



MATH BLAST

at Sheffield School
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LAKE PLEASANT MILLERS FALLS MONTAGUE CENTER MONTAGUE CITY TURNERS FALLS

The Montague Reporter

YEAR 7 - NO. 4

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THE VOICE OF THE VILLAGES

OCTOBER 23, 2008

BY DAVID DETMOLD - It wasn't officially billed as "Let's Make a Deal" but, by the end of a four hour joint session between town, school and state officials on Friday at the Montague town hall, the general outline of a deal to settle at least the current year's budget impasse between the towns of Gill and Montague and their public school system was in the works. The trouble was, all sides had come to the table with their own ideas for the best settlement, and, after two failed budgets - and with the clock ticking toward a state takeover of the school district on December 1st - it wasn't immediately clear whether the purse behind door number three held enough money to satisfy any of the contestants.

First out of the box with a proposed resolution to the approximate \$633,000 budget gap between what the towns of Montague and Gill have appropriated at town meetings and the Gill Montague Regional School District's \$16.8 million budget for the present fiscal year, was GMRSD superintendent Ken Rocke. He pitched a plan to have both the district and the town of Montague kick in more money from reserves to fund a 4% budget increase for the district. Under his plan, the schools would commit \$322,500 from their excess and deficiency (free cash) account to reduce town



Photo Montage by Claudia Wells & David Detmold

Town, Schools, State Meet on G-M Budget

State officials met with members of the Gill and Montague selectboard and finance committees and the GMRSD school committee on Friday, October 17th, at the Montague town hall to air proposals for resolving the school budget impasse.

assessments, and Montague would commit an extra \$233,667 from town reserves.

The GMRSD presently has about \$650,000 in cash reserves from the last two budget years; the town of Montague has about \$1.4 million in one time funds left in an account established to resolve a tax dispute over the former Indeck power plant.

Under Rocke's plan, the state Department of Elementary and Secondary Education (DESE) would come to the aid of the town of Gill, whose budget rises 16% in relation to Montague's 84% for school assessments. Gill has only about \$95,000 left in cash reserves, and already faces a budget deficit in excess of

\$100,000 to meet current year departmental budgets.

Rocke proposed that DESE grant \$51,247 in "discretionary Pothole funds" to ease the budget crisis in Gill, so the town would have to commit no extra funds towards the school budget than the amount already approved at Gill's annual town meeting.

Furthermore, Rocke proposed that the DESE "hold the school district harmless" for any losses it incurs this year from school choice and charter school tuition losses. Rocke said it was clear the district would see at least \$125,000 to \$150,000 in new school choice losses this year, in addition to the \$900,000 in

school choice losses the district is already shouldering on an annual basis. Rocke attributed the additional school choice loss this year to the closing of the Montague Center School.

"Though the district provides excellent education, parents still choose to send their children to surrounding districts that are able to offer more in foreign languages, art, physical education and ancillary services. And with the closing of Montague Center this year, a survey would show a number of parents chose to educate their children elsewhere."

Rocke also said his proposed settlement would be affordable to the towns. "Montague's resources seem to be substan-

tial," he said. "This will not, in fact, drive Montague into bankruptcy, although if we don't stabilize the situation within two or three years we'll all be in dire straits."

Associate DESE commissioner Jeff Wulfson said the idea of using additional Pothole funding to assist Gill in meeting the '09 school budget was "one possible option. It's at the Commissioner's discretion, if we could move forward on some of the longer range issues like regionalization [of schools in Franklin County]. He said the idea of the state appropriating additional funds to hold the GMRSD "harmless" for additional school choice losses incurred after closing Montague Center School, is "not something we currently would have authority to do," and with the legislature in recess, Wulfson said, "it is unlikely we could craft a solution," to that aspect of the GMRSD's budget problem "in the short term."

Wulfson called the GMRSD's school choice plight "one more impetus why we need to look at a broader geographical area, not only for administrative efficiencies, but to keep money from going back and forth across town lines."

State senator Stan Rosenberg (D-Amherst) said "pushing for an additional Pothole grant for Gill is a number one priority see **BUDGET** pg 5

In Memoriam: DANIEL BACIGALUPO

Road Boss Gets Well-Deserved Rest

BY JOSH HEINEMANN
WENDELL - Dan Bacigalupo passed away on Thursday, October 16th. Calling hours were Monday evening, October 20th. He was laid out wearing a blue flannel shirt over a Wendell highway department polo shirt, wearing a Wendell highway department baseball hat. A suit would have been all wrong.

I will remember Dan standing at the road grader steering wheel, making a pass along a dirt road or a snow covered road, intent on his work, with just enough time for a quick wave 'Hello'. Sometimes he walked behind the grader, tossing the large stones it had lifted into the woods. I never saw him idle.

On Tuesday, October 21st he



Daniel Bacigalupo

was buried at Wendell's Osgood Brook Cemetery, the second person laid to rest there. At the Wendell Recycling and Transfer Station (WRATS), Matt Bordeaux remembered him saying, "I've got to get that cemetery finished."

Dan moved to town with his

family in 1966, and began working for the highway department as a part time snowplow driver soon afterwards. He became highway superintendent after Ron Grogan resigned in the 1980s, and in 1994 he was named Wendell Citizen of the Year. In following years the selectboard often heard citizen suggestions that he be named Citizen of the Year again. He worked many hours that he did not get paid for, and took on many jobs that were not required of him.

When the fire department got a medical call around 3:00 a.m. one winter morning with eight inches of new wet snow covering the road, he was up at the highway garage ahead of everyone.

see **ROAD BOSS** pg 13

THEATER REVIEW

ACT's HAUNTING MUSICAL COMEDY In Good Spirits

BY SUDI NIMMS
TURNERS FALLS - Just in time for All Hallow's Eve, Arena Civic Theatre presents a

playing at the Shea Theater for another weekend of live (mostly!) entertainment.

The play is set in a con-



BOB DUCHARME PHOTO

(L- R) Louise Krieger, Martha King-Devine, Dawn Mayo, Kathleen Shewman, Cathy King, and Su Hoyle appear in ACT's

In Good Spirits, this weekend at the Shea

spooky musical comedy to liven the spirits -- both dead and alive. In Good Spirits is

demned theater where several spirits are the only (ir)regular inhabitants. These ghosts are

see **PLAY** pg 12

PET OF THE WEEK

Seeks Loving Home



Fossie

Hey, I'm Fossie! I'm a two-year-old female cat in need of a good home. I'm cute as can be and I need you to take me home. I'm a curious gal who was found as a stray and brought to the shelter. I want a nice, warm, loving home. No more roaming the streets for me! For more information on adopting me please contact the Dakin Pioneer Valley Humane Society at 413-548-9898 or via email leverett@dpvhs.org.

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CARNEGIE LIBRARY NEWS

Now with Wireless Internet

BY LINDA HICKMAN

TURNERS FALLS - The Carnegie Library was recently equipped with wireless Internet. It should be available 24 hours a day, seven days a week adjacent to the building. Several tables are available for laptop use during library hours. The library also has four com-

puters with high speed Internet for public use that are connected to a black and white laser printer. The library is open Monday - Wednesday, 1 - 8 p.m., Thursday 1 - 5 p.m., Friday 10 a.m. - 5 p.m. and Saturday 10 a.m. - 2 p.m. For more information call 863-3214.

WENDELL LIBRARY NEWS

Mostly Yoga

Mostly Yoga resumes on November 2nd, and will continue each Sunday thereafter from 10:00 a.m. to 11:15 a.m. until May of 2009. Wendell body movement teachers will lead this popular class on a rotating basis. A number of different yoga styles will be offered as well as chi-gong and other energy work.

The Wendell teachers include Apollo, Shay Cooper, Arieh Kurinsky, Patty Smythe, and

Susan von Ranson. This is a general level class. Students are responsible to participate at the level that is safe for their physical condition.

Please bring yoga mat, blanket and towel. No scents or perfumes. The class begins at 10 a.m. promptly.

A donation of \$1.00 or more each week is requested to help sustain the class. Mostly Yoga is also sponsored the Friends of the Wendell Free Library.

Map & Compass Workshop

NORTHFIELD - A free map and compass workshop for adults and teenagers will be held Saturday, November 15th from 9 a.m. to noon, at the Northfield Mountain Environmental and Recreation Center. The workshop is sponsored by the Wendell Free Library and the Wendell Cultural Council. The class is limited to 20 participants, and registration is required. Call the Wendell Library at 978-544-3559 for registration and directions.

If you enjoy walking or hiking but feel unsure how to make the best use of a map and compass to keep yourself oriented, then this is the class for you! In this three hour session, Northfield Mountain instructor

Dwight Harrison will examine the main features of maps, how to link the compass to the map, and ways to put this information to use.

The first part of the workshop will be held indoors, followed by instruction and practice out on the Northfield grounds. Harrison said it would be helpful if participants familiarized themselves with "declination" before the workshop.

Each student will receive a free copy of the Northfield Mountain orienteering map, and are welcome to stay after the workshop to use the orienteering course. Students can also come back with their map at another time to use the course.

SENIOR CENTER ACTIVITIES -- Oct. 27th to Oct. 31st

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

Monday, 27th
10 a.m. Senior Aerobics
11 a.m. Easy Aerobics
Tuesday, 28th
9 a.m. Walking Group

10:30 a.m. Chair Yoga
1 p.m. Painting
1 p.m. Canasta
Wednesday, 29th
10 a.m. Senior Aerobics
12:45 p.m. Bingo
Thursday, 30th
1 p.m. Pitch
Friday, 31st
10 a.m. Senior Aerobics
11 a.m. Easy Aerobics

Reminder - Brown Bag date will be Monday, November 3rd. Closed Tuesday, November 4th on Election Day.

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



DETMOLD PHOTO

Dennis Crommett and Philip Price, with the Winterpills, performed an outdoor concert at the Montague Book Mill on Friday, October 10th, as part of the Grand Opening of the new Turn It Up! (used CD, record, DVD and VHS) store at that location. The Winterpills entertained an attentive crowd with their melodic, Big Star-tinged music, and delighted with lyrical harmonies between Price and keyboardist Flora Reed (unfortunately not pictured). The show was a pre-release concert for the Northampton band's new CD: "Central Chambers"; pick it up at Turn It Up!

CHAIR YOGA classes with Jean Erlbaum will be held at the Montague Senior Center, 62 5th Street, Turners Falls on Tuesdays from 10:30 - 11:15 a.m. on the following Tuesdays: Oct. 28th, November 18th and 25th, December 9th and 16th. These classes offer a good stretch and strengthening for muscles, oiling for joints and fun! People from all towns and of all skill levels are invited, including folks in wheelchairs. There is a discounted price of \$2.00 for each class. Pre-registration is not required. For more information, please contact Bunny Caldwell at 413-863-4500.

**GREAT FALLS MIDDLE SCHOOL
STUDENTS OF THE WEEK**

Grade 6:
Jessica Gaines
Grade 7:
Rayanne Mercurel
Grade 8:
Emilee Felton
Summer Forcier

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Math Blast at Sheffield School

BY BRIDGET SWEET

TURNERS FALLS - Last Thursday at the Sheffield Elementary School, building blocks for a successful math curriculum were being assembled for the Gill-Montague school district. Principal Elizabeth Musgrave and Dr. Steven Smith worked with teachers Amy Bernard, Eileen Tucker, Kevin White and Sherry Wood coaching parents and students that showed up to play three levels of math games at the Sheffield Math Blast.

For example, to comprehend numbers in the hundred thousands - like 456,312 - participants rolled six dice and put them in random order. Afterwards, they went around the table to read aloud their creations.

A simpler game was held at the tangram table, where paraprofessional Mary Chaffee played with students. The tangram table's variety and colorful geometric shapes had to be placed in a certain order to create a picture. One student called out, "This is hard. Help!" while a fellow fourth grader searched for the correct arrangement of shapes.

Meanwhile, in the Sheffield library, in the process of being renovated to make it more attractive to younger students, the Massachusetts Parent Information and Resource Center (PIRC) of Boston held an MCAS information session for parents. Teacher Michele Hazlett and reading specialist Laurel Rollins assisted the PIRC staff. Parents, some returning from last year's presentation and some attending the MCAS session for the first

time, all walked away with a folder full of handouts.

Jon Dobosz, parent of a third grader called the session, "very informative." He added, "I like getting that amount of information, to go back and review it later. If I didn't receive it I would have been overwhelmed. I was impressed with the information they gave. It was good in that there could be a change (of MCAS) with legislative decisions."

Elaine Arsenault, an Outreach Specialist for PIRC can be reached at earsenault@fcsn.org at 413-367-3042 for questions and concerns about MCAS.

The Gill-Montague school district has been placed on the Massachusetts Department of Elementary and Secondary Education's "underperforming" list, and a failure to meet yearly goals in improving math scores is cited as one of the reasons why. The district has responded by seeking and winning a grant for the DESE to bring back math professor Dr. Steven Smith, of the University of California, Irvine, to work full-time with teachers and students on math improvement at the Gill and Sheffield elementary schools.

Director of elementary education Chip Wood said, "The preliminary results are outstanding. There is steady progress in third grade (math) MCAS results across the elementary level. There is little difference in gender scores at the elementary level."

From 2006 to 2008, the third grade math MCAS results have improved. As the Mass DOE website states:

Smith called *Math Expressions*, the Gill-Montague schools' math text, "a demanding curriculum." He should know; he assisted Karen Fuson, the author of *Math Expressions*, in developing the curriculum in Chicago in the '90s.

Math Expressions is "a comprehensive standards-based K-5 mathematics curriculum that offers new ways to teach and learn mathematics. Combining the most powerful elements of reform mathematics with the best of traditional approaches, *Math Expressions* uses objects, drawings, conceptual language, and real-world situations to help students build mathematical ideas that make sense to them," according to publisher Houghton-Mifflin.

Since working with the Gill-Montague schools, Smith said he has been "impressed with the discussions teachers have in the classrooms. Kids describe and solve complex problems. This builds foundations."

Asked about the spring 2008 MCAS scores, Smith added, "Proficient means a 'B' not a 'C.'" He doesn't see a gender difference in math scores either.

Students at the Great Falls Middle School work with *Connected Math Project* from Michigan State University. Math scores at the middle school show a more stubborn trend in the

failing category, and fewer students moving into the proficient category than at Sheffield. Great Falls Middle School math MCAS scores from 2006 to

25th, principal Musgrave said, "Mastery of math facts is critical to success in math in upper elementary grades.

"We are asking for support



Fourth graders Melissa Hersey (left) and Keara Glenn receive math tutoring from Dr. Steven Smith at the Sheffield after school program

GRADE 08 - MATHEMATICS: Great Falls

PERFORMANCE LEVEL	2006	2007	2008
ADVANCED	3	16	13
PROFICIENT	16	36	30
NEEDS IMPROVEMENT	32	22	27
FAILING	50	27	30

GRADE 03 - MATHEMATICS: Sheffield School

PERFORMANCE LEVEL	2006	2007	2008
ABOVE PROFICIENT	2	12	12
PROFICIENT	36	26	39
NEEDS IMPROVEMENT	36	37	33
FAILING	26	25	16

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Trashing the Town

MONTAGUE - After he left the restaurant he managed on Avenue A for forty years, John Carey was often to be seen making his way toward Food City at odd hours of the day and night, pushing a line of shopping carts that had been abandoned by residents on the sidewalks and alleys of downtown. Not content with corralling wandering shopping carts by the dozens, Carey could be seen each day, for months on end, wearing gloves and carrying a garbage bag, going up one side and down the other of 3rd Street or 4th Street or 5th Street, bending down to pick up each piece of dropped litter, each cigarette butt, each matchbook, each plastic drink container, each piece of trash left by the side of the road for someone else to dispose of.

Carey said he did this for his health, acting on his doctor's recommendation that he exercise by walking a few miles each day, but we suspect he would have been happier taking walks in the park with his grandchildren, instead of cleaning up after the thoughtless residents of downtown Turners.

Nowadays, you can still find Carey on occasion neatening the planters on Avenue A. But he says he is spending a lot of his time taking computer classes, and we're glad he is putting his retirement to more productive use. Now that he has stopped his daily litter patrol, we can also see just how bad the problem of people trashing their own streetscape really is.

Some folks feel they can finish a fast food meal, open their car door or window, and dump the remains of their dinner along with all the packaging and plastic containers right in the middle of the road. What does this say about their self-respect? What does this say about their attitude toward their neighbors, who have to put up with or pick up their slop each day? It's deplorable.

A walk down Montague City

Road last week showed that this is not a problem confined to just one village. We have never in recent memory seen the sides of the road so littered, with every possible variety of household trash. It's as if a couple of drag racers challenged each other to a contest, racing down the road with waste barrels hanging out the rear windows, to see who could leave the longest strip of trash blowing around behind them.

Two hundred and seventy five well intentioned volunteers spent the better part of a beautiful Saturday recently cleaning up the Montague Plains and other parts of the Connecticut River watershed, and finding just as much illegally dumped tires, trash and household appliances all over the woods as the did the year before. What is wrong with people?

If you heard your neighbors beating their wife or kids, you would call the cops. If you saw them drunk in the streets on a daily basis, you would do what you could to intervene, wouldn't you? These are far more serious social breaches than littering, surely, but there is a degree of passive acceptance of anti-social behavior evident in the amount of littering we accept in the public spaces of our villages. If you see someone breaking the law this way, tell them to cut it out.

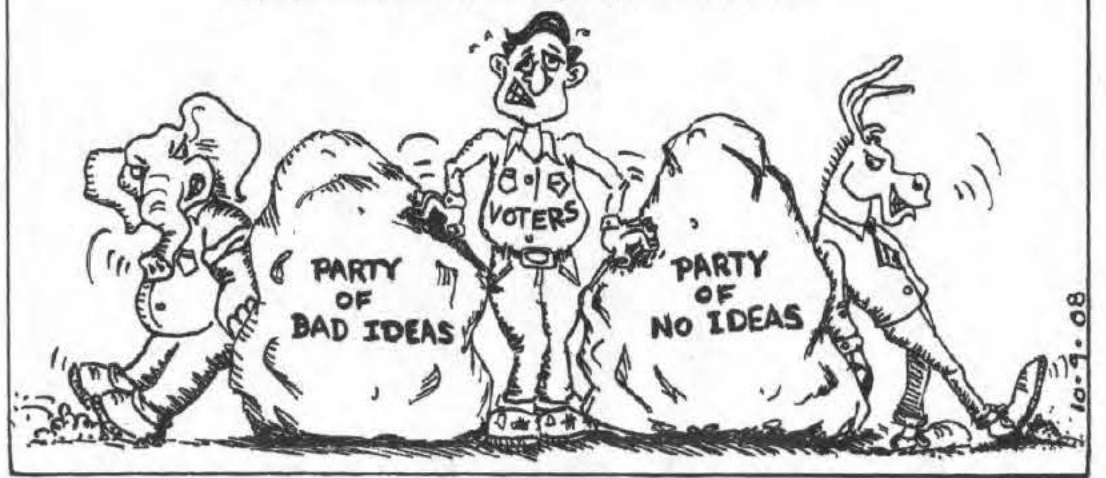
We can't depend on a few Good Samaritans to pick up after the rest of us. And in budget times like these we can't rely on the DPW or the police department to keep our village streets and sidewalks clean for us either. It's a problem each and every resident needs to take responsibility for.

A lot of work is being done to make Turners Falls in particular, and Montague in general, an attractive destination point for tourists to come view art, shop, dine, and spend their discretionary dollars. Don't let a culture of trashing Montague bring those efforts down.

BORDEAUX WINE

by denis bordeaux

"STUCK BETWEEN A ROCK AND A DENSER ROCK"



LETTER TO THE EDITOR

Be a Big Sister, or a Big Brother

As a Montague resident, I would like to share some information about Big Brothers Big Sisters of Franklin County. I have been a Big Sister for almost three years now. My Little Sister is more like a best friend rather than a child that I would have to take care of. When I look at her, I see myself and how I wished I had a Big Sister at that age.

This has been truly such a rewarding experience, not just for the Little, but the Big Sister as well.

Currently, through

Americorps, I am spending most of my time serving youth at Big Brothers Big Sisters. We are always looking for adult volunteers. Unfortunately, we have a list of children who have been waiting patiently for an adult who wants to be part of their life.

With hectic schedules, a lot of people are discouraged about being able to find the time to become a volunteer. Most of our volunteers do have busy schedules, full-time jobs, families, and school. They still manage to spare some of their time

with a child in the community.

It just takes 2 - 4 times a month to be a Big Brother or Big Sister, with a year's commitment. The great thing about this program is there are friendly staff always here to support you.

If you are feeling adventurous or just want to do something different with your free time, please contact us at 413-772-0915.

Thank you.

- Natalie Gardner
Montague Center

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

To Our Readers in Millers Falls

We regret to inform you that the Montague Reporter will no longer be sold at Carroll's Supermarket. You may buy the paper at Franklin Grocery, (Prondecki's) on the Erving side.

We Welcome Your Letters!

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from BUDGET pg 1

area legislators, and though he cautioned "there is very little Pothole money left," he held open the possibility of finding additional funds beyond that to help alleviate the GMRSD's budget deficit from school choice losses. But he wanted to know if there were any other savings still to be found in the GMRSD budget.

Rocke replied, "We're still working hard to reduce the '09 budget. But we have volatile numbers, like school choice loss. If it turns out we have money that is unexpected in the budget, I would not rule out the possibility [of further budget reduction] but it would throw out any gains we could make in the turnaround plan."

By this, Rocke referred to the plan the GMRSD developed with DESE approval this year to move the district off the state's "underperforming" category.

In response to a follow-up question from state representative Steve Kulik (D-Worthington) about school choice losses this year, Rocke said, "We were a little shocked. Although some people predicted a number of parents would choose out, we went from four inappropriately staffed elementary schools to three appropriately staffed elementary schools. But you can't get around parents' feelings about having children attend small community schools."

Gill selectboard member Ann Banash told Wulfson and the legislators, "I appreciate your support of \$51,000 [in Pothole funds] for Gill, but we only have \$65,000 to \$70,000 in new revenues to rely on. It doesn't really solve the long-term problem. If there is a 3% to 4% increase in the school budget next year, we're back in the same situation."

With the recent turmoil in the nation's economy affecting Massachusetts along with every other part of the country, Wulfson told Banash, "We recognize a lot of this is how do we get through this year. The fact is, it probably won't be any better next year. We are looking at the

very real possibility of Chapter 70 [state aid for education] cuts for Fiscal 2010."

Montague selectboard member Pat Allen pointed to the inflexibility of the school budget in a time of shrinking resources. "I don't see the school budget going down. You are asking us to use more reserves. Once those reserves are gone, we're not building a new highway garage. We probably won't even have a council on aging. We're well beyond a number we can possibly afford."

Rocke countered, "We have reduced our rate of increase in line with the increase in town departments. People have the idea we have been wildly adding positions. We have been carefully reallocating positions so we get better use out of them." Rocke said the only new positions added in this year's budget are a half time upper school administrator, a sixth grade teacher, an eighth grade reading specialist and a half time English Language Learning specialist.

In fact, Rocke said, "If I were on the DESE accountability team, I would be asking how can we continue to make the progress being asked of us."

Rocke rattled off a list of needed positions that have not been filled, and said the district "still has no innovative programs to bring students back to the schools. We have a 25% dropout rate over four years, and serious math and reading problems in the schools. These things will not be addressed by keeping things as they are."

Montague finance committee chair John Hanold said, "Last year, we committed \$300,000 from free cash reserves to meet the district assessment. At the time we were told, 'Give us a year,'" to make progress on the budget. "The year has gone by, and we're still being asked to tighten the belts in hopes that action at the legislative level or regionalization will solve this. We need to come back to what our resources are."

Montague finance committee

member Jeff Singleton criticized the new proposal outlined by Rocke, which the superintendent admitted he had not even run by the school committee. "You are padding your budget with \$600,000 in one-time money and creating a disaster right around the corner, with no way to solve the problem next year."

Singleton pointed out that Montague's "entire growth revenues" under Proposition 2½ "went to school assessments last year."

He continued, "It's as if you sit through the town meetings without listening to us. We had \$1 million increases last year [for the schools]. We will be bankrupt in two years if we keep doing that."

Montague selectboard chair Al Ross said, "The schools need every dollar they've asked for. I'm intimately aware of the needs of the towns, like having clean water go into the Connecticut

dipping into financial reserves to get us through the next few years, if we had a deal," to stabilize the structural budget gap in school funding, rather than just plug the current deficit.

Montague town administrator Frank Abbondanzio said, "The fact that we're raising such an issue over the use of reserves, shows we're aware," of the unsustainability of the current approach. If the present school budget gap is filled by use of reserves, Abbondanzio said, "Eight hundred thousand dollars in reserves will be built into the base for next year. Even if local aid does not decline, next year Montague will have to spend \$1.4 million in reserves," to balance the budget. In the year following, Abbondanzio said, Montague will have to seek a \$2 million override to balance the budget, at the same time as the effect of the debt exclusion for the new \$5.6 million police station is beginning to be felt in local property tax bills.

If the town chose not to go to additional use of reserves to fund the school budget gap, Abbondanzio said, it would require cutting 20 jobs, a third of the town's employees. "We have nowhere to go on the expense side; we don't have expenses to cut," he said.

GMRSD budget sub-committee chair Timmy Smith responded, "We've done just about all we can do in a year. We spent 13 years closing a school. I could just sit and cry over having to do that. We've brought our therapeutic program in district this year. We've joined the GIC," state health care program, to reduce insurance increases. "We've done a lot."

Smith itemized a list of special education (SPED) costs that are now likely to be added to the GMRSD's expense ledger, with the recently announced state cuts in SPED funding, as Governor Patrick moves to cut \$1 billion from the state budget and close Massachusetts' deficit. With out of district transportation costs running between \$225 to \$450 a week per student, and 15 out of

district placements, Smith said the district may have to absorb those unanticipated expenses part way through the budget year.

But Gill selectboard budget chair Nancy Griswold admonished the school committee, "Ultimately, we need to have the bottom line reduced. Gill doesn't have any reserves," other than the \$95,000 in stabilization. "Gill doesn't have any free cash."

Singleton added, "You came to us with an assessment number that equals our entire growth revenues. I think the problem is the level of state aid. A \$60,000 increase in Chapter 70 aid is just inadequate."

Looking toward Wulfson and the state legislators, Singleton said, "You folks have to figure that out. We can't afford to use all our growth revenues," to fund the schools anymore.

Asked if the GMRSD was still budgeting for a 3 - 5% salary increase for teachers and staff amid the current budget crisis, Rocke replied, "We've done an estimate taking the average teacher salary and benefit package; it is essentially flat from '08 - '09. We think that's tremendously important."

By this carefully phrased response, Rocke appeared to skirt the question about budgeting more than \$400,000 for salary increases this year by folding in potential savings in health insurance increases the schools hope to derive from joining the GIC.

Selectboard member Patricia Pruitt talked about the town of Montague's \$1.4 million reserve fund as, "both an asset and a problem. We accumulated that to have a legal battle with Indeck over the years, and we don't want to fritter it away. We've all received an education as to why we don't want to spend our reserves. But we still need to fund our schools this year. We'll get to our other town needs as good luck and hard work enable us to."

At this point, Pruitt advanced a second proposal for digging the towns and the district out of

see BUDGET pg 10

"The fact is, it probably won't be any better next year. We are looking at the very real possibility of Chapter 70 [state aid for education] cuts for Fiscal 2010."

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

River and having a police station that is more than a dungeon." Ross said the towns needed to have a plan they could have confidence in, "that would allow the state to put more money into the schools, so we cannot have this recurring pain in funding the schools every year."

Ross called upon the legislators to "eliminate charter school and school choice mechanisms that rob a needy district of resources," by "eliminating the financial advantage for receiving schools." Doing so, Ross said, "would help towns that need educational support," instead of "towns that in all probability need it less than we do."

Ross concluded by saying, "I'd feel a lot more confident

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NOTES FROM THE WENDELL SELECTBOARD

Highway Crew Carries On

BY JOSH HEINEMANN - The road commissioners: Harry Williston, chair, Bill Clough and Michael Gifford attended the October 15th selectboard meeting to discuss concerns resulting from the long absence of highway superintendent, Dan Bacigalupo. Dan passed away the day after the meeting, Thursday, October 16th.

Williston asked if the selectboard would hire a clerk working five to six hours per pay period for the highway department. He asked if the road commission could make Dave Bock acting foreman of the road crew, and Alex Lankowski acting supervisor of the Wendell Recycling and Transfer Station (WRATS), with the appropriate temporary

pay increases.

Lankowski is already attending meetings of the Franklin County Solid Waste District. Williston asked where the town has accounts, especially which auto parts store, and he asked that he be put on the list of people authorized to use those accounts.

Williston said brush mowing along roadsides was complete and that line painting is scheduled to be done October 26th. The F-550 dumptruck has been running rough and is at Stone's for work, and the backup sander snowplow needs work. The grader has been working every day.

Williston said that town cemetery records are in the

highway garage office, and he suggested they should be brought to the town office building. Selectboard chair Ted Lewis said the cemetery commission needs another member, and asked Williston to submit a name.

Board members had to sign and constable Dan Keller was required to post the warrant for the general election taking place on November 4th.

Diva Skydancer opened the meeting with a request to reserve the town hall on December 27th, Saturday afternoon, for a birthday party.

Town coordinator Nancy Aldrich relayed from a conversation with plumber Bruce Whittier that if water pipes to the town hall kitchen are to be rerouted to keep them in a heated space, the new pipes must be copper because it is a public building. Copper is expensive now, and the whole job would cost about \$4,000 at prevailing wage.

Selectboard member

Christine Heard asked if Good Neighbors needs to use the kitchen and board member Dan Keller said they just need hot water. He said that commodities are going down (in price), and the selectboard agreed that for this year it makes sense to continue turning off water to the kitchen during the winter months.

Tom Chaisson bid under \$1,000 to build a roof over the WRATS compactor. Since the construction is not a building and the cost is under \$5,000 the only legal requirement is to use sound business practices. Money for the project will come from the WRATS budget.

Aldrich contacted three electricians about installing a new outlet in the tax collector's office so that the extension cord that is threaded over the filing cabinet can be retired, but so far only one bid has come back.

Heard said that the Union 28 superintendent's office is considering hiring a curriculum coordinator at the central office in Millers Falls. She said that action would increase the Swift River School's share of administrative costs, and Swift

River is already operating on a level funded budget.

Articles for a special town meeting warrant are beginning to accumulate, and Keller floated the idea of scheduling one for mid-December. There is free cash that can be put into stabilization, a need to create a trench permitting authority as required by the state, and a temporary position of highway department clerk to create.

Keller said the committee that will choose and work with the designer of the town's updated website has volunteers: Patty Smythe (of the planning board, which proposed the update), Doug Dawson, Ray Didonato, and Robbie Heller. Aldrich suggested the finance committee might also want to have a say in the choice of the designer, and the look of the website.

Keller said the septic system has not yet been changed over to the second leach field as was supposed to happen at the change of fiscal year to allow each leach field a year of dry time, and prolong the life of the whole system. Steve Mason, the

see **HIGHWAY** pg 7

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HIGHLIGHTS FROM THE MONTAGUE POLICE LOG

Rash of Accidents and Thefts Continue

Tuesday, 10/14

1:35 p.m. Report of vandalism at an Oakman Street address, Turners Falls. Investigated.

2:42 p.m. Report of larceny at Montague Garage, Station Street, Montague.

4:46 p.m. Report of larceny at a Fifth Street address, Turners Falls.

5:45 p.m. Report of burglary / breaking and entering at a Turners Falls Road address, Montague. Advised of options.

6:51 p.m. Report of burglary / breaking and entering at a G Street address, Turners Falls.

8:18 p.m. Report of burglary / breaking and entering in alleyway behind Turners Falls Pizza House, Turners Falls.

10:43 p.m. Arrested [redacted] on a default warrant.

Wednesday, 10/15

12:29 a.m. Loud noise disturbance on Avenue A at Avenue A Dental. Subject taken into protective custody.

8:21 p.m. Report of burglary / breaking and entering at an Avenue A address, Turners Falls. Investigated.

11:38 p.m. Report of burglary / breaking and entering at an Avenue A address, Turners Falls. Investigated.

Thursday, 10/16

10:03 a.m. Report of larceny at a Fourth Street address, Turners Falls.

2:08 p.m. Report of larceny at Old Strathmore building, Canal Road, Turners Falls. Referred to an officer.

4:55 p.m. Officer wanted at an Avenue A address, Turners Falls. Subject removed to hospital.

Friday, 10/17

10:12 a.m. Report of larceny at an Old Stage Road address, Montague.

4:30 p.m. Report of larceny at a K Street address, Turners Falls.

Saturday, 10/18

7:24 a.m. Report of larceny at a K Street address, Turners Falls.

9:00 a.m. Report of larceny at a Second Street address, Turners Falls.

11:37 a.m. Report of vandalism at a Fourth Street address, Turners Falls.

3:52 p.m. Report of larceny at a Second Street address, Turners Falls.

3:55 p.m. Report of accident with

personal injury on Turners Falls Road past Esleek Papermill, Greenfield.

6:13 p.m. Report of vandalism at Turners Falls Skate Park.

9:28 p.m. Report of vandalism at Millers Pub, East Main Street, Millers Falls.

11:14 p.m. Report of larceny at a Second Street address, Turners Falls. Arrested [redacted]

[redacted] on a default warrant.

Sunday, 10/19

2:56 a.m. Report of accident with personal injury. Arrested [redacted]

[redacted] Charged with operating a motor vehicle while under the influence of liquor, leaving the scene of property damage, operating to endanger, impeding operation of a motor vehicle, marked lanes violation and failure to wear a seat belt.

Monday, 10/20

6:52 a.m. Report of accident with property damage on Avenue A at Gill / Montague Bridge, Turners Falls.

12:45 p.m. Officer observed evidence of larceny at the railroad tracks, Millers Falls.

Tuesday, 10/21

10:37 a.m. Report of accident with property damage at Franklin County Regional Housing Authority, Canal Road, Turners Falls.

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BY DAVID DETMOLD

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

said. “We’re down to assembling numbers and a time schedule.”

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

Ross called the Strathmore Mill “absolutely key to the

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

HIGHLIGHTS FROM THE ERVING POLICE LOG

Graveyard Vandalism

Wednesday, 10/15

7:27 p.m. Suspicious males on French King Bridge. Checked same, all okay.

Thursday, 10/16

1:15 p.m. Spoke to North Street resident, advised same not to remove wood from Mountain Road residence. 2:40 p.m. Report of two-car accident with no personal injury at Forest and Moore streets.

3:20 p.m. Report of dead deer on Route 2 at Smokin Hippo Restaurant. Checked area, gone on arrival.

8:48 p.m. Arrested [REDACTED]

for operating a motor vehicle with a suspended license, subsequent offense, and speeding.

Friday, 10/17

10:00 a.m. Breaking and entering at a Cross Street address, checked and secured same.

10:25 a.m. Report of a rolled up white blanket on side of Route 2 with blood stains. Found to be a red and white table cloth.

4:00 p.m. Arrested [REDACTED]

for operating a motor vehicle with a suspended license and no inspection sticker.

11:15 p.m. Assisted Gill police with domestic call on Chapel Drive.

11:50 p.m. Checked suspicious motor vehicle at Erving Paper Mill. Found to be employee, all okay.

Sunday, 10/19

1:45 p.m. Report of vandalism to grave stones, some with brass panels pried off.

Monday, 10/20

12:41 p.m. Assisted Erving fire with gas smell on Church Street. Found to be town flushing sewer lines nearby.

2:30 p.m. Report of large coyote at Veterans Field. Located same, animal appeared healthy and it fled the area.

see HIGHWAY pg 6

engineer from the design firm Dufresne Henry was supposed to supply a tool to operate the valve, but Keller said he himself would make something that would work for that purpose.

Treasurer Carolyn Manley reported that closing has been completed on every property but one that was sold at the September 20th auction of town owned properties. The high bidder for 120 Depot Road has backed out, and so he loses his deposit. Terms of the auction required a \$2,000 deposit that would be forfeited if a buyer backed out of a sale, but this high bidder left a deposit of \$10,000. Manley said the town is not required to return any of the deposit, but she suggested it would be right for the town to return \$8,000, and the

selectboard voted to do that.

The property was then offered to the second highest bidder, who Manley said tried to negotiate a price that was lower than his bid. Manley thought that was just sleazy. The auction attorney suggested that the property should be offered instead to all registered bidders, who then would have 30 days to submit a sealed bid. Half of the lot has been foreclosed on. Manley suggested taking that property off the table and not selling it until a future auction, when ownership of the piece is clearly established. Lewis said he would like to see the lot in one piece before it is sold. Manley said there are more properties that might be ready for auction within a year or two.

Lewis asked how she felt about the auction overall, and she answered that she only had

some small complaints. She would have preferred it if the parcels had been sold in the order they were listed on the auction sheet, and wanted more communication from Douglas Auctioneers. She thought signs should have been placed on the properties earlier in the process, and the signs should have indicated the appropriate parcel number as described on the sheet given out by the auctioneer.

Tom Chaisson arranged a

successful trade with the person who won the property he thought he was buying. That person wanted a woodlot, and Chaisson wanted a building lot.

Lewis commented that the office building now has heat. Keller said that a representative from Johnson Controls troubleshooted the control system, and town custodian Larry Ramsdell was there taking copious notes.



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- Featured readers 8:15-9:30

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September 29 - Christopher Sawyer-Laumann & Ed Foster

October 27 - Dorothea Lasky, Thom Donovan & Joe Torra

November 24 - Geraldine Monk & Alan Halsey

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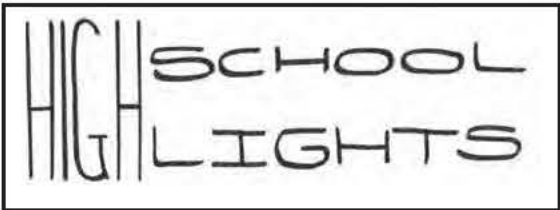
All About the Student Council

BY LINDSEY WILSON

TURNERS FALLS - A new year at Turners Falls High School means new opportunities, and the student council is the perfect group to take advantage of them. Officer at large Dan Skarzynski, a sophomore on the student council executive board, remarked, "We have a good group of people this year." Under the supervision of Hannah Neville and Deb Partridge, the

executive board has new projects in mind and plans to continue ongoing programs. Recording secretary Tranae Gallagher expressed a widely felt sentiment when asked about her goals for this academic year. "We are definitely going to reach out to

the community to acknowledge their continuing support." Recently, the student advisory committee, volunteer students from the student council, have gone to the selectboard meetings to update the town on school functions. Students also go to the school committee meetings, and the student council president, Joshua Gammon, has joined the committee as a non-voting member.



One recent project the students have undertaken is the Booster Day Parade and Booster Day Rally. Corresponding secretary Evan Pleasant played an integral role in organizing both. "Booster Day was very successful; every float looked excellent," he said. As Gallagher noted, the student council recognizes and appreciates the varied support of the community. Historian Samuel Colton has an idea about how to return some of that support by 'cafeteria reform.' Colton hopes to bring

attention to "where we get our fruit from. Buying locally grown would benefit not only a healthy student population but also a healthy community." Treasurer Nicholas Skarzynski hopes to, "end the year with more money in our coffers." Last year the student council bought a T-shirt for every student in the high school for the annual Unity Day, as a community building effort. To this day, students continue to wear them to school, gym, and practices.

PARTY GOIN' ON! AT THE 2ND STREET BAKERY



ANNE HARD NG PHOTO

There was clearly a party going on as the Second Street Baking Company celebrated its first year anniversary with cake, balloons, a clown and other festivities in Turners Falls this Saturday. Seen here: (left - right) Karl Miller, "Pixie Belle" and Macon Cummings.

Bakery co-owners Laura Puchalski and Christa Snyder threw the party as a way of saying thanks to all the folks who made their first year in Turners Falls such a fantastic success. They said they feel the town and their patrons have been incredibly supportive and welcoming.

NOTES FROM THE MONTAGUE SELECTBOARD

Call for More Data at the WPCF

BY DAVID DETMOLD - Bob Trombley, superintendent of the Montague water pollution control facility (WPCF) told the selectboard that as a condition of his department being granted a five-year renewal of their National Pollution Discharge Elimination System permit, "the document that allows the town to discharge treated wastewater to the Connecticut River," his department may be required to fill out five different reports to satisfy Department of Environmental Protection and Environmental Protection Agency regulators. One of these studies, the Pretreatment Technical Evaluation of Local Limits, may cost the town well over \$30,000, and could impact industries that use the sewer system by revising limits set for their contributions to the waste stream. Trombley said the study evaluates "local limits based on the ability of the treatment plant to remove pollution. It comes up with a number of

pounds of pollutants we can take into the headworks and effectively treat. This has a ripple effect on what industry is allowed to send to us." Trombley said he will try to persuade state and federal regulators that oversee the treatment plant's operation that, "There's nothing in our waste stream that will affect the health of the river or aquatic life." In years past, Trombley has been able to convince the regulators that Montague's plant does not need the study, which he priced at \$30,000 ten years ago. Otherwise, the study will be due by February 30th of 2009, Trombley said. Additionally, Trombley said his department may be required to complete an inflow and infiltration control plan, to reduce the amount of clean water that is introduced into the sewer system. Presently, like many towns in New England, about 40% of the water that flows through the sewer system in Montague is from inflow or infiltration, about 400,000 gallons a day. It enters from

surface sources, such as downspouts connected to the sewer, or illegally connected sump pumps, or from subsurface cracks or breaks in the sewer lines. Trombley said reducing the flow of clean water to the treatment plant would reduce the cost at pumping stations, reduce wear and tear and maintenance costs, and reduce energy costs at the treatment plant itself. Additionally, Trombley said the WPCF may have to revise the town's sewer use ordinance, which was updated two years ago, and incorporate an "industrial pretreatment enforcement response plan" into that ordinance. The regulators are also asking Montague to perform a "nitrogen optimization evaluation," to reduce the flow of nitrogen into the Connecticut River, where it contributes to the problem of nitrogen buildup in the Long Island Sound, which has caused areas of low oxygen to adversely affect marine life there. But Trombley said recent adjustments to the process at the plant's aeration tanks has produced a recent monthly reading of zero nitrogen being released into the Connecticut, and if that trend continues it should be easy to persuade regulators that Montague is doing all it needs to do the mitigate the discharge of nitrogen to the river. He had a similarly optimistic appraisal of the requirement to detail steps the town should take to reduce combined sewer overflow to the river, since Montague is presently engaged in a \$5.7 million project to do just that. The regulators also want Montague to test for a new form of nitrogen, along with *e. coli* bacteria, in the treated water being released to the Connecticut, Trombley said. The board approved a change order for the contract between the town of Montague and Camp Dresser McKee for

94% of us would be upset if another adult gave our teens alcohol.

From the 2008 survey of Turners Falls High School and Great Falls Middle School parents.

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Montague Energy Committee Forms

BY DAVID DETMOLD - The town of Montague Energy Committee met for the first time Tuesday, October 21st. Or at least, for the first time in recent decades. Montague, like most Franklin County towns, had a volunteer town energy committee in the late 70s and early 80s, when the oil embargo and local concerns about growing reliance on nuclear power for electrical generation led to a wave of conservation efforts and renewable energy initiatives during the Jimmy Carter years. Now, rising energy prices coupled with the threat of climate change from the use of carbon based fuels are again forcing alternative energy initiatives to the top of federal, state and local agendas.

A few months ago, the selectboard endorsed the Montague Clean Energy campaign, a project of Montague Grange #141 which seeks to develop a source of funds for the town of Montague to use for energy efficiency and renewable energy projects while expanding wind power in New England through a voluntary contribution on local ratepayers' utility bills. After members of the selectboard attended a Safe Energy Fair sponsored by the Montague Clean Energy campaign at the Discover Center in June, the board appointed nine residents of town to serve on a reconstituted town energy committee, to advise the selectboard on ways Montague can reduce utility bills in town buildings, and on ways residents of town can save money and save energy by the application of conservation measures and the use of renewable forms of energy and transportation.

On Tuesday, the committee convened in town hall with Tina Clarke, Sally Pick, Paul Voiland, Pam Hanold, David Detmold, Tim van Egmond, and Chris Mason present; Jason Burbank, Robert Setka and Carlyn Saltman were unable to attend.

The members of the committee bring many years of experience in the field of energy conservation and renewables, high efficiency home heating and cooling systems, community organizing, and the like. They decided to focus on three projects, at least, in the initial stages of the committee's growth. First the committee

see ENERGY pg 10

Energy Savings for Gill Discussed

BY DAVID DETMOLD - Roland Butzke, facilities consultant for Siemens Building Technologies, met at the Gill town hall on Monday, October 20th, with the Gill selectboard and members of the finance committee and building committee, to go over the plans for an upcoming energy audit of town buildings. A contract between Siemens and the Franklin Regional Council of Governments (FRCOG) for Siemens to conduct ESCo (Energy Savings Contract) performance contracts with towns and school districts in Franklin County had been signed that same morning.

Butzke told the town officials gathered on Monday, "performance contracts are a very straightforward concept: 'Save Energy, Save Money.'" According to Butzke, "Performance contracting installs energy efficient facility improvements, with no up front costs, paid for out of guaranteed energy savings from your existing operating budget."

He said ESCos have been performed successfully statewide and are gaining momentum with recent legislation changes, and he credited FRCOG's Bill Gran with having the foresight to bundle the small towns and districts of Franklin County together to make the bid more attractive to Siemens.

Siemens plans to perform a walk through energy audit of Gill's four or five municipal buildings soon; (it was unclear whether the elementary school could be included under the GMRSD or the town of Gill's performance contract). Once that takes place, the town will decide whether to go ahead with an "investment grade audit," which the town would be required to pay for even if they do not proceed to do the energy upgrades with Siemens. He said the investment grade audit was typically a loss leader for Siemens, which might cost the town \$5,000 - \$10,000.

If the town decides to contract with Siemens for the ESCo, Butzke outlined other features his company would provide, including: long-term (up to 20 year) financing of the project, with projected savings from utilities balancing debt service and construction costs over time, and no upfront costs to the taxpayers; long term maintenance and inspection of project components and performance (the ESCo provider is mandated by law to inspect the project and certify the energy savings for the first three years, but can continue to do so for the length of the contract); and energy education to improve the culture of energy use in the community and its schools.

Butzke said his company would be eager to perform as much energy saving work and retrofits to town buildings as they could

see GILL pg 10

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BUDGET from page 5

the budgetary hole. "I propose we realize we'll be spending 50% of new growth for the school budget. That doesn't give us enough money to meet assessments. We have to tap into reserves to meet them."

She proposed spending \$250,000 of town reserves this year, and \$140,000 in town reserves next year to bridge the funding gap with the GMRSD.

Singleton weighed in minutes later with his own plan for resolving the budget gap, by hewing to a .9% budget increase for town assessments for the GMRSD, to mirror the state's Chapter 70 increase for the district.

"This still requires \$120,000 in reserve spending from the town," he said. "If the schools decide on a higher assessment amount for this year, then they need to decline next year by the same amount, and sign an agreement to do that on the dotted line."

He added, "This thing is going to blow up in our faces next year if you do what Ken [Rocke] is proposing."

Ross said, "The schools have got to reduce their operating budget. I would support the use of added reserves," for

Montague, if they do, "and somehow the state can help Gill," meet their percentage of the assessment increase. "That could get us through this year," Ross added, with the proviso that all present realize, "Our town meetings are not pushovers."

Allen said, with the present turmoil in the world economy, "We may be making cuts regardless of the school budget."

Wulfson said the fact that state aid to the GMRSD has not declined, despite the loss of enrollment the schools have experienced in the last decade [G-M student population has declined by about 300 students since 2000], "reflects the work of your legislators."

Rocke pointed out that Gill-Montague is a district where it is inherently more expensive to advance student achievement than in the average Massachusetts school district. One quarter of students in the GMRSD have special needs, Rocke said, and 45 - 47% are eligible for free or reduced lunch, well above the state average of 29%. "And we all know these students enter with fewer advantages and need more resources as they work their way through the system. We have a dropout rate for boys that reflects

that."

Gill finance committee chair Paul Nowill called on the state legislators to work for a dedicated income tax for education, as other states have. He called on them to remove financing for special education mandates from the burden placed on local governments.

"Regardless of what goes on with state cuts, mandates are not adequately funded and requirements remain the same. The town is the final payer," Nowill said.

Rosenberg said, "I've been filing a bill to dedicate 1% of the sales tax and 1/4% of the state income tax for education for virtually my entire career. Go back to 1991 when we established Education Reform. This district was the single largest beneficiary of Ed Reform for the first eight years. You were getting more increases from the state than you were from local taxpayers." Rosenberg added he heard few complaints about state education policy in those years.

"What happened," Rosenberg continued, skipping over the fact that state aid for local schools cratered in 2001, "was you started to lose enrollment, and enrollment plummeted" [in 2002]. Virtually all the students are choosing to other districts in Franklin County. Your loss is their gain."

Rosenberg raised a laugh when he noted that the superintendents of Greenfield

and Gill-Montague had been having "quiet dates" recently to explore the possibility of joining the two districts, or at least sharing top administrative positions.

Montague finance committee member Mike Naughton asked why all the supplemental state Pothole funds the district received this fall (\$255,000) could not be applied to reduce the towns' assessments, rather than just the 50% the GMRSD has voted to use for that purpose.

Rocke replied, "I believe the Pothole funds should be used for school improvement."

Of the \$127,500 remaining in Pothole funds, the district has already allocated \$15,000 to hire a consultant to help the GMRSD search for a new superintendent to replace Rocke, who is stepping down at the end of the school year.

This irked Rosenberg, who said, "Now I'm hearing the shocking news that money is being spent on a search for a new superintendent; that would completely undermine the process," of seeking shared administration or regionalization at least with Greenfield. "Once someone is in place, you can't look at the problem structurally. Decisions are made based on the personalities in place. We have spent four months tied up in budget problems, and we still don't have any collaboration."

School committee chair Mary Kociela said, "I respectfully

disagree; it's not quite that simple. Greenfield has been going through quite a bit in the last six months." She said she was meeting with the one school committee chair there, who has since been replaced, and the superintendent has also been recently replaced. She said she would be holding a meeting soon with the school committee chairs of surrounding districts to discuss collaboration, cost saving measures, and possible regionalization.

Kociela said, "A shared superintendency is not all positive." But she added, "We have and we will pursue regionalization."

Rosenberg retracted his remarks, and offered to find \$25,000 in state funds to back a study between Greenfield, Montague and Gill on expedited school regionalization, if the selectboards and finance committees and city council and mayor of Greenfield send a letter requesting his office to pursue that approach.

DESE associate commissioner Wulfson said, "It is clear from the discussion there are insufficient resources on the towns' side and on the state's side to do everything this district should do. I'm worrying about a Chapter 70 cut for next year. Clearly this district is in an unsustainable position," along with many other school districts across the state. But Wulfson

see **BUDGET** pg 11

ENERGY from pg 9

plans to work with the town as it decides whether and how to implement a proposed ESCo (Energy Savings Contract) with Siemens Building Technology, the consultant tapped by the Franklin Regional Council of Governments to contract with towns and districts to retrofit school and municipal buildings to achieve energy and cost savings. Second, the committee will work with the police station building committee to explore ways to get a photovoltaic system placed on the new safety complex on Turnpike Road, to cut down on utility bills there. Third, the committee plans to work quickly to provide energy audits and insulation materials to homeowners in town facing spiraling home heating and energy costs this winter, with a particular focus on reducing costs for low income and senior citizens living on fixed incomes, through a series of neighborhood workshops in churches or community centers in the villages.

"Energy costs are rising; their incomes are not," said Clarke, the director of the Amherst-based Clean Water Action

Campaign. Clarke is in the process of building a Zero Energy Home in Montague City with her partner Doug Stephens. When complete, the home will produce as much energy as it consumes, from a combination of photovoltaic cells, passive solar heating, and superinsulated double envelope design.

Franklin County Home Care Corporation director Roseann Martoccia warned the Montague selectboard earlier this month that local seniors are facing a crisis this winter, trying to decide whether to heat their homes or eat; and fire departments are reporting concern that inappropriate home heating methods may lead to avoidable disasters this winter.

Selectboard member Pat Allen, who also lives in a Montague City home with a photovoltaic panel on the roof, heated and cooled with geothermal energy, said she was "thrilled with the breadth of vision and experience" on the new committee.

The energy committee will meet again on Tuesday, November 4th at 5:30 p.m. in town hall.

GILL from pg 9

encompass within the scope of the contract, looking at everything from lighting (low up front cost to retrofit, with high immediate payback) to boilers (high up front cost with low payback) to HVAC equipment, building controls, indoor air quality, waste management, composting, water conservation, sewer use, potential for hydropower ("There's a lot of communities with abandoned mills and power generators out there; we can do that in this process."), photovoltaics (although a third party would own the photovoltaic array, lease space on the municipal building, and sell power to the town at a flat rate in order to take advantage of the state and federal rebates, which are not available to public entities) and other renewable forms of power production. Butzke said replacement of roofs, windows and doors may fit within the


scope of an ESCo, but typically would land on a wish list, to be performed only if enough savings can be found in other areas to afford the large capital costs and low energy savings associated with these renovations.

Skeptical, former highway superintendent Ernie Hastings told the gathered town officials, "You're not cutting your budget one dime," by agreeing to the performance contract with Siemens. "What you're saving, we're paying out."


Butzke said that would be true only for the length of the contract; after that the town would enjoy future savings from the energy efficiencies installed. He also said Siemens was typically conservative in the amount of energy savings their engineers estimated for each project, since they are forced by law to guarantee the savings they predict. Therefore, additional energy savings above the predicted amount are common,

and to the town's financial benefit. He also made the general point that all the improvements to town buildings would result in energy savings for the good of the environment.

He said he had been up on the roof at the Turners Falls High School earlier that day, examining their photovoltaic array, as part of a preliminary discussion about a performance contract for that building, renovated as a Green Building only five years ago.

"The flat panels at the high school are extremely inefficient," he said. What's more, he said, "There are branches growing up in between them. One little shadow and the whole grid is gone." He said the high school had the infrastructure now on the roof, and with an ESCo could install more advanced, 40% efficient photovoltaic panels, and have them properly arrayed for maximum electricity production and savings. 

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Friday, 10/24

8:00 a m. Women Girls & HIV: Role Models
8:30 a m. Wisdom Way Solar Village
9:30 a m. Veterans Day 07
10:30 a m. Valley Idol Semi Finals 2008
1:00 p m. TWB The Aging Eye
2:00 p m. Turkey Day Game 2007
4:30 p m. Three Rights of Spring in one magical evening
5:30 p.m. The Western Mass Democrat Lt. Gov Tim Murray
6:00 p m. ASPCA
7:00 p m. GMRSD 10/14/08
9:00 p m. Bernanke
10:00 p m. Carlos Anderson Cost of Freedom
11:00 p.m. Changing Face of Turners Falls

Saturday, 10/25

8:00 a m. Child and Family: Children's Mental Health
8:30 a.m. Chronicles Mass for Raymond & Louise Kervian
9:30 a.m. Cities and Towns Build our Economic Future
10:00 a m. Coffee House Joe Graveline
11:00 a.m. Common Man Cowbell Prescription
12:00 p m. Community Land Trust Meeting 3/4/08
1:30 p m. Darker Image
2:30 p m. Denmark The View the Vision
3:00 p m. Discovery Center Birds of Prey.
4:30 p m. Enjoy the Ride
5:30 p m. Enjoy the Ride
6:30 p m. Falls Table Margaret Fitzpatrick
7:00 p m. FCHC Estate Planning
8:30 p m. Franklin County Matters Community Based Banks
10:00 p m. GCC Talent Show
11:00 p.m. Green by 2015

Sunday, 10/26

8:00 a m. Independent Voices
8:30 a m. Journey to Wissatinnewag
9:00 a m. TBD
11:00 a.m. Living in the Shadow of VT Yankee
12:00 p m. MCTV Video Camp 2007
12:30 p m. Memorial Day Parade & Ceremony 07
1:30 p m. Montague Machine
2:30 p m. The Looming Crisis in Oil Depletion
4:30 p m. RTR Extending Treatment to Everyone
6:00 p m. Seabrook 1977
7:30 p m. Skin N Bonz
9:00 p m. SueMonoGiri
10:00 p m. Sustainable Energy
11:00 p.m. the epics at the vous

Monday, 10/27

8:00 a m. The Rise and Fall of Lake Hitchcock
9:00 a m. The Western MASS Democrat
9:30 a m. Friends present Fall town string band
11:30 a.m. Discovery Center Fossil Tracks
12:30 p m. Eaton Do Ryu
1:30 p m. On the Ridge Turkey Hunting 2008
2:30 p m. Over the Falls
3:30 p m. Overian Cancer Awareness
4:30 p m. Physician focus: Emergency Prep
5:30 p m. Power Canal Draw Down
6:00 p m. Reconciliation Ceremony
6:30 p m. Prevailing Winds in Denmark
6:57 p m. Montague Selectboard 10/27/08
9:00 p m. Amandla
10:30 p m. An Inside Look into Iran

Tuesday, 10/28

8:00 a m. Art Fest 2007
9:30 a m. Bech Interview
10:30 a m. Block Party Parade 08
10:35 a m. Block Party 08
12:30 p m. Cal Ripken Baseball
2:00 p m. Child and Family: Children's Mental Health
2:30 p m. Coffee House Series Fabulous Maurice
3:30 p m. John Root-Wild Flowers
5:00 p m. TBD
6:00 p m. Fate of the Stallion
6:30 p m. Independent Voices 36
6:59 p m. GMRSD 10/28/08
10:00 p m. An Inside Look into Iran

Wednesday, 10/29

8:00 a m. ASPCA
9:00 a m. Silly Wizard Fantasy Fish
10:30 a m. Songs For Wee People
11:30 a.m. Tapping Maple Ridge
12:30 p m. The Flow of Time
1:30 p m. The Western MASS Democrat
2:00 p m. Thomas Jefferson
2:30 p m. Turkey Day Game 2007
5:00 p m. TWB Arthritis Rehabilitaion
6:00 p m. Underground Railway Concert 07
7:30 p m. White House Chronicles
8:30 p m. Wisdom Way Solar Village
9:30 p m. Women Girls & HIV: Role Models
10:00 p m. Valley Idol Finals 2008

Thursday, 10/30

8:00 a m. TWB Sky Awareness
9:00 a m. Tiny Tim
10:00 a m. This is Montague Dec 06
10:30 a m. The Western Mass Dem: Chris Forgey
11:30 a.m. Teachers at Sea.
12:00 p m. Surviving the Vernon Reactor
1:00 p m. Mighty Minds
2:00 p m. Senior Self Defense 1
4:30 p m. Senses of Place
6:00 p m. Red Cross Prevent Home Fires
6:30 p m. Reconciliation Ceremony
9:00 p m. Poetry Music Jam at The Vou
10:00 p m. Over the Falls The Race for State Senate
11:30 p.m. Northfield Mountain Geology Story

VOTE from pg 8

an additional \$7000 to pay for an emergency response plan and vulnerability analysis for the treatment plant.

With nothing else on the agenda, and town administrator Frank Abbondanzio absent, the board spent some time reviewing the ballot for the upcoming state and national election on Tuesday, November 4th, from 7:00 a.m. to 8 p.m.

Apparently there are a number of candidates competing for the post of president and vice president of the United States, and the winners of those contests may be decided on the basis of how people actually vote this year.

Further, there are candidates vying for the position of senator and representative at the federal congressional level and state legislative level, as well as candidates for the governor's council, registrar of deeds, etc.

The selectboard was mostly interested in talking about the ballot questions regarding the abolition of the state income tax, the decriminalization of marijuana, and the banning of dog racing and the gambling associated with it.

Regarding the latter question, Question #3, selectboard member Patricia Pruitt said, "Greyhounds are often misused in the process of dog racing. It's pretty sad, the state they get

left in actually."

Pruitt is known to have a sympathetic touch with dogs, and canine related events.

Regarding Question #2, the decriminalization of marijuana, selectboard chair Al Ross said, "I'm not condoning marijuana use. It is a commonly misused substance." But Ross opined that full prosecution of the current laws regarding marijuana could "tie up the court system," and lead to loss of employment, loss of transportation and "punishment out of proportion to the crime involved." He said, "A 'Yes' vote on this question would not be unreasonable."

Board member Pat Allen pointed out the Montague police had a sign up outside

their door calling for a 'No' vote on Question 2, and Ross said he would welcome a visit from police chief Ray Zukowski to speak to the board on the topic.

The board voted unanimously to oppose Question #1, which would abolish the state income tax by January 1, 2010, "because of the effect it would have on our municipality and our services."

Ross said, "If you think we have a financial crisis now of trying to balance our budget and affording our schools and our basic services, like having a senior center, parks and recreation, having a nurse, it would be absolutely impossible if this passes."

Ross said passage of the measure would lead to higher property taxes, which he called a regressive tax, more adversely affecting low and moderate income residents than the income tax, which he called "the fairest tax."

Ross said he would support a higher income tax.

In their final vote of the evening, the board approved a permit for the annual Rag Shag Hallowe'en parade, from the Aubuchon parking lot to the Discovery Center, gathering at 5:30 p.m. for judging, and ending by 7:00 p.m. A police cruiser will escort the little goblins down Avenue A.

**BUDGET** from pg 10

predicted, "You are going to be at the cutting edge, where community resources and the need for educational improvements collide."

School committee member Mike Langknecht spoke next. "I think we need to lower the school budget. There's no money. We started losing enrollment the year our state funding got cut. This happened just as the school choice phenomenon grew. Bad timing. We've been playing catch-up ball since then.

"I don't think we can spend our reserves to balance the budget," he continued. "I think we should cut the budget. It's not going to be easy. Things are getting worse. There's no money."

Kociela said the school committee would look at the budget again at their next meeting, on October 28th, but said she could make no promises beyond that.

Responding to Singleton's proposal, she added, "My understanding of the .9% budget is it represents a lower operating budget than [the schools] had last year. I understand there are town needs. But to say

we're going to come back with a budget lower than last year, that personally does not feel right to me."

In reply to a question from Pruitt about the likely level of state aid for schools in the coming years, Rosenberg said, "Chapter 70 got cut in the last recession. This recession will be as bad if not worse."

And speaking of the present fiscal year, Kulik said, "If we can get through '09 without any cuts to local aid, we'll thank our lucky stars."

Gill finance committee member Tupper Brown asked, "If resources are cut, then will state mandates be cut concomitantly?"

Wulfson replied, "That's a very good question, and one the DESE will have to grapple with over the next few months."

Rosenberg followed up, "Mandate or regulatory relief is on the table over the next 60 days." He encouraged local officials to set down in writing specific areas of concern regarding state mandates and send them to his office.

Singleton, trying to bring the discussion back to a multi-year solution to the budget crisis,

said the school committee "made some gains this year, and assessments still went up \$800,000. We need something that lowers the budget and lowers the assessment, or it becomes a spiraling problem." He added, "The level of grass-

"If we can get through '09 without any cuts to local aid, we'll thank our lucky stars."

**- Rep. Steve Kulik
(D - Worthington)**

roots anger is unbelievable, coming from people who should be supporting public education."

Rosenberg said his office reviewed the GMRSD budget and found "some cost centers that are significantly higher than other districts", not due to waste, fraud or abuse, but because of the history of this district. I believe with a careful review of that budget we could implement savings" and still afford improvements "the DESE turnaround plan requires."

Rocke cautioned, "Regionalization is not a silver

bullet that solves the problem between Proposition 2½ and inflation. We have to negotiate from healthy systems, with good people committed to being there, and adequate staffing. While budget triage is going on, there is no time to have these discussions," between school districts.

But the legislators warned that regionalization of local school districts is coming, and it would be much better to define its form locally than have it imposed by fiat from Boston.

Wulfson said a "super-intendency union" between Greenfield and Gill-Montague could be achieved by a vote of both school committees, and be in place by next September. He said the possibilities for administrative and cost efficiencies extended further than the possible union of just two districts. "There are lots of small districts out here," he noted.

At this point, Abbondanzio weighed in with yet another possible deal to resolve the '09 budget impasse. He said, "The overall bottom line [of the school budget] needs to come down. Some school committee members are open to doing that.

Our problem [in Montague] is not quite as bad as Gill's."

Given that, the Montague town administrator proposed a 2.3% budget increase for the GMRSD, which he said was the true amount by which the town of Montague's departmental budgets increased this year, excluding debt. Applying this same percentage to the schools would result in a \$234,000 reduction from the \$16,820,004 budget figure the schools are supporting now. This would require the expenditure of additional reserves from Montague, but \$100,000 less than under the 1/12th budget by which the schools are now being funded. He asked the schools and the state to find a way to shield Gill from the impact a 2.3% increase would have on their budget.

The meeting concluded with a commitment for the local boards to meet again in coming weeks. "We can't make a deal at this table," said Gill selectboard's Banash. "The school committee needs to go back and hopefully make a commitment [to budget reduction] by some number. We prefer Jeff [Singleton's plan], but we could probably live with Frank's. And we need at least a two-year plan."



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PLAY from page 1

from different eras and are dressed in the (gorgeous!) costumes or clothing they wore when they met their demise in the theater. From Shakespearean grouch to drag queen, they all have stories to tell.

But they're stuck there in the theater, with no way to exit this purgatory except downwards, when a red light opens the stage door and they are each called by name. The haunts decide to stay where they are rather than descend with the devil.

Suddenly a community theatre troop becomes interested in purchasing the old theater for their shows. The idea of a resident community theatre gives the willies to the spirits who already 'live' there - they believe community theatre is second rate. As one spook proclaims, "Community theatre? I am in hell!"

There is much good-natured

fun poked at community theatre in this show, but the cast of *In Good Spirits* keeps the audience from believing the barbs are true -- as this cast is first rate. Veteran ACT actor Steve Woodard keeps us in stitches as the longest-residing specter. His portrayal as the put-upon professional who looks down his patrician nose at the theater's new owners is terrific, his comic timing impeccable, and his singing voice superb. He slings and zings his one-liners deftly with a knock-out combination of cynicism and puns.

Another ghost, Bunny, is a pre-goth, creepy teen who gets a sinister kick out of her role. But the show-stopping ghost is the diva queen Tequila Mockingbird, played by Dave Peck. It's a wonderful experience to watch her glide across the stage, glistening all in silver and speaking or singing to us in effortless

feminine tones. She is divine - and absolutely to die for.

Among the notable living (of whom there are many) there are two love-interest story lines. Mortimer (Chris Denay) and Rosemary (Alana Martineau) are too shy to get together, as are Summer (Catherine King) and Tom (Jerry Marcanio). Chris Dunay's Mortimer is to this show what Rick Moranis was to the original *Ghostbusters* movie. The adorable dork, Mortimer pines after Rosemary the dentist. The love-struck Mortimer sings "Notice Me" with painful adolescent angst and geeky comedic flair.

The other not-to-be-missed musical performance is Tequila's ode to her favorite comedic heroine, in "My Carol Burnett." Reliving memories of watching the Carol Burnett Show as a child is a bittersweet journey to the past.

As wonderful as the entire

cast is, the real star of the show is nine-year-old Emma Henderson. She plays Rosemary's daughter and wow! does she have it all. She can sing, dance, deliver, and never drops character. She's got personality, charm and is just darling. Her character, Carol-Ann, is the only one who can see and hear the theater's spirits. She tries to convince them to help get her mom and Mortimer to admit they like each other.

Carol-Ann and some of the spirits work out a plan to try to help the struggling community theatre troupe put on a winning performance. Will their scheme work? Will the troupe earn enough money to survive? Will love triumph? Will the spooks get to heaven? You'll just have to see for yourselves with a trip to the Shea this weekend.

In Good Spirits is directed by the brilliant Robert DuCharme; this is his 105th show! It was

created by Pioneer Valley's Howard Odentz who wrote the book, lyrics and music. *In Good Spirits* was orchestrated by Bruce Zimmerman. Vocal arrangements are the work of Amy Roberts-Crawford, who is also the show's music director.

The show runs again this Friday and Saturday night, October 24th and 25th at 8:00 p.m., and Sunday, October 26th, at 2:00 p.m. at the historic Shea Theater at 71 Avenue A in Turners Falls. If he's still walking the boards, the spirit of Danny Shea would be proud.

For ticket reservations and more information, call the Shea Theater at 413-863-2281, extension 3. Tickets are also available at the World Eye Bookstore in Greenfield and the Jones Library in Amherst. For more about Arena Civic Theatre visit their web site at www.arenacivictheatre.org. Enjoy the show!



News from the Montague Business Association

The Montague Business Association is working with downtown Turners Falls businesses, organizations and interested individuals to promote a safe and friendly Halloween. On Friday evening, October 31st, between 4:00 and 5:00 p.m. there will be **Trick or Treating on the Avenue**. The annual **Rag Shag Parade** will be held at 5:15 with local goblins gathering at the parking lot by Aubuchon's. Look for bright orange pumpkins in windows or on doors of those participating to welcome in youngsters for a tasty treat.

An up to date list will appear for your convenience in next week's Montague Reporter. Should you have any questions, please contact Pam Kostanski at 863-9900 or Linda Ackerman at 863-4316.

Spooky Skate Park Fundraiser

TURNERS FALLS - On Halloween Day, Friday, October 31st, a fundraiser will be held from 2 p.m. - 6 p.m., with children's games at the Skate Park on 2nd Street in downtown Turners Falls. The event is sponsored by the Save Our Skate Park Committee. Can you toss the spider into the witch's kettle? Bring some quarters and try your luck. Prizes will be awarded. Come in costume and join the Rag Shag parade down Avenue A at 5:30 p.m. The Skate Park is open, so bring your skateboard. Call 413-863-9576 for more information.

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HIGHLIGHTS FROM THE GILL POLICE LOG

Frozen Mist Closes Bridge

Wednesday, 10/15

9:15 a.m. Animal complaint at Mount Hermon Campus.

11:00 a.m. Animal complaint at Mount Hermon Campus.

3:00 p.m. Child custody issue on Mountain Road; assisted DSS.

Thursday 10/16

4:20 p.m. Security alarm Mount Hermon Campus; employee error.

6:00 p.m. Gas drive off at French King Highway Mobil Station; officer responded.

7:30 p.m. Officer requested to Gill Elementary School for traffic issues.

8:50 p.m. Security alarm at residence on French King Highway; checked, all OK.

9:25 p.m. Assisted Erving police with an arrest.

Friday 10/17

6:45 p.m. Assisted Bernardston police with two disorderly youths.

11:00 p.m. Domestic disturbance on Chappell Drive, assisted by Erving police.

Saturday 10/18

7:00 p.m. Officer responded to Franklin Road for a house filled with smoke.

Sunday 10/19

1:00 p.m. Officer requested to assist with traffic for Opening Gaits Road Race.

4:55 p.m. Officer requested for a disabled motor vehicle at Gill Craft Fair.

10:14 p.m. Breaking and entering on Hickory Hill Road; under investigation.

Monday 10/20

7:05 a.m. Gill-Montague bridge frozen over with ice due to mist from the dam.

Bridge closed to northbound traffic until Mass Highway arrived with salt and sand.

1:30 p.m. Car struck while attending the Gill Craft Fair on Sunday. Owner did not notice the damage until she arrived home.

2:30 p.m. Annoying phone calls at Mount Hermon School.

Tuesday 10/21

6:56 p.m. Responded to fire at 26 Walnut Street.

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JESSICA HARMON ILLUSTRATION

BY FRED CICETTI

LEONIA, NJ - Q. What's the best way to treat epistaxis?

Well, that one made me go to the dictionary. Turns out epistaxis is the fancy word for nosebleed.

The best way to treat a nosebleed is to resist every instinct in your body to tilt your head back or to lie down. You have to keep your head higher than your heart to cut down on bleeding. And, if you lean back, you can swallow blood, which can pro-

duce vomiting and diarrhea.

The best technique is to sit down and lean slightly forward so the blood will drain out of your nose. Then, using your thumb and index finger, squeeze the soft portion of your nose together.

Hold your nose until the bleeding stops. Don't let go for at least five minutes. Repeat as necessary. You can also place an ice pack across the bridge of your nose.

Self-treatment can stop almost all nosebleeds. If bleeding persists, get immediate medical attention.

To prevent a recurrence of a nosebleed, follow these tips:

• Avoid bending over or blowing your nose for several

hours.

• Rest with head elevated to about 45 degrees.

• Don't lift anything heavy.

• Don't smoke.

• Don't drink hot liquids for at least 24 hours.

• Blood-thinners are not advisable if you're suffering from a nosebleed. Avoid aspirin and ibuprofen for normal aches and pains. However, if you are on a prescribed blood-thinner such as Coumadin, consult your physician.

Nosebleeds usually start just inside the nose at the septum that separates the nostrils. The septum contains many fragile, easily damaged blood vessels.

In older adults, a nosebleed may also begin deeper inside

the nose, where there are larger blood vessels. This type of nosebleed may be caused by hardened arteries or high blood pressure. These nosebleeds begin spontaneously and often require medical treatment.

The most common causes of bleeds are dryness and picking your nose. Other causes include injuries, colds, allergies, blowing your nose, an object stuck in the nose, repeated sneezing, nasal sprays and cocaine use.

Frequent nosebleeds can be an indicator of serious illness. For example, nosebleeds and bruising can be early signs of leukemia. Nosebleeds can also be a sign of blood clotting disorders and nasal tumors.

A cooler house and a humid-

ifier help many people with frequent nosebleeds. Nasal saline spray and petroleum jelly ointment can help prevent nosebleeds, especially during the winter months.

If you are prone to recurrent nosebleeds, it is helpful to lubricate the nose with an ointment. This can be applied gently with a Q-tip inside the nose. Make sure the ointment is applied generously to the septum. Many patients use A & D ointment, Mentholatum, Polysporin, or Neosporin ointment, or Vaseline. Saline nasal spray helps, too.

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

ROAD BOSS from 1 He plowed a clear path ahead of the emergency responders to the house, and he led the parade of flashing lights with the town snowplow. The ambulance, coming from Greenfield, was stopped by downed trees a mile short of the house, and the paramedic who came to the house called the hospital to say getting the patient to the ambulance would probably do him more harm than good. Dan would come out for anyone in town at any time of day or night.

I bought my firewood from Dan. I usually asked for what I wanted on a spring day when I saw him in passing by a job site. Then one day a while later I would come home and find a

pile of wood dropped where I had asked for it. From then on it was up to me to catch up with him and pay him. If we met when I had no money and no checkbook with me he would say with a barely perceptible grin, "I'm not worried. I know where you live."

The sand he laid down on the roads has less salt than the sand other towns use, because of a town meeting decision. Wendell uses a changing formula to keep enough salt in the sand so it does not freeze solid in the trucks, and after most storms Wendell roads have been in as good or better shape after snowstorms than the surrounding towns' roads, thanks to the care Dan took in this and every other aspect of his work.

He organized the town's auction of surplus equipment each fall, and never felt his duties began and ended with highway work. One fall, my bid won the firewood the road crew had gathered during the year, a loose pile sold as two cords but closer to three. Right after that I got sick, and every time I felt better and went to bring the wood home I got sick again. My pile was in the way at the highway garage, and finally Dan had the town dump truck drop two loads at my house, which was enough of a jump start to get me to move the rest before snow fell. (I finally went to a doctor.) At other times, he left wood the road crew cut with families he knew had need.

Selectboard chair Ted Lewis said, "If you asked him, he would do anything. If you told him to do something, he would take his time." The road crew delivered wood chips from tornado stumps to anyone who asked for them until regular road work became necessary. The amount of incidental work the road crew performed during construction of the new town buildings and septic system, and the amount of money they saved the town thereby is hard to calculate; the work was just squeezed into their schedule.

The hole Dan is leaving in town and in people's hearts will not be patched quickly or easily.



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JACK COUGHIN ILLUSTRATION

FRIDAY, OCTOBER 24th
Pumpkin Carving Pot Luck, 6 p.m. to 9:30 p.m. at 34 Court Sq. Montague Center. Bring your own pumpkin or carve one we grew. All welcome.

Open Mic at The Brick House, Turners Falls. Come share your musical/poetic/dance, or any other genius you feel like sharing. 7 to 9 p.m.

Deja Brew, Wendell: Zydeco Connection, 9 to 11 p.m.

Rt. 63 Roadhouse, Millers Falls: *Love Bomb*, rock and roll covers, come to dance! 9:30 p.m.

The Rendezvous, Turners Falls: *Mass Production*, reggae, 9:30 p.m. \$3.

SATURDAY, OCTOBER 25th
Pioneer Valley Institute and the Friends of the Great Falls Discovery Center present *Ice Age Climate Changes in the Valley*. Join Geologists Steve Winters & Professor Dick Little for an overview followed with a field trip. *Glacial Landforms Here and in Our Backyard to Montague Plains*. Bring a picnic lunch; we'll stop to eat atop Mount Sugarloaf. 10 a.m. - 12 p.m. Free to members of either PVI or the Friends of the Great Falls Discovery Center. Others \$10/ children under 13, \$5. Register, contact PVI (413) 775-1671 or herbertc@gcc.mass.edu.

Carnegie Library, Turners Falls: Children's Halloween Party, 10:30 a.m. - noon. Children of all ages and families invited. Refreshments, games, face painting, arts & crafts. Costumes encouraged, not required.

Nuclear-Free Jubilee, Brattleboro, VT. Beginning at 11 a.m. with a procession led by Bread & Puppet Theater, starting

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at Elm Street, between Flat and Canal, to the Brattleboro Town Common. Rally on the Common, speakers, music, info tables, and food! Musicians: MacArthur Family, Charlie King & Court Dorsey, The Nields. Speakers Harvey Wasserman, Peter Shumlin, Gaye Symington, Anthony Pollina, and Reverend Billy! Info. at the Safe & Green Campaign, (413) 624-8858, www.nuclearfreejubilee.org.

At the Bookmill, Montague Center: Roger Salloom. 8:30 p.m. \$12/adults and \$5/under 12 years of age.

Dancing With The Muse: Unique Evenings of Contemplative Music and Movement with John and Miro Sprague, and guests. 7:30 p.m. - 12:30 p.m. at The Maizumi Institute's House of One People, Montague, \$12. www.zen-peacemakers.org.

SATURDAY & SUNDAY, OCTOBER 25th & 26th
Enchanted Kingdom held at All Souls Church, Greenfield 1 to 8 p.m. An Alternative to Scary Haunted Houses, perfect for children ages 3-10. No costume needed, we offer dress-ups so that you can become part of the fantasy. \$3/person. 10/25, 2:30-8:30 p.m., 10/26, 1-5 p.m., and Friday, October 31st, 5:30-8:30 p.m. Kick-off concert with Roger Tincknell on Saturday, 1 p.m.

Halloween Celebration with Roger Tincknell, songs, stories and dance. Wholesome snacks and entertainment served around a campfire behind the Northfield Mountain Visitor Center, Northfield. 6:30 - 7:30 p.m. Free for all ages of ghosts and goblins. Pre-register (800) 859-2960.

Deja Brew, Wendell: *Eric Love*, Eric's smooth voice and mellow style will bring you back when he sings all your favorite covers from the 60' & 70's, 9 to 11 p.m.

Rt. 63 Roadhouse, Millers Falls: *Reprobates*, rock and blues. 9:30 p.m.

Hats Off to America Revue: Carol Pedigree performs songs from the 20's to 50's in vintage gowns, hats and boas.

At Unity in the Pioneer Valley, Greenfield. 7 p.m. Info: 774-5552.

FRIDAY to SUNDAY, OCTOBER 24th to 26th
At The Shea Theater, Turners Falls: Arena Civic Theatre presents a hauntingly funny musical *In Good Spirits*, by local author/composer Howard Odentz. Fri & Sat. at 8 p.m. Sunday Matinee at 2 p.m. Tickets \$13/adults, \$11 seniors & students.

SUNDAY, OCT. 26th
Benefit for the Karuna Center for Peacebuilding. A mandala Chorus and Goodwin Memorial AME Zion Church Choir perform Songs of Peace at the Johnson Chapel on the Amherst College Campus, 3 p.m.

Tickets \$10/adults; \$8/children, students & seniors; \$30 for a family ticket (2 adults & 3 children)



Trio con Brio Copenhagen perform a Halloween-themed program: Beethoven's Piano Trio in D major, "Ghost"; Bent Sorensen's Phantasmagoria (2007) written for and dedicated to Trio con Brio Copenhagen; and Smetana's Piano Trio in G Minor. at Centre Congregational Church, Brattleboro, Vt.

Family Dance, 4 - 6 p.m. at the Montague Grange, 34 Main Street, Montague Center. Family-style contra dancing with caller Cindy Green and live music from traditional contradance band Shingle the Roof.

At the Rendezvous, Turners Falls: *Le Cabaret de Rende-voo* (open mic) 8 p.m., free.

MONDAY, OCTOBER 27th
Deja Brew, Wendell: *All Small Caps*, A Night of Spoken Word. Open mic begins at 7 p.m., guest reader, 8 p.m.

WEDNESDAY, OCTOBER 29th
Great Falls Farmers Market: rain or shine, corner of 2nd St. & Ave A, Turners Falls. Farm products, baked goods, maple, crafts, 3 - 6 p.m.

French King Entertainment Center, Erving: Super Fun Bowling Club - 7:30 p.m. Costume bowling night! Join us for

a super fun evening of non-competitive costume bowling. All ages and abilities welcome. Call 423-3027 for info.

Dean Cycon of Dean's Beans presents *The Power of Cooperation, How Cooperatives Serve Coffee Communities Around The World*. Held at the 2nd Congregational Church, Ct. Sq., Greenfield, 7 p.m. Sponsored by Franklin Community Co-op.

At The Rendezvous, Turners Falls: Montague Phantom Brain Exchange. Featuring: Eagle Ager (sculpture/dance/sound performance crew from NYC), Russian Tsarlag (video & performance from Providence), Bull Tongue (locals Thurston Moore & Byron Coley) interviews living legend Danny Fields, DJ Phloyd Rice (out sounds), 9 p.m., \$5.

THURSDAY, OCTOBER 30th
At the Rendezvous, Turners Falls: *Abbie Barrett, Mark Schwaber and Sara Gomes*, 9:30 p.m.

Deja Brew, Wendell: *Ronald Meek & Adrian Meek*, traditional celtic music, 8 to 10 p.m.

FRIDAY, OCTOBER 31st
Brattleboro Music Center presents one of chamber music's most accomplished and promising young piano trios, Trio con Brio Copenhagen, at Centre Congregational Church in Brattleboro, Vermont. 8 p.m. Trio con Brio Copenhagen - the Korean sisters Soo-Jin Hong and Soo-Kyung Hong and the Danish pianist Jens Elvejaer.

Route 63 Roadhouse, Millers Falls: Evenspeak Halloween Party. Costume, prizes! 9:30 p.m.

At the Rendezvous, Turners Falls: DJ Pushplay Halloween Dance Party! \$3.

Deja Brew, Wendell: *News*, Halloween Costume Party, dancing tends to break out when this group gets going! Harmonic, eclectic rock, 9 to 11 p.m.

FRIDAY & SATURDAY, OCTOBER 31st & NOVEMBER 1st
At The Shea Theater, Turners Falls: The Country Players present *Count Dracula* by Ted Tiller. Reserve tickets (413) 863-2281, ext. 1 or www.countryplayers.org

FRIDAY, OCTOBER 31st THROUGH DECEMBER 13th
At the Discovery Center, Turners Falls: Winning entries of the Massachusetts Junior Duck Stamp competition on display.

HOT SPOT TEEN CENTER

MONDAYS - Drop-in, 3 - 6 p.m.
TUES & WEDS - Ongoing Music Project, 3 - 6 p.m.
THURS - Drop-in, 3 - 6 p.m. & Movie Night, 6 - 8 p.m.
Free (except some trips), open to local teens. Some require permission slips.
Info: Jared at 863-9559.
Hot Spot Teen Center is in **The Brick House**
24 Third Street, Turners Falls, 01376

SATURDAY, NOVEMBER 1st
Route 63 Roadhouse, Millers Falls: TBA, Rock and Roll, 9:30 p.m.

WEDNESDAY, NOVEMBER 5th
Tyler Boudreau, author of *Packing Inferno: The Unmaking of a Marine*, will speak at the Leverett Library, 7:30 p.m.. His book is a timely account of the ordeal of a marine officer in battle in Iraq and the equally difficult task of coming home. Info. call 548-9220 or www.leverettlibrary.org.

ONGOING

At the Discovery Center, Turners Falls: Photography in the Great Hall: Wildlife photographers Don Cooper and Linda Henderson exhibit this month.

Select Photographs: 1956 thru 2005 by photographer Paul Capinigro on display in Gallery 52 & 56 at the Hallmark Museum of Contemporary Photography, Turners Falls. At Gallery 85: Lois Greenfield - Celestial Bodies, Infernal Souls. Both exhibits through Dec. 14th.

Memorial Hall Theater POTHOLE PICTURES

**Friday & Saturday
October 24 & 25 at 7:30 p.m.
BACK TO THE FUTURE**

Pothole Pictures, Shelburne Falls: *Rear Window*. Laid up with a broken leg a bored man (James Stewart) stares out his window all day watching his neighbors lives, till he begins to suspect one of foul play. Entertaining, thought-provoking, stylish and inventive. Suspenseful Hitchcock classic-one of his best! Grace Kelly, Raymond Burr, Thelma Ritter. 1954, PG, Color, 115 min.

Music before movie at 7 p.m.

51 Bridge St., Shelburne Falls 625-2896



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Saturday, 10/25, 9 - 11 p.m.
60's & 70's Covers: *Eric Love*
Monday, 10/27, 7 - 10 p.m.
A Night of Spoken Word: *All Small Caps*
Thursday, 10/30, 8 - 10 p.m.
Traditional Celtic Music:
Ronald & Adrian Meek
Friday, 10/31, 9 - 11 p.m.
Halloween Costume Party: *News*

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Fri, October 24th - Thurs, October 30rd
1. BEVERLY HILLS CHIHUAHUA
DAILY 6:30 9:00 PG
FRI, SAT, SUN 12:00 3:00
2. HIGH SCHOOL MUSICAL 3
DAILY 6:30 9:00 G DTS sound
FRI, SAT, SUN 12:00 3:00
3. BURN AFTER READING R
DAILY 6:30 9 FRI, SAT, SUN 12 3
4. MAX PAYNE DAILY 6:45 9:15
FRI, SAT, SUN 12:15 3:15 PG13
5. BODY OF LIES R
DAILY 6:45 9:15
FRI, SAT, SUN 12:15 3:15
6. PRIDE AND GLORY
DAILY 7:00 9:30 R DTS sound
FRI, SAT, SUN 12:30 3:30
7. SAW 5 R DTS sound
DAILY 7:00 9:30
FRI, SAT, SUN 12:30 3:30
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At the Gill Arts & Crafts Festival



DETMOLD PHOTOS



(Clockwise from upper left): **JoAnna Frankel, with Gill's youngest resident: Elijah Brody, born October 10th - 8 lb 6 oz - a real work of art!**
The Falltown String Band, strumming and a thumpin'
Nanette Bready, (r) of Westboro, at Maryanne Guerin's "Folk Art" booth.
Jeff Blake (l) and Sydney Foster work the forge at the Pioneer Blacksmith Club display.

Front cover: **Barbarann Mainzer works on a watercolor of a turkey.**



Cider Days Celebrates the Local Apple

BY MARK LATTANZI

FRANKLIN COUNTY - Crisp apples and real cider once again take center stage, at the 14th Annual Cider Days festival, to be held on Saturday and Sunday, November 1st and 2nd in orchards, farms, historical villages and community centers throughout Franklin County.

Each year, Cider Days attracts several thousand fans of the apple in all its forms, who participate in a wide range of programs and events held in the scenic small towns and orchards of Western Massachusetts, from family-oriented orchard rides,

wassailing, and sweet cider pressing to workshops focusing on how to make hard cider.

Most of the demonstrations, talks, and tastings are free of charge, and there is no general admission fee. An all-day marketplace will take place on Saturday at the historic Brick Meeting House in Colrain, including local farmers, artisans, and food vendors. And all weekend long there are tastings of apples and pears, as well as ciders and meads, plus special apple- and cider-themed menus at local restaurants.

This year also features special

ticketed events, including a Cider Salon held at Historic Deerfield, billed as the largest open tasting of commercial hard ciders in America, with more than 15 producers from the U.S. and Canada, followed by a Harvest Supper.

For a schedule of events, plus directions, information on lodging, and to reserve tickets for the tastings and Cider Dinner, go to www.ciderday.org.

THE COUNTRY PLAYERS
present
COUNT DRACULA
"A howling good tale of love, lust, and lost innocence"
AT THE SHEA THEATER
Oct. 31st,
Nov. 1st,
Nov. 7th & 8th
at 8 p.m.
BASED ON 1931
THE NOVEL BY BRAM STOKER
Directed by **DAVID GROUT**
TICKETS & INFO: 413-863-2281
EXT. #1


Great Falls Farmers Market
Wednesdays
3 - 6 p.m. Rain or Shine
• Win a Gift Basket!
• Two Weeks to Go
• Treats on October 29th

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Franklin Community Cooperative

The Rendezvous
GREAT FOOD,
12 HOURS A DAY, 13 ON WEEKENDS!
FRI: 24
Mass Production (Reggae) \$3
SAT: 25
True Jaqueline • Petulant Child \$3
SUN: 26
Cabaret de Rendezvous (open mic)
Sponsored by the Valley Advocate
FUN! PRIZES! FREE! 8PM!
FRI: 31
DJ Pushplay HALLOWEEN DANCE \$3
Costume Contest • Prizes!
SUNDAY BRUNCH! YUM!
free wifi always!

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FRANKLIN COMMUNITY COOPERATIVE
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PRESENTS A TALK BY
Dean Cycon of Dean's Beans
THE POWER OF COOPERATION:
HOW CO-OPERATIVES SERVE COFFEE
COMMUNITIES AROUND THE WORLD
WEDNESDAY, OCTOBER 29TH, 7 P.M.



Held at The Second Congregational Church
Court Square, Greenfield
Free, Open to Everyone, Refreshments
Copies of Dean's book **JAVATREKKER** available for purchase courtesy of World Eye Bookshop & Dean will be available for book signing after the presentation.
October is Co-op & Fair Trade Month!