treats*. 10 a.m. to 4 p.m.

Great Falls Discovery Center, Turners Falls. *Amazing Bats*. 1:00 to 2:00 p.m.

The Rendezvous, Turners Falls: *Halloween Tea Party Dance Party*, Costume Contest, big prizes. Come as your favorite tea-partier, be it Samuel, Sarah Palin, Alice, Mad Hatter... 9:30 p.m.

Route 63 Roadhouse, Millers Falls: *Heroes in Trouble Roadhouse Halloween*

Party, costume contests & more. 9:30 p.m.

The Montague Inn, Montague: *TNT Halloween Scaryoke* @ 8:30 p.m. to 12:30 a.m.

Deja Brew, Wendell: *Halloween Costume Party* with music by *Dedicated to Delilah*. 9 to 11 p.m. 80s Pop Rock and Ballads.

French King Bowling Center, Erving: *Metal Night*. Come in costume. *Graceland* 7:30 p.m. *Sorrows of Autumn* 8:30 p.m. *The Grave* 9:45 p.m.

SUNDAY, OCTOBER 31st
Montague Grange: *Halloween Haunted House*. \$1 for the main floor, aimed for the younger audience. \$3 for the DUNGEON -- a horror no one should ever witness -- designed specifically for the older crowd. Can you handle it? 6 to 8 p.m.

SUNDAY, NOVEMBER 7th
Public Forum on Greenfield Town Farm; 2 p.m. Greenfield High School, Silver Street. Daniel Ross, past director of Nuestras Raices will speak; panelists include: Liz Keohan, Natick Community Farm; Amanda Cather, Waltham Field Community Farm; Diego Angarita, Nuestras Raices; small group discussions on the future use of this beautiful piece of communal property. Local food advocates welcome!

SATURDAYS
Montague Farm Cafe each week, 12 to 3 p.m., Ripley Road, Montague. Great food, family atmosphere. Health and wellness offerings and fresh veggie care packages. Free; transportation available. 367-5275

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- 3B. THE TOWN R DAILY 9:00
4. SECRETARIAT PG DAILY 12:15 3:15 6:40 9:10
5. LIFE AS WE KNOW IT PG13 DAILY 12:15 3:15 6:40 9:10
6. SOCIAL NETWORK PG13 DTS DAILY 12:30 3:30 6:50 9:20
7. RED PG13 in DTS sound DAILY 12:30 3:30 6:50 9:20

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Thursday, 10/28 8 to 10 p.m.
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The Suitcase Junket (M. Lorenz) (bluegrass/blues)

SUN 10/24 8pm FREE
TNT KARAOKE!!!

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Montague Farm Café Provides Many Forms of Nourishment



PARZYCH PHOTO

Guests gather in a circle at the Zen Farm Café on Ripley Road in Montague on October 9th.

BY ANNE HARDING & JOSEPH A. PARZYCH - The Montague Farm Café, on Ripley Road in Montague, is a unique soup kitchen that takes place on Saturdays from noon to 3 p.m. at the Montague Farm Zen House. This rustic meditation and retreat center is definitely not your average soup kitchen location.

The Farm Café requires the help of many volunteers to bring together the growing number of participants: shelter residents, low income families, folks in recovery and others. Many participants have transportation issues that can result in isolation and lack of opportunities. Some need meals, and others are simply seeking a connection to other people.

Karen Werner, director of the Montague Farm Zen House said, "The Café is an opportunity to be nourished by good food, community, serving and being served." The Farm Café began as a monthly meal in April, but midway through June ramped up to serving weekly. The Café con-

sistently feeds 50-70 people. On some weeks more than 100 guests have been served. Each Café features live music, family activities and free health and wellness offerings.

A stone soup pot is set up each week in the dining room for contributions of poems, money, drawings, or special found objects, which are displayed at subsequent gatherings. The meal often begins with an outdoor gathering, where everyone joins hands in a circle to share thoughts and prayers. Volunteers are acknowledged, news of upcoming events shared, along with an announcement of the day's mouthwatering menu.

Some of the fresh organic produce grown on the Zen farm makes its way into the weekly menu offering. Other food comes from a long list of donors, including Pierce Brothers Coffee, Moonrise Medicinal Herbs, the Food Bank of Western Mass, Green Fields Market, Maplewood Farm, apples from Jody Scalise, Laughing Dog

Farm and other, anonymous donors. Often volunteers will bring food or potluck dishes to share. The Richard Smith Company donated cutlery; plates, cups and art supplies came from BJs; and Barts donated coffee cups. Collective Copies donated paper supplies and crayons were

supplied by Jessica Bruno.

The Café is fulfilling one of the missions of the Zen Peacemakers by developing and managing holistic social service projects that help individuals, families and communities. Participants come from surrounding towns as far away as Amherst and Northampton. Volunteers give rides to those who need them.

Earlier this month, Jazz duo Sandy Pearson and John Harrison entertained the crowds before and during dinner. Other volunteers made pies, prepared and served food, and cleaned up after the meal.

A rotating team of volunteers have committed to providing free wellness services following the meals, including a physician, an acupuncturist, a nutritionist, four massage therapists, three counselors, and a bi-lingual mindfulness stress reduction coach. A weekly AA meeting is held.

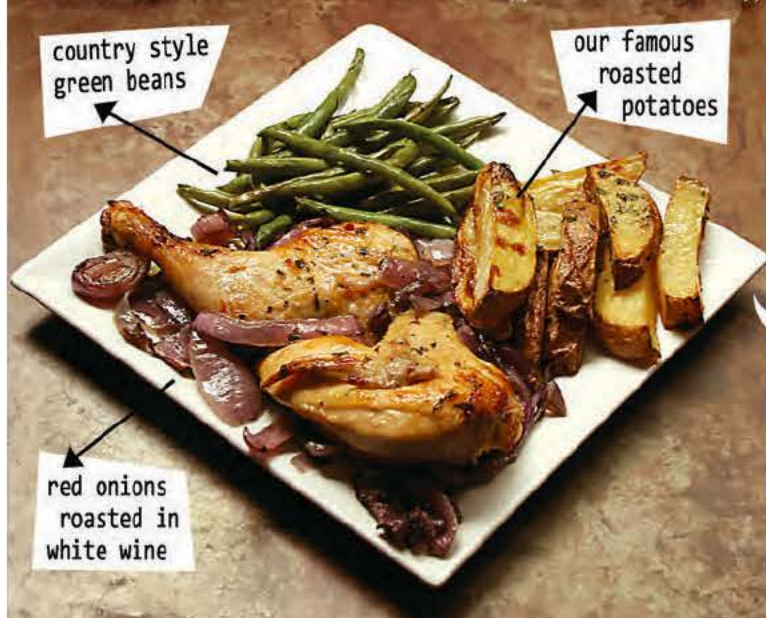
The Zen Peacemakers, the organization that in 2005 purchased the Montague Farm, a former commune considered the

birthplace of the global anti-nuclear power movement, stress the integration of spiritual practice through social engagement. In a way, the practice seeks the path to group enlightenment by creating a different kind of society.

Werner has already seen the Café change in the few short months of its operation. The line between volunteer and recipient is slowly blurring, as visitors become more comfortable with the setting. They are beginning to share their skills and talents with the group. Many people return again and again, and a growing sense of extended family is evident.

If you would like to participate as a visitor or volunteer, call Werner at 413-367-5275. The Farm Café can use volunteers in five areas - donations of food or money; food preparation; meal serving and cleanup; wellness or creative offerings for adults or children; and transportation to and from the meal for families in need.

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