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The Montague Reporter

YEAR 8 - NO. 43

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50¢

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THE VOICE OF THE VILLAGES

SEPTEMBER 2, 2010

Labor Day in Turners Falls Second Franklin State Rep Race



Tom Tyler operates a computerized SMK horizontal boring machine, boring holes into cast iron plate at the Montague Machine Co.

BY JOSEPH A. PARZYCH - Once one of the largest employers in town, Montague Machine experienced a gradual decline over the last few decades. But this Labor Day, business, as they say, is picking up.

The manufacture of giant pulp wood grinders, located on the corner of M Street and Rastallis has had a resurgence this summer. Lathes and milling machines in the shop are humming again. Chips fly or curl off in spirals, arc welders flash and sizzle, as huge pieces of cast iron and steel begin to take shape. Work orders have increased, and the shop will soon put on a second shift, according to shop foreman Mike Beaugard.

Not counting salesmen, sixteen employees work at the plant now, down from the heyday of about 125. The shop is unionized under the International Association of Machinists and Aerospace Workers.

Machinist Mike Magnant has been working at the shop for 35 years, and he's seen a lot of changes. "We have four computerized machines: one milling machine, two lathes and a horizontal boring mill. They sent me to Chicago to learn computers."

Magnant agreed, "Work is picking up. We're building a [pulp] grinder now."

Tom Tyler, who has worked at Montague Machine for 36 years, operates a computerized SMK horizontal boring mill. "They sent someone from the factory to train me," Tyler said. "It's mostly pushing buttons." He laughed, adding, "The right buttons."

Pulp grinders were the mainstay almost from the start in 1908 when International Paper Company bought the Turners Falls Machine Company, whose chief product had been the Crocker Hydraulic Turbine. The Turners Falls Machine shop was

see LABOR DAY pg 8



Steve Adam



Denise Andrews



Lee Chauvette

Six Candidates Debate



Genevieve Fraser



David Roulston



Roxann Wedegartner

BY DAVID DETMOLD GREENFIELD - Only Steve Adam (R), among the six candidates for Second Franklin District state representative who met for their first debate on Wednesday, August 25th at Greenfield Community College's downtown center, said he supported the November ballot referendum to cut the state sales tax from 6.25% to 3%.

Explaining how he would make up for the expected loss of \$2.5 billion in revenue (in a state budget of about \$29 billion) that would result from a sudden reduction of 52% of sales tax receipts, Adam, the chair of the Orange selectboard and a quality manager for Nypro, Inc., a plastics manufacturer based in

Clinton, said, "I believe we have a lot of waste in government."

Independent candidate Genevieve Fraser, an online professor who lives in Orange, directed fire at Adam over this remark in the only instance in the hour and a half debate where one candidate took issue with another candidate's remarks.

Fraser, who dropped out of the race in July due to hypersensitivity to sunlight brought on as a side effect of medication she is taking for arthritis, announced she was reentering the race the day before the debate, thanks to a wide brimmed hat and the shorter campaigning days of fall.

Fraser said, "I trusted Steve when he said we needed a 2½ override," in Orange, where vot-

ers approved \$544,000 in additional property taxes in June to support the budgets of the library, transfer station, and council on aging, and to keep street lights on.

"I worked hard to support that override," added Fraser, who was cut off by the timekeeper before she could press her attack on Adam.

She called the prospect of cutting the state sales tax by more than half "an absolute disaster for the state," a position which the other four candidates, all Democrats, agreed with.

But even though Adam talked of "the huge economic disaster," Massachusetts is now in the throes of grappling with, "in

see DEBATE pg 10

Preparations Gather Speed for Soapbox Derby



Chelsea and Alan Curtis at work on "Chelsea's Cruiser" to be entered in the youth competition of the Montague Soapbox Derby.

BY ANNE HARDING MONTAGUE - There was a full house at Joe Landry's workshop on Sunday, August 29th, as families worked on their Soapbox Racers in preparation for the September 19th race.

Landry opened his workshop and made his tools and a vast collection of old bicycles available to anyone who wanted to build a cart. He also offered invaluable design and construction advice.

It was a scene of old fashioned Yankee ingenuity with a din of hammering, drilling, cutting, and growing excitement as the carts took shape.

PJ, Laila and Arthur Evans arrived early to pick out bike parts in hopes of finishing two carts in time for the race. By the time they left at the end of the day, one was almost complete.

Alan and Chelsea Curtis were hard at work on Team Love Bug's entry - the low riding creation they call "Chelsea's Cruiser," since she's the driver.

Using tires from hand trucks, parts from a fifth wheel for a steering mechanism and a hockey puck for braking, the cart was almost ready for painting by the end of the day.

Alan Curtis read an early article about the race and thought it would be a great father - daughter activity. He did some online investigation, and the two have been working on their prototype model for the 2010 race ever since. They hope to enter two carts next year.

Neighbor Bob Semaski stopped by to visit with a cart he made over the winter with his grandsons Joshua and John. The boys are too young to compete this year, but the cart was there for test drives and design inspiration.

Team StewZew stopped by to scavenge bicycle parts needed to complete their cart - Lucky #18 - the Zoom Car. Self-confessed junk collectors and tinkers John and Greg Stewart said race

organizer Mik Muller had coerced them into entering the race, but they seemed to be having a great time building their cart nonetheless. Plans for their vehicle continue to evolve, but it promises to be a sleek machine driven by the senior member of the team.

Muller was also on hand, working with daughter Ivy to complete her cart and chat with several other visitors who stopped by for advice, ideas and inspiration.

Muller said, "This first year will be legendary. Everyone will have a great time, and we'll all be talking about it till next year - which cars to beat, which drivers to watch. Twelve people will take home trophy cups. We hope to see as many racers from Montague out there as possible. Montague, don't let us down!"

For more information about the race call 413-863-6459 or visit the website www.montague-soapboxraces.com.

PET OF THE WEEK

Let Me Entertain You!



Courtney

My name is Courtney and I'm a two-year old female longhaired cat in need of a good home. My people just left me outside the shelter, so it was a lucky thing that the staff found me and brought me in, otherwise I just don't know what would have happened to me. I'm a sweet and gentle girl with the softest fur in subtle shades of gray and tan. I have cute, white mitten paws and glowing golden eyes. I love to play with stuffed mice and jingle balls and I adore treats. I would love to settle down in a forever home where I could entertain you with my great cat games and be there to relax you at the end of the day with my soothing, soft purr. To find out more about adopting me, please contact the Dakin Pioneer Valley Humane Society at 413-548-9898 or via email: info@dpvhs.org.

MONTAGUE LIBRARY NEWS

Rainforest Animal Show!



SHELIA JOHNSON PHOTO

TURNERS FALLS - A fruit loving kinkajou found Genylne Fiske - White's shampoo fragrance very interesting at the Rainforest Live Animal Show on Friday, August 6th, at the Carnegie Library. Richard Roth of Creature Teachers from Littleton also brought a scarlet macaw, a small toucan, a coatimundi, a tarantula, a red eyed tree frog, a cane toad and a red tailed boa. Over 110 people attended the show on the library lawn.

SLATE LIBRARY NEWS

Opening Tuesdays

September is upon us, and with it come changes at the Slate Library. As of September 7th, the Slate Library will no longer be open on Mondays. Instead, the library will be open on Tuesdays from 2 - 6 p.m. Please come visit and see our new audio book collections. We have many new titles in both the adult and juvenile sections.

The Slate Library is also getting ready for an exciting fall story hour program. Once again story hour will be held on Friday mornings at 10 a.m. The fall program begins on September 24th and continues through the academic year. Each week will offer a theme, snack and art project, as well as good company. Please join us on the cozy rug!

For more information, call 863-2591.

ERVING LIBRARY NEWS

Reading Club for 8 - 12 Year Olds

The Erving Library will be forming a Reading Club for 8 to 12 year olds. Starting in September, Raold Dahl's birth month, participants will be asked to read one of his books (Charlie and the Chocolate Factory, BFG, James and the Giant Peach). The second meeting in October will be a discussion of Theodore Boone, John Grisham's first book for children. Interested students should contact the library by emailing: ervinglibrary@netscape.net.

Photos from EPLs summer reading programs are now post-

ed on facebook. Search Erving Public Library at <http://www.facebook.com> and join as a fan.

Again, area librarians are planning a county-wide reading theme for the winter months. More information will be available in 2011.

Performers, artists, crafters, travelers, people who want to share their talents or expertise, should contact the Library Director at ervinglibrary@netscape.net. Funding for some programs will be available through the Erving Cultural Council.



JOSEPH A. PARZYCH PHOTO

The SPS Kobelco operator took down the cast iron railings, the supporting steel and concrete curb on the Gill side of the Gill-Montague Bridge on Tuesday, and demolished concrete from around the cross beams in preparation for installing a cantilevered deck. The guy walking on the bridge deck needs to tread lightly; there's not much left.

Volunteers!

Volunteers needed to assist FCSWMD with recycling at the Franklin Cty Fair. Free admission to the fair in return for a four hour shift, helping the environment. Find out more, call 413-772-2438.

WENDELL LIBRARY NEWS

Playgroup Resumes

The Wendell Library playgroup with Sylvia Wetherby, for children 0 - 5 will be starting up again next week. Drop-in sessions will be held each Wednesday from 10 - 1130 a.m.

Wetherby said, "The first week we will share caterpillar interest. We will read a book, create caterpillars, and study as only preschoolers can. Please bring your own caterpillars, real or toy. Tent caterpillars and tomato horn worms are welcome only in containers."

This free program is co-sponsored by Community Network for Children and the Wendell Library.

Save the Date



Performance by Paul Richmond, Suzy Polucci and Moonlight Davis at the Shea Theater, Turners Falls. October 1st & 2nd. A benefit for The Montague Reporter!

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The Montague Reporter

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PHONE (413) 863-8666
FAX (413) 863-3050
reporter@montaguema.net
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Advertising and copy deadline is Tuesday at NOON.

This newspaper shall not be liable for errors in advertisements, but will print without charge that part of the advertisement in which an error occurred. The publishers reserve the right to refuse advertising for any reason and to alter copy or graphics to conform to standards of the newspaper, such as they are.

Local Subscription Rates:
\$20 for 6 months

Franklin Home Care Funds Elder Programs

BY ANNA VIADERO
MONTAGUE CITY - Franklin County Home Care (FCHCC) Area Agency on Aging has funded 13 grants to community organizations and agencies totaling \$49,662 for programs to start or resume on October 1st, 2010.

The Citizen's Advisory Board at FCHCC and the board of directors took all grant proposals into careful consideration, receiving

many more requests than funds available. Members of the review committee expressed their gratitude that so many local Councils on Aging and other local agencies are interested in providing much needed services to area elders.

Among the programs funded are the following:

Western MA Legal Services - \$22,000 for the Elder Law Project;

Erving Council on Aging - \$1667 for Home Repair;

Erving Council on Aging - \$990 for Chair Aerobics;

United ARC - \$9000 for Grandparents Parenting

Hospice of Franklin County - \$3889 for a Support Group.

For more information, contact Donna Liebl dliebl@fchcc.org or 413-773-5555 Ext. 2215.

SENIOR CENTER ACTIVITIES - September 2nd to 8th

GILL/MONTAGUE Senior Center, 62 Fifth Street, Turners Falls, is open Monday through Friday from 9:00 a.m. to 2:00 p.m. Congregate meals are served Tuesday through Friday at Noon. Meal reservations must be made a day in advance by 11:00 A.M. Plan ahead: Yoga classes with Jeanne Erlbaum resume on 9/21 and new Tai Chi classes with Marcia Gobeil begin on 9/9. Both classes are supported by a grant from the Executive Office of Elder Affairs. Voluntary donations are accepted. Council on Aging Director is Roberta Potter. For more information, to make meal reservations, or to sign up for programs call 863-9357. Messages can be left on our machine when the center is not open

Monday, Sept. 6th
Senior center Closed

Tuesday, Sept. 7th
9:00 a.m. Walking Group
10:00 a.m. Brown Bag

12:00 p.m. Lunch
12:45 p.m. COA Meeting
1:00 p.m. Canasta
Wednesday, Sept. 8th
9:00 a.m. Foot Clinic by appointment.
10:00 a.m. Senior Aerobics
12:00 p.m. Lunch
12:45 p.m. Bingo
Thursday, Sept. 9th
9:00 a.m. Tai Chi
10:00 a.m. Coffee & Conversation
12:00 p.m. Lunch
1:00 p.m. Pitch
Friday, Sept. 10th
10:00 a.m. Senior Aerobics
10:45 a.m. Chair Exercise
12:00 p.m. Lunch
1:00 p.m. Scrabble

ERVING Senior Center, 18 Pleasant St., Erving (Old Center School, 1st Floor), is open Monday through Friday from 8:30 a.m. to 2:30 p.m. for activities and congregating meals. For info and reservations, call Polly

Kiely, Senior Center Director, at (413) 423-3308. Lunch is daily at 11:30 a.m., with reservations 24 hours in advance. Transportation can be provided for meals, shopping, or medical necessity.

Monday, Sept. 6th
Senior center Closed

Tuesday, Sept. 7th
8:45 a.m. Chair Aerobics
12:30 p.m. Painting

Wednesday, Sept. 8th
8:45 a.m. Line Dancing
12:30 p.m. Bingo

Thursday, Sept. 9th
9:00 a.m. Aerobics

Friday, Sept. 10th
9:00 a.m. Bowling
11:30 a.m. Lunch - Call the center for details.

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

Happy 10th Birthday, Ioy!

MONTAGUE SOAP BOX Races

Sunday, September 19
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JESSICA HARMON ILLUSTRATION

Local Briefs

COMPILED BY DON CLEGG - The Shea Theater, 71 Avenue A, in Turners Falls is the place to be this Saturday, September 4th, at 7:00 p.m. when the Cambridge University (UK) American Tour, in a return visit, will present Shakespeare's "The Tempest". These university students from England will present a free (donations requested) one-performance only event. Reserve your seat by calling 413-863-2281. Doors open at 6:00 p.m.; any unreserved seats may be claimed at that time.

Explore the **Montague Sand Plains** on September 11th, 11:00 a.m.- 1:00 p.m. Learn about the story of fire on the sand plains, and why the landscape is like Cape Cod despite the fact the ocean is miles away. Join Great Falls Discovery staff for an introduction to the fauna, flora, and geology of this amazing and threatened habitat. Bring water, bug repellent, and sun screen. The program is free; however, registration is required. For more information call 413-863-3221 or visit www.greatfallsma.org. Participants will meet at the Great Falls Discovery Center and car-

pool to the starting point. Please arrive no later than 10:30 a.m.

On Saturday, September 11th, 10 to 2 p.m., **Artspace**, 15 Mill Street, in Greenfield will hold a sale of used musical instruments and equipment. Donated and consigned instruments and equipment are being sought for the sale. Proceeds benefit Artspace's financial aid program and "strings for kids". Call 413-772-6811, or email info@franklyarts.com. Open to the public.

The **Leverett Family Museum** at 1 Shutesbury Road will present a program entitled "Reminiscences of Dorothy King" by Leverett resident Portia Weishel on Sunday, September 5th at 3:00 p.m. Bring your own chair and prepare to enjoy yourself at this special presentation.

John Furbish has reported new data to update his recent story (MR VIII #39) "What Kept the Salmon Away?" Of the 41 Atlantic Salmon that passed through the lift at the Holyoke Dam, eight continued upriver and passed through the **Turners Falls Fishway**.

These salmon had been raised in a hatchery and radio transmit-

ters had been implanted in them before their release in waters north of here, so researchers have proof these eight fish returned to the waters of their release (as salmon are instinctively programmed to do).

The **Movement Studio** located at 24 3rd Street in Turners Falls will open its doors again this fall to offer yoga classes for adults, dance classes for children, and affordable space available to anyone looking to teach a class, hold a rehearsal or schedule office hours in downtown Turners Falls.

A new project of the Brick House Community Resource Center, the Movement Studio hopes to provide affordable open space for teachers and community members in Turners Falls. All proceeds from the Movement Studio go directly to support the Brick House. For information about current classes check out our website at www.movementstudio.wordpress.com call 413 863-9197 or stop by the studio and pick up a brochure!

Montague Center's Ferd Wulkan will join other world class winkers in the **World Tiddlywinks Championships** in Vienna, VA this weekend. Good luck, Ferd. We hope you squop the opposition!

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

Town of Montague Hires New Deputy Collector

BY PATTI DION -

Effective September 1st, the town of Montague will begin using Point Software, Inc. as the town's new deputy collector for the purpose of collecting delinquent excise taxes. Point Software, Inc. located in Longmeadow has been in the excise collection business for several years. The town will no longer be associated with Kevin Bolduc out of Lowell for the purpose of collecting excise. Bolduc will continue to collect delinquent parking tickets.

The owner of a motor vehicle has 30 days after issuance of an excise bill to pay the current excise tax. If it remains unpaid after thirty days, a demand bill is issued adding interest and a demand fee of \$5.00. If an excise tax bill remains unpaid after demand notice due date, it is forwarded for collection to Point Software. At this time their fees are also added to the bill.

Gina Nascembeni, will be the individual at Point Software who will be performing the duties of deputy collector for Montague. Nascembeni's number is 413-526-9737. If you wish to mail

your payment, send it to Point Software, Inc. Deputy Collector's office, 200 North Main Street, Suite 1201, West, East Longmeadow, MA 01028.

Please note that Point Software, Inc. accepts bank checks, money orders or credit card payments. They also accept cash if you choose to pay at the location. Do not mail cash. They do not accept personal checks. Their hours of operation are Monday - Thursday 9-4 and Friday 9-3.



Stop by Our Farmstand for Fresh Picked Summer Vegetables!

Turn South on River Road One Mile from Tavern 119 River Road, Gill 508-397-4304

CORRECTION

WENDELL LIBRARY WINDFALL - In the last issue of the Montague Reporter, the report of the Wendell selectboard's meeting mistakenly lists Robert and Helen Haddad's \$2,500 gift to the Wendell Library as \$25,000.

Helen Haddad writes, "While we wish we were in a position to donate \$25,000 to the Wendell Library, unfortunately we are not. However, as the Library certainly could use further funds, perhaps our gift of \$2,500 will inspire others to make donations, large or small, in the memory or honor of someone they care about."

Librarian Rosie Heidkamp adds, "We are very grateful to the Haddads for their generous gift which was made in memory of their late son George Rogerson Haddad. With it we will be purchasing exceptional books in fields of the natural world and the environment, areas of special interest to him. The gift allows us to purchase items we could otherwise not afford, such as those with high resolution photography. We hope the Haddads' generosity inspires others to come forward in continuing support of the success and vibrancy of this community resource."

The Haddad Fund acquisitions will soon be on display and available at the Library.

FALL PROGRAMS 2010

56 First Street, Unity Park Fieldhouse, Turners Falls, MA 01376
 Phone: (413) 863-3216/ Fax: (413) 863-3229
 Office Hours: Mondays - Fridays: 8:30am - 4:30pm
www.montague.net

YOUTH PROGRAMS

SQUIRTS SOCCER - Children in grades K - 2, SHINGUARDS ARE REQUIRED
 When: September 11 - October 30 (T); Saturdays 9:30 a.m. - 10:30 a.m.
 Fees: Montague Residents \$25.00 Non Residents \$30.00
 • COACHES ARE NEEDED FOR ALL LEVELS - TRAINING IS PROVIDED.

JUNIOR & SENIOR TRAVEL SOCCER LEAGUE -
Junior League - Grades 3 & 4 - Games will be 4 v.4
 Fees: Montague Residents: \$40.00/child/week, Non-Residents: \$45.00
Senior League - Grades 5 & 6 - Games will be 7 v.7
 Fees: Montague Residents: \$45.00 per week, Non-Residents: \$50.00 per week
 Practices - Week of September 6. Time and location at coach's discretion.
 Games - Saturdays; September 11 - *October 30
 • COACHES ARE NEEDED FOR ALL LEVELS - TRAINING IS PROVIDED.
 • SHINGUARDS ARE REQUIRED
 • Registration is on-going until Saturday, September 4, when the MPRD Office will be open from 9:00 a.m. - 12 noon for final registrations and t-shirt fitting
 September is Youth Soccer Month!

SWIMMING LESSONS

SESSION I: *October 30 - December 18 (*Tentative starting date)
 When: Saturdays Class schedule
 Contact MPRD for specific class times
 Fees: Montague Residents \$40.00 Non Residents \$45.00
 Registration Deadlines: Session I - Friday, October 22

BLUEFISH SWIM TEAM

Early November through mid March 2011
 Who: Open to all area youth. Practical swim test required for new swimmers.
 When: Practices - Mon/Wed/Thurs evenings (Times subject to change)
 Competitive Meets -> Sat. afternoons (Home & Away); Dec., Jan. & February
 Fees: Not established at press time

FAMILY PROGRAMS

9th Annual Family Fall Fun Day Saturday, OCTOBER 16, 2010

1:00pm - 3:30pm

Come out and celebrate the true New England season! Enjoy Scarecrow Stuffing, *Pumpkin Carving, bake sale, and more!
 Adopt your scarecrow now, they go fast!
 Where: Unity Park, Turners Falls
 Fees: Scarecrows = \$6.00 per ;
 Pumpkin Carving = \$2.00 per

*Come and carve your pumpkin for the PUMPKINFEST planned for October 23rd

We need clothes for our scarecrows!
 If you have some long sleeve shirts and pants that you're not using anymore, we will gladly take them off your hands. Drop them off at our office.
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Editor
David Detmold

Editorial Assistants
Hugh Corr
David Brule

Circulation
Janel Nockelby

Layout & Design

 Claudia Wells
Boysen Hodgson
Karen Hoyden
Karen Wilkinson
Suzette Snow Cobb

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 Claudia Wells
Joe Parzych
Shawn Woolsey

Distribution Manager

Don Clegg

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Michael Muller

Bike Trip to Chicago

BY DAVID DETMOLD - "I don't trust anybody," whispered the librarian in Otego, NY as she helped me access the internet to check email.

Travelers need help; they need passwords and personal identification numbers to use library computers if they don't have a local library card, and librarians hold the key to those codes and information.

Twenty minutes earlier, I had waited patiently for the bank branch manager across the street to call her boss, and then her boss's boss, to see whether her bank could still cash a travelers check for a stranger passing through town carrying valid photo ID.

"These new regulations came in after 9-11," imparted the teller, *sotto voce*, as she waited for the go ahead from her superiors.

As I left town, riding a heavily laden bicycle, I saw the teller again, smoking a cigarette on the sidewalk outside the bank. My story checked out. I really was a traveler in need of cash to spend in local stores and diners.

On the way out of Otego on Highway 7, I realized I also needed to find a place to fill my water bottles. The only people around to ask were a couple of gravediggers preparing for a Polish burial. They were waiting for the mourners on an overcast day, and wondering how to pronounce the deceased's name, which seemed short on vowels. They told me I could use the nearby water tap.

"It's six feet from the graves, don't worry," one told me.

I poured the water out as soon as I got down the road and out of sight. It began to rain, and kept up all the way to Binghamton.

On a bike trip, much of what you learn about the passing countryside you learn from roadside signs. In this part of New York state, an active dialogue was kept up by signs for and against hydraulic fracturing in the Marcellus Shale formation, a source of natural gas. Some signs advocated protecting the water supply for 17 million people between New York City and Philadelphia. Others favored the economic development drilling would bring.

Brightly painted pipelines sprouted next to placidly grazing cows in some pastures. Signs in front yards and the driveways of tourist businesses declaimed, "Pass Responsible Gas Drilling Now," with the first and third words emphasized in large, bold letters. One farmer held an opposing view, with a big sign and an arrow pointing straight down demanding, "Drill Here, Drill Now!"

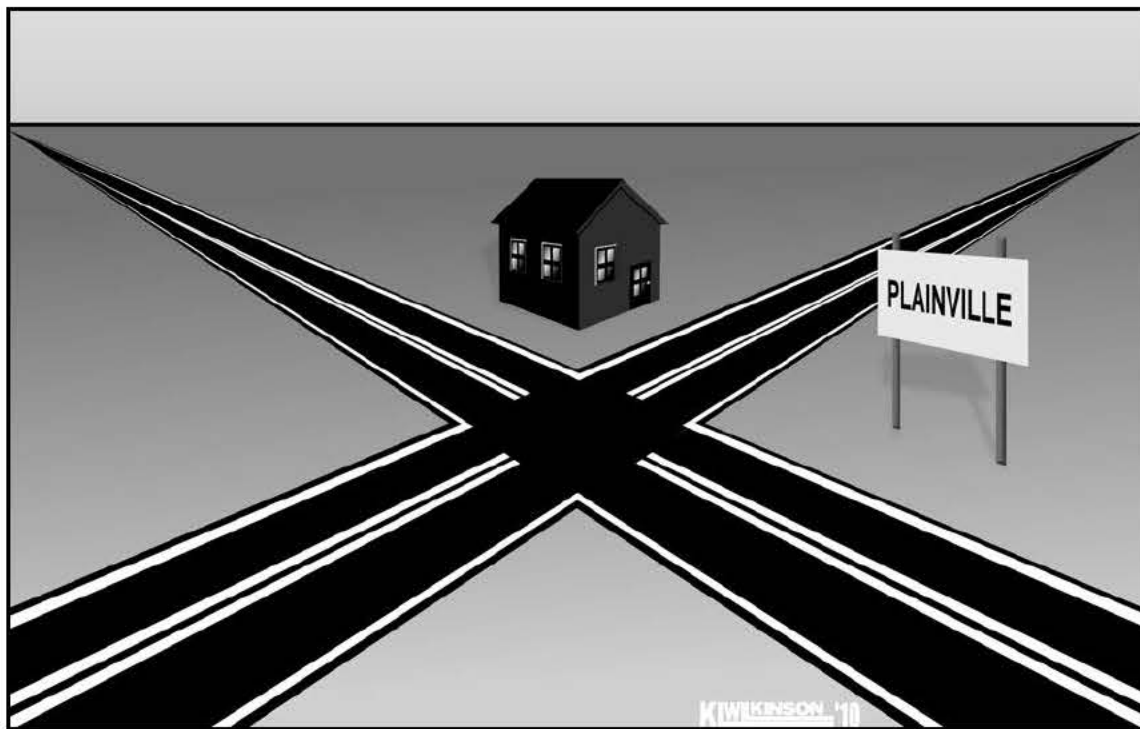
Along this stretch, signs also sprang up espousing Tea Party sympathies. "Fidel and Hugo would be proud!" proclaimed one among an array of hand lettered placards tearing down Obama in a farmyard outside Cobleskill. "Defend the Constitution!"

There were many such signs along Highway 7. "Wake Up, America!" But closer to Chicago, those signs faded away.

The downtown of Lorain, Ohio's tenth largest city, where the Ford Econoline and the Mercury Cougar once were assembled on the shores of Lake Erie, now resembles a scene from the Twilight Zone. Cop cars cruise the vacant streets, but every storefront is closed and empty. Even the tattoo and piercing parlors and junk stores that replaced the jewelers, furniture outlets, clothiers and hardware stores have given up the ghost, the scavenging "We Buy Gold!" store picked clean. Block after block of well preserved early 20th century brick two and three story commercial buildings lie idle, as if a neutron bomb had gone off, whisking the shoppers far, far away. It's eerie. The malling and chain store massacre of downtown America is pervasive everywhere, but in Lorain it can claim total victory.

At the Angelic Café in Owego, NY, a cheerful waitress studying early childhood education brought a platter of scrambled eggs, whole wheat toast and homefries, and mopped up a previous spill. Owego's downtown still bustles with life, with a venerable courthouse and a small farmers market bringing people down the main streets. Stately mansions line Route 17C; John D. Rockefeller lived here.

"Owego was voted the



KAREN WILKINSON ILLUSTRATION

coolest small town in America," the waitress confided.

"I wonder what drugs they were on when they voted," she added.

On the east side of town, Lockheed Martin's manicured campus stretched for acres, dotted with lakes and prowled by security vehicles. Lockheed, which still employs thousands in this depressed region of New York, laid off 730 workers last year when president Obama cancelled orders from the Bush administration for a new \$6.3 billion fleet of 23 presidential helicopters.

Obama decided flying around in his 30-year-old helicopter would be a sensible symbol for a deficit wary nation.

Lockheed sacked more workers this year due to the slackening pace of Pentagon procurements.

Waiting for ice cream in Corning, I learned the company that bears the city's name and made it famous still employs 5,000 locally. Many are engineers from China and elsewhere in Asia who have emigrated to this upstate town to work on the design and manufacture of fiber optic cable, catalytic converters, and 'intelligent glass' for high tech gadgetry. The ovenware and dinner glass that made the company's reputation have been sold to World Kitchen, LLC, which retains the right to use the Corning name.

The wind blows steadily from the west, and the sun beats down interminably. On the east side of Cleveland, the stratification of class mirrored the topography, as the bland, affluent suburbs in the hills descended gradually to the crumbling pavement of the central city, with its battered housing blocks and vibrant street life.

No roads other than interstate 86 lead west from Salamanca, NY, the largest American city in

Indian territory east of the Mississippi, where the mayor can find nothing to boast about in a promotional brochure other than hoping, "You will agree that we have the most beautiful four seasons you'll experience anywhere."

I got chased off the interstate by a sheriff's deputy, who admitted the only alternate route would have taken me 20 miles out of my way, a long detour for a bicycle.

"You're supposed to carry a map," he growled.

"I am carrying a map."

In Ashtabula, the line of state troopers and police cars stretched down Main Street farther than the eye could see, honoring the return of a fallen soldier from Afghanistan. Lance Corporal Kevin Cornelius, a graduate of Lakeside High School, died in Helmand province on August 7th when a prisoner attempting to escape grabbed a rifle and killed him along with a 19-year-old Marine from Christiana, TN.

Citizens sadly lined the sidewalks in the withering noontime heat, carrying flags. One told me, "Be sure to vote."

At the library, a high school classmate of Cornelius's told me he had been a very nice guy. I asked her to tell me more about him, but she couldn't think of anything else to say. He was 20 years old.

I learned later that one of the highlights of Cornelius's life had been the bike trip he took in 2006 from East Glacier, MT back home to Ashtabula, a distance of nearly 2000 miles.

My route was less than half that length, and all the way I was kept company by goldfinches, flashing in and out among the endless rows of corn. Fields of soybeans and acres of tomatoes made the hills and valleys verdant; road side stands beckoned with peaches, melons, and all the abundance of the land.

Toiling up a steep hill outside

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American Dead in Iraq and Afghanistan as of 9/2/10



Woodhull, NY on Route 417, I came across horse droppings in the breakdown lane, and imagined horseback riders climbing the rise before me. But not too many miles had passed before I saw the source. A horse and buggy came cantering at a fast clip in the other direction, and I realized I was not following the bridle path of some recreational equestrian, but cycling in the wake of the Amish.

I continued to do so all through Ohio and Indiana.

We always waved to one another, the Amish in their buggies, I on my bicycle, in solidarity amid the roaring semis and speeding cars. The Amish have been opposed to global warming long before science ever recognized the term.

Signs by the side of the road advertised tack and buggy repair, straight back chairs and caning, jams and jellies, quilts, "No Sales on Sunday." A smaller, hand lettered sign advertised Nightcrawlers, 12 for a dollar. This one, too, said "No Sales on Sunday." (My favorite roadside sign of all read simply, "Nightstalkers," no price, no mention of Sunday sales.)

I bought a new back wheel in Elmira, to replace a wearing freewheel ratchet in the hub, and promptly began breaking spokes every 50 miles or so. The bike store owner in Sandusky who trued my tire used Swiss made spokes to replace the broken ones on the freewheel side. He said most spokes came from Taiwan, now, and were of inferior quality compared to the old American made steel.

He complained that politicians were doing nothing for the working man.

"They get elected with union support," he said, "and then do the bidding of the corporations."

I told him I would look him up again when I next came through Sandusky, maybe ten years down the road. He hoped by then there would once again be a good American-made touring bicycle.

"These foreign companies charge 50% more than the American brands used to."

Truer words were never spoken. Though truer wheels were.

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WMECo Wraps Up Community Meetings on Richardson Road Beaver Pond

**BY BILL FRANKLIN
LEVERETT & MONTAGUE**
On August 23rd, representatives of the Western Massachusetts Electric Company (WMECo) hosted the first of four planned community discussions about the fate of a 2500-foot long beaver pond that stretches across the border of Montague and Leverett on Richardson Road.

The pond has submerged the base of five of WMECo's large wooden utility pylons carrying power lines, and the utility is seeking an acceptable solution to the problem posed by the beaver pond to allow them to maintain the pylons and power lines.

The meeting on the 23rd, held at the Leverett Library, was attended by about 30 people, including the direct abutters to the beaver pond.

WMECo representative Ron Ford, who moderated the meeting, walked a fine line between impartial mediation and the voice of a party with its own deep interests in the final outcome.

From the meeting's outset, Ford stated his intent was to elicit opinions from interested parties and to present options under

consideration by the utility for solving the impasse.

Carl Tyburski, WMECo's supervisor of transmission maintenance, described a serious, ongoing issue he called a "hot spot" at one of the poles in the pond. The hot spot affects the safety of the workers, Tyburski said, and the deep water of the beaver pond makes it difficult for workers to attend to routine maintenance on the five pylons in the beaver pond.

Tyburski said the problem of access to maintain the lines may end up causing serious injury to members of the public as well as workers. The hot spot in question, if not fixed soon, will eventually fail, causing an avalanche of other problems, he said. The pole in question sits in four feet of water, too deep for repair trucks to access.

WMECo then presented three options for the public to consider. The first is to drain the pond entirely; the second would be to lower the pond by approximately two and a half feet; the third would leave the water level of the pond unchanged. Draining the pond entirely, would, according to WMECo, be the safest and

least costly method of solving the problem. Lowering the pond by approximately two and a half feet would also allow the utility to resolve safety issues, but would be the most costly of the three options, a cost that would be passed on to consumers. Leaving the pond unchanged would leave unsafe conditions for workers and residents.

Peter Reich, a Leverett geologist who owns land downstream of the pond, raised the issue of groundwater recharge. Stating that groundwater supplies are declining at an alarming rate, both nationally and locally, he stated that beaver ponds are one of the main sources of recharge for groundwater. "This is scary," he said. "If we take away the recharge zones, your property won't be worth anything."

Sam Calgione, a dentist who owns land in Montague abutting the pond, said he has lost 20 acres of his land as a result of rising water levels at the beaver pond. He also raised public health concerns associated with the high water level, most immediately the possibility of flooding for downstream residents if the beaver dam is accidentally

breached. "When that dam goes," he said, "those people will be in harm's way."

In Calgione's list of health concerns, he also mentioned problems with septic systems as a result of a rising water table; contamination of drinking water; and mosquito borne diseases such as equine encephalitis.

Montague attorney Sam Lovejoy asked WMECo, "Do you have the legal right to remove the dam? How far does your reach go?"

Ford responded, "We want to table that issue for now." He added, "We don't want to say, 'Here's our big stick, now try to stop us;' we want a collaborative solution."

Leverett abutter Dan Bennett argued, "You should bear the cost yourself, since you caused the problem yourself by putting poles in a wetland."

At the second community meeting on the topic, which was held on the 26th at the meeting room of the new police station in Montague, Ford proposed to cancel the final two scheduled meetings, claiming a "sense of the

meeting" had been arrived at in favor of lowering the level of the beaver pond by two feet or so, to allow utility vehicles to access the submerged pylons. The utility will install 'beaver deceivers,' devices to reduce the water level, to accomplish the draw down.

But Bennett said that level has nearly been reached already by drought in the summer heat wave, and by the fact that the beavers have phased out dam building activity at the pond.

"The beavers are phasing out. It's an old age beaver pond now," he said.

Bennett discounted fears that the dam might give way and cause downstream flooding. "It's fearmongering," he said. "The storm of 1997, when Richardson Road washed out, didn't touch it. The real danger now is forest fire. It's good to have a reservoir up here anyway."

WMECo now will approach the boards of health and conservation commissions in both towns to seek appropriate permits to lower the level of the pond. The utility plans to install concrete bases for new steel utility poles they will place in the wetland, Bennett said.

LETTERS TO THE EDITOR

Sullivan for DA

We have an important election coming up in the September 14th Democratic primary to nominate a new district attorney. I am going to vote for Dave Sullivan, who has the experience and integrity to be an outstanding DA.

Dave has a solid background in public service, both as an attorney and an experienced administrator, serving currently as Hampshire County Register of Probate. I know that he is committed to working throughout our region with local law enforcement and citizens to make our communities as safe and secure as possible. He also has the expertise and perspective needed to strengthen and improve the services provided by the district attorney's office.

I am pleased to wholeheartedly endorse Dave Sullivan's candidacy to be our next district attorney.

- Rep. Stephen Kulik

Mug Race Thanks

For 30 years, the Montague Mug Race has been held in conjunction with Old Home Days. A huge thank you to all who supported our efforts this year!

The race could not take place without the continued support of the following:

Architectural Components, Red Fire Farm, Renaissance Builders, Montague Mill, Rau's Towing, Armen Honey, Connecticut River Internists, ReveneX, Turn It Up, Greenfield Savings Bank, Sumner Heating, About Face Computers and Coca-Cola.

A host of volunteers as

always turned out to ensure the race ran smoothly, and the Montague Center Fire Department provided course security.

The weather was perfect for the race. As the smoke from the cannon cleared the common, the runners took to the course with great intensity.

The attendance in the two mile Mini Mug Race grows yearly.

Thanks to all for a great local event with wonderful community support.

- Ann Fisk
Montague

Montague Parks and Rec Unveils New Logo

BY JON DOBOSZ - The Montague Parks and Recreation Department is sporting a new logo that conveys all the aspects of the department: parks, nature, programs, and of course, people.

The design process took a little longer than originally planned. The Parks and Recreation commission publically introduced the contest to design a new logo back in October of 2009, and received more than a dozen entries.

It came down to three top contenders. Each showed concepts we wanted to include. The question was how to put them all together.

At that point, the commission

decided to turn to the Turners Falls High School graphic arts department for assistance.

"I presented the project to the Advanced Graphic Arts class," said art teacher David Hoitt. "Students were learning how to use the vector graphics program, Adobe Illustrator. I thought the logo project was an excellent opportunity for students to apply their knowledge in a real world situation. The students worked hard and responded well to the challenge."

The winning designer was Taylor Howe, a senior at TFHS, who utilized concepts from the

see LOGO pg 7

AN APPRECIATION

BY DON CLEGG

GREENFIELD - Fredrick "Rick" Nichols, lately of downtown Turners Falls, passed away on Wednesday, August 18th, at the Poets Seat Nursing Home in Greenfield. Rick was one of those unique characters we rarely have an opportunity to meet in our lives, but when we do, we treasure them. Debonair, witty, and erudite, he was a complete gentleman of the old school. He helped out at the Montague Reporter on Thursday afternoons mixing up zip codes and smudging the labels, and invariably entertained staff and visitors with his whimsical spin on life, his flamboyant sense of humor and stories of vacations long ago to Paris, Rome and Greece.

He may have had holes in his shoes, but he maintained champagne tastes and a certain élan right to the end. The pleasure was always mine to be able to call Rick Nichols my dear friend. God speed!

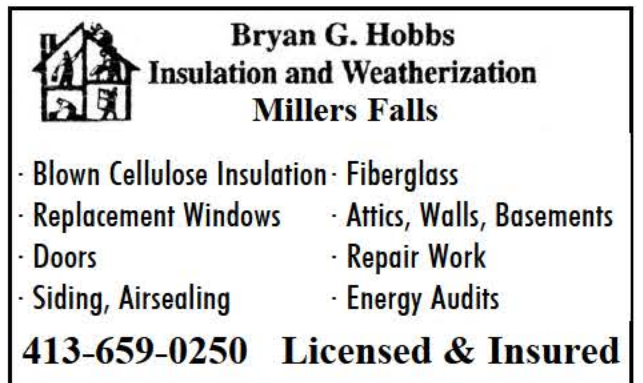
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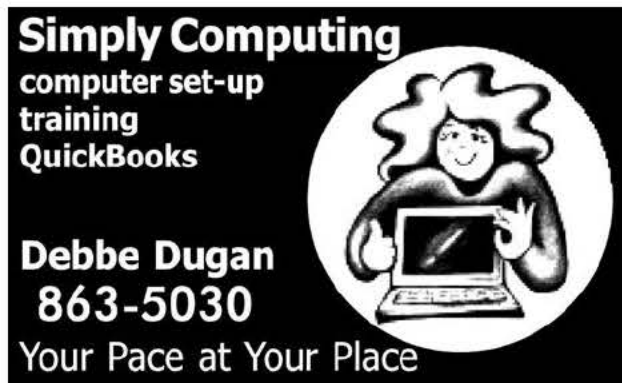
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NOTES FROM MONTAGUE SELECTBOARD

Future Airport Development at Issue

Native Americans Seek Memo of Understanding to Permanently Preserve Cultural Sites

BY JANEL NOCKLEBY - On Monday, August 30th, members of the Turners Falls Airport Commission asked the selectboard to sign a memorandum of understanding regarding procedures for Native American tribal access to the aircraft operating area, and for permanent preservation of sites in the flight path. The airport commissioners, who were present in the meeting room, voted unanimously to support the memorandum. If approved, Montague would give up development rights in specific areas of the municipal airport that have been determined to be archeologically important or culturally sensitive to the interested federally recognized Native American tribes: the Narragansett Indians, the Wampanoag Tribe of Gayhead (Aquinnah) and the Mashpee Wampanoags.

If the selectboard approves the memorandum of understanding, it would be a non-binding statement, because only the Montague annual town meeting has the authority to change land rights in town. Peter Golrick, chair and secretary of the Turners Falls Airport Commission, said currently nothing can be built in the designated areas of concern since they are in the flight path of the airport.

"It is a small price to pay to get the project completed," Golrick said, referring to the \$5 million runway replacement project at the Turners Falls Airport being paid for by the Federal Aviation Administration, pending resolution of access and development concerns for the tribes.

The selectboard deferred the decision on whether or not to sign the memorandum until next Tuesday, September 7th at 7 p.m. since selectboard chair Pat Allen was not in attendance and selectboard member Christopher Boutwell said he needed more time to review the details of the request.

Golrick said approval of the memorandum was critical to getting the airport improvement project completed.

"After months and months of deliberation and legal counsel," airport manager Michael Longo stated that the memorandum is "a well-crafted document" which might allow the airport improvement project to come to completion.

Any delays beyond September would cause labor costs to go up for the construction company that is contracted to do the work, said airport commission member David Brule.

Selectboard member Mark Fairbrother, a former member of the airport commission, expressed concern about giving up development rights at the airport and described Native American tribal claims at the airport as "extremely questionable." Fairbrother said he felt the selectboard was being asked to sign the document "under duress."

Longo described how the Native American tribes have been "granted authority on the project as consultants," and that it is right for the airport commission to recognize them. "They have a place in this," he said.

Federally recognized Native American tribes are routinely

granted consultant status at any development projects that expend federal dollars or require federal permits, as part of the government to government agreements mandated by law under the Section 106 of the National Historic Preservation Act. In December of 2008, the Chief of the National Register of Historic Places and National Historic Landmarks, Paul Loether, confirmed that a stone formation on top of a hill at the airport has been designated as eligible for inclusion in the National Register of Historic Places as the Turners Falls Sacred Ceremonial Hill Site, the first such Native American ceremonial site east of the Mississippi River to earn such status.

"This will make the Federal Aviation Administration, which had requested a determination, treat the site as if it were listed in the National Register," Loether said at the time.

There were no members of area tribes at the selectboard meeting on Monday, but Doug Harris, Preservationist for Ceremonial Landscapes for the Narragansett Indian Tribes, stated this week he has read the memorandum of understanding. He cannot comment on it, however, until he can meet with other representatives of area tribes to discuss it. That meeting is scheduled for September 2nd.

Michael Nelson updated the selectboard on plans for the first Franklin County Pumpkin Fest. On October 23rd, from 3 - 9 p.m., attendees of the festival can look forward to free kids activities, music in Peskeomskut Park, food ven-

dors, and hundreds of candlelit pumpkins lining Avenue A. The Avenue will be closed from Third to Seventh Streets from noon - 11 p.m., including time for setup and cleanup for the event. The coordinators of the event encourage everyone to bring their jack-o-lanterns, or to carve a pumpkin at the festival.

During a dog hearing, Steven Crowningshield of Turners Falls told the selectboard about his efforts to contain his bull-mastiff dog, Bear, on his property to prevent further incidents of aggression. On August 12th, Bear attacked a Chihuahua, which will recover from its injuries, near Crowningshield's property on Central Street. Crowningshield has paid for all veterinary care for the smaller dog. He is constructing an enclosure for his yard for his dog, and has assured the selectboard his dog will never be allowed off leash again.

The selectboard will send Crowningshield a letter stating it will take no disciplinary action against him since he has demonstrated he has taken full responsibility for his dog's actions, and the complainant is satisfied with his response.

Franklin County Hazardous Waste Collection Day will be held on September 25th at Greenfield Community College and the Orange Transfer Station. Registration is required, and available online at the Franklin County Waste District website, www.franklincounty-wastedistrict.org, or at the department of public works and town hall. A list of accepted materials is also available on the website.

The selectboard approved running the state primary election on September 14th. Voting hours will be from 7 a.m. - 8 p.m. for the offices of governor,

lieutenant governor, attorney general, secretary of state, treasurer, auditors, Franklin County sheriff, district attorney - Northwestern District, state representative and senator, representative in Congress, and councilor.

The Montague selectboard approved sending a letter to the Erving selectboard stating that before Montague can begin to consider sharing the capital costs of recently completed sewer improvements in Erving, Montague must receive materials supporting their claim, including itemized costs. Without the materials, and without previous notifications of sewer improvements, Erving is in breach of contract, stated town administrator Frank Abbondanzio.

Forty-six acres at 76 West Mineral Road in Millers Falls has been approved for inclusion in the Agricultural Preservation Program by the selectboard, although Fairbrother noted the town's conservation commission presently has no funds to contribute to the effort. Interested parties will need to raise funds elsewhere in order to get the land changed from an industrial zone to an agriculture-only restriction in a stretch of land that connects the Connecticut River to the Montague sand plain.

There will be a Gill-Montague school board district meeting on November 18th at the Turners Falls High School. Again, the topic of consideration will be the district school's operating budget.

The Gill selectboard would like to meet with the Montague select board to discuss concerns about the Gill-Montague Bridge construction project. This meeting may take place on September 13th. Stay tuned.

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NOTES FROM GILL SELECTBOARD Districtwide School Budget Meeting Set for November 18th

BY P.H.CROSBY - Montague's rejection of the Gill-Montague school budget again this year over affordability concerns, despite the fact the school committee approved a level funded budget as requested, has led to the scheduling of yet another districtwide budget setting meeting, open to all voters in both Gill and Montague and scheduled for November 18th in the Turners Falls High School auditorium.

At its August 30th meeting, the Gill selectboard and members of the audience grumbled that the town of Gill had already approved the school budget as proposed. A majority of Gill and Montague voters present at the district meeting on November 18th must now approve the school committee's requested \$16.4 million budget for the process to move forward.

Discussion of other topics on the board's agenda was preceded by a review of public participation practices as part of the agenda. Nancy Griswold, of Riverside, a former member of the selectboard, said she felt her

attempts to contribute to recent energy commission and finance committee meetings had been rejected by committee chairs. Selectboard chair John Ward, who had been present at one of the meetings Griswold alluded to, said he "read" the situation differently.

Ward said he understood Chair Tupper Brown to mean the meeting was a "working meeting, not a public hearing."

Ward said, "I don't believe the intention was to quash your opinions," but to move on with committee business.

Administrative coordinator Ray Purington noted the subject of appropriate public participation in meetings was a frequently discussed topic at selectboard association gatherings Gill representatives attend. Apparent consensus among other small towns is there needs to be a time and a place for public participation, but that meeting chairs had the right and responsibility to define parameters for discussion in order to allow committee members to get on with their work.

Griswold also complained that minutes of some town committee meetings were delayed and inadequate. They should be released to the public within several days of the meeting, not longer. "Some of the actions a group like the energy commission is considering taking are expensive, and that is the public's business," asserted Griswold.

Later in the meeting, Griswold volunteered for consideration as an appointee to the town's newly established capital improvements committee, and she also volunteered in advance to take the minutes for that board.

In other business, the board authorized Purington to work with Tighe and Bond on an assessment of the Riverside sewer pump replacement project, with a plan for paying for the eventual work with Community Development Block Grant funds. A sufficient number of Riverside residents have completed an income survey to allow the neighborhood to qualify for the funds, according to Ward.

see GILL pg 12

LOGO from 5

three contest finalists. "Taylor demonstrated high level skills and perseverance as she successfully developed her initial concepts into a final logo design," said Hoitt.

The final three entrants were Cody Wells of Montague, Katie Kuklewicz of Turners Falls, and

Fallyn Adams of Gill. Along with Howe, they will receive a gift pack from MPRD for their creativity and hard work. We couldn't be happier with the end result.



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HIGHLIGHTS FROM THE ERVING POLICE LOG Harassment on Facebook

Tuesday, 8/17

3:40 p.m. 911 call from French King Highway for attempted child abduction. Under investigation.

Wednesday, 8/18

2:15 p.m. Assisted state police with seizure of marijuana plants from Strachen Street residences.

Thursday, 8/19

3:15 p.m. Report of youths jumping off the bike path bridge on Dorsey Road. Youths located and moved along.

Saturday, 8/21

2:15 a.m. Report of motor vehicle crash on Route 2 at Wheelock Street.

4:30 p.m. Report of suspicious female sitting on bridge near International Papermill. Located same. No problem. Moved along.

5:30 p.m. Report of motor vehicle crash into Millers Falls-Erving bridge. Found to be in Millers Falls. Assisted Montague police.

11:20 p.m. Barking dog complaint on Mountain Road. Located dog and spoke to owner. Dog was brought inside.

Friday, 8/27

11:15 a.m. : Hit and run accident just east of Erving Center on Route 2. Criminal application issued to [REDACTED]

Operator left scene. Crash under investigation.

Wednesday, 8/25

[REDACTED] for marked lanes violations, negligent and reckless operation of a motor vehicle and leaving the scene of a property damage accident.

9:15 p.m. Criminal application issued to [REDACTED]

[REDACTED] for operating a motor vehicle with an obstructed number plate and operating a motor vehicle after a suspension, on Forest Street.

Sunday, 8/29

6:15 p.m. Report of two male subjects trespassing on Maple Avenue. Spoke with same and moved along.

Monday, 8/30

7:45 p.m. Took call regarding harassing messages left on Facebook account. Under investigation.

HIGHLIGHTS FROM THE LEVERETT POLICE LOG Game Camera Stolen

Monday, 8/15

9:30 a.m. Owner of a Shutesbury Road camp reported a game camera stolen from a tree outside his camp between 8/10 and 8/15. Under investigation.

Wednesday, 8/18

9:30 p.m. Resident of Hemenway Road reported receiving threats from someone currently being held at the House of Correction. Subject was advised of 209A and harassment order procedures.

I :35 p.m. Officer stopped [REDACTED] and issued a criminal citation for unlicensed operation of a motor vehicle.

Saturday, 8/21

10:25 a.m. Report of a parachutist down in the woods near Lake Wyola. Unfounded. Possible ultra-light flying below tree level. Nothing found.

12:45 p.m. Motorcycle accident on Shutesbury Road. [REDACTED]

Subject declined both.

Thursday, 8/19

[REDACTED], operating a 2007 Harley Davidson Road King went off the road, down an embankment. Transported to Bay State Medical Center in Springfield by Amherst Fire Department ambulance. Under investigation.

Sunday, 8/22

5:48 p.m. Assisted Shutesbury police with a domestic disturbance at a Pelham Hill Road residence.

6:03 p.m. Tree on power lines on Montague Road. WMECO notified, cleared tree, and restored power.

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The Road Less Traveled Memento Mori

BY RICHARD ANDERSEN & DIANE LYN NEW YORK CITY - What do a trumpet made out of a shinbone and a frog sitting on a skeleton in a coffin made to be worn around the neck have in common? They are part of a current exhibit at the Rubin Museum of Art in New York City - a special place many have yet to discover.

Located in the old Barney's Department Store building on Seventh Avenue and West 17th Street, the beautifully

reconstructed RMA is dedicated primarily to Himalayan art. No easy task when there is no Tibetan equivalent for the word. The closest approximation to our idea of "art for art's sake" is *Iha dri pa*, which literally means "to draw a deity." What Tibetan 'artists' try to achieve in their work, as the museum's introductory guide points out, is to "portray the essence of a particular deity in visual language."

"Remember that You Will Die" compares and

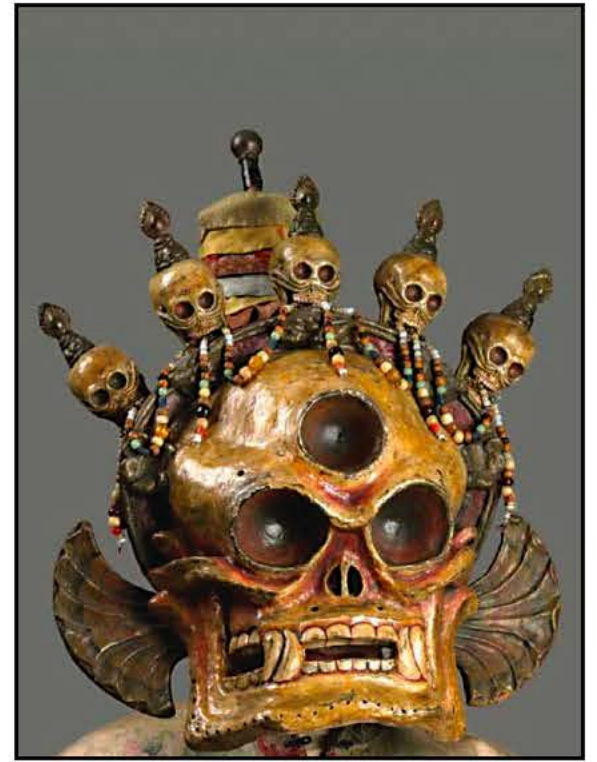
contrasts death-related works of art from Medieval and Renaissance with *Iha dri pa* from Tibet. Sound a bit macabre? Wait until you see the bejeweled bronze reliquary glove with hand and arm from twelfth-century Belgium - a forerunner to Michael Jackson's single-handed glove, no doubt - and the dancing Tibetan couple whose skins are peeling away in ribbons. What "essence of deity" is being represented here? Or in the apron made from human bone?

To answer these and other questions, the RMA

hires art historians to wander about the museum and explain the unknown to the possibly unknowing. Once these guides - the excellent Juliet Gumbs is one - have a sense of what you're interested in or in need to know more of, they will lead you to what you won't want to have missed: the sixteenth-century German rosary beads carved in the shape of human skulls, for example, or the painted Tibetan hand drum made from a skull.

And the message connecting all these and similar Christian and Buddhist *memento mori*? Be good if you want a better hereafter.

The exhibit will die on September 6th, so hurry. The afterlife can wait.



"Lord of the Charnel Grounds Dance Mask," Mongolia; 19th - 20th Century. Paper-mache, Ian Triay Collection

LABOR DAY from pg 1

located in the vicinity of the Turners side approach to the Gill-Montague Bridge, next to the present day Discovery Center.

International Paper Company, or IP, changed the name to Montague Machine Company when they purchased the Turners Falls Machine Company. For a time the shop built machinery exclusively for IP, producing the Great Northern Grinder, designed in collaboration with the Great Northern Paper Company.

Montague Machine built, sold and serviced these giant pulp grinders from Maine to Texas, as well as Canada and other foreign countries.

A pulp grinder reduces logs to pulp by pressing a bundle of pulpwood logs against an abrasive stone cylinder. The capacity of these pulp grinders increased to over 50 tons a day when Montague Machine began building a much larger one, the Great

Northern-Waterous Grinder. Montague Machine manufactures this model to this very day.

Though the machine shop is humming again, the Montague Machine foundry is a thing of the past.

The foundry stands silent where an enormous ladle capable of holding tons of molten iron once glowed fiery red. A huge air powered hoist tipped the ladle to pour molten iron to flow like lava into molds below. Smoke filled the cavernous foundry. An acrid odor arose as the resin that held the sand molds together smoked from the scorching molten metal, in a scene out of Dante's *Inferno*.

Men with respirators ground cooled castings smooth amid the din and whine of high speed air grinders, dust and sparks flying in the air. Carpenters hammered shipping crates together to ship huge pulp grinders, bigger than an automobile, to other states, or other countries. Men built new

molds from wooden patterns for future pours. Shredding machines chewed the rem-

nants of used molds, reducing them to sand again, adding to the dust and din.

The vast foundry, black with smoke from years of molten metal, was once a bustling place. But today, the foundry stands quiet, used only for storage.

Welders now fabricate grinders from steel, before they're machined. Some parts of the grinders are still cast iron, machined from castings produced in other foundries. When new regulations came along requiring changes to the foundry, management deemed the upgrades too expensive, and decided that using an outside foundry was a sensible move. Precision machining is the mainstay of the Montague Machine Company. Now, Rodney Hunt of Orange produces castings for them, and in turn, Rodney Hunt reciprocates by sending machine shop work to Montague Machine, to the advantage of both local firms.

Shop foreman Beauregard said a new service Montague Machine offers is cutting bulk steel alloys into custom sizes, mostly for Lyman and Gordon of North Grafton, MA. An enormous reciprocating power saw, like a giant hack saw, cuts the steel into specified lengths.

"We got an order for cutting

titanium alloy steel into pieces to build aircraft frames, recently," Beauregard said. "We cut off the ends and send a sample to the customer, to be tested, before we begin precision cutting. The metal is very strong and lightweight."

Asked how he liked the job as the Labor Day holiday approached, Beauregard said, "This is a union shop, but it doesn't have a union feel. It's a good place to work. Most of the guys have worked here for 30 or 35 years or more. We're like family."

The Gill-Montague Bridge bisects the former Montague Paper mill site, where a large population of workers once toiled. The Discovery Center, former home of Montague Paper's machine shop flanks one side of the Gill-Montague Bridge. The Montague town hall flanks the other. This building was once the headquarters of Alvah Crocker's Turners Falls Company, later the Western Massachusetts Electric Company.

Below the canal, brick arches remain, marking the bowels of the old Montague mill.

When excavating for the Indeck coal fired steam plant, now dismantled and shipped to Guatemala, where environmental regulations are less strict, the

water turbine that once drove machinery through a system of pulleys and belts at the old paper mill was unearthed, and trucked to the scrap yard with hardly a second thought of preserving it for future generations to see. It could very well have been a Crocker Hydraulic Water Turbine manufactured by the forerunner of Montague Machine.

If you listen closely to the rushing canal waters that once drove mill machinery, you can almost hear the voices of men and women who toiled in the mills whispering in protest at the waste of good mills and the loss of good jobs of days gone by.

The Shady Glen Restaurant sits across the street from where stood the old Grand Trunk Hotel, once the home away from home for visiting businessmen. That building, an architectural gem, was also torn down.

Asking a waitress what she liked best about her job, "Meeting people," she said. "I like to talk with them. And I make a lot of friends."

Dean Elgosin at the post office said his job entailed a lot of things. "I sort mail, answer the phone, wait on customers - whatever needs to be done."

What does he like about the job? "I like meeting customers."

see **LABOR DAY** pg 9

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Industrial Archeology in Turners Falls



IVAN USSACH PHOTO

Earlier this summer, local history enthusiasts explored one of the remaining arches of the demolished Montague Paper Co., located at the northern end of the Power Canal in Turners Falls. The arches were used to return water drawn from the canal to the Connecticut River below.

BY IVAN USSACH - In 1870, one of the first American cutlery factories left its original location by the banks of the Green River in Greenfield and moved across the Connecticut River to the recently established industrial village in Turners Falls.

The John Russell Cutlery Co., started in 1834, took its place along the power canal, just downstream of the Montague Paper Co. Remains of both of these historic industrial giants were on view for the dozen people who joined guide Al Shane on an evening a few weeks back.

Meeting at the Great Falls Discovery Center, Shane exhibited old cutlery specimens, including some predating the use of stainless steel in the 1920s. "The workmen tossed the blanks out the window," said Shane, who picked up that juicy

tidbit from someone on a previous tour whose grandfather had been treasurer of the company.

In the 1800s, the company's famous Green River knife was standard gear for "every scout, hunter, miner and trapper" in the West.

Shane, who is the curator of the Museum of Our Industrial Heritage in Greenfield, said the industrial might of Turners Falls was built "primarily on paper."

"Why do business here?" he asked the group. My hunch it had something to do with floating logs down the Connecticut was close. Shane said the Montague Paper Co. developed a process to make paper out of spruce from the forests of northern New Hampshire and Vermont. The Discovery Center is housed in the paper company's old machine shop.

After a brief review of water

power, we headed off across the power canal and down a dirt path to the northern end of the strip of land separating the river and the canal. The canal falls 75 feet, and this change in elevation - called the 'head' - provides the power for water to turn wheels and turbines. Water was channeled to the paper company's turbines through an intake called the penstock, and released back to the river through arched openings. It is these brick arches and surrounding stone foundations that remain visible today, and folks were eager to peek inside.

Moving south with the river on our right, we came to the northwest corner of the Russell Cutlery foundations. They are a good 15 feet high, and as we walked along people easily found various worn metal artifacts: a knife blade, eye hooks, cutlery blanks, a putty knife - lots of stuff. Shane said the University of Massachusetts did an archeological study of the site some years back.

Further on we found a light-colored stone wheel fragment over a foot long with grooves built in to show the degree of wear. Continuing south, walking below what was the cutlery factory's water line, we found slate roof pieces and thousands of bricks from the demolition. An outflow arch here was half-silted up. Sun-bleached twigs and branches litter the river bank - good company for the factory remains.

In 1933, the Russell Cutlery Co. merged with the Harrington Cutlery Co. of Southbridge, MA (the nation's first) to create the Russell Harrington Cutlery Co. in Southbridge, which changed its name in 2001 to Dexter-Russell, Inc.

The program was organized by the Friends of the Great Falls Discovery Center, part of an ongoing series of events on the third Thursday of each month. Go to greatfallsma.org for more info.

The Museum of Our Industrial Heritage is open by appointment; contact them by calling (413) 548-9435 or visit their website at industrialhistory.org.

NORTHEAST FOUNDATION for CHILDREN Supports Elementary Education Nationwide



NEFC purchased this abandoned building for \$1 from the town of Montague in 2006, spending half a million dollars to renovate it for workshop space.

BY JOHN FURBISH

TURNERS FALLS - This Labor Day, we can acknowledge the continued success of one of the major employers in downtown Turners, the Northeast Foundation for Children.

NEFC was founded in Greenfield in 1981 by a group of public school teachers who developed a vision of bringing together social and academic learning

throughout the school day for elementary students. They started with 40 students in a laboratory school, called the Greenfield Center School.

Now, NEFC provides professional development for elementary school educators nationwide. Its primary message is that social skills and academic skills go hand in hand. School children can be

see **EDUCATION** pg 12

LABOR DAY from pg 8

What does he like least? He smiled, "I can't say, because I enjoy it all."

Was his boss within earshot?

Nancy Pierce works at the Food City deli. She's is a ray of sunshine. Despite struggling to make ends meet, Nancy still greets people with a smile and sometimes even a hug. Customers love her. People do business with people they like. Nancy deserves a raise.

Shop foreman, Steve Lively, at the Montague Highway Department has worked at the highway garage for 20 years. He was looking for a short circuit in wiring on a town dump truck one day recently.

He looked disgusted. What does he like least about his job? "These damn electronics and printed circuit boards," he said. "This truck is ten years old and it's got a plug for a code reader. In the winter when the trucks are needed most for plowing snow, they'll break down at two in the morning, and it's snowing. The job is challenging. It isn't like the old days when you could find a problem right away, and fix it with a few tools. Unless you've

got code readers and a bunch of computerized test equipment, it gets frustrating."

What's to like about the job? He doesn't hesitate.

"They're a nice bunch of guys, like brothers and sisters. They're always ready to help each other out. But most of them have been here over 20 years and they'll be retiring all at once. There'll be a new crew of young guys. They don't have the work ethic of the older generation." He laughed. "Young guys don't seem to want to work that hard."

Two SPS workers on the Gill-Montague Bridge, mechanic Harry Gobel and iron worker Scott Vairs appear happy in their work. "I like coming out in the field to repair machines," Gobel said. "It gets me out of the shop." "The worst thing about the job is the ride to work," Vairs averred. "I live in New Hampshire up by the Maine border near Canada. But the pay is good, and I like being out in the open."

And they went back to work. That's what Labor Day is all about - ordinary people doing extraordinary work.



Gulls Coming Inland

ATHOL - Gulls are the quintessential shore birds - so why are we seeing them here in the North Quabbin and other inland locales?

The Athol Bird & Nature Club will explore that question on Wednesday, September 8th at 7 p.m. at the Millers River Environmental Center, 100 Main Street, in Athol.

Free and open to the public, the meeting features senior wildlife biologist Ken

MacKenzie and natural resources director Dan Clark, who will discuss the Department of Conservation and Recreation's gull study - research into ring-billed, herring and great black-backed gulls in Massachusetts - including their movements, feeding and use of public water supplies.

More information about the ABNC is available at www.millersriver.net.

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DEBATE from pg 1

local aid, and we've had to deal with that," still Adam maintained, "we have to find a way of reducing government on the backs of working people."

In follow up emails, Adam said he had never actually supported the Orange overrides this spring as selectboard chair. He said only that, "I was in support of taking the question of funding via a Proposition 2½ override to the people of Orange."

Fraser took issue with that distinction. "You stood before townspeople," she replied to Adam via email, "as our duly elected selectman, and helped present facts and figures that outlined a catastrophic budget shortfall. I believed then, as I do now, that the numbers presented were valid. The voters were presented a scenario where we would have to face the shutdown of our library, council on aging, street lights and transfer station as well as firing 20 town employees if action was not taken... I chose to join the override faction and fight for what I believe is in the

best interest of the town."

Fraser said cutbacks in state aid following passage of the sales tax cutting ballot initiative Adam supports in November would put Orange and other district towns right back in the same position of cutting services or raising property taxes. "I shudder to think of what we will be faced with in the future."

It was more difficult to find differences of opinion among the four Democrats who are vying for their party's nomination in the September 14th primary: Greenfield attorney David Roulston, Orange resident and former Procter and Gamble business manager Denise Andrews, environmental manager and former firefighter Lee Chauvette, of Athol, and Greenfield planning board chair and former school committee chair Roxann Wedegartner.

Along with Fraser, they all said they supported a single payer health care system, and would work to reduce the cost of health care for businesses and individuals. All spoke of their commitment to creating jobs and supporting education. The distinctions in their platforms were subtle, and often came down to the forcefulness of their personal style and the strength of their resumes (view the debate on MCTV; for scheduled rebroadcasts check their website: www.montaguevtv.org).

Roulston said he had spent 30 years helping individuals navigate state regulations as an attorney, and would be able to translate that experience to excellence in constituent service as a state representative. He pointed to his leadership role in defeating the Romney administration's plan to eliminate the Orange District Court as an example of how he has taken initiative to save jobs and protect local businesses that depend on the revenue the courthouse brings to downtown

Orange. He said in his law practice, he always hires people who have been on public assistance.

Andrews said she had managed a plant with 60 workers for Procter and Gamble (she worked for the company for 25 years), had helped workers retrain and find new jobs "in difficult times" when the plant closed, and could take her management background and personnel experience to Boston, where she would bring her "skills and compassion" to bear "in an area that needs new leadership" – the state legislature.

Chauvette talked of being on the opposite end of the firing line when his firefighting job was axed twice due to municipal downsizing, and how this experience gave him an understanding of the precarious position of many workers in the district. He promised to fight for them if elected, and he pledged fiscal conservatism. Echoing Adam, he said, "We cannot continue to live outside our means and raise revenue on the backs of hard working taxpayers."

Wedegartner promised to be a capable, effective voice for the Second Franklin District, and to apply her many years experience with the planning board and school committees in Greenfield, Warwick and Pioneer Valley Regional to "putting our people back to work, controlling health care costs, reducing energy costs, and ensuring good, safe schools under local control."

Speaking in support of a single payer health care system, Fraser compared the 3% administrative costs of Medicare to the 15 – 20% administrative costs of the private insurance dominated health care system. She noted 14 districts (including the First Franklin) will have nonbinding referenda on single payer health care this fall.

Roulston said 23 cents of every American health care dollar go toward administrative overhead, "double every other indus-

trial country in the world." He said a single payer system would ensure "everyone's right to adequate, safe and effective health care."

Adam said, "Massachusetts' universal health care as implemented means more mandates, less options and higher costs." He advocated giving patients more information on their health care options, saying transparency in the system would drive down costs. He also advocated for malpractice tort reform and giving small businesses the right to purchase health insurance jointly.

Talking of the qualities that would make him an effective leader on Beacon Hill, Chauvette said being unemployed three times recently through no fault of his own has helped him stay "in tune with the life experience of people here in this district. I support the working class, and I will bring that to Beacon Hill."

Fraser said during her five years as an aide to state senator Robert Wetmore, she learned to "enjoy the culture on Beacon Hill." She called the legislature, "a building that teams with life, truly the People's House."

Wedegartner said she was "a good listener who likes working collaboratively with other leaders." But, "I don't shy away from tough decisions," she added. "As often as not, I'll make those tough decisions on your behalf."

Andrews said her character traits of strength and compassion would allow her to analyze data "so I can represent the district well. I know how to play on a team. I'll keep an open door policy. Diversity is important. So is working together to get results."

Moderator Linda Dumlevy, of the Franklin Regional Council of Governments, asked the candidates about raising revenues. She said the state has already cut seven billion dollars from a 28 billion budget in the last three fiscal years, and is still approaching a one billion deficit in the present

budget cycle. Should the legislature raise taxes?

Fraser, who said she played an instrumental role in forming the Massachusetts Forest and Wood Products initiative called for reindustrializing the region, to create new jobs to fill state coffers.

Roulston said, "Unfortunately I don't believe jobs will suddenly pop up." He called for reinstating the estate tax on millionaires to bring in more federal and state revenues.

Wedegartner said, "The state may at some point have to raise taxes. That's not my first choice." She called for further committee work to "reinvent our tax policy," to achieve a "predictable, fair and transparent tax policy."

Adam said, "We need to make Massachusetts tax policy competitive with other states, to keep jobs here." He said the Commonwealth is losing jobs to New Hampshire because of tax advantages there. "We need a bold new approach to help Massachusetts rebound and make Massachusetts a state where businesses want to relocate."

Andrews called for "going aggressively after investors and money," and tax reform. "We know there's waste. We need to figure out new means of efficiency and engage people to develop new models."

Chauvette, alone among the candidates, embraced the push for casino gambling as a means of boosting state revenues. "We lose one billion a year to Connecticut and Rhode Island. We need to leave the emotional side out of it," and expand gaming in Massachusetts, he said.

Gill and Erving voters, along with voters in Greenfield, Warwick, Orange and Athol, will decide which of these four Democrats will face off against Adam and Fraser in the November election to fill the seat now held by Chris Donelan, who is retiring to run for county sheriff.



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HIGHLIGHTS FROM THE MONTAGUE POLICE LOG

Monday, 8/23
9:40 a.m. Breaking and entering on Griswold Street. Report taken.

Tuesday, 8/24
3:13 a.m. Arrest of [redacted] for transporting/carrying alcoholic beverage as a minor, near Cumberland Farms on Montague City Road.

Wednesday, 8/25
2:44 a.m. Unwanted person on K Street. Peace restored.

Thursday, 8/26
3:49 p.m. Arrest of [redacted] for second offense of driving under the influence, marked lanes violations, failure to take care in starting, stopping, turning, or backing up, reckless operation of a motor vehicle, and driving to endanger.

Friday, 8/27
2:30 p.m. Shoplifting at Food City. Investigated.

Saturday, 8/28
2:12 p.m. Brush fire on Greenfield Road. Referred to another agency.

11:44 p.m. Fight at Third Street Alley. Investigated.

Sunday, 8/29
10:07 a.m. Domestic disturbance on K Street. Advised of options.

8:20 p.m. Brush fire in the Montague Plains Wildlife Management Area. Referred to another agency.

Monday, 8/30
1:24 a.m. Arrest of [redacted] for larceny under \$250 by single scheme, improper use of a credit card under \$250.

Tuesday, 8/31 6:48 a.m. Suspicious person at La Bodega on Fourth Street. Referred to an officer.

Wednesday, 8/18
7:22 a.m. Arrest of [redacted] for breaking and entering a building during daytime for felony, malicious destruction of property over \$250, larceny from building, and larceny under \$250 from La Bodega on Fourth Street.

11:38 a.m. Arrest of [redacted] on a default warrant.

Friday, 8/20
5:07 p.m. Arrest of [redacted] for third offense of driving under the influence, criminal operation of a motor vehicle with a suspended license, and operating to endanger.

9:55 p.m. Arrest of [redacted] for driving under the influence, operating to endanger, marked lanes violation, and failure to wear a seat belt.

Saturday, 8/21
1:21 a.m. Arrest of [redacted] for vandalism, damage, or defacement of property, and disturbing the peace. on Fairway Avenue.

5:00 p.m. Report of assault at Gill boat ramp. Investigated.

11:57 p.m. General disturbance in alleyway behind Second Street. Peace restored.

Sunday, 8/22
4:24 p.m. Larceny on Fourth Street. Investigated.

8:04 p.m. Domestic disturbance on Fourth Street. Advised of options.

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News Analysis

Digging Up Dirt at Northfield Mountain

BY JOSEPH A. PARZYCH
NORTHFIELD - A dredge and barge arrived on Tuesday at Northfield Mountain to suck up the silt FirstLight Power had dumped into the Connecticut River before the federal EPA ordered them to cease and desist on August 3rd. After three months of pumping silt into the river, FirstLight was ordered by the EPA to halt that discharge for "polluting the navigable waters of the United States."

Since then, FirstLight has been scrambling to find alternate ways to dispose of the vast quantity of silt that clogged the mile long, 35-foot diameter intake tunnel at the pumped storage hydro facility, so they can begin producing electricity again.

The hydro facility was shut down in May for what was planned to be a three week

maintenance period, to dredge silt sediment that had accumulated in Northfield Mountain's 320-acre upper reservoir over the past decade or more. But when FirstLight's contractors drained the upper reservoir in May, hundreds of thousands of yards of silt were sucked down the intake tunnel, clogging it to a height of up to 16 feet. Trash gates at the top of the tunnel, originally installed to protect the generators in the powerhouse from debris, came crashing down with the descending silt, damaging the giant turbines and necessitating further repairs and more delay.

Now, twelve inch diameter ABS pipe snakes from the tail-race at the bottom of the intake tunnel up to sediment ponds Davenport Trucking is constructing by Route 63 to hold the excavated silt, since the river



JOSEPH A. PARZYCH PHOTO

A worker at Northfield Mountain connects twelve-inch ABS plastic pipe with internal connectors in a pipe joining jig, sheltered from the rain on Ferry Road, by the pump house. A pipe of this diameter will be able to move a lot of slurry in a hurry from the clogged intake tunnel at the pumped hydro facility. The question is - where to put it, now that the EPA has halted FirstLight from discharging silt directly to the Connecticut River?

is off limits. The ABS pipe is ready to be hooked up to Dredge America's equipment once it is launched. This dredge and ABS pipe combination is common in beach restoration and results in sand - or silt in this case - being pumped at a terrific rate.

A lot has gone wrong, and the routine maintenance outage has become a trial and error of attempts to clear the tunnel, and has now stretched to four months, and the end is not yet in sight.

Wells Go Dry

Trouble began in early May, when several households on Lower Farms Road in Northfield, next to Northfield Mountain's pump house off of Route 63, suddenly found their wells going dry. These wells are drilled deep down to an aquifer

see DIGGING page 14

GMEF Recognizes Benefactors with Recognition Plaque



MARTY ESPINOLA PHOTO

(left to right) Jane Oakes, Susan Hastings, Carol Gloski, Paul "Squeezebox" Gluck, TFHS/MS principal Donna Fitzpatrick, Joyce Philips and Nancy Daniel-Green.

BY JOYCE PHILLIPS
TURNERS FALLS - The Gill-Montague Education Fund board of directors recently continued the tradition of honoring their

benefactors with a sixth annual recognition plaque.

Donna Fitzpatrick, principal of Great Falls Middle School and Turners Falls High School,

received the plaque from members of the GMEF and Paul "Squeezebox" Gluck, a member of the Philadelphia Mummies' Aqua String Band who performed in April at the 6th Annual 2010 Gill-Montague Gala.

In recognition of Hillside Plastics, Inc. and Montague Elks Lodge #2521 for their continued support as corporate underwriters and the many tier givers, the plaque with engraved plates bearing their

names will be hung outside the theater at Turners Falls High School.

The annual gala, while earning financial support for the enrichment of our students, has proven to be a source of ongoing enrichment for the community. As a result of the annual gala, the GMEF has awarded over \$58,850 in grants since 2005 to enhance learning at district schools in various fields including science, music, art, athletics, language and reading.

To learn more about the Gill-Montague Education Fund, the grants previously awarded, upcoming concerts and how to get involved, go to the GMEF website at www.thegmef.org.

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NOTES FROM THE GILL-MONTAGUE SCHOOL COMMITTEE

Open Meeting Law Finding Aired

BY ELLEN BLANCHETTE – On August 4th, assistant district attorney Cynthia Pepyne sent a letter to the Gill-Montague school district attorney, Russell Dupere, regarding an anonymous complaint filed with the district attorney for the Northwestern District having to do with a possible open meeting law violation regarding the election of the school committee chair. This issue was discussed at the August 24th meeting of the school committee. Pepyne said in her letter that while there was no clear violation of the open meeting laws (since she could find no evidence of a deliberate attempt to circumvent these laws), there had been several conversations between Sandra Brown, former school committee member from Gill, and as many as six current members about the election of a chair for the committee following the elections of May 18th. These conversations occurred between Brown and individual members, and since Pepyne found that these members may have not been aware of Brown's discussions with other members, she found it insufficient evidence to establish a clear violation of the law.

However, in her letter she did warn members that "for the future, members should be aware that discussion of committee business outside of a posted open meeting raises issues of trust amongst the public as well as other committee members."

Pepyne requested that the letters she received from each member as part of her inquiry, as well as her decision letter, be included in the public record and attached to the minutes of the meeting.

In closing her inquiry into the matter she noted that the Attorney General will be handling all issues regarding the open meeting law in the future. This decision was made by the legislature in order to bring continuity to this policy throughout the state.

In discussing the conclusions reached by the District Attorney's office, members were of differing opinions as to the seriousness of the matter. There continues to be some confusion among members regarding what may and may not be done by members regarding communications outside of the open meetings, and so some clarification may be requested of the Attorney General and the school district's attorney, Dupere.

On the 24th, superintendent Carl Ladd and the school committee set the date for a district meeting in another attempt to pass a budget for FY'11. The meeting will be held on Thursday, November 18th, 2010 at 6:30 p.m. in the Turners Falls High School auditorium. If there is no agreement by December 1st, the state will set the budget for the district. Ladd said the 1/12th budget that the district is functioning under at present is sufficient, and will be adjusted once a budget is set. He agreed it would be better to wait until state assessments are completed to hold a district meeting. Whereas only town members may vote at the two Montague town meetings, at a district meeting all residents of both Montague and Gill may vote to decide on the total assessment amount for the school district.

GILL from pg 7

In the course of the sewer pump discussion, the subject of Riverside, Griswold raised the issue sewer user fees. She felt the "rainy day" fund provided by these fees would grow faster if there were a flat rate fee on all users. Ward disagreed, saying a progressive rate based on use encouraged good practices in terms of water conservation and was a fairer way to deal with the fact that many users are older and on fixed incomes.

Gill will be part of a Community Development Block Grant proposal for housing rehab funds along with four to six other towns. A public hearing so people can learn about proposed upgrades through CDBG funds is scheduled for September 27th at 6:30 p.m. The board also signed off on Chapter 90 reimbursement requests and authorized the highway department to move forward

on the dump truck body replacement it has been planning.

Fire chief Gene Beaubien and firefighter Mike Crochier gave board members an update on a brush truck the department wants to purchase, the price for which falls within the \$13,000 range approved by town meeting. The fire department has gotten quotes on the assembly and attachments and the work that needs to be done. The department was authorized to proceed with the brush truck purchase.

Beaubien also relayed a request from firefighters for the board to consider reimbursing them for the time some of firefighters spend taking relevant but non-mandated training and courses that add to their skills as members of the force. Selectboard member Randy Crochier, with a son on the force, recused himself from the discussion.

"These folks take time off

from work to attend classes," stated Beaubien. "So it's reasonable to ask. They're not expecting to have their wages replaced, but can they be reimbursed in some kind of way?"

The board was hesitant to set a precedent. "We might identify a limited amount in our budget that could be used for this, for example," selectboard member Ann Banash said, "but we need some time to look into this."

Public Service announcements, a new part of the meeting, included acknowledgement of the Franklin County Home Care Home Weatherization program deadline of October 15th, the Gill Recreation Committee Annual Tag Sale at the former Riverside School on September 4th (rain date September 5th), and the change of town library hours from Monday and Thursday to Tuesday (2-6 p.m.) and Thursday see GILL pg 14

NEFC from pg 9

explicitly taught how to listen, cooperate with others, and disagree respectfully, and teaching them these social skills helps them do their best academically. If a teacher works with students on both academic and social skills, both tend to spiral upwards.

NEFC's first book appeared in 1985, and now NEFC is the sole source provider of the Responsive Classroom approach to elementary teaching, which emphasizes social, emotional, and academic growth in a strong and safe school community.

In 2004, Turners Falls was fortunate to attract NEFC from Greenfield to the town's newly renovated Colle Opera House, where the expanding nonprofit moved into the two upper floors. In 2006, taking advantage of Montague's commercial home-steading program, NEFC purchased a two story brick building in the alleyway off 2nd Street for one dollar and spent about half a million more renovated it into a modern workshop and conference facility.

On the Avenue, the NEFC looks as barren as the tip of an iceberg, if you just view its quiet front window (between the Shea Theater and the Gallery), because most of its staff and the numerous clients/guests that

come for workshops and trainings enter through the back of the Colle building or go directly into the quirky little classroom building on 66 2nd Street.

The quiet street level storefront window on Avenue A belies the beehive of activity taking place in the floors above and beyond, where 30 people work in the 16 office suites or offices, or the multi-purpose rooms where meetings, trainings, and classes take place.

The Avenue A headquarters supervise more than 100 consulting kindergarten through sixth grade teachers engaged in fieldwork in some 30 states, including Alaska, and also Canada. A nonprofit licensee, Origins, in Minneapolis, Minnesota provides training for elementary and middle school teachers in the upper Mid West and Oklahoma. Both groups provide workshops, consulting services, and supporting publications.

In the past few years, with the downswing in the economy, the nonprofit NEFC has not had to lay off staff or stop its print and electronic publishing or decrease services. But as NEFC staffer Alice Yang noted, the economy has "forced school budget cuts, which means schools are less able than during more prosperous times to provide their teachers with crucial

professional development."

In hard times, it's the children who miss out on important aspects of their education. But Yang noted many schools are still finding ways to bring in professional development for their teachers. She said NEFC is, "cautiously optimistic the economy will revive soon, so more of America's school children will get the full education that they need."

Currently, 6,000 people attend NEFC sponsored workshops and institutes in approximately 100 locations each year. The Responsive Classroom quarterly newsletter for elementary educators has a readership of 85,000, while 120,000 books and other publications are sold each year. About 35,000 people visit the Responsible Classroom website, www.responsiveclassroom.org each month. In addition, the Responsive Classroom Facebook page has nearly 8,000 fans, and the Responsive blog nearly 500 subscribers.

All these services and resources are created, maintained, and continually refined by the efficient staff working in the upper reaches of Royal Colle's old Opera House, right in the middle of historic Power Town. That's something to celebrate this Labor Day.



HIGHLIGHTS FROM THE WENDELL POLICE LOG

Plant Thrown at Front Door

Sunday, 8/15
6:45 a.m. Resident reported bench at community garden was vandalized. He repaired it.
Wednesday, 8/18 6:30 a.m. Report of suspicious, noisy person on Locke Hill Road. Spoke with individual. No further problem.
Saturday, 8/21
1:00 p.m. Depot Road

resident reported his mailbox hit by a car overnight. Vehicle also ran off the road and then left the scene.
Tuesday, 8/24
11 a.m. West Street resident reported a HP laptop computer and \$10 in change taken from unlocked vehicle sometime on the night of 8/13/2010.

Thursday, 8/2
5:50 p.m. Morse Village Road resident reported vandalism and a scooter stolen from residence today.
8:57 p.m. Morse Village Road resident reports a plant thrown at his front door minutes ago. Nobody found in the area.

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JESSICA HARMON ILLUSTRATION

BY FRED CICETTI

LEONIA, NJ – Q. *Isn't living in the country healthier than living in the city?*

I don't think there's a definitive answer to that question. My first reaction to this inquiry was that life in the country is much healthier. It seemed obvious because of the crime, pollution, crowding and stress of the city.

However, the National Rural Health Association (NRHA), a national nonprofit organization, gave me some surprising information that made me rethink my answer.

Here are some of the facts from the NRHA:

- Only about 10 percent of physicians practice in rural America, which contains nearly 25 percent of the population. There are 2,157 Health Professional Shortage Areas in rural and frontier areas of all states and US territories, compared to 910 in urban areas.

- Rural residents are less likely to have employer-provided health care coverage or prescription drug coverage, and the rural poor are less likely to be covered by Medicaid benefits than their urban counterparts.

THE HEALTHY GEEZER: Rural Blues

- Two thirds of the deaths attributed to car accidents occur on rural roads. One reason for the high mortality rate is delays between a reported accident and the arrival of an emergency medical team located far from the scene. The national average response time for a car accident in rural areas is 18 minutes, or eight minutes longer than in urban areas.

- As many as 90 percent of first responders in rural areas are volunteers, not paid professionals.

- People living in the country are nearly twice as likely to die from unintentional injuries than are urban residents.

- Rural folk are at a significantly higher risk of death by gunshot than urban residents.

- Abuse of alcohol and use of tobacco are significant problems among rural youth. The rate of drinking-and-driving arrests is significantly greater in non-urban counties. Rural eighth graders are twice as likely to smoke cigarettes as their peers in the cities.

- Cerebrovascular disease and high blood pressure are higher in rural areas.

- About 20 percent of non-metropolitan counties lack mental health services compared to five percent of metropolitan counties.

- The suicide rate among rural men is significantly higher than in urban areas. The suicide rate among rural women is escalating

rapidly and is approaching that of men.

- More than 470 rural hospitals have closed in the past 25 years.

- Rural residents often have to travel long distances to reach a doctor or hospital.

After learning about rural health, I don't think I'll ever feel the same when I drive on blue highways.

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

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The Gill Gourmet

– Cajun Sweet Corn –

BY JOSEPH A. PARZYCH –

Now that sweet corn season is in full swing, I'd like share a recipe.

It's not one of my favorites, but I thought readers would enjoy it anyway. The recipe; not the corn.

Pot Roasted

This is a very simple recipe that seems to work every time.

1. Put husked sweet corn in a pot and cover with water.
2. Turn burner on high and bring to a boil.
3. Wander off to the garden, mow the lawn, or take a trip into town.
4. You will know when the corn is done when you get back to a house full of smoke and shrieking fire alarms.
5. Grab the pot and carry it outside.
6. Call the fire department and tell them not to bother sending out a truck again, since you have exhaust fans clearing the house of smoke.
7. Eat the sweet corn, avoiding the charred part.

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GO GREEN FAMILY

Episode 22: Staying Warm and Cozy: The Heat Challenge

BY JEANNE WEINTRAUB-MASON

MONTAGUE CENTER - From their couch at home, Beverly Bartlett and her daughter Jayden watched WGBJ host Sam Lively on television, as he popped out from behind an ancient oil furnace, then gingerly stepped back to keep the dust off his jacket. "What made him decide to wear a pink tie and white linen jacket if he knew they were going to film in a grimy basement?" wondered Beverly.

"Now that it's September,

it's time for our contestants to rethink how they heat their homes. Here in New England, we've got a long heating season ahead of us, and with oil at \$3.50 a gallon, there are some powerful incentives for saving energy and reducing our carbon footprint. Let's see how our three families decide to tackle this next challenge." Sam concluded his intro by pretending to check a setting on the furnace.

Soon afterwards, heating contractor John Wyatt paid a visit to the Bartletts' house. As

soon as he walked into the sun drenched living room and felt the warmth of the tile floor through his socks, he knew this was a passive solar house. He appreciated that the warm floor and massive walls were there for heat storage, or "thermal mass," while the large windows framing the southern view towards the Sawmill River Valley were capturing energy from the sun.

"Built in the '90s, right?" he asked.

"That's right - how did you know?" Gerry Bartlett replied.

"The overhangs - those are

your 'on-off' switches for overheating, if you will. If this was one of those passive solar houses built in the 70's, you'd really be cooking without shades on a day like today. Passive solar houses built more recently like this one generally don't overheat."

"So, we've got this solar house that's already pretty easy and inexpensive to heat. Is there anything we can do to go greener?" Gerry asked cautiously.

"You're using electric for your back-up heat, right? How about a geothermal backup sys-

tem instead? It collects heat that is stored naturally underground. A geothermal system doesn't burn fuel like a furnace. It just requires a system of pipes and pumps. In the summer, you reverse the process to use water circulated underground to cool your house."

Sounds good to me," Gerry answered with a smile. In bare feet, shorts and a sleeveless t-shirt, he reached for his checkbook.

Continued next issue ...

DIGGING from page 11 in bedrock. Some adjacent homes, with shallow wells drawing water from an aquifer above bedrock, like Linda Rice's well, did not lose water.

Steve Doyle, a district maintenance operations engineer for the Massachusetts Department of Transportation, who also lives on Lower Farms Road, said there is a layer of clay about 12 feet deep supporting a shallow aquifer above the bedrock there.

"We had our [deep] well go dry in May when they began pumping out the intake tunnel,"

Public Hearing

In accordance with the provisions of Chapter 138, General Laws, as amended, the inhabitants of the Town of Montague are hereby notified that The Montague Parks & Recreation Department will be sponsoring a public meeting to discuss the final design and preliminary cost estimates of the Skatepark portion of the Unity Park Improvement Project. The meeting will be held on Thursday, September 16 at 7:00 pm in the Second Floor Meeting Room of Montague Town Hall, located at One Avenue A in Turners Falls. Public participation is welcomed.

Doyle said. "There are so many cracks in the tunnel that pumping drained the aquifer down," he added. "But First Light was pretty good about getting a plumber to hook us up to temporary tanks they put on the lawn. We have 800 gallons of storage."

Doyle continued, "I don't know what's going to happen when we get freezing weather. The officials say they'll be done clearing the silt in a few weeks, but the guys working on the tunnel say it'll be December, or later, before they're done."

"First Light has been very good to us," Lower Farms Road resident James Andreas said. "They responded as soon as we called. The plumber came out and installed a pump and tank in our cellar and piped it up to tanks out on the lawn. I told them I wanted to water my garden, too, so they set up three tanks for a total of 2,500 gallons. I told them I wasn't going to drink water sitting out in the sun all day, incubating who-knows-what, and they put in a water cooler and tank in the house for drinking water. A swimming pool water hauler from Westfield delivers twice a week. The truck is usually here Monday or Tuesday, and again on Friday."

Unsympathetic Farmer

Tom Shearer, whose Cross Road farm is not far from the

tailrace tunnel at Northfield Mountain, said his shallow well has not been affected by the maintenance shutdown. But he has no sympathy for Northfield Mountain's troubles.

"I don't feel sorry for them," Shearer said. "They deserve it! I've lost a lot of farmland. It isn't steady erosion, but the river going up and down six or eight feet, day after day, undermines the bank, and then, all of a sudden, a big chunk of my land falls in the river and I don't get a dime for it."

Ducks in a Row

Since the EPA issued their cease and desist order, Northfield Mountain has set up alternate methods for disposing of silt, rather than discharging it into the river.

Silt is being trucked to a disposal site to the north of the upper reservoir.

Abington Constructors, the firm that has taken over the task of clearing silt from the intake tunnel from Cianbro Company, is using 20 21,000-gallon capacity liquid storage tanks to settle out silt pumped from the tunnel, discharging the clear water back to the river. The tanks are lined up on the banks of the Connecticut River by the tailrace, two by two, all in a row, sitting on a bed of crush stone. These weir tanks with baffles are designed to settle out solids, according to tank manufacturer,

Brian Bent of V-E Enterprises, Springer, OK.

"These tanks are usually loaded at shoulder height. Material passes tank to tank. By the time water laden silt gets to the last tank in the series, the water will be relatively clear," Bent said.

The 21,000-gallon tanks, which look like box cars, measure eight and a half feet wide by 45 feet long and nine and a half feet high.

Trash Racks Trash Turbines

Abington Constructors are scheduled to repair damage caused by steel trash racks that fell apart at the tunnel's entrance at the upper reservoir and passed through the turbines, according to one Northfield Mountain worker who wishes to remain anonymous. That employee blames lack of maintenance for the trash racks' failure. He reports that welders have repaired such damage in the past.

Deep Silt Getting Deeper

When the upper reservoir was drained in May, dragging silt and trash racks down the tunnel, the level of silt at the tailrace was only a few feet deep, according to this source. As the construction crew has worked its way up the tunnel to the powerhouse, digging away at the face of the blockage, the

see **DIGGING** page 16

GILL

from page 12 (3-8 p.m.).

The Weatherization Program drew the most discussion, with member John Ward declaring it a "great deal" and urging the public to act quickly on this opportunity to get a free Mass Save assessment of weatherization needs on their homes, in turn leading to a reimbursement of 25% or up to \$600 for follow-up work for those homeowners over 60.

"Mass Save's turnaround times on assessments are much quicker than they were," Ward said.

He also noted that documentation of an assessment is required in order to qualify for grants to put PV panels on one's home, and shared the details of his own experience, which allowed him to get PV panels installed for a fraction of the actual cost as a result.

A public meeting at the Franklin Regional Council of Governments office on September 13th at 5:30 p.m. will consider FRCOG's regional pedestrian plan. While there is little demand for sidewalks in Gill, several of those present noted the future need, as part of the intersection upgrade on Route 2 at the Gill-Montague Bridge, for a crosswalk to provide safe passage for walkers and children on bicycles to cross the highway.



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JACK COUGHLIN ILLUSTRATION

THURSDAY, SEPTEMBER 2nd
Deja Brew, Wendell: *The Relics*, Brian Mallet and Lefty Cullen playing all your favorite oldies from the 50's & 60's, 8 to 10 p.m.

The Rendezvous, Turners Falls: *Falltown String Band*, 7:30 p.m. No cover.



Caravan of Thieves perform at Burrito Rojo, Saturday, September 11th, 8 p.m.

FRIDAY, SEPTEMBER 3rd
Early Morning Nature Walks, start at the Great Falls Discovery Center, Turners Falls at 8 a.m. Led by a DCR Interpreter take a leisurely walk along the bike path and village sidewalks. Learn about plants, animals, and mill town history. Continues 9/5, 9/10 & 9/12. (413) 863-3221 for info.

Celtic Music & Dance Concert at Celtic Heels School of Irish Dance Center, Greenfield. Fiddler, Adam R. Sweet and guitarist, Jim Bunting with guest dancers. A variety of styles, but mostly traditional songs and acoustic music of a Celtic nature including Irish, Scottish,

Welsh and Cape Breton. 8 p.m. \$10/\$8 members.

Deja Brew, Wendell: *Barrett Anderson*, renegade blues, 9 to 11 p.m.

Burrito Rojo, Turners Falls: *Mo Ambeasa*, reggae!, 8 p.m.

SATURDAY, SEPTEMBER 4th, Montague Farm Cafe, a free family-friendly meal with activities. Noon to 3 p.m. Continues each Saturday. Call Karen: 367-5275 if you want to come, need a ride, or want to volunteer some time or garden surplus.

The Shea Theater presents the Cambridge University (UK) American Tour of Shakespeare's *The Tempest*. A return visit by this wonderful Shakespeare troupe of university students from England! One performance only, 7 p.m. FREE admission. Reservation necessary (donation requested). For reservations, call the Shea Theater, (413) 863-2281.

Deja Brew, Wendell: *Jimi Star*, Waylon & Willie tribute artist - Rock-a-Billy, 9 to 11 p.m.

MONDAY, SEPTEMBER 6th
Montague Center Farmer's Market, on the common, Montague Center, 3 to 7 p.m. Vendors welcome.

The Rendezvous, Turners Falls: *Bladerunner* on the Big Screen, 9:30 p.m.

THURSDAY, SEPTEMBER 9th
Deja Brew, Wendell: *Free Range*, rock out with Betsy, Mark and Bruce to clas-

sic rock and dance music, 8 to 10 p.m.

The Rendezvous, Turners Falls: *Cinnamon Ums*, folk, etc. 8 p.m.

Burrito Rojo, Turners Falls: *John Clarke*, Singer/Songwriter, 7 p.m.

FRIDAY, SEPTEMBER 10th
Singer songwriter *Michael Orlen* performs at the Great Falls Coffeehouse. Orlen draws on an extensive knowledge of twentieth century folk, blues, and ragtime music to choose songs that resonate in today's world. The coffeehouse takes place in the historic Great Hall of the Great Falls Discovery Center, Turners Falls. Doors open at 6:30 p.m. Performance at 7 p.m. Coffee & homemade baked goods. Museum Store open during intermission. Suggested donation of \$6 - \$12, free for children.

Deja Brew, Wendell: *Richard Chase Group*, acoustic driven originals, 9 to 11 p.m.

The Rendezvous, Turners Falls: Welcome Hallmark Students! *Jamie Kent*, jazz/pop/rock, \$3 cover.

Burrito Rojo, Turners Falls: *Flabberghaster*, rock/funk/blues, 9 p.m.

SATURDAY, SEPTEMBER 11th
Birds of the Massachusetts Coast: Piping Plovers and More, by photographer John Van De Graaff on display at the Great Falls Discovery Center thru **September 30th**. Reception 1 to 3 p.m. meet the photographer, see these amazing images.

PowerTown Music, a Social Enterprise of the Brick House Community Resource Center, presents: *Caravan of Thieves* 8 p.m. at Burrito Rojo, Turners Falls. \$10 adv \$12 at the door. <http://caravanofthieves.com>.

Deja Brew, Wendell: *The Equalites*, reggae fantastiko! 9 to 11 p.m.

The Rendezvous, Turners Falls: *Carrie Ferguson & Kristen Ford*, \$5 cover.

SUNDAY, SEPTEMBER 12th
The Rendezvous, Turners Falls: *SLOPE POETRY!* at 5 p.m. Followed by *TNT KARAOKE* at 8 p.m.

Deja Brew, Wendell: *Harp Beat*, 8 to 10 p.m.

THURSDAY, SEPTEMBER 16th
Deja Brew, Wendell: *Wailin' Dave Robinson & Tommy Filault*, lues based roots music, 8 to 10 p.m.

Burrito Rojo, Turners Falls: *Kevin Jones*, jazz guitarist, 7 p.m..

WEDNESDAYS
Great Falls Farmers Market. On the lawn near the Discovery Center, Avenue A, Turners Falls. 2 to 6 p.m. Rain or shine every Wednesday.

FRIDAYS
Gill Friday Night Films outside behind the Riverside Green School, Rt 2, 8 p.m. will show a general admission film on the back wall. Bring lawn chairs, blankets, snacks. Canceled if rain.

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PowerTown Music
A social enterprise of the Brick House Community Resource Center
presents...
Sat. Sept. 11 8:00pm - *Caravan of Thieves* with Luke & Simon Eaton and Dakota Roberts at Burrito Rojo, Turners Falls \$10 adv. \$12 at door.
Fri. Sept. 24 8:00pm - *Anais Mitchell* with the Hadestown Orchestra at The Shea Theater, Turners Falls. Sponsored by the Montague Bookmill.
Sat. Sept. 25 8:00pm - *Moon Boot Lover* with Grooveshoes at Burrito Rojo, Turners Falls.
Thurs. Sept. 30 8:00pm - *The David Wax Museum* at Burrito Rojo, Turners Falls.
For tickets and more info: www.powertownmusic.com

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3. **VAMPIRES SUCK** PG13 DAILY 7:00 9:20
4. **THE LAST EXORCISM** PG13 DAILY 12:15 3:15 6:45 9:15
5. **THE OTHER GUYS** PG13 DAILY 12:15 3:15 6:45 9:15
6. **GOING THE DISTANCE** R in DTS sound DAILY 12:30 3:30 6:30 9:00
7. **MACHETE** R DTS sound DAILY 12:30 3:30 6:30 9:30

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In July of 2008 the Fox Islands Electric Cooperative, of which Vinalhaven is a member, voted 383-5 to begin a wind power project, one of the first on the East coast. The hope was to save energy costs and perhaps charge thermal storage heaters and sell the additional power Vinalhaven didn't need off-island. Previously, power was imported from the mainland via a submarine cable.

Can You Hear the Wind?

BY LESLIE BROWN

VINALHAVEN - The skyline across from my Maine vacation cottage has changed.

Twelve miles off the mainland, the island of Vinalhaven now sports three huge wind turbines placed at the highest point, about mid-island. Last summer I saw barges and even the passenger ferry delivering huge metal parts. Everything on the island is delivered by ferry or barge, whether a refrigerated truck of food, a cement mixer, or a load of cordwood. Obviously this elevates the cost of anything bought, sold or built on the island. Small wonder that island commuters often travel the ferry laden with carts, bags and boxes of food and beverage they have purchased in the big box stores in Rockland.

On this island community of 1200, year-round residents survive by lobstering or are in the

This tightly knit community welcomed the three turbines last year. The project has indeed been successful in delivering local energy at a fraction of the previous cost, and in a more reliable manner. According to the Fox Island Cooperative, the average cost per kilowatt hour is five to six cents compared to a national average rate of 11.36 cents in 2008.

For a community that subsists on fishing and tourism, any local savings is significant. The island provides its own K-12 public school, largely locally funded, and is fiercely independent. However, as in any island community, residents are codependent and generally focus projects and planning on the good of the whole.

Two years after the inception of the project, the turbines receive somewhat mixed reviews. While most of the islanders approve of the turbines, a handful of residents who live

within a mile of the windmills have complained of problems with noise from the day the turbines began turning.

Despite improved electric bills, factions are taking sides and questions are being asked about the complainants and about biased noise data collection. From the viewpoint of the windmill's closest neighbors, there seems to be a higher personal cost of sleep disruption and anxiety.

According to the National Renewable Energy Laboratory in Colorado, wind turbine noise is becoming a bigger issue in the United States. The problem has already been recognized in Europe where wind farms are older and are built in more densely populated areas. Even in Maine, the Mars Hill wind farm in Aroostook County and the turbines in Waldo County have brought complaints of sleeplessness and anxiety from nearby residents.

Research by the NREL has provided some unexpected results. Sound isn't as simple as something you hear or you don't. It isn't just noise; it involves frequency and pitch. For example, very low frequency sounds which are inaudible to humans are the same sound waves that elephants and whales use to communicate over long distances.

People are differently sensitive to sound frequency. It is the 'silent sounds' that may be the cause of the human complaints of sleeplessness and mood disorder. The problems are complicated by

the fact that state and indeed national noise compliance standards are really about amplitude or volume.

Wind turbines also create pressure waves which cannot be heard. Called infrasound, these waves caused serious issues with some early turbine installations, such as one in Boone, NC built in the 1970s. This pressure wave shook houses with an earthquake-like effect and resonated in body cavities so that some people felt seasick, in addition, no doubt, to feeling sleep-deprived and anxious. For these reasons, windmill farms are no longer constructed with the wind at their back.

On my mainland peninsula there is a homeowner who has installed a small turbine in his front yard on a raised bed, much like one you would use to install a flagpole. The tower is a third again as high. When the three blades are spinning at full force, the windmill produces an irritating, high-pitched sound much like that of a jet engine revving for takeoff. However, this turbine also revolves slowly from north to east to west to catch the day's prevailing winds and thus is only loudly annoying one third of the time it is running. Even then, the noise impact has no greater impact than that of the neighboring lobster boat motors, except that it is a new sound in the area.

Fox Island Cooperative has asked the NREL to come to Vinalhaven to investigate their problems. The results are informative. Data collection indicate

that noise annoyance did not always correlate with proximity to the turbines. Also, the fact that the island is surrounded by ocean where the atmosphere traps any noise is significant. Further, the turbines are mounted on granite which may be a more powerful transmitter of sound than the soil on which many windmills are erected.

The pressing need to explore alternative sources of energy is evident to most thinking people. Here in western Massachusetts, we are fortunate in having access to studies and research which can inform our use of and planning for wind power. We can take some time, if not too much, to benefit from the experience of others.

On Vinalhaven, the data collecting by the NREL continues. What is the source of the sound problem: the blades, the rotor, the siting? Can the speed be reduced without compromising effectiveness? Is there a better blade design?

Here in Franklin County, residents have raised concerns of noise, environmental effect on birds and other wildlife, and the question of esthetics. The towers on Vinalhaven are majestic or intrusive depending on your point of view. But the savings and carbon offset benefits from wind power cannot be contested.

We are fortunate in being able to access much research and many options before choosing the best plan for our own rural area. Just the same, we probably shouldn't wait too long.

DIGGING from pg 14

height of the silt continued to rise, to more than 16 feet. This height increases the threat of a cave-in or mudslide, endangering workers below.

The tunnel is cleared to the power house now, but there are still hundreds of feet of blocked tunnel to the upper reservoir remaining to be unplugged.

In August, workers were using small crawler excavators and skid steer bucket loaders, [1/4 - 1/2 cubic yard capacity, the size of a big wheelbarrow] to chip away at the tunnel of silt. The machines removed the silt to the low point beneath the tailrace where it was mixed with water, reducing it to a slurry. The slurry, once pumped direct-

ly to the river, was rerouted to the settling tanks in mid August. Simultaneously, a concrete pump sent silt via a five inch pipe up the pump house shaft to load into dump trucks for disposal on the north side of the reservoir.

A new boom with larger floats has appeared in place of the boom that had been set up in the Connecticut River closest to the tailrace. Observers report that the silt earlier pumped into the river pulled the silt curtain down, floats and all, and buried it.

Robot Founders

Meanwhile, the Ted Berry Co. Inc of Livermore, ME dispatched a robot and high pres-

sure water hoses called 'Hydroblasters' to help FirstLight flush out the silt. Put to work at the upper end of the tunnel, the robot was getting buried while trying to wash the silt down, according to the confidential source. A closed circuit TV camera monitors the robot's progress, or lack thereof.

Vacuum Trucks Guzzle Silt

At least five Ace Grizzly and GapVax HV 57 vacuum trucks from North American Industrial Services of Gorham, ME are on the job, vacuuming silt out of settling tanks at the tailrace. Only one Ace Grizzly vacuum truck was counted going up the mountain in over two hours on a recent day. Last week, three

vacuum trucks were hooked up to settling tanks with suction hoses jumping. Two more North American trucks waited on Meadow Road. A FELIX Company catch basin vacuum truck from Manchester, NH, was also in the line of waiting vehicles.

These trucks are all carrying silt to a dump site on Northfield Mountain in the area of a ravine north of the upper reservoir that Davenport filled in May with silt dug for an access road to the reservoir outlet. Davenport built that access road in a futile attempt to clear the upper tunnel with a 200-ton Manitowac crane, since sent back to Maine.

Pantermehl Land Clearing crews, of Ashfield, MA, have

clear cut about five acres of land north of the reservoir by the old east access road, using a large feller-buncher machine. Pantermehl hauled wood chips off to FirstLight's biomass power plant in Fitchburg, and logs to a sawmill. The area Pantermehl cleared is where FirstLight contractors are dumping rock and gravel removed from the access road built in May at the upper reservoir. It seems the rocks and gravel pose a threat of further damage to turbines and valves, once normal operations resume.

It has been a long three weeks of 'routine maintenance' at Northfield Pumped Storage.



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