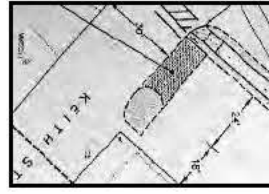




Yoga Studio Opens

on 3rd Street in Turners
Page 3



New Sidewalks

And a Parking Island for Scotty's
Page 7

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SEPTEMBER 11, 2008

GILL AND MONTAGUE CHOOSE THE .9% SOLUTION



On Sept. 8th, the Gill selectboard met in joint session with the Montague board and finance committee to prepare for Tuesday's budget setting District Meeting for the G-M schools. (l to r) Pat Allen, John Hanold, Carolyn Olsen, Jeff Singleton, Allen Ross, Patricia Pruitt, Marje Levenson, Tracy Rogers, Ann Banash, Lee Stevens, and Nancy Griswold

BY DAVID DETMOLD

The Gill and Montague selectboards met in joint session on September 8th at the Montague town hall, with members of the two towns' finance committees, to come up with a joint proposal in advance of the budget setting district meeting for the regional schools, which will take place on Wednesday, September 17th at 6:30 p.m. at the Turners Falls High School.

This was the second

time in recent weeks the two towns' finance and selectboards have met. At the first meeting, they chose Montague town moderator Ray Godin to moderate the district meeting, like last year.

The Gill-Montague Regional School District (GMRSD) has already posted the agenda for the district meeting, which consists of one article: a motion to approve a \$16,820,004 operating budget for the school year already in progress.

see BUDGET pg 11

GCC Proposes Dropout Prevention Program for Turners High School

BY DAVID DETMOLD

GILL-MONTAGUE - Bob Pura, president of Greenfield Community College, wants to help the Gill Montague Regional School District reduce its dropout rate. He came to the September 9th meeting of the school committee with an offer of free or reduced tuition in a special dual enrollment program at the college for up to 20 academically capable TFHS students who are judged by high school administrators to be at risk of dropping out. The project, called the Early Transition Program, has been working with Greenfield High students for the past year, and will be available to TFHS students starting in the spring of 2009.

G.C.C. Associate Dean of Enrollment Shane Hammond said the program has been working with 20 fulltime students a year from Amherst High School for the last 12



Bob Pura, president of Greenfield Community College

"... people get far too many messages that they don't belong in higher education, that they can't succeed, when in fact we know they can, and they will."

offer to do something to help relieve the high dropout rates in school systems like Gill - Montague.

"These two folks became concerned with the numbers of people in the community who did not see themselves as college bound, people who get far too many messages that they don't belong in higher education, that they can't succeed when in fact we know they can and they will." Through the generosity of these donors,

Community Access Fund Scholarships are now available to make the dual enrollment program available to income eligible students at no cost. The college is able to offer the Early Transition Program to students who are not eligible for the scholarships at 80% of regular tuition, with no added fees, Pura said. For these students, the families would most likely

see TFHS pg 10

years, and has recently expanded to include full and part time students from Greenfield High. If adopted at Gill-Montague, the program would allow Early Transition students to take courses toward completing their high school course requirements, while at the same time earning credit toward an associates degree at the college. The program will

be available to juniors and seniors.

Pura called the program, "incredibly powerful," with "an incredible graduation rate" for the students enrolled.

Pura said the program was extended to include local school districts, after the successful startup with Amherst High, when two anonymous community members from Franklin County came forward to

Outpouring of Support for Young Woman Injured in Car Accident

BY MARA BRIGHT WENDELL

Community fundraising efforts are ongoing to aid seventeen-year-old Clara Gardner, who was seriously injured when a car struck her while loading her friend's van outside the AmTrak station in Springfield, at 1 a.m. on August



Clara Gardner, shown here in a photo taken in Guanajuato, Mexico, this summer by her friend Jose Luis Medina

2nd. She was just returning from Mexico, where she had been studying Spanish with her dad and two friends. She was transported to the Bay State Hospital trauma unit, where it was deter-

mined that she needed amputations of both legs above the knee.

She is currently recovering at a rehabilitation facility, where she will begin the process of

see CLARA pg 11

\$kate Park May Lose its Lease

BY DAVID DETMOLD

TURNERS FALLS - The Turners Falls skate park, which finally opened this spring after being locked for more than four years because of deteriorating conditions, has been enjoying something of a heyday, with skaters and BMX bikers - young men, mostly - cutting graceful figures as they execute

Community Meeting to discuss the future of the Skate Park Wednesday, Sept. 17th, 7 p.m. at the Brick House. Public Welcome.

figure 8s and bold, gravity defying stunts. However, the ten-year lease on the property is



DETMOLD PHOTO

Matt Spring, 11, said coming to the skate park "takes your mind off life."

expiring at the end of October, and the landlord is considering charging a monthly lease fee for the skate park, or simply terminating the lease altogether, at least in part

because the skaters and bikers and other young people who frequent the park have been "trashing" the place.

The owner, Tim DeChristopher, of Turners

Falls, said a combination of economic circumstances (he is putting the former Chick's Garage up for sale, although the skate park lot will not be

see PARK pg 12

PET OF THE WEEK

A Gentle Soul



Beauty

My name is Beauty and I'm an eight-year-old female hound mix in need of a good home. I'm best described as a "gentle soul". I am gentle with kids, cats, dogs - I don't even chase deer! A true hound, I love sniffing around and have enough independence that I will happily lay at your feet and hang out with you. I would be good with kids over 5. For more information on adopting me please contact the Dakin Pioneer Valley Humane Society at 413-548-9898 or via email lev-errett@dpvhs.org.

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CARNEGIE LIBRARY NEWS

Mother Goose on the Loose

Mother Goose on the Loose will be held Saturday, September 20th, at the Carnegie Library at 10:30 a.m. The program is an interactive mix of guitar and banjo music, rhymes, stories, puppets, and other visuals. The free sessions are designed for babies through preschoolers and are performed by Children's Librarian Linda Hickman and

musician Michael Nix. Monthly Saturday programs will be held through November. The programs are supported by a grant from the Institute of Museum and Library Services, administered by the Massachusetts Board of Library Commissioners. For more information call 863-3214.

Library Club Meets at Millers Falls

MILLERS FALLS-Isabella, Kartyr, and Brianna of Millers Falls enjoyed looking at "ology" books at the Millers Falls Library during Library Club on Tuesday, September 9th. Library Club is a free drop in after school program for children of all ages. It meets every Tuesday from 3:30 - 4:30 p.m. at the Millers Falls



Library. Activities include crafts, snacks, live music, and stories. LINDA HICKMAN PHOTO

NMH Hosts Diversity Summit

Northfield Mount Hermon School will host the inaugural Conference on Race, Racism, and Raising the Discourse on September 27th and 28th. Organizer James Greenwood, NMH's director of multicultural education, encourages faculty and students from area schools to attend to explore diversity, equity, social justice, and multiculturalism.

word poet and director of the Mothertongue Institute for Creative Development. Also presenting will be Daneea Badio, a social worker from Georgia whose nonprofit organization helps single parents and The Minority Reporter, whose website deconstructs mainstream movies, analyzing messages about race and social function.

Keynote speaker Aya DeLeón is a black/Puerto Rican spoken

Diversity summits will be held throughout the year at NMH, scheduled for October

TFHS Class of '43 Reunion

Members of the Turners Falls High School Class of 1943 reunion committee met recently at the home of Walter and Virginia Kostanski, of Turners Falls, to finalize plans for their 65th class reunion. Reservations have been made with the French King Restaurant, Route 2, in Erving for Saturday, October

11th, 2008, at 1 p.m. for this event. Dinner will be served at 2 p.m. Reservation cards are being mailed to out-of-the-area class members, and local members will be located by phone.

June Powers Wilkins, 75 B Wells Street, Apartment 218, Greenfield, MA 01301 will be receiving reservations. Checks

FACES & PLACES

Chauncey plays at Between the Uprights on 2nd Street on Monday nights. Here he is in action, pulling off a few Keef Richards' licks.

DETMOLD PHOTO



Summit speaker Aya DeLeón

25th-26th, November 15th-16th, January 24th-25th, February 21st-22nd, and April 4th-5th. For more information, or if you are a student or teacher who wants to register for the conference, contact James Greenwood at 413-498-3439 or e-mail jgreenwood@nmhschool.org.

for the cost of dinner should be made out in her name for \$25 per person. Her telephone number is 413-773-5393.

Choices for the complete dinner are beef, chicken, or had-dock. Cheese and crackers will be offered during the social hour, from 1 p.m. to 2 p.m. For additional information, please call Edward Letourneau at 413-773-9289.

SENIOR CENTER ACTIVITIES -- Sept 15th - Sept. 19th

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

10:30 a.m. Chair Yoga
1 p.m. Canasta
State Primary Elections;
Center closed for activities and congregate meals. Meals on Wheels delivered as usual.
Wednesday, 17th
10 a.m. Senior Aerobics
12:45 p.m. Bingo
Thursday, 18th
1 p.m. Pitch
Friday, 19th
10 a.m. Senior Aerobics
11 a.m. Easy Aerobics

with reservations a day in advance by 11:00 a.m. Transportation can be provided for meals, Thursday shopping, or medical necessity by calling Dana Moore at 413-422-2584.

Monday, 15th
9:00 a.m. Exercise
9:45 a.m. Library
12 Noon Pitch
Tuesday, 16th
9 a.m. Aerobics
12:30 p.m. Painting
Wednesday, 17th
8:45 a.m. Line Dancing
12 Noon Bingo
Thursday, 18th
9 a.m. Aerobics
10:15 a.m. Pool

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

Monday, 15th
10 a.m. Senior Aerobics
11 a.m. Easy Aerobics
Tuesday, 16th
9 a.m. Walking Group

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

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

CORRECTION

The article on Wendell Old Home Day (MR VI #41) on August 7th contained an inaccuracy in listing the accomplishments of Wendell's Citizen of the Year, Charles T. Smith. He is not the longest serving chair of a board of health in the state of Massachusetts. He is the longest serving chair of a conservation commission in the state of Massachusetts. He has also been helpful to the Wendell board of health in conducting perc tests in years past. Thank you Charles, and we apologize for the editing error.

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Peaceful Palm Opens in Turners Falls

BY DAVID DETMOLD - Tamar Allis, of Turners Falls, and Deirdre Hall, of Northfield, have opened a new yoga and fitness studio on 3rd Street in Turners Falls. Called the Peaceful Palm, the studio will feature beginner and intermediate courses in Hatha yoga, for children and adults, and senior citizens too. Also, the instructors are trained to teach Pilates, while guest instructors will be offering workshops in a range of activities from art therapy to belly dancing. Mindful of the emphasis downtown Turners is placing on the arts these days, Allis and Hall will be hosting changing art shows six times a

year on the walls of the former Pure Light Gallery, 37 Third Street, where their new yoga studio is located. The inaugural show is by Andrea Mizula-Jones, of South Deerfield, in a variety of media, including a wonderful block print of Mt. Chocorua, a favorite spot. The studio will also be participating in the downtown art walks, including the upcoming Arts and Leaves tour on October 4th and 5th. Allis and Hall point out the many benefits of yoga include reducing stress, increasing flexibility and strength, and calming and centering the mind. Pilates, they add, is good for "core strengthening"

and alleviation of back pain, as well as providing a "whole body workout." They want to encourage people from all walks of life to come in to the Peaceful Palm and become more physically active, through yoga and Pilates. Spanish-English classes will also be offered. The instructors have been practicing yoga for 14 or 15 years, and have taught courses at the YMCA in Greenfield in the past. This is the first time they have opened their own studio. "It's very exciting," said Allis. For more information, go to their website at www.thepeacefulpalm.com.



Belly dancing and hula hoops enliven the grand opening of the Peaceful Palm Yoga Studio on 3rd Street in Turners Falls. Whitney Suter, front and center

Montague Business Association 3rd Thursday Networking Meetings at Area Establishments Begin September 18th

Almost a year in the making, the Montague area once again has its own business association. On September 18th, from 5-7 p.m., the Montague Business Association (MBA) will host the first of a monthly "Thirsty Thursday" networking series at the Rendezvous, 78 3rd Street, Turners Falls. These events, which are free and open to the public, will take place on third Thursdays, with locations rotating among establishments in several of Montague's five villages, including the Miller's Pub, Thomas' Country Club, the Night Kitchen, the Route 63 Roadhouse, Jake's Tavern, and Between the Uprights. The new MBA's mission is to support, promote, and develop Montague's businesses by

collaborating with others to better the community and enhance Montague's long-term economic growth. MBA president Pam Kostanski of Jay K's Liquors sees the organization as "alive with possibilities for shaping the future of the Montague area business community." She and executive committee members Todd Howe of Caddie Consulting and Mik Muller of Montague WebWorks invite business owners to join the association at annual rates ranging from \$60 for sole proprietors to \$120 for larger companies -- or to follow the lead of Northeast Utilities and contribute \$1000 for a Founder's Membership. Benefits of tax-deductible membership will include being

represented by a unified voice at all levels of government, opportunities for business referrals and networking, and a listing in the MBA's business directory. Joining now also offers a unique chance to shape the future of a new and exciting organization. In addition to the Thirsty Thursday socials, the MBA will host a pancake breakfast at 7:30 a.m. on Sunday, October 5th at St. Kazimierz, 197 Avenue A, Turners Falls, scheduled to coincide with the Arts and Leaves Art Walk and Studio Tour taking place that same weekend. The MBA will also sponsor and facilitate an informational meeting with town of Montague staff at the town hall

on Wednesday, November 12th from 5 - 6:30 p.m. This event will give area business people an opportunity to ask questions about building codes, permitting processes, health codes, community policing, and more. Updates will also be provided on issues such as Gill-Montague bridge construction plans and the new police station. This event will be broadcast live on MCTV. "Our goal is to play a vital role in the town by building a viable business support system through both communication and action," says MBA vice president Howe. "In our first year, we hope to energize and unite Montague area businesses for the betterment of the community."

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"The Voice of the Villages"

A Shared Dilemma for Schools and Towns

BY JOHN HANOLD

MONTAGUE - On Wednesday, September 17th, registered voters in Gill and Montague can take the next step toward setting this year's budget for the Gill-Montague Regional School District, and in the process determine the school assessment each town will be obliged to pay. Although the school year has begun, the district's budget was set by the state's Commissioner of Elementary and Secondary Education, and is temporary until a budget is approved by both the school committee and the voters of the member towns.

The school committee has endorsed the commissioner's budget, but the towns have each appropriated less for assessments than the temporary budget would require. The district proposal would require just over \$9,200,000 in town funding from Gill and Montague, but the assessments voted by the towns total roughly \$8,340,000, leaving a significant gap of about \$860,000.

Why is this Happening?

If one revenue source does not grow enough to match the yearly growth of the budget, the burden of funding the regional schools shifts to other sources. For the current budget year, several shocks are buffeting the G-M district and posing a dilemma to the voters of Gill and Montague:

The various budgets proposed by the school committee since late January - including the one matching the commissioner's total - are 4 - 5.5% above the budget set at last year's district meeting for the 2007 - 2008 school year.

State aid, which has accounted for nearly 40% of the school budget, grew just under 1%

from last year, primarily reflecting decreased enrollment. During the last 8 - 10 years, state aid has consistently lagged behind the growth in the district's budget.

In deciding how to meet this year's school budget increase the towns have limited choices:

Town department increases have already been held to less than 3%.

Non-property tax income is forecasted essentially flat, reflecting limited growth in permit fees and auto excise taxes in a troubled economy.

Voters are reluctant to support a Proposition 2½ override, reflecting the same view of the economy noted above. In fact, in June Montague's voters defeated an override request intended to close a budget gap on the town side.

In this environment, supporting the school committee's budget will stress town voters beyond their ability to pay, now and in the future.

What Will the District Meeting Do?

We expect to begin by considering the school committee's proposal, along with an alternative proposal reflecting the joint position of Gill and Montague town officials, and voting on them in order. If neither proposal is approved, I look for a "constructive engagement" of everyone to define the budget and funding assumptions we can all support in future meetings. A total budget figure requires agreement between voters at district meeting and a later vote by the school committee; any tax increase requires later approval by voters in the town affected; and the use of savings requires a later vote by the school committee or the towns see **DILEMMA** pg 5



LETTERS TO THE EDITOR

Obama on Nukes

I wanted to comment on the position the Obama campaign has taken in support of "clean nuclear power". The issue for me, besides the impossibility of trying to make nuclear power plants "safe" and "clean" is the nuclear waste that already exists, let alone creating more.

For 50 years the nuclear experts haven't figured out what to do with the waste. Nor is it ever calculated in the price of nuclear power, or acknowledged that hundreds of generations into the future will have to deal with the waste we have already created.

I guess it goes along with sending along the deficit to future generations.

We were in the Franklin County Fair parade in Greenfield last week with the Citizens Awareness Network, wearing barrels with the nuclear symbol on them. We walked the parade route with water leaking out of the bottom of the barrels as an example of the many places nuclear waste has leaked into our environment. We did this to address the reality that no one knows what to do with nuclear waste, and meanwhile we are storing it in barrels that last for 50 years when nuclear waste lasts for



Paul Richmond, left, and Karl Meyer barreled through the Franklin County Parade in the guise of leaky nuclear waste haulers.

thousands of years. Until there is a real solution to the present nuclear waste problem I don't understand why anyone would want to create more, especially if you acknowledge the enormous burden on future generations and the enormous cost that will be passed on as well.

One last thought: less than 300 years ago in the area where we now live, people spoke a different language. What symbols, what language, are we going to use to label the waste

repositories to warn future generations for thousands of years of the danger we are stockpiling for them today?

- Paul Richmond Wendell

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EYE ON TOWN FINANCES

Minority Report: Vote a School Budget the Towns Can Afford

BY MIKE NAUGHTON

MONTAGUE - I urge registered voters in Gill and Montague to attend the Gill-Montague Regional School District meeting on September 17th, and to vote down the budget of \$16,820,004 that is being requested by the district. In this I am joined by the other members of the Montague finance committee, as well as the selectboards of both towns. Simply put, the towns cannot afford this budget -- it is not a vote against education, it is a vote for preserving our towns as viable entities.

The combined boards are planning to offer an alternative budget of \$16,081,257, and I will leave it to others to offer the rationale for that number. It is certainly closer to what the towns can afford, and its originator, Jeff Singleton, put a lot of thought into coming up with it.

I find myself to be a minority

of one, in that I don't feel that it goes far enough. It requires an override of about \$160,000 from Gill, as well as the likely continued use of Montague's dwindling reserves. Also, if the district accepts it, which I think they may after factoring in some of their own reserves, then it lets the state off the hook, and that would be a bad thing.

Because the real culprit here is the state government, which encouraged us through so-called Education Reform to believe that we could have a public school system equal to those of our richer neighbors and promised to give us the money to make that happen. It was a wonderful goal, and for a while during the 1990s the money was there to make it a reality.

But around 2001, state aid dried up, and the district towns have been playing catch-up ever since.

We want the best for our



kids, and we have been reluctant to accept the fact that we simply can't afford the school system that the district has built, so we have been making increasingly difficult choices in other areas to keep the dream alive.

I believe that it is in everyone's best interest to wake up, as Ann Landers would say, and smell the coffee. We are two poor towns who have been hung out to dry by the state, and we need to face that fact. I believe we can afford a good school system, but we can't afford the

school system we have, and the harder we try the harder we make it for ourselves -- all of us, children and adults alike -- in the future. We need, as a community, to step back and take a hard look at what we are trying to do and how much money we have to do it with.

With that in mind, I have tried to come up with my own proposal for a budget that the towns can actually afford, without resorting to overrides or reserves or other uses of one-time funds. In doing so, I focused on Gill, since they seem to be slightly worse off than Montague; in other words, a budget that Gill can afford is also one that Montague can afford, but not vice versa.

Based on figures I received from Gill's administrative assistant, I calculate that budget to be \$15,073,840, which as you can see is over \$1 million lower than the one endorsed by my

colleagues. They felt, and perhaps rightly so, that it is unrealistically low, but I believe that it serves to remind us of just how far our collective aspirations are from our ability to pay.

I intend to offer it as an alternative at the upcoming district meeting and let the voters decide. If the arguments that persuaded the selectboards and the finance committee also persuade those at the meeting, then Jeff Singleton's proposal will prevail. But if others share my doubts about the wisdom of continuing down the path of counting on overrides and reserves to balance our budgets, my proposal will be there for them to consider.

Mike Naughton is a member of the Montague Finance Committee. The views expressed here are his alone, and are not necessarily shared by anyone else in town government or anywhere else.

DILEMMA from pg 4

affected. In sum, the district meeting is only the first step in closing the gap between district requests and town revenues.

Can We Buy Time Till Next Year?

In recent years, some speakers favored using savings to help close the structural budget gap, in order to give the district time to settle programming, benefit plans, and building configuration issues. For some time I was among those speakers, anticipating a better solution "just around the corner". The district has indeed addressed those issues, but the gap has widened, due in part to the inadequate increase in state aid and in part to expansion of school programs. To intensify the problem, Gill has no savings left, and Montague's selectboard and finance committee believe continued use of savings to pay for recurring expenses will result in

Montague being in the same position as Gill in a year or two.

Given a choice between delaying the inevitable catastrophe, and confronting it today, many townspeople favor confrontation today. This new position, which I now share, prevailed during Montague's lengthy town meetings, which ended with minimal use of savings and the curtailment of salary and benefit increases.

How Should Voters Prepare?

At the outset, we need more people at the district meeting! I recall last year's budget was passed by a vote of 132 - 130, far too few voters and far too close a margin to be a vigorous community endorsement. We owe the district and its towns a clearer resolution.

Voters should avoid thinking of the decision as so complicated - or so hopeless - that "voting for anything" will defer the problem to a better time. Better times are not in sight, and the

affordability of school assessments is a present concern for both towns. Next Wednesday's formal vote is on the district's total budget - but the real impact on residents - whether owners or renters, is in the assessments on the towns. The use of savings and one-time income (whether in-hand or speculative) to reduce assessments will influence the final cost, but it will also affect the towns' financial health.

What Should We Do?

First of all, we should approve a lower budget total than the \$16,820,004 the school committee is asking for. We should do this both to help close this year's affordability gap and establish a base for future years.

Unlike the town of Montague, the school district's staffing levels are steady to rising in a period of declining enrollment. In Montague, the police, water treatment plant and public works departments

are smaller than they were ten years ago, and town hall staff is essentially unchanged over that period. The district's increases can be explained, but that does not make them affordable.

Both the town of Montague and the school district have taken steps to curb health care costs, the district by changing their insurance provider and the town by negotiating an increase in the employees' share of premiums, from a 90% - 10% split to an 80% - 20% split over the next two years.

However, the town's salary negotiations result in approximately a 3% increase for employees for each of the next two years, including steps and the health insurance offset, while the school committee has included a 3 - 5% increase for employee salaries in their budget. This difference could wind up accounting for \$175,000 or so of the funding gap.

Secondly, we should not cover assessments by further

reducing town budgets and services, because thriving schools need viable towns. Thirdly, state officials - both legislative and executive - must acknowledge that regional cooperation between school districts and other initiatives may provide budget relief in the future but they do not address today's affordability crisis.

Finally, we should make zero or minimal use of town and school district savings, because our ability to borrow or respond to non-recurring needs and opportunities depends on having adequate reserves - in both the towns and the district. I encourage you to vote only for what we can afford, and not to continue to mask the problem for another year.

John Hanold is the chair of the Montague finance committee. The views expressed here are his own, and are not necessarily shared by anyone else on the finance committee.

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LETTERS TO THE EDITOR

Might Not Be Such a Bad Idea

I would like to respond to the letter that Warren Welch wrote to the readers of the *Montague Reporter* in last week's issue, regarding Independence for Montague Center.

Mr. Welch, be careful of what you wish for. I would back you 100 per cent, because I do believe that it would take the tax burden off my back by not having to support your Center of Independence.

Just think. You could have your own police department with your own chief of police, your own highway department with your own highway superintendent, your own town clerk, town tax office, town building inspector, town tax assessor, your own town accountant, manage your own town hall (which you already have, so that's a plus).

Let's talk about buying

your own highway department trucks, plows, sanders, mowers, leasing your own school busses, paying for your own teachers and administrative staff.

You already have a fire department, so that would be another plus. You could buy the Center School from the town of Montague and create a kindergarten through high school complex, which could create great joy to those who now have to send their children to the Whately Elementary School, where I have read that a good percentage of the class is made up of Montague Center children. Your own school superintendent could fight to bring the children back to Montague Center.

Your own board of selectpersons could run your town, and no one would

have to complain about our town administrator, who has, by the way, brought a lot of money to our villages in grants over the years. But I am sure the Center could come up with a town planner who could attempt to seek grants for the community.

I do believe that the town highway department would love to get out of plowing those hills in the Center during the winter months.

Warren, I don't mean to be facetious, but watch out for what you seek, because it might just turn around and bite you.

I do respect you for putting this thought out for discussion.

- Art Gilmore
Millers Falls
Town Meeting Member,
Precinct 2

Singleton Counters Naughton

A few quick points in reply to Mike Naughton's critique of the ".9% budget," (not to be confused with the 1/12th budget; see pages 4 and 5). First of all, the budget does not require a \$160,000 override in Gill, since most of that number is in fact caused by shortfalls in the Gill town budget.

At most the budget the two towns have proposed for the district schools would require a \$30,000 override from Gill, for the school side. Thus, Naughton bases his own alternative recommendation on a Gill problem not mainly caused by school funding issues. I do not think this sends a clear message to the state at all. The .9% increase mirrors the level of state aid and sends a much clearer message.

Naughton also does not like the fact that the proposed budget still uses Montague reserves. But in fact the proposal significantly

reduces the use of reserves over FY'08 (by nearly 2/3rds). This is very similar to what we have done on the town side of the budget. You cannot expect to dig yourself out of the hole in one year.

Naughton fears the school district will come down to the .9% budget with reserves and one-time revenues, thus getting the state "off the hook." I do not think it will be so easy. I think it will require a negotiation where we are all sitting at the table.

But at least Naughton and I are debating the best way to challenge the mess that has been "dumped in our laps."

- Jeff Singleton
Montague Center

Jeff Singleton is also a member of the Montague finance committee. The views expressed here are his own and do not necessarily represent those of anyone else on the committee.

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Cover up, please?

Enjoying a fine afternoon following the last remnants of the hurricane, my eight year old son and I decided to go to Fiske Pond. As we passed the pond, we heard a sound, perhaps swimmers. Glancing back briefly, I confirmed indeed there were three swimmers, upright and nude.

On our way out (the trail was too waterlogged to do the circuit) we averted our eyes.

Actually, this summer, I've encountered nude swimmers virtually every time I've taken my kids to Fiske Pond. I'm generally not prudish, every once in awhile is fine - but it seems to have gotten a bit out of hand. For example, one user, on multiple occasions, would spend a good deal of time bending over to pick up weeds in the nude, no matter who was around.

I was one of several folks who worked hard to protect Fiske Pond for the enjoyment of the public, particularly to provide access to a traditional swimming hole, there being few

other appealing public options. Along the way, there were some sacrifices made in terms of what we could and couldn't do at Fiske Pond.

For the enjoyment of all the public, not just a few, I am asking nude swimmers who don't already do so, to please consider some options, so that parents like myself, or other users, don't have to worry about what we'll encounter at the beach.

One option would be to use a swimsuit, but there are other options as well. For example, listening for other people approaching, and covering up. (Actually, one day a very courteous group of nude swimmers heard our kids coming, asked them to wait, and covered themselves.) Nude swimmers could also go to the pond in the early morning or early evening, when they are less likely to run into people who don't want to encounter public nudity. The simplest thing to do if all else fails is to cover up in

deeper water, rather than providing a full frontal view in shallow water.


I know that some feel nude swimming is natural and that nudity is just another societal taboo, but there must be ways to minimize subjecting others to nudity, which may be unappreciated or may make other users, particularly children, feel awkward. At a certain age, kids really do start to notice nudity and also develop a sense of modesty.

Regardless of what regulations the town of Wendell has adopted at Fiske Pond, public nudity is illegal, and some users really don't appreciate it. I'm not writing this letter to ask the conservation commission to prohibit public nudity outright at Fiske Pond. But I would ask for some common sense and courtesy from the subset of nude swimmers who don't feel there is a need to cover up for other users.

- Raymond DiDonato
Wendell

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NOTES FROM THE MONTAGUE SELECTBOARD

CDM Seeks \$75,000 More for Sewer Work

BY DAVID DETMOLD - On July 28th, as reported in the August 7th issue (VI #41) of the *Montague Reporter*, Paul Gilbert, project supervisor for Camp Dresser McKee (CDM), the engineering firm assisting the town of Montague in their \$5.7 million combined sewer overflow remediation project and treatment plant upgrade, asked the Montague selectboard to grant a change order for an additional \$68,000 in engineering fees. CDM had dropped its fee by \$200,000 back in May of 2006, when Gilbert announced that total costs for the CSO project had ballooned to \$10.3 million, and the town ordered a reduction in the scope of work to fit the project within the approved \$5.7 million price tag. In July, Gilbert defended his request for an additional \$68,000 by noting the added costs of project redesign, on site supervision during rough patches in construction of the new chlorine tank, and design work for solving code issues in the operations building.

The selectboard asked for and received a breakdown of total construction costs for the two phase project, including the code compliance work at the operations building, before granting Gilbert's request for \$68,000 in added engineering fees on August 11th. But on September 8th, town administrator Frank Abbondanzio informed the board that Gilbert has requested an additional \$75,000 for "design costs associated with addressing code issues CDM has been involved with" in the operations building at the treatment plant.

"So, that's \$143,000 total?" asked a skeptical Pat Allen. "I'm not sure I knew it was going to be going up."

"Me neither," said board member Patricia Pruitt. "We need to hear some more about that."

"Have Paul Gilbert come back," to explain the additional request, Allen instructed Abbondanzio.

In other sewer related news, Abbondanzio summarized Montague water pollution control facility superintendent Bob Trombley's plan to use \$180,000 out of \$216,000 from the sewer department's retained earning (free cash) account to reduce the impact of the CSO work on this year's sewer rates, as follows.

"Without retained earnings, we'd be seeing an increase of 26% [in sewer rates] mostly due to increased debt service from the CSO work. That alone accounts for a 20% hike. We knew it was coming; now it's here."

Abbondanzio explained that use of retained earnings would reduce the hike to about 9% over last year's sewer rates.

Hallowe'en in the Park

The board approved a request by the Skeleton Crew Theater to hold an interactive, full scale puppet theater performance in Peskeomskut Park from 3 p.m. to 9 p.m. on the date of the Rag Shag Parade, Hallowe'en, Friday, October 31st.

Michael Glazier, of Montague, and Jonathan

Grant (\$279,545) and a \$200,000 town meeting appropriation, was awarded to the low bidder, Caracas Construction of Ludlow. With the addition of \$32,000 in program income funds, the total amount awarded came to \$511,545.50.

DPW superintendent Tom Bergeron said construction will begin, "ASAP," and should be largely completed before winter weather sets in. Sidewalks to be reconstructed include: Unity Street (where asphalt residue will also be removed from the retaining wall on the east side), 7th Street, Spring Street, Second Street, and Stevens Street in Turners Falls, and Center Street and Union Street in Montague Center. Additionally, a cut-out will be installed at the bus stop at the top of the Hill on Unity Street, to allow busses to pull out of traffic while discharging or boarding passengers.

More importantly, the long and dangerous crosswalk in front of Scotty's, much in use during the school year, will be shortened considerably by the construction of an island, which will help define the parking in front of Scotty's. Abbondanzio said the parking lot there would still be accessible from Unity Street and Keith Street.

"People will no longer be backing out into the right of way," said Abbondanzio, "and we will reduce the distance school children will have to cross."

With the contribution of \$32,000 from program income money, Abbondanzio said \$118,500 would remain in that account.

Following last month's tree hearing, Bergeron said none of the trees along the routes of the sidewalk work would have to be removed. He said the paving in front of the posted trees on Union and Stevens Street would be done in asphalt to allow for root growth, and "if anything were to happen to the trees in the future," then those patches of sidewalk could be repaved with cement.

In Other News

The board approved a change in status of hiring from temporary to fulltime for Joe Dodge, as maintenance and groundskeeper at the DPW, at 40 hours a week, \$13.69 per hour. The change was made at the recommendation of

the town accountant.

DPW superintendent Tom Bergeron said his department would be returning to a five day, 6 a.m. to 2 p.m. workweek, once there is a threat of snow. The town hall will remain on an energy saving four day work week, with offices open from 8:30 a.m. - 5:30 p.m. Monday, Tuesday, and Thursday, and until 6:30 p.m. on Wednesday.

The board approved a memorandum of understanding to promote the Pioneer Valley Clean Energy Plan, outlining steps the town could take to reduce energy use and improve its environmental profile.

Board chair Allen Ross accepted an invitation to attend a conference of the United Southern and Eastern Tribes in Nashville, TN at the end of September, to represent the town of Montague in a panel discussion about the possibilities of promoting Montague as a destination point for "preservation tourism," highlighting the area's Native American history.

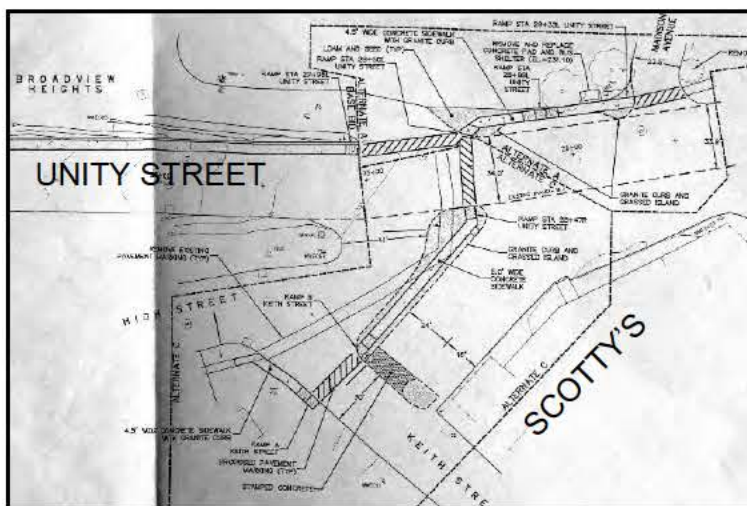
"I'm not prepared to take a position on airport related issues," cautioned Ross. "I'm going to help the town, and to help the tribes create a site where Native American history could be presented in a respectful manner."

The Narragansett Indian tribe, which extended the invitation for a representative of the selectboard to attend, will pay for Ross's travel expenses to and from the conference.

First Light Power announced the timing of work on the power canal, which will be drained for maintenance from Saturday, September 13th through Thursday, September 18th. There will be detours along the bike path during this time, and the question of signage for those detours will be addressed to the power company.

Matthew Latkewicz, of Turners Falls, was appointed to the Montague Cultural Council.

The board approved a permit for the Turners Falls High School Booster Day parade, which will step off at 10:30 a.m. from Unity Park on Saturday, October 4th, and continue down Avenue A to 7th Street, up the Hill to Montague Street, to Turnpike Road to the high school.



An engineering diagram of the new parking island to be constructed in front of Scotty's Convenience Store at the top of Unity Street.

"It's critical we use it to mitigate the increase." Trombley feels it's important to leave some balance remaining in the retained earnings fund, since the remainder will be "built into the base" for next year, Abbondanzio said.

But Charles Blanker, vice president of strategic development for Southworth Paper, the town's largest sewer user, wondered "Are we over budgeting on purpose? It seems there's a substantial free cash or retained earnings account each year."

The board promised to have Trombley get back to Blanker to answer this and other questions he had about the WPCF's budget before the rate hearing to fix the sewer rates on September 15th.

Abbondanzio said the impact from the proposed hike to the average sewer user of 75,000 gallons a year would equal about \$39 a year, nine dollars more than the off the cuff estimate Trombley gave two weeks ago.

The board approved a change order for the CSO work to pay \$30,114 for resurfacing concrete on the sludge storage tank, which, when drained recently, revealed unexpected deterioration that had to be immediately addressed.

Chappell, of Gill, proprietors of the Skeleton Crew, described the event as a child friendly, not too scary experience, similar to a "mental scavenger hunt," where participants answer questions from life size puppets before proceeding along the walking path to the next ghoulish interlocutors.

Glazier said the puppets would resemble "Muppet characters, friendlier monsters..." although spookier monsters for older folks might also be on hand that evening. Apple cider and food vendors may also make up part of the event.

"We hope to bring a positive atmosphere for the community for Hallowe'en, with an emphasis on safety for the kids," said Glazier.

The board granted permission for Jake's Tavern to put up a three and a half by five and a half foot specials board, partially on the tavern's property and partially on the town sidewalk, from 11 a.m. to 8 p.m. daily. Thirteen feet of clearance will remain between the edge of the sign and the sidewalk planter, allowing plenty of room for use of the sidewalk.

Sidewalk Construction

The sidewalk reconstruction project, funded jointly by a Community Development Block

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NOTES FROM THE MONTAGUE SELECTBOARD

Auction of Town Properties Set for September 20th

BY JOSH HEINEMANN - The Wendell selectboard spent a large part of its September 3rd meeting going over the details of the upcoming September 20th auction of 14 tax title properties with town treasurer Carolyn Manley. Douglas Auctioneers of

South Deerfield will conduct the auction, and will take responsibility for details like posting properties on the ground, newspaper advertisements, making the required effort to contact prior owners, who have the right to bid first on their former property. Residents who are interested in which lots are for sale may examine the list on posting boards around town, including the town hall, the library, the Country Store, and the Wendell Depot Store.

No property will come with the presumption that it is an appropriate building lot, and as with all auctions, terms of sale are: "Let the buyers beware."

There has been continued interest in the house at 120 Wendell Depot Road, which sits on a non-conforming lot, has neither a well nor a septic system, and does not have enough room to locate both.

Auctioneers will be paid with a 5% buyer's premium, which will be added to each bid that is accepted. Douglas Auctioneers said that establishing a minimum bid is not a good idea, but buyers will be required to qualify with a cashier's check, the amount of

which will vary with each property. Douglas advised the town to prepare a room with a capacity to hold 50 or 60 people, so the board agreed to change the venue from the town office meeting room to town hall.

Because the selectboard is custodian of town properties, a representative from the board is required to be at the auction. The auction must be posted as a selectboard meeting a week in advance. All three board members said they planned to attend.

Paul Richmond, representing the Full Moon Coffeehouse committee, was scheduled to meet with the selectboard as the meeting opened, to discuss wiring issues at town hall where the monthly coffeehouse series takes place, but he did not appear.

Town coordinator Nancy Aldrich said Patty Smythe found one volunteer for the committee that will chose and work with the consultant to update the town website.

The electrical boxes on the town common are falling apart, and may be a hazard. They give qualms to the musicians who use them on Old Home Day. Selectboard member Dan Keller

suggested replacing the plywood boxes with some composite material that will last "forever". Aldrich said that since the boxes are not inside a building, the job does not have to go out to bid, and the board members agreed to contact electrician Jerry Facey to look at the situation and see if he can order something out of a catalogue to replace the decrepit boxes.

The state Department of Revenue scheduled a meeting with Wendell's assessors for Wednesday, September 10th to assist in preparing to send out semi-annual tax bills, rather than sending annual bills as has been the town's recent practice. The finance committee and the selectboard attended that meeting as well.

FRCOG is working with Franklin County towns to bring in Siemens Building Technologies to conduct preliminary energy audits of town buildings. These preliminary audits would show whether a more complete audit is justified, and the second audit would list steps a town should take to reduce energy use, and detail the likely cost savings of each action.

The first audit is free, and

requires no commitment from the town. The cost of the second audit is deducted from any work Siemens does. Siemens would be paid for their work with the money a town saves in energy costs, until the entire bill is paid.

Since the first step costs nothing, the selectboard agreed to have the preliminary audit done. The two new town buildings are already energy efficient, but the town hall, the highway garage, and the new senior center, even after recent renovations, may all benefit with energy savings through this program.

Two students from Bernardston narrowly missed admission to Franklin County Technical School this year, while the school accepted two students from out of the district. In response, the Bernardston selectboard sent a letter to the Tech School administration, and to selectboards of district towns, including Wendell, questioning the school's admissions policy. As a result, the Franklin County Technical School Committee will review the school's admission policy at its September meeting.

HIGHLIGHTS FROM THE GILL POLICE LOG
Quiet Saturday in Gill
Monday, 9/1
3:45 p.m. Assisted with medical emergency on Main Road
7:25 p.m. Disturbance on West Gill Road, assisted subject with obtaining an emergency restraining order.
Tuesday, 9/2
2:03 p.m. Report of minor motor vehicle accident on French King Highway.
Wednesday 9/4
2:33 p.m. Report of possible suicidal subject on French King Bridge.
Friday, 9/5
5:50 p.m. Alarm at Main Road location, all secure.
10:05 p.m. Assisted Erving police department with suicidal subject.
Sunday, 9/7
1:01 p.m. Bicycle accident with injury on Rt. 10.
2:33 p.m. Assisted with fire alarm on Mount Hermon Campus.

HIGHLIGHTS FROM THE ERVING POLICE LOG
Scrap Metal Theft in Erving
Tuesday, 9/2
6:55 p.m. Medical emergency at a Warner Street address. Assisted BHA ambulance, subject transported by same.
Thursday, 9/4
7:10 a.m. Report of noise disturbance in area of Forest Street. Dog barking, spoke with subject at residence.
Friday, 9/5
6:05 a.m. Motor vehicle accident on Route 2 in Farley Flats area, no injury.
7:30 p.m. Report of two loose dogs in area of River Street. One dog returned to owner, one brought to pound.
9:40 p.m. Report of suicidal male at a Pratt Street address. Transported same to Baysstate Franklin Medical Center.
Saturday, 9/6
1:07 a.m. Arrested [redacted] for operating a motor vehicle while under the influence of liquor and speeding.
4:20 p.m. Report of larceny of scrap metal from a River Street address. Investigated.
4:50 p.m. Arrested [redacted] for operating a motor vehicle while under the influence of liquor and possession of class D drug.
6:25 p.m. Medical emergency at a Warner Street address. Assisted BHA ambulance, subject transported by same.
10:09 p.m. Report of a disabled motor vehicle at east end of Old State Road Found to be a single-car motor vehicle accident, no injury.
11:37 p.m. Report of suspicious persons at a High Street address. Checked same, no problems.
Sunday, 9/7
11:15 a.m. Medical emergency at a Warner Street address. Assisted BHA ambulance, subject transported by same.

A Half Mile of Tires
12TH ANNUAL CONNECTICUT RIVER CLEANUP

BY ANDREA DONLON GREENFIELD - Last fall, over 2000 people from Vermont, New Hampshire, Massachusetts and Connecticut pitched-in for the Source to Sea Cleanup. They cleared over 50 tons of tires and debris - including 69 shopping carts, 30 couches and chairs, and six toilets from the banks of the Connecticut River and its tributaries. Five hundred and ninety-four tires were also collected last year. Stacked-up, up the tires collected since the event began would reach a half

mile into the air. This year's cleanup, sponsored by NRG Middleton Power, should push the overall tally of community helpers past the 10,000 mark, over the event's 12 year history. "We've got volunteer groups working all the way from the headwaters near Canada to Long Island Sound," said Cleanup coordinator Christine Luis-Schultz. Sponsors helping CRWC supply Source to Sea volunteers with needed resources include Northeast Utilities

Transmission, TransCanada, the Metropolitan District Commission (MDC) of Connecticut, and Lane Construction Corporation, based in Cheshire, CT. More sponsors are welcome. To become a volunteer or to help sponsor a group, get more information, or be referred to a cleanup team in your area, visit www.ctriver.org, or email: cleanup@ctriver.org. Contact cleanup coordinator Christine Luis-Schultz at: (413) 772-2020, ext. 201, with questions.

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EVENTS IN GREENFIELD AND NORTHAMPTON PROMOTE

SAFE SHREDDING AND RECYCLING OF CONFIDENTIAL DOCUMENTS

Is shredded paper recyclable? You bet it is. That's why the Springfield Materials Recycling Facility Advisory Board (MAB) is sponsoring two free shredding events on Saturday, September 20th, in Greenfield and Northampton.

These events are free and open to residents and small businesses from western Massachusetts municipalities. For safe and confidential destruction of financial or personal documents, attendees will place their items to be shredded into a mobile shredding unit, operated by ProShred, Inc. The end product will be recycled.

The shredding events will be held at the following locations on September 20th, from 9:00 a.m. to 1:00 p.m.:

Smith Vocational High School, 80 Locust Street (Route 9), Northampton

Staples, 259 Mohawk Trail (Route 2), Greenfield

There is a per person shredding limit of two recycling bins full of the following papers: cancelled or blank checks, credit card statements, bank statements, medical records, legal papers, income tax files (query on www.bankrate.com to find out how long to keep financial records), financial records, proprietary documents, customer lists, sales reports, and HR records.

Also, as a reminder to participants that these documents can be shredded and recycled through your local recycling program, the MAB will be raffling off a free paper shredder at each event location to interested participants.

Over 60 municipalities have joined the Mass Recycles Paper! campaign, a public - private partnership to

reduce the 1.5 million tons of paper that is being thrown away annually in the Commonwealth. Sending this paper to the landfill or incinerator, rather than recycling it, costs Massachusetts municipalities more than \$100 million each year. In an effort to support this campaign the MAB is sponsoring these free paper-shredding events.

MassRecycle has surveyed the paper mills and paper recovery facilities in Massachusetts to determine what types of paper can be recycled. Visit www.massrecyclespaper.org for a list of papers that can be recycled by all of these facilities, including Springfield MRF.

For questions about the event or about recycling shredded paper, call 413-772-2438 or email: info@franklincountywastedistrict.org.

Dear Amy When recycling plastic bottles, big and small, can you leave the cap on or are they not recyclable? Also, what about the metal cap on glass bottles and jars?

- Robert Quinn-O'Conner
Montague City

Dear Rob,

Thanks for your letter. Caps for plastic and glass bottles should be removed and thrown away. There are many reasons for this. The first is that the caps are a different type of plastic than the bottle. The second reason is, if bottles are left capped, it can cause problems when they are baled (crushed) together: the cap can fly off due to pressure and injure someone in the vicinity. The third reason is that if loose caps go through the sorting and baling machinery at the recycling facility, they are too small and just fall through the machinery to the floor. They cannot be baled because they are so small, they fall out of the bale.

Metal caps are a different story. If a lid is all metal, that is, no plastic or other materials are in or on it, it can be recycled. A tuna fish can has an all metal lid, while a glass pasta sauce jar has a composite lid, made of metal and plastic. The machinery at the recycling facility can tell when

something is made of aluminum or steel and the item can be recycled with the other cans. It is best to push the lid down into the can so that the lid stays with the can.



JESSICA HARMON ILLUSTRATION

For more information, go to: www.franklincountywastedistrict.org/RecyclingYesNoListFLI.pdf. Or see our website: www.franklincountywastedistrict.org.

Thanks for recycling!

- Amy Donovan
Program Director
Franklin County Solid Waste Management District



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- Wednesday**
Baguette • Roasted Garlic Herb Braid • Farmhouse White Loaf • Multi Grain Sunflower Seed
- Thursday**
Baguette • Cheese Bread & Jalapeno Cheese Bread
Foccacia (various flavors)
Polish Seed Rye
- Friday**
Baguette • Cranberry Walnut Braid • Italian Loaf • Honey Wheat Loaf
- Saturday**
Baguette • Cheese Bread & Jalapeno Cheese Bread
Foccacia (various flavors)
Cinnamon Raisin Bread
Cranberry Walnut Braid
- Sunday**
Cinnamon Raisin Bread
Cardamom Bread • Honey Oat with Walnuts

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



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TFHS from 1

would most likely have to bear the tuition costs, although it is possible the school district could seek grant funds for this purpose.

In Greenfield, students who are income eligible are receiving full scholarships through an annual Community Development Block Grant to support the reduced G.C.C. tuition. In Amherst and Greenfield, family funds have been expended to pay for the college course fees for Early Transition students who are not eligible for the scholarships.

The high school will be asked to make an in kind contribution of time from a guidance counselor to work with the

students. The college will have an academic advisor working with the Early Transition students as well.

There will be no direct cost to the school district to participate in the program at the outset, although transportation for the dual enrollment students will have to be worked out between the families and the school district.

Pura said the anonymous donors who are subsidizing the program for Franklin County districts like Gill-Montague have made a "multi-year commitment" to provide scholarships for eligible students, but at some point in the future, more costs may have to be borne

by the local districts. "We'll make the program affordable," when that day comes, promised Pura.

Turners Falls High principal Jeff Kenney enthusiastically backed including TFHS in the Early Transition program. "We know we've got an issue with the graduation rate. This gives us an opportunity to be able to reach kids who are ready for college but for one reason or another never get there."

Hammond said the success rate for the program has been very high. Although the track record with Greenfield High is only a year old, the program's success with Amherst High School students has been well documented in terms of improved test scores, student satisfaction, higher retention rates and dropout reduction.

Hammond said the student mix at G.C.C., which includes a good percentage of older students returning to college, has been welcoming of the younger dual enrollment high school students.

"That's one of the strengths of the learning environment at G.C.C.," Pura added. The median age of G.C.C. students is 27.

Although the committee took no formal vote, they backed the plan. "We will move this into high speed here," promised interim superintendent Ken Roche, "to set this up for spring. I think this is a terrific opportunity for kids."

The drop out rate for students who should have graduated with the TFHS class of 2007 was

22.9%, on par with Holyoke (22.7%) and Springfield (22.7%).

In Other News

The board welcomed Josh Gannon as the student council representative to the school committee. During TFHS principal Jeff Kenney's report on how exciting it was to have students back in school after a lonesome summer, the committee turned to Gannon to find out whether the students were similarly enthusiastic about returning to class.

"Yes," Gannon said, after pausing for a moment.

"Good answer," said school committee chair Mary Kociela.

Nurse Leader Hired

Paula Kelsey, of Greenfield, has been hired to be the nurse leader at the Gill-Montague schools. She will work half-time "to build the nursing infrastructure" at the district schools.

Kelsey, who teaches part time in the G.C.C. nursing program, served for seven years as the nurse leader at the Mohawk Regional Schools, until Mohawk discontinued the position this year.

Gill-Montague will pay 80% of Kelsey's \$25,000 salary this year with a state grant, which will require the school district to increase the local share of the nurse leader's salary by 20% a year for the next four years, if the district wishes to continue the grant funded program for the full five years.

SPED Advisory Council

Nadine Ekstrom, the newly hired director of special education for the G-M schools, is organizing a parent advisory committee for the district's SPED program. The first meeting will be held on Tuesday, September 16th at 6:30 p.m. at the high school.

Chip Wood, who is now the director of elementary curriculum at the GMRSD, said the elementary schools are all up and running smoothly in their new configurations. Enrollment in the three elementary schools is now at 511 (with 620 in the upper

schools for a total of 1131 students so far this year), with 133 in Gill, 275 at Sheffield, and 62 kindergartners in three classrooms at Hillcrest, with 41 of 45 pre-K slots filled at that school.

Hillcrest principal Chris Jutres, reporting on the progress of the Reading First program, (now that grant funding for the program has run out) said it was important to determine, "what sustainability means for our district, now that we no longer receive the funds. What are the good programs we can keep in place that won't cost so much money? Reading First... it's imperative that young children can read; it's imperative for outcomes at the other end [of K-12 education]." Jutres said, "It's a real coup for the district to take on that position as part of the permanent faculty."

Marty Espinola reported on the receipt of a \$125,000 a year, five year Drug Free Communities Grant to fund the Gill-Montague School Community Partnership, which will allow the group to hire a coordinator, and help pay for a social issues marketing campaign, and to fund two dinners to gather town residents to address issues like substance abuse and violence within the framework of a positive sense of community.

Kenney announced the Franklin Regional Transportation Authority has offered to waive fares for Life Skills students who need to use FRTA busses to access connections in or around town as part of the program.

Reporting on the joint meeting with state and town officials on August 27th in Boston, which he attended to represent the school district, superintendent Roche said, "I'm hopeful we'll receive significant Pothole grant money this year, which we've already said we will share with the towns." Roche said word on the amount of state Pothole funding may be available in time for the budget setting district meeting on September 17th, which will take place at 6:30 p.m., at the high school. All registered voters of Gill and Montague are invited to attend.

MCTV Program (Ch. 17) Schedule: Sept 12th - 18th

Friday, 9/12	12:30 p.m. Discovery Center Birds of Prey	6:00 p.m. Women Girls & HIV: Teen Girls
8:00 a.m. Friends present Fall Town String Band	2:00 p.m. Discovery Center Emus	7:00 p.m. GMRSD 9/9/08
10:00 a.m. Amandela	3:00 p.m. Discovery Center Fossil Tracks	10:30 p.m. Women Girls & HIV: Services
1:30 p.m. Brown Bag	5:30 p.m. Discovery Center Open Mic Night 07	11:00 p.m. The HIV Test
2:00 p.m. Coffee House with Joe Graveline	6:30 p.m. Discovery Center Open Mic Night 07	Wednesday, 9/17
3:00 p.m. Coffee House with Pat 'n Tex	7:00 p.m. Discovery Center Poetry and Prose	8:00 a.m. Senior Aerobics
6:00 p.m. Coffee House with Ferne Bork, Dan Tinen, Bruce Kahn Trio	9:00 p.m. Discovery Center Pop Rockets	8:30 a.m. Senior Self Defense 1
7:00 p.m. GMRSD Meeting 9/9/08	10:30 p.m. Discovery Center Woodpeckers	8:30 a.m. Senior Self Defense 2
10:00 p.m. Coffee House with Pat 'n Tex	Monday, 9/15	9:31 a.m. Senior Self Defense 3
Saturday, 9/13	8:00 a.m. Eaton Du Ryu	9:31 a.m. Senior Self Defense 4
8:00 a.m. Coffee House Series Ferne Bork, Dan Tinen, Bruce Kahn Trio	9:00 a.m. Elder Law	10:00 a.m. The HIV Test
9:00 a.m. Coffee House, Jeff Martell	10:00 a.m. Enjoy the Ride	11:00 a.m. Women Girls & HIV: African American Women
10:30 a.m. Common Man Cowbell Prescription	11:00 a.m. Fabulous Maurice 5/19/08	11:30 a.m. Wisdom Way Solar Village
11:30 a.m. Common Man Denise Grendan	12:30 p.m. Fate of the Stallion	12:30 p.m. Valley Idol Finals 08
12:30 p.m. Common Man: Eric Goodchild	1:00 p.m. FCHC Estate Planning	3:00 p.m. The Well Being - The Aging Eye
1:30 p.m. Common Man Jeff Brewer	2:30 p.m. Girls Softball Finals	4:30 p.m. Preachin the Blues
3:00 p.m. Common Man Stephanie Marshal	3:30 p.m. Special Town Meeting 9/11/08	5:30 p.m. Reconciliation Ceremony
4:30 p.m. Common People Concert Amandela	7:00 p.m. Selectboard LIVE	6:30 p.m. GMRSD District Wide Budget Meeting - LIVE
6:00 p.m. Common People Celtic Harp	10:30 p.m. Montague Update: Ted Graveline	Thursday, 9/18
6:59 p.m. Common People Celtic Harp2	11:00 p.m. Montague Update: Jamie Berger	8:00 a.m. Power Canal Draw Down
7:30 p.m. Common People Fall Town String	Tuesday, 9/16	8:30 a.m. Block Party Parade 08
9:00 p.m. Common People Van Edmond	8:00 a.m. Montague Update: John Ancil	9:00 AM Block Party 08
10:30 p.m. Community Land Trust Meeting 3/4/08	9:00 a.m. Special Town Meeting 9/11/08	10:30 a.m. Discovery Center Poetry and Prose
Sunday, 9/14	2:30 p.m. Montague Update: Josh Goldman	12:30 p.m. Discovery Center - Root Cellar
8:00 a.m. Community Land Trusts in Action	3:00 p.m. Naturalist Laurie Sanders	2:00 p.m. Friends present Fall Town String Band
9:00 a.m. CWA Butterflies and Flowers	3:30 p.m. Northfield Mountain Geology Story	4:00 p.m. Discovery Center-Root Cellar
10:00 a.m. CWA Consider the Lilies	4:00 p.m. Overian Cancer Awareness	6:00 p.m. Discovery Center Poetry and Prose
12:00 p.m. Denmark The View the Vision	5:00 p.m. Peske Park Dedication	7:00 p.m. GMRSD Meeting 9/9/08
	5:30 p.m. Power Canal Draw Down	10:30 p.m. Block Party Parade 08

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CLARA from page 1

learning to walk again with prostheses. Fundraising efforts will help pay for the prostheses she needs.

Clara attends Northampton High School and is entering her senior year. She lives in Wendell half the week with her mom and the rest of the week with her dad in Northampton, although her mom plans to move to Northampton during Clara's recovery to make her travel to and from school easier.

Clara's major interest is art. She has taken several honors art classes at Northampton High, intends to apply to colleges and possibly art schools, and is considering a career in design or

art. She was a member of the track and indoor track teams during her freshman and sophomore years, and joined the crew team last year. Her coaches are hoping to get her on the water again this year with the use of special adaptive equipment.

Lynne Davis was one member of the ad hoc committee of community volunteers who got together in the days after Clara's accident to plan a benefit tag sale and other fundraising efforts to ease the financial burden the family will now face in adjusting to Clara's accident.

"The outpouring of community support was really amazing," said Davis. "This accident happened to Clara and

her family, but everyone responded as if we were one big family. That spirit lives in Wendell: when one is in crisis, it happens to all of us. That shared responsibility - that we are all part of the same web of humanity - is a special quality in our town.

"We raised \$5000 in two days at the tag sale for Clara. One moment that I'll never forget: our local Fed Ex driver came and grabbed my hand and put something in it. She said, 'I'm so sorry,' and walked away to her truck without taking anything. I'll always remember the sincerity and the compassion in her voice. I looked, and there was a \$100 bill in my hand," Davis said.

Patti and Vic Scutari, who donated the use of the parking lot at the Wendell Country Store for the tag sale on August 30th and 31st, also donated 10% of the proceeds of sales Sunday night at the Deja Brew pub, which they co-own next door. The band that played on Sunday evening, Fernand & Friends, donated their tips as well, to add another \$290 to the total raised.

Davis spoke proudly of the community's response in the face of such an unforeseen, cruel twist of fate to one of their own. "It's such a loss," she said. "This will impact the young woman and her family for such a long time. This was one way we could quickly raise a lot of money and show them we love

them." Now the committee plans to continue the fundraising efforts by sending out letters of appeal to help Clara and her family retrofit their home to accommodate her new physical needs. A firewood raffle is also ongoing, with cordwood donated by Doug Smith, and tickets on sale at the Wendell Country Store.

Donations for Clara are being received through the Dean's Beans Foundation. Checks should be made out to the Dean's Beans Foundation, with the Clara Fund on the memo line, and are tax deductible.

Send contributions to: Dean's Beans, 50 Moore Avenue, Orange, MA 01364.

BUDGET from page 1

This is the same amount imposed by the state Department of Elementary and Secondary Education in July as a temporary measure, until the district and the towns agree on a budget.

On Monday, the selectboards of Gill and Montague, along with the finance committee of Montague (the Gill finance committee lacked a quorum) approved a budget number - \$16,081,257 - that would reduce the schools' budget by more than \$700,000. The lower figure will be introduced by amendment at the district meeting.

The lower number represents

a .9% increase over the GMRSD school assessments the towns paid last year. The rationale for the boards approving a .9% increase in town assessments is based on the fact that state aid for the GMRSD increased by only .9% this year, which the towns feel has placed an unfair burden on the them to make up the difference in the 4% budget increase the state mandated by its 1/12th budget in July. This 4% budget hike would translate to a 9.3% school assessment increase for Montague and a 13.7% assessment increase for Gill.

The .9% budget amendment the boards supported would

require the town of Gill to pass a \$161,000 override, to fill a \$104,000 shortfall on the townside of their budget, and a \$57,000 shortfall on the school side.

"This budget sends a clear message to the state," Jeff Singleton said.

The school committee would

have to agree to any budget figure that differs from their approved budget. More district meetings are a possibility before a final budget is agreed to.

Montague finance committee Mike Naughton, who cast the sole vote against the compromise figure, said, "This is just a dress rehearsal for next year." He

offered an additional cut of more than a million dollars, "rather than continue in the death spiral we're on now."

Tupper Brown, of the Gill finance committee, said, "All Pothole funds [the schools may receive from the state this fall] should go to the towns to reduce assessments."

HIGHLIGHTS FROM THE MONTAGUE POLICE LOG
Sex Offense Reports

Tuesday, 9/2

5:35 p.m. Report of neighbor disturbance at a Bridge Street address, Millers Falls. Advised to contact police if repeated.

7:48 p.m. Report of suspicious person at a Grout Circle address, Millers Falls. Advised to contact police if repeated.

8:30 p.m. Officer wanted at a Fourth Street address, Turners Falls. Peace restored.

8:31 p.m. Report of domestic disturbance at a K Street address, Turners Falls. Peace restored.

Wednesday, 9/3

12:45 p.m. Report of larceny at St. Mary's & St. Anne's cemeteries.

3:03 p.m. Report of runaway at a Fourth Street address, Turners Falls. Subject returned to home or family.

8:35 p.m. Officer wanted at a Griswold Street address, Turners Falls. Peace restored.

Thursday, 9/4

2:16 p.m. Report of possible suicide attempt at Gill-Montague Bridge, Turners Falls. Subject removed to hospital.

5:24 p.m. Officer wanted at a Farren Avenue address. Arrested [redacted] on a straight warrant.

7:29 p.m. Report of domestic disturbance at a Millers Falls Road address. Arrested [redacted] Charged with assault and battery, domestic, intimidation of a witness and assault and battery on a person 60+/disabled with injury.

Friday 9/5

3:03 a.m. Report of neighbor disturbance at a Turnpike Road address, Turners Falls. Investigated.

9:57 a.m. Officer initiated arrest of [redacted] on a default warrant.

4:27 p.m. Report of neighbor disturbance at a Bridge Street address, Millers Falls.

7:25 p.m. Report of hit and run motor vehicle accident in South Prospect Street area, Millers Falls.

8:34 p.m. Report of a missing person from an Elm Street address, Turners Falls.

Saturday, 9/6

1:09 a.m. Report of threatening / harrasment at a Second Street address, Turners Falls. Peace restored.

2:03 a.m. Report of loud noise disturbance at a Third Street address, Turners Falls. Peace restored.

Sunday, 9/7

2:54 a.m. Officer wanted at a Fourth

Street address, Turners Falls. Arrested juvenile, age 14. Charged with running away.

7:09 p.m. Report of domestic disturbance at a Montague Street address, Turners Falls. Investigated.

8:16 p.m. Report of missing person from a Park Street address, Turners Falls. Subject returned to home or family.

10:23 p.m. Report of domestic disturbance at a Second Street address, Turners Falls. Investigated.

Monday, 9/8

12:32 a.m. Report of loud noise disturbance at a Third Street address. Peace restored.

3:46 p.m. Report of sex offenses at Unity Park, Turners Falls. Investigated.

4:32 p.m. Report of illegal dumping at a Poplar Street address, Turners Falls.

6:27 p.m. Report of sex offenses at Sheffield Elementary School, Crocker Avenue, Turners Falls. Investigated.

Tuesday, 9/9

12:59 p.m. Report of domestic disturbance at a Fourth Street address. Turners Falls. Arrested [redacted] Charged with assault and battery, domestic.

6:24 p.m. Officer wanted at a Third Street address, Turners Falls. Peace restored.

Name that Truck!

BY TRACY ROGERS

GILL - Every truck worth its wheels needs a name, right? This November, Gill's highway department will receive its brand new single-axle, six-wheel International dump truck, with plow and sander. The town needs help giving it a name, and the Friends of Gill stepped up to the plate.

The Friends are sponsoring a Name the Truck contest. The person responsible for submitting the name chosen as the best by the panel of judges

- Gill's selectboard - will win a \$50 gift certificate to a business of his or her choice located in the town of Gill. The chosen name will be painted on the truck, along with "Town of Gill" and the town's seal.

Entry forms for the Name the Truck contest are available at the town hall, or online at www.gillmass.org. Deadline for entries is October 22nd at 5:00 p.m. The contest is open to Gill residents only, of any age. Go to www.gillmass.org for complete details.

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Patriots' Winning Streak Continues Brady out for Season with Knee Injury

Patriots 17 - Kansas City Chiefs 10

BY MATT ROBINSON

FOXBORO - You had to be there. Gillette stadium. Hushed murmurs from the crowd. "Is that Brady?" Another voice, a few rows back, "I think Brady's down."

We watched from half a field away as a group of trainers gathered around an injured Patriot. Then word came from a fan with headsets. "It's either his knee or his ankle. It doesn't look good."

Indeed, the news wasn't good. The Patriots' star quarterback, Tom Brady, did not return from the locker room. Not after the quarter, not by the half, not by the end of the game. Gradually, the fans realized that for better or worse the New England Patriots and the entire power structure of the NFL had changed completely in the first thirteen minutes of the



Tom Brady is helped off the field with a torn ligament in his knee. He will not play for the rest of the season.

first game of the season. Hit by Chiefs' safety Bernard Pollard with 7:38 remaining in the first quarter, Brady injured his ACL (a knee ligament).

And by the end of the game, we knew he was gone for the season.

So where are we now? All those questions we've been asking since January are moot. "Could the Patriots bounce back from a heartbreaking loss in the Super Bowl?" "How long could their incredible regular season winning streak continue?" And of course, "What are their chances of winning the Super Bowl in '09?"

Now, there is only one very painful question left in the hearts and minds of Patriot's fans. "What are we going to do now?"

Brady, the highly successful "franchise" quarterback, who had started in more than 100 games, will not return at all, not this year anyway. At the helm now? Matt Cassel.

Cassel did all right on Sunday. He didn't lose the game. That's the most important thing. He threw for over 150 yards, and completed more than 70% of his passes, including a touchdown.

Even though Tom Brady will not return this season, the Patriots are still one of the best teams in the league. They're the AFC champions. They're riding an unprecedented three year, regular season winning streak. And most importantly, they want to prove to the world that they can win the Super Bowl with or without Tom Brady. Now they'll have to try.

PARK from page 1

included in the sale) and his changing plans for the future use of the site prompted him to advance an offer to renegotiate the lease with a \$300 per month lease fee.

But he made it plain that the way people are using the skate park was part of the problem, for him, and may push him in the direction of not renewing the lease at all. DeChristopher mentioned trash thrown over the fence into his stonemasonry storage yard, trash and graffiti tags strewn about the park itself, and a tendency on the part of skaters and BMXers to climb the newly installed chain link fence, rather than using the front gates, all detracting from his view of the skatepark as a good neighbor.

"On the other hand," DeChristopher said, "it's been really used, and they're loving it."

This seems true from interviews with park users on Wednesday, on the same afternoon DeChristopher put the For Sale sign up in front of Chick's and prepared to move his sculpture studio back to the former Williams Garage on Second Street.

Morgan MacConnell, a sophomore at Turners Falls High School, who just moved to town two years ago from Valdiz, AK, said he used to skate on the Avenue when he first came to town, back in the day when the skatepark was still locked.

"A couple of people yelled at me, 'Don't skate here!'" MacConnell said he just walked away from those encounters. But he recalled the skate park in Valdiz.

"It was just like the one in

Turners Falls, until some big sponsors helped out. Then they got all steel equipment and ramps..."

MacConnell became a regular at the Turners Falls skate park once it re-opened this spring. He rates it, "Pretty good. A lot of people come here and skate and ride BMX bikes. Kids on scooters. Once in a while, I'll see one person rollerblading here."

He said among the people who use the park, you see "some adults, you see teenagers and little kids."

As to the news that the park might soon be closing, MacConnell said, "I'm a little bummed out about it. The Greenfield skate park is a little bit away, if you want to walk there."

MacConnell estimated "about 20 people a day," use the TF park; "more on the weekends."

Malik Baker-Gore, 8, a Sheffield student, said he had



Skateboarder Morgan MacConnell said he was "a little bummed out" to hear the skate park might be closing

just started using the skate park on Tuesday. "I went to Unity Park when I was little," he allowed, "and I saw this and I decided to try it out." He circled the park in the summer sunshine on his BMX racer.

"It's a really good place for skateboarders, biking and scooters. I started with scooters here," he said offhandedly.

On the bench, Ruth Nervig, the Americorp worker at the Brick House who has been heading up efforts to renovate and revitalize the skate park over the last year, invited Malik's mother, Clarice Rivera to a community discussion about the fate of the skate park

see PARK pg 16

STILL ROOTIN' FOR YAZ

PHOTO CREDIT UNKNOWN

Famed former Red Sox left fielder Carl Yastrzemski is recovering at home from his August triple bypass surgery in Boston. Shown here in a vintage 1966 autographed photo with Montague's own Walt Kostanski and his sons Jay (left) and Rick. "We're still rooting for ya', Yaz!"

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JESSICA HARMON ILLUSTRATION

BY FRED CICETTI

LEONIA, NJ - Q. Can you get Lyme disease in Hawaii?

It's possible, but the odds are against it. The federal government's Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) hasn't reported a case of Lyme disease in Hawaii since 1996.

The CDC has identified the Northeast, the upper Midwest and the West Coast as the places you're most likely to get Lyme disease. However, Lyme disease is found in many parts of the United States, Europe, Asia and Australia. You should check

THE HEALTHY GEEZER: Lyme Disease in Hawaii?

with the health departments in your area.

Lyme disease is caused by bacteria spread by bites primarily from deer ticks, which are brown and often no bigger than a pinhead. The disease was named for the Connecticut town where it was first recognized in 1975.

Lyme disease can cause fever, headaches, fatigue, joint pain, sore muscles, stiff neck and a skin rash that usually begins where the tick dug in. The rash may start out as a small red spot that can get bigger. A ring within the spot can fade and create a "bull's eye." Some people with Lyme disease get many red spots.

If you don't treat Lyme disease, it can spread to the heart, joints and the nervous system.

Patients with late Lyme disease can suffer permanent damage. If Lyme disease spreads to the heart, the person may feel an irregular or slow heartbeat. The disease is rarely fatal.

Lyme disease is treated with antibiotics. In most cases of early Lyme disease, two to four weeks of oral antibiotics kill the bacteria. If the disease has progressed, your doctor may recommend an intravenous antibiotic for two to four weeks. This IV treatment is usually effective, although it may take some time to recover.

Lyme disease is often misdiagnosed. The disease's symptoms are shared with other conditions such as viral infections, joint disorders, muscle pain (fibromyalgia), chronic fatigue syndrome and depression.

There is no human vaccine for Lyme disease available. There was a vaccine approved by the Food and Drug Administration in 1998. It was pulled from the market in 2002.

The CDC reports that there are more than 20,000 cases of Lyme disease each year. Most cases are reported in the summer when people are outdoors and ticks are most active.

Only a minority of deer tick bites lead to Lyme disease. The longer the tick remains attached to your skin, the greater your risk of contracting the disease. You aren't likely to get Lyme disease if the tick has been attached to your skin for less than 48 hours.

To remove a tick, use fine-tipped tweezers. Grab the tick as close to your skin as possible. Pull in a steady upward motion until the tick comes out. Then

apply an antiseptic to the bite area and wash your hands with soap and water. Save the tick for possible identification by a doctor.

The best method of fighting Lyme disease is to prevent tick bites. The following are some recommendations:

- When you go into the woods, wear light-colored pants and long-sleeve shirts, shoes (no sandals) and a hat. Tuck pant legs into socks or shoes, and tuck shirts into pants. Light-colored garments are better for locating ticks.

- Stay on trails and avoid walking through low bushes and long grass.

- After you spend time outdoors, check for ticks. Then wash and dry clothing at high temperatures.

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

THE GARDENER'S COMPANION

Tomatoes Crack under Excess Rain

BY LESLIE BROWN

MONTAGUE CITY - This season's tomato crop has been disappointing: reduced numbers of fruit and many lost to severe cracking.

The tomato square began with ten sturdy, full-foliaged plants of five varieties: Gardeners' Delight, a cherry; Pineapple, a bi-colored fruit; Abe Lincoln, a highly touted older variety; Red Zebra, a variant on its green cousin; and Brandywine, a sizable, tasty heirloom.

These beauties had been pampered in my sunroom since late winter, fed with seaweed emulsion, and transplanted three times. Clearly, there was nothing errant in their upbringing. On a mild and cloudy day in late May they were set into the warm garden soil and given a cage for support.

Throughout the warm and sunny month of June, I fed, watered and weeded them. Then in July, the monsoons

came. Depending on which weather program you favor, we had some 10-12 inches of rain that month. And not in the form of gentle showers. Instead we experienced heat and humidity broken by brief deluges of intense watering.

Therein lies the problem. Tomatoes love water in regular doses when they need it. Given over watering, their roots continue to absorb moisture with the eventual result of cracked and spoiling fruit. Interestingly enough, even after the monsoons desisted, many of my tomatoes continued to crack.

Cracking at the stem end is normal in some varieties like Brandywine. It is not a hybridized and over-developed plant. It is prized for the size and intense flavor of its fruit. No one who chooses to grow it complains about the "cat-face" the mature fruit acquires. This summer's cracking is different and totally weather related.

Interestingly enough, some

varieties have borne up better than others. A little research revealed that tomatoes are not created equal in the strength of their skins. Some varieties have greater epidermal elasticity and can thus survive overly enthusiastic watering.

The Red Zebra is a good case in point. They do have a fairly tough skin, but this has proven to be a good trait this summer as only a few of these fruits have succumbed to cracking. Brandywine also has continued to provide large, tasty fruit with no further cracking than the expected "whiskers" at the stem end.

While the cherry tomatoes have produced in great numbers and continue to do so, they have succumbed to cracking in a big way. In order to continue to enjoy them, I have had to harvest them before they are quite ripe and then use them in a cooked form before the cracks become moldy. Nonetheless, they have been good compan-



MARY AZARIAN WOODBLOCK

ions for my neighbor's overzealous zucchinis and, with the addition of plenty of garlic have provided a tasty addition to many meals.

By about mid-summer the woodchuck and I reached an accommodation. He agreed that the continued application of ammoniated rags was an appetite reducer and further that it wasn't all that far to my neighbor's garden. He left well trimmed winter squash plants and kale to me. I took this to mean it was time to try a last row of green beans.

They came up thriftily and in good number in the row. Alas, the departing woodchuck neglected to pass the word along to his cousin in crime, the rabbit. Thus the foreshortened row of four healthy bean plants.

Happily the over trimmed squash, once left to its business, has produced not only a fine crop of blossoms, but also some quickly developing Butter bush fruits.

The best crops of this summer are by far the eggplants, the sweet peppers, the leeks, the basil and the kale. Of course, the eggplant and peppers will need to be harvested before the late summer nights become cold, and so will the basil. The leeks can be left a little longer to sweeten, and the kale can be harvested into the late fall season.

If you've been luckier than I with your tomatoes and want a simple way to preserve some, slice unblemished fruit thickly or if small freeze whole and use later in tomato sauce or any other cooked dish. They will not hold their shape during freezing, but will add good flavor to winter cooking.

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JEP'S PLACE Part LXXXIX

Ready to Eat Chicken

BY JOSEPH A. PARZYCH GILL -- The next morning, we went back home after Mrs. Studer fed us breakfast. Where the barn once stood, there was a big empty space with mounds of smoldering gray ashes surrounded by fine white ashes that lay like drifted snow. Some darker mounds were hens that had been in the barn. They stunk of burning feathers.

There wasn't a trace of the girls' despised high button shoes. Our homemade tractor, built from a Reo truck, had been parked in the barn. The tires were gone and the scorched metal sagged like chocolate in the summer sun. Aluminum parts had liquefied into strange

shapes. I found one in the shape of a dinosaur.

A couple of my schoolmates came over to gawk at the ruins and what was left of the Reo. They made jokes about the smoldering hens being all cooked and ready to eat. I knew they were trying to cheer me up. I tried to laugh, but it didn't seem funny.

The cows gathered next to the fence, looking at their former home as though they were wondering what was going to happen next. I wondered, too.

Ma came out to tell us that Pa had had a bad heart attack and was in the hospital. Her eyes had dark circles. She seemed to be walking around in a daze, unable to accept that the barn was reduced to smoldering ashes, the

house was in disarray, Pa was in the hospital, we had no money, and we were without a breadwinner. I knew that life would never be the same again.

Ma told the boys that the cow had kicked over the lantern and set the barn on fire. That didn't sound right. I'd fooled around with lanterns and found that even if I held one upside down, they'd still stay lit and just smoke a little. Besides, no one could find the remains of the lantern in the ruins. I suspected they had carried a lamp into the barn and the heat from the lamp chimney ignited hay hanging down from cracks in the haymow floor. Once ignited, there was no stopping the fire.

I felt like too much had happened all at once and I had to get away. When the boys asked me to come to their farm to visit, I asked Ma for permission to go. I thought going there would get my mind off of everything that had happened. But my brain seemed locked on the events of the fire.

When I asked if I could go visit the boys, Ma offered to make me a lunch to take along. She began making chicken sandwiches, but had trouble cutting the meat off the bones. So she put a chunk of carcass, bones and all between two slices of bread.

"You can eat the meat off the bones," she said.

When we got to the boys' house, I stayed outside to eat my lunch. It didn't take a genius to figure out their father didn't like me, especially when other visiting kids were invited in to eat, and I got left outside.

"You make my father nervous, so you have to stay outside," one of them explained. "Crows, is what he calls you people. He says he doesn't like Polaks because you sound like crows when you talk. He says you people oughtn't talk Polish, you should oughta' talk American."

As I sat on the lawn ready to tackle my chicken sandwich, the younger boy came back out to call me into the house. At first, I thought his father wasn't at home. He usually just glowered at me. But there at the kitchen table, he sat with a little smile on his face. This was the first time I'd ever seen him smile. I figured maybe he felt sorry for me because of the fire and Pa being so sick in the hospital with a heart attack. He had, after all, come to help fight the fire. It looked like he'd had a change of heart and we could be friends. They whole family sat smiling and watching. No one was eating, though their plates were full.

"Go ahead and eat your lunch."

I took out the huge sandwich, not knowing what to do. I didn't want to open the sandwich and eat the chicken with my fingers as I had planned to do, knowing it was not polite to eat with your fingers. I opened my mouth wide. All eyes were on me. The chunk of chicken carcass between the two pieces of bread made it way too big to eat like a sandwich.

They burst out laughing. They laughed and laughed. I'd never seen their father laugh before. He was really enjoying himself.

"Take the sandwich apart and eat the chicken and bread separately," the mother said. She was no longer smiling.

I knew, then, they had lured me inside to have a good laugh at my expense. My mouth stayed dry while I tried to eat. The boys and their father kept looking at me and snickering. After the razzing about the chicken sandwich, I didn't feel like playing and went along home. They never invited me inside to eat again, nor did I ever want them to, though it did make me bitter to see other playmates invited in for lunch, and not just to be made a laughing stock.

- Continued next issue

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COORDINATOR SOUGHT - Commonwealth Corps Opportunity: North Quabbin Timebank Coordinator. We are hiring a coordinator of the North Quabbin Timebank to make it a meaningful part of our regional economy and community. The NQ Timebank serves the 9 towns of the North Quabbin and is a free

web-based community currency enabling members to exchange services without the use of cash. We currently have 41 members and are inspired by the successes of the Portland, Maine Time Bank which has 700 members who exchanged 20,000 hours of services last year! To see a short video about our Time Bank: www.nqtimebank.org. Compensation will start at \$10,000 for a total of 1600 hours of service over the year, with a \$2000 bonus at completion. There is a generous health insurance benefit. Questions and letters of interest, contact Karen Werner: kwerner@montaguema.net

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HIGHLIGHTS FROM THE WENDELL POLICE LOG
B&E at Country Store
 July 24th
 Diamond Farm reported over 250 turkeys killed by coyotes last night.
 July 25th
 Motorcycle accident on Mormon Hollow Road. Minor injuries.
 August 1st
 5:50 a.m. Maple Valley School reported a runaway student.
 August 8th
 Farley Road resident reported three bags of trash left beside his property.
 August 4th
 2:50 a.m. alarm at Wendell Country Store. Breaking and entering occurred, two individuals seen running from scene.
 August 14th
 6:00 p.m. alarms at Maple Valley School due to computer problem. Waited for Simplex to reset alarms.
 September 6th
 Welfare check requested on Locke Hill Road resident.


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ARTS & ENTERTAINMENT



JACK COUGHUN ILLUSTRATION

FRIDAY, SEPTEMBER 12th
At the Great Falls Discovery Center: **Friends Coffeehouse, Songwriting Contest Finals.** Best songs of the 65 submitted to the songwriting contest initiated by the Connecticut River Watershed Council, performed in this special "Finals Concert". Judges panel will select the final contest winners! 7 - 9 p.m. Suggested donation \$6 - \$12 (children free). Info. call 863-3221 x3.



Yarn performs at the Rt. 63 Roadhouse, Millers Falls on Saturday, September 13th, 7 p.m. "These Brooklyn cowboys sound like they really believe in their songs and their picking is assured and bracing, especially Andrew Hendryx on mandolin." - Sing Out! Magazine

Montague Senior Center and Comcast present an information session at Montague Senior Center 12:30 p.m. All are welcome to this free session, but sign ups are required at 863-9357. On February 17, 2009 local television stations will begin broadcasting a digital signal. TVs without converter boxes will no longer pick up any signal.

Deja Brew, Wendell: **Mother Turtle**, soul rock, 9 to 11 p.m.

Rt. 63 Roadhouse, Millers Falls: **Everspeck**, rock & roll covers, 9:30 p.m.

FRIDAY & SATURDAY, SEPTEMBER 12th & 13th
Pothole Pictures, Shelburne Falls: **Shall We Dance.** Fred and Ginger in a musical drama directed by Mark Sandrich, 1937. 7:30 p.m. with music before the movie at 7 p.m.

SATURDAY, SEPTEMBER 13th
At The Great Falls Discovery Center, Turners Falls: **Monarch Mania!** - Explore the life cycle and migration of the Monarch Butterfly, 1 - 3 p.m. Join educator Rachel Roberts and Ranger Sue Cloutier for an afternoon learning about Monarch butterflies & tag and release Monarch butterflies into the wild. No pre-registration required, free for families with young children. Info www.greatfallsma.org.

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Hallmark Institute of Photography public reception for Andarge Asfaw, *Ethiopia from the Heart* & Lynn Goldsmith, *Rock & Roll*. Both from 1 to 5 p.m. Artist Talk in the auditorium at Hallmark Institute of Photography, 27 Industrial Boulevard, Turners Falls, 7:30 p.m.

6th Annual John Putnam Fiddlers' Reunion & Sunflower Contest. At the Energy Park, Miles St., Greenfield. Begins at noon. Info. 774-6051 x 14

Conference at the Great Falls Discovery Center, Turners Falls: **Working Woodlands & Land Trusts: Responsible Forest Management as a Conservation Strategy for Massachusetts.** Info (413) 397-8800 or emily@mass-woodlands.coop.

At The Bookmill, Montague Center: Autonomous Battleship Collective presents **Joe McPhee / Paul Flaherty / Chris Corsano** trio with special guest **Josh Burkett**. Creative jazz. Arrive early for couches, armchairs, and to browse the books. Shows begin around 8 p.m., \$5-10.

Wendell Full Moon Coffeehouse, Wendell Center: **Compton Maddux and The Dirt Simple Band**. Open Mic begins at 7:30p.m., feature at 8 p.m. Admission is \$6 - \$12/ kids 6-12 \$2; under 6 free. Partial proceeds to benefit the Wendell Full Moon Coffeehouse.

Deja Brew, Wendell: **Richard Chase Group**, acoustic folk/singer songwriter, 9 to 11 p.m.

Rt. 63 Roadhouse, Millers Falls: **Drunk Stuntmen & YARN.**, 7 p.m.

The Rendezvous, Turners Falls: **Stephen Cahill Art Opening**, music by **Wood Green Empire**. 9:30 p.m., \$3 cover.

SUNDAY, SEPTEMBER 14th
Rt. 63 Roadhouse, Millers Falls: **Second Sunday Comedy show.** Three Comics for \$5, 8:30 p.m.

Deja Brew, Wendell: **Steve Crow, Peter Kim & Joe Fitzpatrick**, warped Americana, 7:30 - 10 p.m.

At The Rendezvous, Turners Falls: **TNT Karaoke**, 8 p.m., free.

MONDAY, SEPTEMBER 15th
Evening Sing-A-Long at the Montague Center Library, 6:30 p.m. Linda Hickman, plays guitar and banjo and performs a variety of children's music. Info, call the Carnegie Library 863-3214 during the week, or Montague Center Library, 367-2852, Mon. eve.

TUESDAY, SEPTEMBER 16th
Gallery Talks by the Art Faculty of Greenfield Community College. Series of informal talks give an opportunity to meet the artists and hear from them their thoughts and ideas behind their art practice. The talks are open to the public and take place in South Gallery of GCC from noon to 1 p.m. Tuesday, September 16th - Joan O'Beime, continues 9/18 with Erik Schubert, 9/23 Jen Simms.



Photography of Tom Young on display with Fall Faculty Art Exhibit at Greenfield Community College in the South Gallery. See 9/16 listing for Gallery Talks by faculty artists.

Undergrowth Farm presents, **Un Poquito de Tanto Verdad/A Little Bit of So Much Truth**, a documentary film. The unprecedented media phenomenon that emerged when tens of thousands of school teachers, housewives, indigenous communities, health workers, farmers, and students took 14 radio stations and one TV station into their own hands, using them to organize, mobilize, & ultimately defend their grassroots struggle for social, cultural, & economic justice. 90 min. At the Brickhouse, 24 3rd St. Turners Falls, 7 p.m. Free. Refreshments.

WEDNESDAY, SEPTEMBER 17th
At the Discovery Center, Turners Falls: **Science and Nature Brown Bags**, bring your lunch to the Great Hall for a 30-minute presentation on science or nature. Continues 9/24 from 12:10 to 12:45 p.m. Free.

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

Practically Raw! Nutrition Talk with holistic clinical nutritionist Diana Allen, MS, CNS. Learn practical ways to include more delicious, enzyme-rich, alkalizing raw foods in your daily diet. Green Fields Market upstairs meeting room, 6:30 p.m.

Info. (413) 205-6971; or nutrition4evolution@earthlink.net.

The Rendezvous, Turners Falls: **Quimastah Chad's Quignite Quiz!** 8 p.m. Test your trivia skills, win prizes!

THURSDAY, SEPTEMBER 18th
At The Rendezvous, Turners Falls: **Rub Wrongways Records Indie Pop Caravan of Stars: School for the Dead, The Fawns, Sitting Next to Brian Jason Bourgeois.**

FRIDAY, SEPTEMBER 19th
The Rendezvous, Turners Falls: **Rusty Bell**, \$3 two sets!

At The Bookmill, Montague Center: **Alex Diaz**. Rolling thunder on a freight train boogie across the astral plane! Begins around 8 p.m. \$5-10

SATURDAY, SEPTEMBER 20TH
Montague Grange, Montague Center: **Contra Dance**, 4 to 10 p.m. Gender-role-free contra dance. Open to all.

Fourth Annual Northfield Summer Arts Fest, 10 a.m. - 4 p.m. On the grounds of Green Trees Gallery, 105 Main Street, Northfield. Art, food booth, bands, children's activities.

At The Discovery Center, Turners Falls: **Discovery Center Bird Club.** Join the BIRD CLUB, watch and learn all about birds by playing games, reading books, and doing science and art activities. Open to everyone, but geared towards school-aged children (young with chaperone). Each meeting builds on learning from previous months, so commitment to the club is recommended but not required. Info. (413) 863-3221. Free. 10 a.m.

At The Discovery Center: **Trek to Dinosaur Cove.** Join science history buff Sarah Doyle and geologist Steve Winters for a cultural and geological history tour of Turners Falls and Barton Cove area dinosaur fossils. Carpool to Barton Cove for a short hike to a historic fossil-hunting quarry. Free, register at 863-3221 www.greatfallsma.org.

SATURDAY & SUNDAY, SEPTEMBER 20th & 21st
The North Quabbin Garlic and Arts Festival. Forster's Farm, Orange. www.garlicandarts.org

FRIDAY, SEPTEMBER 26th
The Rendezvous, Turners Falls: **Death Vesswl with Micah Blue Smaldone**, 9 p.m. Tickets \$8 in advance at the bar, \$10 by phone and at the door.

SATURDAY, OCTOBER 4th
12th Annual Source to Sea Cleanup. Dozens of groups return for 4-state effort help out on the Connecticut River Watershed Council's Cleanup. New and returning volunteers are asked to register with CRWC by **Friday, September 5.**

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- DAILY 6:45 9:15
- FRI, SAT, SUN 12:15 3:15
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- BRIDESHEAD REVISITED
- DAILY 7:00 9:30 DTS sound
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PARK from page 12

at the Brick House on Wednesday, September 17th at 7:00 p.m.

"We like walking over here," Rivera told her. "We don't want to truck all the way over to Greenfield. We want Turners to be cool too."

Rivera said her son gets intimidated by the bigger kids at the Greenfield park. "He's less apt to ride around there," she said.

She suggested to Nervig that some young people who receive

added Matt Spring, 11 years old, who moved to 3rd Street a month or two ago from Brockton, and now attends 6th grade at the Great Falls Middle School.

"They didn't even have a skate park in Brockton," Spring said.

He said it was a toss up for him whether he would prefer to play video games or go to the park. He said sometimes his mother tells him to go outside to play, so he comes here.

"I always think of it as I'm annoying her," he said matter of

Three pals named Dustin Underwood, Jordan Noetzel, and Josh Garbacik hung out on an idle ramp, talking about the park.

"It's a good place to start biking if you're just learning," said Underwood.

"It's a fun place to hang around in," Noetzel agreed. He rides a scooter; Underwood mostly rides a BMX.



Dustin Underwood, 11, Josh Garbacik, 12, and Jordan Noetzel, 12, say the Greenfield Skate Park has more ramps, "but we're used to this one."



Danny Rivera

court sentences of community service might go for the idea of policing or picking up the skate park. "It would be an ideal task for them," she thought.

Danny Rivera (no relation) said he has been coming to the skate park regularly for the last year, usually to ride his Tony Hawk BMX. Rivera, a 14-year-old freshman at TFHS, said he usually hangs at the park with four or five of his friends.

"My friends skate, and I bike," Danny Rivera said. "I like it because I can just come down here and ride for a little bit and forget about everything."

"Take your mind off life,"

factly. "I have to get out of her way for a minute. I don't really need the exercise."

Spring has a sleek new Malibu Beach Racer scooter, which he puts through its paces at the park.

Danny Rivera moved to Turners from Queens six years ago, and says he's glad he did. "There's a lot of music, actually," in Turners, the tall, open-faced lad confided. "If I didn't move here I probably wouldn't play the guitar."

He said a group of friends just picked up a band called Everyday Heroes, which "should be up and running soon, practicing at the Brick House."

If the park closes, "It will ruin a good spot to skate," Garbacik said.

Nervig said she had talked with town administrator Frank Abbondanzio about the problem facing the skate park, and hoped to have further discussion with DeChristopher next week before the community meeting.

Selectboard member Patricia Pruitt, who walks past the

park from her Prospect Street home to town hall regularly, said, "I've noticed how busy it is."

She said no blame should attach to the landlord for looking after his own interests after being so generous with the space for years. "We've been fortunate that he's let us use it for all this time, and we're grateful for his generosity."

She added, "I do appreciate the work that's been done by the Brick House to get it back in service." And she said, "I don't want to see the skate park go away."

She recommended the interested parties approach the selectboard with the problem, to see if there is some way the town can be of help.

The skate park was organized ten years ago, in the aftermath of the drowning death of local teens (and avid skateboarders) Chris Gallagher and Winter Clark, who lost their lives one summer day at the Rock Dam. Area teens organized and approached the selectboard with the idea of establishing a skate park. Chick's

Garage offered use of the rear lot in return for payment of the land taxes on the site. Businesses like Couture Brothers, Hassay Savage, Heat Fab, Hillside Plastics, Rugg Lumber, Warner Brothers, Yankee Environmental Systems, and many others joined with the Montague Elks and the Turners Falls Firemans Relief to bring together donated materials and services to build the park, with the active help of building inspector David Jensen and his son Enoch, and others

tioned Community Action and the Brick House as likely partners in such an effort.

"When it got started, it was parents of the kids who were skaters that oversaw the park," Nervig said. "But when their kids age out, those parents drop out. If we had an organization, that would be more of a sustainable process."

The Brick House has been supportive of the Turners Falls skate park over the years, acting as a conduit of funds and an organizer of work bees to repair



DETMOLD PHOTOS

Morgan MacConnell and Kelly Pease, who said she would like to see more girls using boards at the park.

too numerous to mention. The teens organized large benefit concerts over the years to raise thousands of dollars for the project, and have kept up that tradition in recent years.

Nervig said she thought it would be good if more than one local organization banded together to oversee the skate park, whether it remained at its current location or had to find a new site in town. She men-

the park and resurface the ramps. The Brick House and the town of Montague have separate funds set aside for improvements to the skate park, with a balance of more than \$1000, Nervig said. She said she plans to buy more sheet metal to install on the ramps over the weekend.

"If it's going to go away, at least they'll have a great last two months."

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