

WORD ON THE AVENUE

Whassup with the Skate Park? Page 5



RIVER SONG FEST

at the Discovery Center Page 16

LAKE PLEASANT

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THE VOICE OF THE VILLAGES

SEPTEMBER 25, 2008

Old Fashioned Barn Raising



BY DAVID DETMOLD

WENDELL - Over the weekend, an 1850s-era chestnut post and beam barn facing the town common in Wendell was reassembled by 60 community volunteers in a good old-fashioned barn raising. The barn is owned by Jonathan and Susan von

As the volunteers gathered on Saturday morning, Jonathan told them the barn had been used by generations of the Lewis family as a dairy barn, with four stanchions, a stall for mother and calf, a horse stall, and another low stall area, perhaps for pigs. There were haylofts above.

"It was the most beautiful barn inside, with wonderful aged timbers, and whitewashed areas in the dairy. There was a lot of history inside: old calendars and a handcarved fishing pole, with line and hook, clearly created by a kid to go fishing long ago."

In 1997, the von Ransons bought the farm from Brad Lewis, of Leverett, who in his younger days had helped his father with the dairy operation. His mother, Lucille Lewis, was a schoolteacher in Erving, and before that in Wendell, in one or the other of the old one-room schoolhouses that once dotted the town.

Von Ranson dismantled the barn last spring. "It was pretty decrepit. The roof had been somewhat maintained; the posts were rotten at the bottom, sawn off and propped up at different heights at different corners." He painstakingly mapped each timber as he took the barn apart, and

"It's kind of mysterious why so many people were willing to give up a whole day to help us out...

I think it has to do with doing something challenging together. They know it's real and useful."

- Jonathan von Ranson

determined how much of the original framing could be salvaged and reused. "Sixty to seventy percent of the timbers are original. Michael Idoine [of Quist Road Lumber] came and we sawed up logs for timbers: we salvaged some red oak from the tornado, white oak trucked up from Connecticut, and some was bought from loggers in Wendell: red pine and red oak and hemlock." In addition, some chestnut timbers were donated for the barn by neighbors Bob Shulman and Geoff Richardson.

Over the course of the past summer, von Ranson, sometimes with a helper, could be seen painstakingly sorting and grading the original posts and beams, determining which parts were sound and which parts required new wood scarfed on to restore their original load bearing capacity.

After cleaning up the area and pouring a new foundation last year, von Ranson mortised together a new sill for the barn from white oak, and installed a subfloor out of local hemlock boards. He lengthened all the posts to raise the height of the second story by 21 inches, "so we wouldn't hit our heads on the beams." Jonathan and Susan intend to live in an apartment in approximately a third of the restored barn, the south endabout 760 square feet - once the construction is finished.

The von Ransons are seeking permission from various boards to live without electricity, to use a composting toilet in their new apartment, and to reduce the requirements for their septic system since they will use only about 10% of the average amount of water for a household of two. "We want to lighten our environmental footprint and not be forced to install unnecessary infrastructure," Jonathan von Ranson said.

The rest of the barn will be used for a workshop, and a bay for their tractor.

The von Ransons are no strangers to simple living. For nearly twenty see BARN pg 8

Budget Setbacks for GMRSD

BY DAVID DETMOLD The Gill-Montague school committee met amid piles of books in the Sheffield School library on Tuesday, after an effort to achieve a budget agreement with the member towns of Gill and Montague went down to overwhelming defeat at last week's district meeting, where the school budget failed by a vote of 196 - 44. In the aftermath the committee offered a list of bad news in school choice losses (36 more students leaving the district, taking around \$180,000 in state aid with them), and new special education enrollment, which will likely cost the district an additional \$145,000 this year. These items combined will negatively affect the current school budget by \$325,000.

In terms of the possible fiscal relief from the state, the district had still not heard about Pothole grant funding as of Tuesday evening. But the committee voted unanimously to authorize the school administration to immediately apply half of any Pothole funds the Gill-Montague Regional School District (GMRSD) may receive to reduce the assessments to the towns.

Meanwhile, GMRSD continues to operate under a 1/12th budget of \$16,820,004, as mandated the Commissioner Elementary and Secondary Education on July 1st, and bill the towns quarterly. This is the identical budget number the towns voted down at the district meeting on September 17th. Another district meeting will be scheduled in the coming weeks.

"This has taken a great deal of any cushion we had when we reduced our budget to meet the Commissioner's budget," said GMRSD superintendent Ken Rocke, referring to the past week's SPED and school choice reversals.

Commissioner Mitchell Chester of the DESE will appear at a public meeting at the Holyoke High School, for a meeting of the Massachusetts Association of School Committees, on October 21st, from 5:30 - 7:30 p.m. Rocke encouraged citizens and town officials to attend and speak out on the subject of state aid for the schools.

The school committee was welcomed to Sheffield by new principal Elizabeth Musgrave, who explained the library was undergoing a complete makeover so it would be more welcoming to young readers. The Sheffield open house will be held on Thursday, September 25th, from 5:30 p.m. to 7:30 p.m.

Chip Wood, director of elementary curriculum for the district, said he had been successful in receiving a \$30,000 grant from the DESE to fund a full year of math tutorials for students and staff from Dr. Steve Smith, who worked in a similar capacity with the district last year, to acclaim. considerable Wood said the grant was particularly welcome, because math is the area where the district needs to show the most improvement on MCAS scores. "This will be the year when we really make some gains in that area," he predicted.

Wood extolled the features of a new computer software program called Renzuli, which he called "a gateway for our new computer labs in Gill, Sheffield and Hillcrest. It's like buying the best state of the art textbook, if you will, for children at the elementary level. Parents will also be able to access the program and work with their children on it at home.

PET OF THE WEEK

At Your Service



Pugsley

My name is Pugsley. I'm a two-year-old male black and white cat in need of a good home. I am a friendly dude who loves attention. I have lived with cats and dogs before. I love to play! I am FIV+, and I'm looking for a loving home where I can be an indoor kitty! For more information on adopting me please contact the Dakin Pioneer Valley Humane Society at 413-548-9898 or via email leverett@dpvhs.org.

GREAT FALLS MIDDLE SCHOOL STUDENTS OF THE WEEK

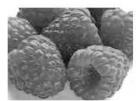
Grade 6:

Makileigh Barre-Bukowski Grade 7:

Sophie Letcher Grade 8:

Kelsey Yolish **Timothy Meyer**

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Local Subscription Rates: \$20 for 6 months

CARNEGIE LIBRARY NEWS Used Book Sale

BY LINDA HICKMAN

TURNERS FALLS - There will be a Used Book Sale at the Carnegie Library on Saturday, September 4th, from 10 a m. - 2 p m. Thousands of books, including mysteries, suspense, non-fiction, and children's, will be sold at \$2 a bag. The proceeds will go to the Friends of the Montague Public Libraries, who help support the three libraries and their programs. The sale will be held in the basement of the Carnegie Library, 201 Avenue A, Turners Falls. The used book room is quite full, and the library staff would prefer not to accept any more book donations until after the book sale. For more information, call 863-3214.

Preschool Story Hour

Preschool Story Hour is held on Wednesday mornings at 10:15 a.m., at the Carnegie Library. Young children and their families are invited to come and enjoy stories, crafts, music, activities and snacks with artist Ruth O'Mara. The themes for the month are as follows:

October 1st - Dinosaur Tales; October 8th - Dogs; October 15th - Horses; October 22nd -Masks; and October 29th -Pumpkin Stories.

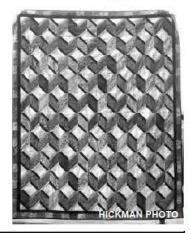
The weekly free series is designed for ages 3 to 5 and their parents, grandparents, and other caregivers. Siblings of any age are welcome. For more information, please call 863-3214.

Libraries Quilt Raffle

BY LINDA HICKMAN

TURNERS FALLS - This fabric boxes quilt made by Susan SanSoucie of Turners Falls is one of the prizes for the Friends of the Montague Public Libraries quilt raffle. The raffle will be held in early December. Raffle tickets are on sale at the Carnegie, Millers Falls, and Montague Center Libraries.

For more information call 863-3214.



WENDELL LIBRARY NEWS

Book Making Workshop

Classes will take place in October, on Saturday mornings 10:00 am. until noon, begin-October on Registration is limited; please call the library, 978-544-3559. The library has samples of the kind of books we will make together, come by and take a look.

The class will explore four or five types of binding styles, each week making a different book, which participants can take home. All will be book styles you can reproduce on your own. You will learn how

books are put together, explore paper in three dimensions, learn hand skills and techniques needed to make simple books. No previous experience is required, and all supplies are provided. This will be a fun introduction to making books and working with colorful papers, board, cloth and threads.

Julia Rabin, a resident of Wendell, has been painting and making art for 30 years. She has focused exclusively on book binding for the last eight years, working with Peter Geraty at the Praxis Bindery.



with the help of Brick House staff and the efforts of the Undergrowth Farmers from Gill, and donations from many local businesses. Thanks to all who put together this great event!

Cultural Grant Proposals Sought

Montague

The Montage Cultural Council is seeking grant proposals for community oriented arts, humanities, and interpretive science projects due October 15th. The priorities for applicants include: communitywide events such as concerts, festivals, and plays; projects led by local artists; environment, nature, and science education programs; as well as support for community arts and cultural organizations, and activities in schools.

Ten copies of each grant application, typed and signed, plus one copy of relevant support materials, though multiple copies are appreciated, must be postmarked by Wednesday, October 15th. Send completed application packets Montague Cultural Council, Montague Town Hall, 1 Avenue A, Turners Falls 01376. Forms and detailed guidelines are available at www.mass-culture.org. Contact Lisa Enzer, Chair, 413-367-2658.

Wendell

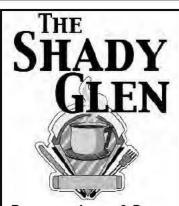
Wendell Cultural Council seeks funding proposals for community-oriented arts, humanities and science projects. Proposals must be submitted (postmarked) by October 15th.

These grants can support a variety of artistic projects and activities in Wendell - including exhibits, festivals, workshops, performances, and lectures.

The Wendell Cultural Council will also entertain funding proposals from schools and youth groups through the PASS Program, a ticket-subsidy program for school age children. The Wendell Cultural Council is part of a grassroots network of 329 local councils that serve every city and town in the state. The state legislature provides an annual appropriation to the Massachusetts Cultural Council, which allocates funds to each local coun-

This year, the Wendell Cultural Council will distribute \$4000 in grant funds. Application forms and more specific guideline information are available at the Wendell Free Library, town offices, post offices, and the Wendell Country Store, or on the web at www.masscultural.org/lcc_public.asp. Contact Phyllis Lawrence, WCC chairperson, at 413-367-2175 for questions.





BREAKFAST, LUNCH & DINNER

Lunch Specials from 11:00 a.m. Mon: American Chop Suey • Tues. Chicken Fricassie • Wed: Chicken Souvlaki, rice • Thurs: Corn Beef & Cabbage • Fri: Fried Scallops Sat: Yankee Pot Roast

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SENIOR CENTER ACTIVITIES -- Sept. 29th to Oct. 3rd

GILL/MONTAGUE Senior Tuesday, 30th Center, 62 Fifth Street, 9 a.m. Walking Group Turners Falls, is open 1 p.m. Canasta Monday through Friday from 9:00 a.m., to 2:00 p.m. for activities and congregate Council-on-Aging meals. Director is Bunny Caldwell. For information or to make reservations, call 863-9357. Meal reservations need to be made a day in advance by 11 a.m. Messages can be left on our machine when the center is not open. Mealsite Manager is Chris Richer. The Center offers a hot noon meal weekdays to any senior. A reservation is necessary and transportation can provided. Trips: Call the Senior Center 863-9357 or 863-4500.

Monday, 29th 10 a.m. Senior Aerobics 11 a.m. Easy Aerobics

Wednesday, 1st 10 a.m. Senior Aerobics 12:45 p.m. Bingo Thursday, 2nd 1 p.m. Pitch Friday, 3rd 10 a.m. Senior Aerobics 11 a.m. Easy Aerobics

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

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

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

Monday, 29th 9:00 a.m. Exercise 9:45 a.m. Library 12 Noon Pitch Tuesday, 30th 9 a.m. Aerobics 12:30 p.m. Painting Wednesday, 1st 8:45 a.m. Line Dancing 12 Noon Bingo Thursday, 2nd 9 a.m. Aerobics 10:15 a.m. Pool

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

Harvest Meal at the Brick House

BY DAVID DETMOLD

TURNERS FALLS - Turn the corner of the alley between 3rd and 4th Street by the Brick House on Monday evening and you would have run into a buffet meal for 50 neighborhood residents, who had gathered to enjoy a harvest meal prepared by the Undergrowth Farm in Gill and the Brick House staff, with donations from many area businesses.

The meal included veggie burgers, grilled Barramundi donated by Australis, red bliss potato salad, coleslaw, tomatogarlic soup, corn on the cob, collard greens, bread donated from the 2nd Street Bakery, pumpkin and apple pies, Candy Cane ice cream from Bart's and hand pressed cider made from apples picked in front of the Shea Theater, pressed on site. The main ingredients were organic vegetables from Undergrowth Farm, as well as produce from other local farms.

Ten-year-old Tatyana Santiago, a Sheffield student who attended the family dinner with her mother, said she enjoyed the meal. "I tried different kinds of foods." She liked the Barramundi the best, or maybe the rosemary bread from 2nd Street. Or maybe the pumpkin pie, baked in a cobb oven at Undergrowth Farm.

Cori Mathews was pressing the apples as fast as people could drink the cider. All manner of helpers lined up to help serve and prepare the meal.

"I know quite a few people here," said Sarah Kohler, of New Salem. She had stopped by to drop off her daughter, Bagheera, who volunteers at the Hot Spot Teen Center, and then decided to stay and help serve. "It's delightful," she said.

The harvest meal was paid for, in part, with a \$200 grant from the Community that Cares Coalition.

Workforce Summit

NORTHAMPTON - Are you a private sector businessperson who would like to hear from the Massachusetts Secretary for Labor and Workforce Development. Would you like to have the opportunity to relay your workforce priorities to her? Here's your chance!

The Franklin Hampshire Regional Employment Board invites businesspeople from the area to participate in a Workforce Strategies Summit at the Hotel Northampton on October 2nd from 3 - 6 p.m. Secretary Suzanne Bump and Dr. Paul Harrington from Northeastern University will talk about what the employment trends in the Pioneer Valley are, who is looking for jobs and which businesses have job vacancies, and where the skill gap exists between the two. Your views on how we can put

this information to use for our economic development advantage are needed!

Seating is limited. Call the FHREB at 413-773-1835 to reserve a space.



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TURNERS FALLS WATER DEPARTMENT WILL BEGIN READING METERS ON MONDAY SEPT 29th, 2008

Like to Sing?

We've got a place for you! Heart of the Valley Chorus Guest Nights are Oct. 1, 8, 15, 22 @7pm, JFK Middle School, Florence.

No professional singing experience required. For information call 665-0924 or 584-7878 or

visit our website www.heartofthevalleychorus.org



7th Annual Family Fall Fun Day October 18th

MONTAGUE-Montague Parks & Recreation will be holding its annual Family Fall Fun Day on Saturday, October 18th from 1:00 pm. - 3:30 p.m. at Unity Park in Turners Falls. The event will be held rain or shine, and will include Scarecrow Stuffing (\$5 per scarecrow), Pumpkin Carving

(\$1 per pumpkin), face painting, and a bake sale. The scarecrows (donated by Andy Carson of Millers Falls) and pumpkins (donated by Steve Melnick of Deerfield) are limited and first come/first serve. and should be reserved in advance as we cannot guarantee availability day of event.

Also, 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. Please contact us at 863-3216; recclerk@montague.net, www.montague.net.

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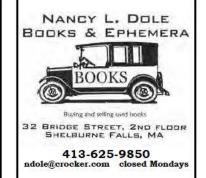














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Strong Public Schools

BY MARY KOCIELA

MONTAGUE - The following are my comments made at the District Meeting last week. I feel they bear repeating because, although the school budget was defeated by a very large margin, I still believe strongly in the school committee's position.

We will continue to work with the towns over the next couple of months, as we receive more information, and I remain hopeful that an agreement can be reached.

A town's public school budget is one of the most important things we contemplate each year. I have been on the school committee for eight years now, so like many of you, I am not new to town meeting or to school budget meetings.

The school committee role has changed significantly since I first began serving, but one thing that has not changed is the way in which the budget process seems to inevitably pit the schools against the towns. I am just as frustrated as you by this, because I know first hand that this administration and school committee cares deeply and has made every effort to save money and bring you the



most reasonable, fairest budget we can, with careful attention paid to what the towns can afford.

I promise you, we are not asking for money we do not need. If we have offered new information at a late date, it is not because this is an eleventh hour deal; it's eleventh hour information.

It is a result of a budget process that requires the school committee to put out a budget in February, five long months before we have any solid information. Like many things with the state, it doesn't make sense, but we have to do it. So, we guess. We give our best guess based on projected revenues, expenses based on what we spent last year and what we perceive to be the state fiscal climate. We put out a number in February, and by June things have changed.

The process would serve us all better if our preliminary budget could come out much later, but it cannot.

So, I ask you to understand the difficult framework we are forced to work with, and please approach the school budget with an open mind. Start with a spirit of community and trust, and remember our common ground: to provide our students with the best possible educa-

I know our town officials are angry with the state for mandating programs they don't pay for, and I don't blame them. In August, they were successful in arranging a meeting in Boston

We Welcome Your Letters!

Montague Reporter 58 4th St Turners Falls, MA 01376 FAX (413) 863-3050 reporter@montaguema.net

I'M WILLING TO DEBATE WITH FOREIGN LEADERS. THAT'S WHY I'M HERE TONIGHT WITH SENATOR OBAMA. BUT SERIOUSLY, I WAS BORN IN PANAMA. I'VE ALWAYS PUT MY COUNTRY FIRST. MY VIEWS WERE HARDENED IN THE HANOI HILTON: NO APPEASEMENT FOR TERRORISTS. NO RETREAT FROM THE OIL FIELDS OF IRAQ. BOMB, BOMB IRAN. KEEP A CLOSE EYE ON RUSSIA FROM THE GOVERNOR'S MANSION IN JUNEAU. AND TO THE PEOPLE'S REPUBLIC OF CHINA, WHO HAVE BEEN SO HELPFUL WITH OUR NATIONAL DEBT, I SAY, "ARIGATO!" CALL ME ANYTIME YOU NEED A FAVOR IN RETURN. I'M WILLING TO TALK TO ALL FOREIGN LEADERS. EVEN HALEY BARBOUR, THE GOVERNOR OF MISSISSIPPI. AFTER LISTENING TO THE COUNSEL OF MY 300 FOREIGN POLICY ADVISORS, I HAVE DETERMINED THAT THE WARS SUPPORTED BY MY OPPONENT, GEORGE BUSH, ARE BAD WARS. THE WARS I WILL SUPPORT AS PRESIDENT ARE GOOD WARS. AND AS MY FRIENDS ON THE ARAB STREET KNOW WELL, DIPLOMACY IS MY MIDDLE NAME.

Can't Wait for that Foreign Policy Debate...

...as soon as they finish fixing the economy.

with our representatives and officials from the Department of Elementary and Secondary Education. I commend them for this action, which will quite possibly result in additional Pothole funds coming to our district this fall.

But, this is where I must respectfully part ways. The towns have proposed a budget that is lower than last year's school budget, in order to send a message to the state. But, in my opinion, it sends the wrong message: a message that says we cannot take care of our own business and that we do not value our schools. In this climate of competition in school choice, this is too great a risk. And, what message does this send to our students? We have an opportunity to send a different, more positive message.

Here are some highlights of what we have done this past year to save you money. Last summer, ours was one of the first districts to join the state's Group Insurance Commission, Special Education account to what you have. allowing us to build a budget prevent us from going in the red

\$400,000 less than it would have been with the yearly 18% health insurance increase. We have consolidated our elementary schools, allowing us to move from four schools with insufficient staff, resources and programs to two Montague schools and one Gill school that are fully staffed and fully resourced, with a wider grade span and programs including art and music in each school.

We are projecting an end of the year balance that will allow us to build up our excess and deficiency fund reserves. We lobbied for criteria to be added in the state's Pothole language so that Gill-Montague would be prioritized, and as a result we are anticipating extra funds. which we have already committed to share on a 50-50 basis with the towns. We have reduced out of district Special Education costs by making the Mill Therapeutic Program a program within the district, and we have a newly created should an unanticipated SPED student require out of district expenses, as has happened in the past. And finally, we are actively pursuing collaborations with our neighboring districts to develop additional cost saving options.

KAREN WILKINSON ILLUSTRATION

It hasn't been an easy year, and we have held strong. I am very proud of all we have accomplished. I hope you are too. This is a school district you can feel proud of, and it's critical that we pull together. If you want to blame the state for the difficulty we are in, we're with you, but let's not do it at the risk of our public school families and teachers. The school district is not the thing that takes money from the town; we are the very thing that draws people into town. We are your neighbors, your family and your community's future.

Montague and Gill need a strong public school system, and as school committee chair I am happy to report that's



New Water Rates for Turners Falls

board of Water Commissioners of the Turners Falls Water Department voted Monday evening, September 22nd, to revise the water rates. The move was strongly suggested by the department's accounting firm. After much discussion, the commissioners voted to increase the rate to \$1.90 per 1,000 gallons, a 15 cent increase per 1,000 gal-

New water rates will be reflected on the May 1st, 2009

The new semi-annual billing is as follows:

Minimum Charge is \$30.00. 16,000 to 200,000 gallons

- \$1.90 per 1,000 gallons
- 201,000 to 400,000 gallons
- \$2.00 per 1,000 gallons 401,000 to 600,000 gallons
- \$2.10 per 1,000 gallons
- 601,000 to 800,000 gallons
- \$2.20 per 1,000 gallons
- 801,000 to 1,000,000 gallons \$2.30 per 1,000 gallons 1,001,000 and above -

\$2.40 per 1,000 gallons Water usage is based on a six-month period, approximately April 1st through September 30th for summer reads, and approximately October 1st through March 31st for winter reads. Sewer bills are based on winter water usage and then doubled.

There is a minimum charge of \$30.00 for usage up to 16,000 gallons for each sixmonth period.

The rate for usage outside the Turners Falls Fire District shall remain the same.

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GUEST EDITORIAL

State Must Help Solve Budget Crisis

BY JEFF SINGLETON

MONTAGUE - I believe it is time for the school district, the member towns and state education officials to negotiate a budget that is fiscally viable and meets core educational needs. This budget cannot lead to cuts in core programs, producing more enrollment losses and a downward spiral for the school district. At the same time, the budget cannot continue the policy of unaffordable assessments to the towns. It cannot rely on reserves and one-time revenues. This will only create another budget crisis next spring.

Most importantly, budgetary discussions must make real progress toward a long-term plan for fiscal stability for the school district and the towns. The ongoing structural budget crisis undermines education and causes deep divisions in our communities.

Town officials made these arguments over and over again at the recent district meeting on September 17th. The school dis-

trict budget proposed at that meeting was simply not viable. It relied on \$450,000 in GMRSD reserves and one-time revenues. It required Montague to use \$300,000 in reserves. Gill's assessment would have been twice its growth revenues, requiring a very large override. It would have produced a major budget crisis next year. The proposal contained no coherent plan for the future.

No one acted in bad faith or "moved the goal posts," as was suggested at the meeting. The towns and school district never agreed on a percentage increase in the assessment or budget; town officials always opposed the heavy use of reserves. Over four months ago, the Montague selectboard and finance committee voted an assessment that was in fact lower than the one proposed at the district meeting.

The district meeting understood these arguments and overwhelmingly voted the school budget down (195-44). Many



voters who traditionally support school district budgets said, "Enough is enough." These included parents with children in the district. They clearly were also uncomfortable with large cuts in the school budget, also soundly rejecting a proposal that would have produced very large reductions. Although there was no consensus on an alternative budget, these votes are, in fact, a coherent 'message.'

It is time to show leadership and work out a solution for the short and long term. There is no way this can happen without state involvement. The state is responsible for over 40% of school revenues. The level of state aid is a major reason for the district's current fiscal problems. Key parts of the school district budget are the result of state policy (special education, school choice, charter schools). The state has declared the district "underperforming" and is monitoring its progress.

and a long-term plan is not a child in the school district.

threat or a challenge. It reflects a plain and simple necessity. We understand the serious fiscal constraints at the state level. We have the same fiscal constraints at the local level. Now let us sit down and solve this problem.

Jeff Singleton, Precinct 1 town meeting member, Montague Calling for state involvement finance committee, parent of



WORD ON THE AVE

What do you think the town should do about the skate park?

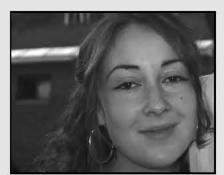


"I think they should keep it open, and they should have more things for the children." - Edie Williams Turners Falls



"We have kids that like to skateboard, and we think it's a good thing for them."

> - Kristen Graves and John Graves, Greenfield



"How can the town complain about loitering on the streets and take away the skate park?"

> - Sarah Yazdi Turners Falls

Compiled by: Jameson Bednarski . Photos by Kelly Pease



"Closing it is a bad idea, because it contributes to the community."

> - Jessica Edson Northfield

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NOTES FROM THE ERVING SELECTBOARD

Erving May Assist Land Purchase Near French King Bridge

September 15th, David Brule, the chair of the Erving conservation commission, along with Franklin Land Trust director Rich Hubbard and Jen land Soper, protection specialist for the Department of Conservation and Recreation, met with the selectboard to seek help in the state's intended purchase of 21.3 acres of conservation land along Dorsey Road, now owned by an estate for the Carroll family

DCR hopes to permanently conserve the land for recreational uses. Soper said the state would provide the lion's share of the purchase price, the total amount of which has not been made public. But in order to meet the Carroll family's price, the town is being asked to come up with the final \$45,000 for the purchase.

"What DCR is willing to offer is a little bit short of what the family wants, so we went to the selectboard to see if they would be willing to fund the difference," said Brule. Although they put off formal action, "The board seemed generally supportive," of the project, added Brule, who

BY DAVID DETMOLD - On plans to walk the property soon with the newest member of the selectboard, Andrew Goodwin.

> "It's prime property along the mouth of the Millers River, overlooking a beaver pond and a marsh" said Brule. "I'm looking to help create a green corridor from the mouth of the river up to Millers Falls."

> "The Soper said, Department of Conservation and Recreation owns a lot of property near the French King Bridge, and this purchase would help us keep that view and keep the integrity of a connected corridor along the river. Our main priority is the preservation of natural resources, and this really fits." Soper said the land, at the confluence of the Millers and the Connecticut is "highly sensitive" in terms of Native American archeological resources, as well.

> Brule said the Carroll family house, which dates from the same era as the historic Cabot Camp on the opposite side of the bike and pedestrian bridge to East Mineral Road, is located on additional acreage at the end of the paved section of Dorsey Road that would not be included in the sale. A Carroll

family member may wish to rehabilitate the house and live there, and possibly develop nearby lots, Brule said.

In other news from the September 15th meeting, the board met with the finance committee to review a long range financial plan prepared by selectboard chair Andy Tessier, forecasting future capital improvement needs for the town and the school, including a schedule for funding future retiree benefits.

At the same meeting, the finance committee voted to recommend all eight warrant articles for the upcoming special town meeting, September 29th at 7:30 p m. at town hall.

An additional \$3,000 for a part time library director's salary is on that warrant, since the previously advertised salary of \$12,000 failed to attract qualified candidates. The town meeting will also vote on whether to expend \$150,000 from the sewer department's retained earnings to inspect and repair leaks in sewer lines.

The board also finalized the paperwork to apply to the state revolving loan fund for treatment plant upgrade in Ervingside, expected to cost more than \$5 million.

appointed The board Mitchell LaClaire Jr., the son of the current fire chief, as an Erving firefighter. The younger LaClaire has been a junior firefighter with the Erving department, but is now old enough to join the force.

The board signed a business license for Catamount Auction Company, of Church Street in Shelburne Falls, to conduct auctions at the French King Bowling Center.

On September 8th, the board met with a committee of seniors who are working on plans to develop a new senior center and a new senior housing complex on town owned land near the Erving Elementary School. Concern was expressed that if senior housing is developed that it be reserved exclusively for senior citizens.

As for the senior center, town meeting approved funds for a feasibility study last year, and a preliminary design was prepared by architect John Catlin, of Quincy. Now, with Community \$162,839 in

borrowing for the wastewater Development Block Grant funding, Catlin is developing bid ready plans for the project. The senior center committee will meet with Catlin on September 25th to go over those plans.

> State grants may available to help the town pay \$700,000 of the \$2.3 million project, said town administrative coordinator Tom Sharp.

Both projects will require final approval from town meeting.

Cable Contract Signed

Cable committee chair George Bohrer and Comcast attorney Steve FitzGibbons announced the town had reached an agreement for a renewal of the 10-year contract for Erving's cable access service. The new contract will provide cable access for the village of Farley, and a live drop at the Erving Elementary School. The board approved, the deal and the contract was signed.

The board also appointed Leo Parent, Dan Hammock, and Art Kaczenski to the veterans memorial committee.

NOTES FROM THE WENDELL SELECTBOARD

Auction Pulls in \$156,000 for Wendell

BY JOSH HEINEMANN -On September 17th, the Wendell selectboard dealt with only a few agenda items before going into early executive session to discuss the auction of town properties that took place at the town hall on Saturday, September 20th. Fourteen properties were offered, four of which have enough land and frontage to be building lots by right, assuming they have water and are dry enough for a septic system. The auction pulled in \$156,000 for the town.

On the 17th, town coordinator Nancy Aldrich reported that the electrician she contacted about replacing the electrical panels on the town common was too booked up to take on an additional project now. He was not aware of any prefabricated metal or weatherproof composite box,

but he thought a properly built wooden one would last a long time, and he said electrician's work would not be necessary because no rewiring would be involved.

Selectboard chair Ted Lewis still preferred the idea of using a material that does not rot, and suggested talking with town custodian Larry Ramsdell, or Tom Chaisson who has done several carpentry jobs for the town. Aldrich said the bidding processwould not be required, because the work does not involve four walls and a roof.

The Swift River School administration wants to take part in the energy audit offered by the Franklin Regional Council of Governments and Siemens Building Technology, and sent a letter to the selectboard to see if the board had any objections. The board

did not have any.

On October 2nd, the Central Franklin County Veterans Affairs Office is holding a meeting to honor Arnold and Benny "take a break" Rubin for ten years of renting them an office at \$141 a month including utilities, and invited board members to attend. Lewis said he would go.

Aldrich read a list of accounts that town accountant Janet Swem feels should be carried over to the next fiscal year, including the special projects account, the account for cleanup of town properties, the town hall stage repair account, the insurance reserve account (which the town is building up so the town can afford to increase deductible amount on its insurance and save on the premium), and the Mahar deferred salary account.

The circulator pump for the town office heating system is turning on whether it is needed or not. Keller said it is time for Johnson Controls to come and work on the system's computer control. In other town office news, town custodian Larry Ramsdell said he is willing to try repairing bubbles in the flooring, and said there are places in the copy room where he can start. When the meeting began he was repairing the lock on the back door.

Board members signed a memorandum of understanding with the Franklin County Solid Waste District that would have the district, rather than the Department of Environmental Protection, conduct annual inspections of the Wendell Recycling and Transfer Station (WRATS).

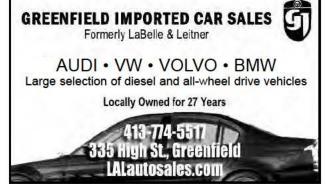
Keller said that the town got two bids for repair of the new

senior center (the former library building) slate roof. Keller declined to vote on the matter, since he is friends with one of the contractors, but Lewis and Christine Heard accepted a bid of \$300 from Mark Fuller of Belchertown.

Keller said Paul Richmond had spoken with him about the expectations of the Full Moon Coffeehouse Committee to install a conduit under the town hall floor that would carry the wires that the coffeehouse uses. Coffeehouse volunteers have offered to put the conduit in place and run the wire, and Keller thought the wire would carry low voltage. But Lewis was concerned about liability with any electrical work. He suggested contacting the building inspector to see if a licensed electrician is required for the work.

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BY DAVID DETMOLD

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

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

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

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

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

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

Jensen said the court was aware that the onset of winter would complicate cleanup operations at the building, which lacks a roof in most areas. "The judge took note that timeliness is important," he said. "We're down to assembling numbers and a time schedule."

Strathmore Report

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

Ross called the Strathmore Mill "absolutely key to the economic future of this town, in so many ways."

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

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

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

Heritage Landscapes

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

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

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

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

status

Shea Sprinklers

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

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

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

NOTES FROM THE MONTAGUE SELECTBOARD

Railroad Salvage Owner Given Two Week Reprieve

BY DAVID DETMOLD

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"We're not going to drop the ball."

-Judge Dina Fein Massachusetts Housing Court

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see MONTAGUE pg 9

HIGHLIGHTS FROM THE MONTAGUE POLICE LOG **Burglaries, Breaking & Entering**

11:46 a.m. Report of possible suicide Wednesday, 9/17 hospital.

advised of options

4:20 p.m. Report of illegal dumping at Thursday, 9/18 a Migratory Way address, Turners 9:05 a.m. Report of vandalism at Prospect Street address, Millers Falls.

attempt at an Avenue A address, 11:23 a.m. Burglar alarm sounding at a Turners Falls. Subject removed to Prospect Street addres, Millers Falls. Investigated.

2:52 p.m. Report of a fight at an 6:06 p.m. Report of burglary / breaking Avenue A address, Turners Falls. Caller and entering at a Bulkley Street address, Turners Falls. Investigated. 3:50 p.m. Report of motor vehicle theft 6:59 p.m. Report of illegal dumping at a Thirteenth Street address, Turners and breaking and entering at an East Main Street address, Millers Falls.

Falls. Advised to contact police if Williams Garage, Second Street, 1:18 p.m. Report of burglary / breaking 7:32 p.m. Report of a domestic Services rendered.

Turners Falls. Investigated.

Report of domestic 5:20 p.m. disturbance at a Fourth Street address. Arrested junenile, age 14. Charged with assault and battery, domestic, intimidation of a witness and making a threat to commit a crime.

Friday, 9/19

old Railroad Salvage building, Turners Turners Falls. Referred to an officer.

10:28 p.m. Report of burglary / breaking and entering at a Newton Lane address, Montague. Investigated. Saturday, 9/20

8:09 Report of vandalism at a South Turners

and entering at Rite Aid, Avenue A, Turners Falls. Arrested

Charged with breaking and entering into a vehicle in the daytime and possession of class A drug.

1:20 p.m. Burglar alarm sounding at 1:46 p.m. Report of trespassing at the Rod & Gun Club, Deep Hole Drive, 3:56 p.m. Report of possible suicide at an Avenue A address. Subject removed to hospital.

Sunday, 9/21

1:23 p.m. Burglar alarm sounding at a Montague. Services rendered. Falls Road address, Montague. Services rendered.

disturbance at a Second Street address, Turners Falls. Investigated. Monday, 9/22

12:31 a.m. Report of loud noise disturbance in the area of Avenue A and Fourth Street, Turners Falls. Arrested

Charged

with assault and battery, domestic. 7:58 a.m. Report of vandalism at Franklin County Technical School, 82 Industrial Boulevard, Turners Falls.

9:42 a.m. Burglar alarm sounding at a Turners Falls Road address,

5:50 p.m. Report of domestic disturbance at a Fourth Street address.

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> 48 Randall Road Montague Phone/413-863-3780

> > Mike Fuller, Owner

Good Dirt Pottery Studio

Clay is Good Dirt

38 Main Street, Montague 413-367-0155 www.gooddirtpottery.com

BARN from pg 1

years, they lived up on Bear Mountain, in a stone house Jonathan built with the help of a local timber framing party made up of friends and neighbors. They had to walk in to that house in winter months, and drew water from a well by hand, before installing a hand pump at the sink. They lived without electricity then, although the current owners, Pam Richardson and Peter Gallant have since installed a photovoltaic panel on the house.

"We found it was a pretty peaceful, deep woods situation," von Ranson recalled. "It was a very satisfying and seemingly elegant way to live. Simple, with no feeling of deprivation. A feeling on the other hand of great privilege in living in such a beautiful spot and being able to put together a good life with our own hands, mostly, with a jeep and a chainsaw. The house was built entirely with hand tools."

Now in the bustling center of Wendell, on the day of the barn raising, neighbors brought food and hand tools and their own energy and enthusiasm. "Women

men were among the cooks. It was amazing and beautiful to see how skillfully they all were working together," von Ranson

"I had developed a whole plan, so I knew what I wanted to do, and I yelled out instructions," he added. "People came up during the day and told me, 'What a nice, quiet leadership you exercise.' But that's just because I have a soft voice."

One person who volunteered on the barn raising was Josh Heinemann. He commented, "The work was almost complete at sundown. About a dozen people returned Monday after work, and then a half dozen came Tuesday and got everything in place. Someone commented that if the crew had been Amish the barn would have been roofed and sided by evening, but the crew was not Amish, and a good deal of thinking had to be done in place."

After the final post was seated, the final beam pulled into place, the crew celebrated with ice cream.

Von Ranson said, "It's kind of mysterious why so many people were in the framing crew and were willing to give up a whole



Barbara Caruso pulls it all together at the Wendell Barn Raising

day to help us out. At least 20 people were there for virtually the whole day on Saturday, and some have come on succeeding days. I think it has to do with doing something challenging together. They know it's real and useful."



Saturday, Sept. 27th 12 to 5 p.m.

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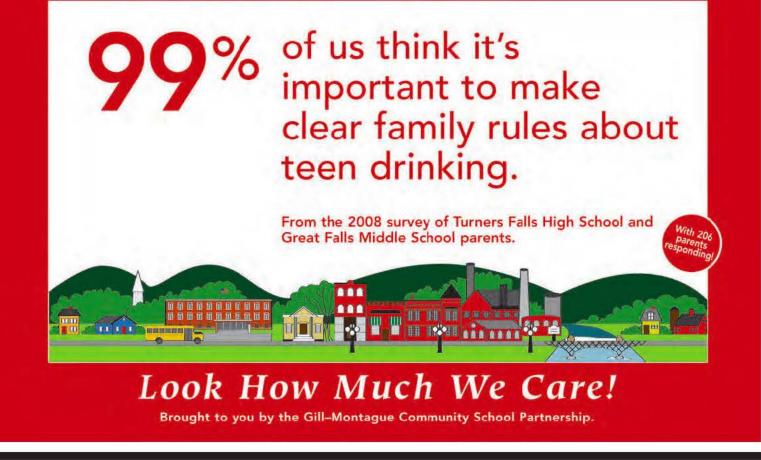
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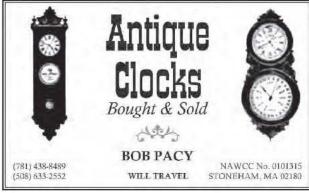
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MONTAGUE from 7

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

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

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

Ross called the Strathmore Mill "absolutely key to the economic future of this town, in so many ways."

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

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

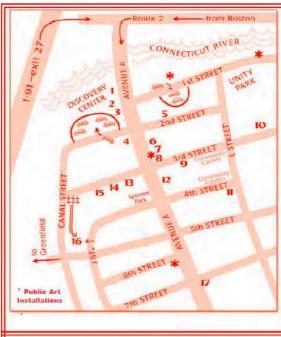
Laroche said, "If Swift River Group [Anctil's company] isn't able to move forward with the Strathmore, we have something to provide a developer if the town decides to move ahead and market the site to a developer. The information [in the consultant's report] will make it more feasible for a developer,"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

Heritage Landscapes

In other news, Laroche received the board's support for a grant application he will submit this week to the Department of Conservation and Recreation to provide technical assistance to the town in developing an inventory of

'heritage landscapes,' which could be either rural or urban in nature. These vistas should have cultural and historic significance for the community.

LaRoche said a proposal from Native American tribes to have the town of Montague partner with them to make Montague a destination for 'preservation tourism' would be "a wonderful fit" for the heritage landscape program. He encouraged Native American groups to add their heritage landscapes to the town's see MONTAGUE pg 12



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- 1. Great Falls Discovery Center
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Chris Sawyer-Laucanno Jan McClish Vern McClish Jaye Pope



Paul Caponigr Hallmark Gallery 52 & 6



3. Hallmark Museum Galleries 52 & 65

4. 2ND Street Banking Co.

Maple Street Glassworks

5. Hallmark Museum Gallery 85

- 6. Rendezvous
- 7. Great Lighting
- 8. The Peaceful Palm Studio also at this location: Andrea Mizula-Jones



Lois Greenfield



9. The Brick House House Silent Art

Auction
10. Peterman's Baskets And Bowls

also at this location: Hotsapp Wordworks

- 11, Jack Nelson
 - @ Carriage House Designs
- 12.Patty Cake Patty Cake
- 13. Pancake Breakfast
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It is difficult to get the news from poems yet men die miserably every day for lack of what is found there.

- William Carlos Williams

Poetry Page edited by Christopher Sawyer-Laucanno, Janel Nockleby and Jamie Berger

Readers are invited to send poems to the Montague Reporter at 24 3rd Street, Turners Falls, MA 01376; or email us your poetry at reporter-poems@montaguema.net

design by Boysen Hodgson

Poets, Set Your Watches: The Death of Ilhan Berk

Slender stalk - a field I'd enter, trespass But where did Alice go? She was known to touch us all, angelic, as I think we said, angelic - the only one to criticize our fault and have no fault her own. Even then the century was shutting down.

As for now, I place a row of stones upon her stone, mystical design that can mean nothing anymore. It used to hold a secret, cabalistic tone engine of the universe that would groan and clack until she set our time - but time itself shuts down these doings, too.

And holding hands, we'd penetrate so deep within the field we scared ourselves, thinking we would never see our friends again. Among the slender stalks, each stalk, sweet surface, held a scent we'd feed ourselves, knowing rapture. These were secrets then, and poets dressed for Carnival. The stalks grew old. They made disease. We could be happy if we had not thought the field we counted real held things that keep.

-- Edward Foster Greenfield and Jersey City, NJ

Right as Rain

The smart approach would be to enjoy the crepes even without the addition of 100% pure grade A amber maple syrup. But you can't do that any more than you can revel in the seagulls that waddle up the beach looking for an unattended picnic basket packed with bread and bologna, or maybe, if there is a God, untinned kippered herring snacks.

For you, completeness is all, perfection basic. I'm content to shrug and utter something about something lacking a certain je ne sais quoi, but you not only know what the quoi is but know in grams or ounces exactly how much of it is lacking.

I don't really envy you this ability to get to the heart of things so presciently, so immutably, but no, I can't say that I'd like it much either if the elephants parading across the town square developed amnesia and took to rifling the just-armed mousetraps.



The editors would like to thank the following for their generous financial underwriting of The Poetry Page:

Anonymous, Klondike Sound, Carlin Barton, Montague Dental Arts, Dr. Robert Koolkin, Green Fields Market, Michael Farrick, and Michael Muller.

If I seem to have no problems its only because I have learned to bury them better. Every day I cringe

with the weight of myself and the weight of those who have pressed themselves onto me, hot iron hissing, the memories of many debacles. I have no problems, only

tragedies, and they are feathers, an excruciating, unbearable weightlessness hovering above me:

remorse in full bloom bulldozed by a wispy countenance.

The cracks in my armor are small but significant.

A mace could never kill me, but a silent sabotage can;

invisible scars no surgeon's scalpel

will ever kiss. The only tongue

I have to lick

my wound is my own,

but each time I lap

the infection

I deposit another

dose of disease:

self-same cycle

of servitude

to the ghost

of my malaise,

whose etheric blob crushes me with wings of air.

--Kevin Smith

Turners Falls

Jersey City Late at Night for Joel Lewis

Who else is worried on this street of winter rivers, floating ice, and taxis, drivers, steaming glass. --Only people wearing khakis coming home from friends or work get to ride in style.

The rest of us explore the docks. My orange colored friend without a name is back. He gets his tan, like I get mine, at night. Our walk in Jersey's orange air has made me think my skin is pitted like the moon. I'd tell the aging beach boy by the PATH that Jersey air can made you crafty he's my pigeon in the night. This friend wears khakis, too. We stalk a jacket as it scurries home. It tells us by the leather he's distressed. But as for me, the Jersey shore's a work of art. The thing this town does best, this cake of ice, is cut us off. Our jackets and our khakis, beauty, make us both a thing apart.

-Edward Foster Greenfield and Jersey City, NJ

Not Exactly Exact From Mussorie-Montague Miscellany

Collision is collusion: the smart folks bet money on sure winners and the crowd on the avenue begins to sing in three-part harmonies that would make an orca rise. But here in the vestibule silence reigns and the snow queen stays inside to guard her ice. You want to avoid another Sunday packed with remorse, avoid tearing frantically at your starched collar.

Ascendance in transcendence: the bells keep ringing the heart keeps beating despite all the long goings and short comings and you know that someone, somewhere will light a candle seek consolation in dejection breathe in disconsolate smoke as if it were spring air.

Better to pack your bags and hop on the next train rattling across the twin rails that traverse the churning river.

-Christopher Sawyer-Lauçanno Turners Falls

CONTRIBUTOR'S NOTES:

Christopher Sawya Lauçanno co-ecile mis page and is a writer and

Sharon Meller Horton Ives in Tumers Falls

Evon Tolit lives in Circentials.

Sevin Smith is 51 years old a Furners falls resident lubial and herapist as well as poet

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the poetry page

On Woodward Avenue, Detroit

It was just my imagination Runnin' away with me. The Temptations

for Wyn

There's talk of angels among us, wing and prayer in a mirror (imagine, that tells without reflecting), as when nothing lies between us and stars come up. The sun fades

I don't mean to frighten you.

I don't mean to frighten you

because there's talk of angels.

among us, stars come up. The sun fades.

See, yourself, in the mirror:

Nothing lies between us,

unless your wing deflecting my prayer. I pray without reflecting.

I don't mean to frighten you.

Nothing lies between us
c vvvv

telling glimpse of wing in mirror

and stars come up. The sun fades. The sun fades, Stars come up.

Night bleeds to benign light reflecting wings' scars like scraps of prayers in the mirror.

I don't mean to frighten you.

There's talk of angels

when nothing lies between us. When nothing lies between us

the sun fades. Stars come up, though there's talk of angels.

Wing to prayer, prayer to wing, we reflect.

I don't mean to frighten you.

Winter wings hold up the mirrortell me what breath forms on the mirror-

Nothing lies between us.
I don't mean to frighten you.
The sun fades. Stars come up.
At the point of least reflection
there's breath of angels.

Stars fade. The sun comes up.

There's talk of nothing between us.
I don't mean to frighten you. Angels lie.

-Penelope Austin

Me & You

I feel the heat from your breathing and the heat from your hands.

I'll abide by every word you say My heart beats at your commands.

When you look at us together nothing could compare.

I feel when people see us
They can't do much, but stop and stare.
There's something we got
that could mean so much
It lies with that one touch.

--Charlene Howard Elmira, NY

Another Autumn for my father

Light brittle as a long life glances
off headstones, flattens them into
white sheets on which the expenditure
of breath is tallied. From this
side of the fence they are no more imposing

than the razor-thin shadows of the wroughtiron railings cast across my pathso little divides the quick from the dead, this light that washes the silver backs of fallen leaves quicksilver across the pavement

going out the moment the cost of living
becomes too steep. Yet there are some
who go on paying, who stretch the moment out
beyond reason, beyond design, beyond any accident
that makes the light look merely grim.

What accounts for the will to continue along the frayed rope of sidewalk, staggering, from the cemetery toward the reckless beauty of the red maple blazing ahead?

--Penelope Austin

The Apocalypse

The flag flies over...red, white, and blue... the meadows, the prairies, the mountains that sing, the flowers, the birds the oceans, & streams, the ponds so still, we don't see the ripples.

As our country falls, the people rise with a cross casting shadows & tears in their eyes.

For Io, & behold, a light beams down on the heart of the land & the graves of our sons.

Whose Spirits glow from the Heavens with love, blessing the world with a vision of Oneness.

--Evon Tefft Greenfield

Lizzie Borden

Lizzie Borden, has a sister named Emma Their parents were murdered, what a dilemmal Served hot mutton stew, on a hot muggy day Made Lizzie so angry, she just chopped away The city of Fall River, stood at the door Wondering what all the commotion was for Police were searching for all of the facts For Lizzie's parents were killed by an ax A neighbor witnessed a man eating a pear But when Lizzie came from the barn, the man wasn't there The suspect was Lizzie, strange as it seems She was arrested without any screams Mom and Dad's skulls, were out on display When the prosecutor tried to make Lizzie pay All through the trial, she shed not a tear And when it was over, her guilt was unclear The case was unsolved, and Lizzie was freed Born was a song, of the terrible deed There's only one thing that this poem lacks The solution to who gave those horrible whacks.

--James Wright Northfield

A Love Letter for Summer

Summer, you do not change to fall.
Only lead to it.
With you, there is no destination,
Just a steady unfolding.
And so it is with my life - it just unfolds.
In September I feel a need to say goodbye to you.
There's a painful tug on my soul stemming from all my losses combined.
But you do not leave me, nor do you take from me.

You are omnipresent, belong neither to this year for to the next.

I just am. Yet your stillness settles over me, bidding me to

likewise reside neither in the past nor in the future.

commemorate all that's gone before. Summer, you are ever with me as you lead to fall,

--Sharon Mellon Horton Turners Falls

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• Doors open 7:00 p.m.

• Open mic 7:15-8:00

Featured readers 8:15-9:30
 Upcoming Readings

September 29 - Christopher Sawyer-Laucanno & Ed Foster

October 27 - Dorothea Lasky, Thom Donovan & Joe Torra

November 24 - Geraldine Monk & Alan Halsey December 29 - Guest & Open Mike Extravaganza

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MONTAGUE from 9

inventory, if Montague received the competitive grant.

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

Pastor Sohyung Ryu and Chong Collete, from the Greatness Life Korean Church in Millers Falls asked for and received a letter from the selectboard in support of Ryu's efforts to clear up his immigration status with the Citizenship U.S. Immigration Services (USCIS). The USCIS has disputed with the four year old church, which has fifteen members, whether the church is able to support Ryu as a full time minister. Collete said she was willing to



Pastor Sobyung Ryu of the Greatness Life Korean Church in Millers Falls

support Ryu personally, if the church could not. The selectboard sent a letter saying they were aware of the church's activities in Millers Falls, and the documentation Collete had mustered to support Ryu's petition for legal resident status.

Shea Sprinklers

Abbondanzio said the town had recently been informed, following an inspection of the Shea Theater, that the sprinkler heads in the fire suppression system had been rendered inoperable long ago, when the theater had been repainted. At that time, the sprinkler heads also received

a coat of paint, making them nonfunctional. The town will

use \$5100 of program income money to replace the 51 sprinkler heads, and the work will be done as soon as possible. The fire chief has been advised of the problem.

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

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

MCTV Program (Ch. 17) Schedule: Sept 26th - Oct. 2nd

Eagle Cam: Not airing until further notice.

Friday, September 26 8:00 am Sustainable Energy 9:00 am District Wide Budget Meeting

(9/17/08) 12:30 pm Franklin County Matters 6:00 pm Into the way of Peace 7:00 pm GMRSD (9/23/08)

11:00 pm Independent Voices 11:30 pm Montague Machine

Saturday, September 27

8:00 am Green by 2015 8:30 am Franklin County Matters

10:00 am Fate of the Stallion

10:30 am Silly Wizard

12:00 pm Richard Heinberg: The Looming Crisis in Oil Depletion 6:00 pm Surviving the Vernon Reactor

7:00 pm Richard Heinberg: The Looming Crisis in Oil Depletion 9:00 pm Special Town Meeting

(9/11/08)11:00 pm Sue Mono Giri

Sunday, September 28

8:00 am Over the Falls

9:00 am Positive Profiles in Courage 10:00 am Poetry Music Jam

11:00 am Franklin County Matters

12:00 pm Falls Table

6:00 pm Over the Falls: Side Hill Farm 7:00 pm GCC Talent Show 8:00 pm Eaton Do Ryu 9:00 pm Discovery Center: Root Cellar

10:30 pm Living the Truth

11:30 pm Common People Concerts

Monday, September 29

8:00 am Seabrook 1977 9:30 am Women Girls & HIV 10:00 am District Wide Budget Meeting (9/17/08) 6:00 pm Coffee House Series: Ferne

Bork, Dan Tinen, Bruce Kahn Trio 7:00 pm Select Board (9/22/08) 9:00 pm Discovery Center: Importance

of Pollinators 10:00 pm Community Land Trust Meeting

Tuesday, September 30

8:00 am Discovery Center: Fossil Tracks 9:00 am White House Chronicles

10:00 am 9-1-1 People Facts and Stories 10:30 am District Wide Budget

Meeting (9/17/08) 6:00 pm Discovery Center: Importance

of Pollinators

7:00 pm GMRSD (9/23/08) 11:00 pm Enjoy the Ride

11:30 pm Falls Table

Wednesday, October 1

8:00 am Independent Voices 8:30 am Into the way of Peace

9:30 am Discovery Center: Rust Knuckle Raptor and Fall Town String Band

11:00 am Silly Wizard 12:30 pm Songs for Wee People

6:00 pm Special Town Meeting (9/11/08)

8:00 pm Tapping Maple Ridge 9:00 pm Discovery Center: Rust Knuckle Raptor and Fall Town String

10:30 pm GCC Talent Show

Thursday, October 2

Band

8:00 am Silly Wizard 9:00 am Teachers at Seat 9:30 am The Epics at the Vou 10:30 am Senses of Place 12:00 pm The Western Mass

Democrat 12:30 pm Tiny Tim 6:00 pm The Rise and Fall of Lake

Hitchcock 7:00 pm Select Board (9/22/08)

9:00 pm Richard Heinberg: The Looming Crisis in Oil Depletion 11:00 pm District Wide Budget Meeting (9/17/08)

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~ J.R.R. Tolkein

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JESSICA HARMON ILLUSTRATION

BY FRED CICETTI

LEONIA, NJ - Q. My wife and I are taking our first trip abroad. Do you have any advice about how to stay healthy during this vacation?

First, see your doctor and your dentist to make sure you are starting the voyage in good condition. You may need vaccinations. The vaccines you got when you were a child also may need to be updated.

Some vaccines don't reach their peak levels of protection until about six weeks after you get shots, so plan your doctor THE HEALTHY GEEZER:

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visit accordingly.

Vaccines you may need include: hepatitis, flu, Japanese encephalitis, measles-mumpsrubella, meningococcal meningitis, pneumococcal, polio, rabies, tetanus and diphtheria toxoids, typhoid fever, chickenpox, and yellow fever.

Now, here are some more

 Guard against infection by washing your hands often, especially after you've been on a plane, train or bus. Alcoholbased hand sanitizing gels are better than soap-and-water in killing bacteria and viruses that cause disease. The gels don't need water to work; the alcohol in them kills the germs on your hands. Not all hand sanitizers are the same. You should use

only sanitizers that contain at least 60 percent alcohol.

- · Pack all your medicines in their original containers in your carry-on bag.
- · Bring prescriptions for your regular medicines and eyewear.
- · Pack a first-aid kit with medicines for diarrhea, indigestion, body aches and pains, colds, allergies, wounds, sun exposure and motion sickness. Include adhesive bandages, scissors, tweezers, nail clippers, pocket knife, thermometer, mirror and alcohol-based hand gels.
- · Check your health insurance coverage for every country you plan to visit.
- · If you are in a country where traveler's diarrhea is common, avoid street vendors, uncooked food, unpasteurized

dairy products, tap water and a long time on an airplane or

- Use bed netting and insect repellents in countries that present a risk of disease carried by mosquitoes.
- To battle jet lag, drink a lot of water on your flight. Dehydration contributes to the discomforts of jet lag. Avoid caffeine, which causes the body to eliminate water.
- · Some flyers experience pain in their ears during takeoffs and landings. These travelers should chew gum and swallow often when planes are going up or down.
- · Protect yourself against deep-vein thrombosis, which occurs when blood clots form in the veins (usually in the legs) and block blood flow. Sitting for

train can contribute to DVT, but wearing special compression stockings can help prevent this dangerous condition.

· If you suffer from motion sickness, make sure your eyes are seeing the same motion that your body senses. In a car, sit in the front seat and look out the windshield; don't stare at passing scenery outside the passenger window. On a rocking boat, go up on deck and watch the horizon. On an airplane, sit by the window and look outside. On a train, take a seat near the front and next to a window.

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

Equinox

BY FRAN HEMOND

MONTAGUE CENTER - The equinoxes, vernal and autumnal, are the two days of every year when, says the Old Farmer's Almanac, the sun crosses the celestial equator, and light and dark are equal. Here in New England, halfway up to the North Pole, the equal nights will now get longer, and we who live here pay attention to the challenge.

A couple of generations ago, before modern technology and energy sources made a world where it was feasible for women to work outside the home, preparing for living through the coming winter was important. On a farm, the ladies in house dresses, aprons, and high shoes spent hours in the kitchen peeling and paring the tomatoes and peaches and pears, green beans and other goodies that would feed the family for the next months. No freezer in those



days. It was blanch and can and process in large kettles of boiling water on the wood stove. With the freeze approaching, the harvest must be saved. The cellar was lined with shelves of colorful quart jars and jellies.

Another colorful activity was tightening up the windows with storm sashes that had to be put on from the outside each fall.

The men of the time were a tough lot. To reach second story windows, my father put up a precarious ladder while my mother protested. He carried a double sash window in one hand and used the other hand for the rail.

Today, I pushed up a screen and pulled down a storm win-

Mainly, to my mother the fall equinox meant line storms. They must have been the remains of hurricanes from the south. Until 1938, I do not remember any of note, but the storm that year brought the word hurricane to common use.

Here in Montague at Cold Brook, acres of our land on the Connecticut River were washed away. Mother's line storms had become more than a wiping out of colorful fall foliage.

If we view the year holiday to holiday, it seems inconceivable that by Columbus Day the gloriously green trees of the equinox will be showing their colors, and by Hallowe'en their leaves will be gone with the wind.

HIGHLIGHTS FROM THE ERVING POLICE LOG Three Larcenies, Two Loose Dogs

Tuesday, 9/16

6:48 a.m. Report of car egged on Pratt Street.

4:35 p.m. Report of loose dog in area of Amidon Street. Checked area, gone on arrival.

8:50 p.m. Arrested

for license not in possession and operating a motor vehicle after suspension of license. Wednesday, 9/17

12:16 p.m. Arrested

for operating

a motor vehicle with a revoked license. Arrested

outstanding warrant. Arrested

, for operating

a motor vehicle with a revoked license.

Thursday, 9/18

1:00 p.m. Report of felony larceny by check or forgery at a French King Highway address. Under investiga-

1:45 p.m. Report of possible jumper on French King Bridge - Woman on other side of guard rail. Located sub-

ject; found to be sightseer. Friday, 9/19

1:59 p.m. Arrested

ing a motor vehicle while under the influence of liquor, second offense and driving to endanger.

4:12 p.m. Report of loose dog in area of Mountain Road. Located same and returned to owners.

8:08 p.m. Arrested

for operating a motor vehicle with a suspended license, possession of a dangerous weapon, open container of alcohol in a motor vehicle and an outstanding warrant.

Saturday, 9/20 6:58 p.m. Citation issued to

for operating a motor vehicle after revocation of license and operating a motor vehicle without insurance.

Sunday, 9/21

1:25 p.m. Report of larceny under \$250 at Box Car Restaurant.

2:25 p.m. Report of larceny under \$250 at a Church Street address.

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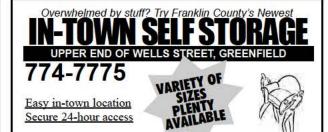
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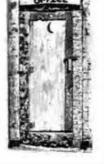
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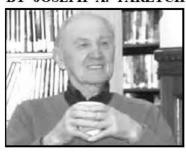
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JEP'S PLACE Part XC

The Hospital

JOSEPH A. PARZYCH



GILL -- On our first trip to visit Pa in the hospital, he was lying in bed in a ward with about 40 other patients. He took his illnesses very seriously, and this certainly was serious enough. He lay flat on his back with the sheet pulled up to his chin, looking grave. We surrounded the bed, overwhelmed by the hospital smell of ether and alcohol, and the whiteness of the place - white sheets, white beds, white walls, white ceilings, and rows of white

The nurses were all dressed in white with little white caps perched on their heads, padding about in their white shoes, carrying white bedpans and white towels. A janitor in dark street clothes shuffled in, pushing a dust mop that was three feet wide. He looked as foreign in his dark clothes as we did in this world of white.

When Ma leaned over to ask Pa how he was doing, anxiety showed in her voice. He replied between groans that he was grievously ill. He then rolled a bit to one side, raised his hip, groaned again and blew a big fart as if to show us just how keep from laughing.

"Gas," he announced solemnly. Whereby we began to first snicker and then giggle uncontrollably.

"Not funny," he said, frowning.

Try as we might, we couldn't control ourselves. periodically burst out in giggles and snickers, hoping he was too sick to climb out of bed and thrash us. He lay there, glowering between groans.

When we got ready to leave, Pa motioned for Ma to come

bad things were. We tried to closer. He whispered in her ear. I figured he wanted to utter his last words of will and testament.

September 25, 2008

"Bring me cigarettes and matches," he whispered. "They won't let me smoke - I got to have cigarettes."

The next time we came in, Ma passed him the cigarettes. He said he'd smoke them under the bed sheet after dark when everyone was asleep. I worried he would set his bed and the hospital on fire. Fortunately oxygen was not in use then.

- Continued next issue

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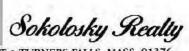
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ARTS & ENTERTAINMENT



FRIDAY, SEPTEMBER 26th

A Bouquet of Music Healing Arts Concert at Baystate Franklin Medical Center, Greenfield. Noon-12:45 p.m. (413) 773-257.

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

Deja Brew, Wendell: Eclectic rock: Nexus, 9 to 11 p.m.

Great Falls Discovery Center, Turners Falls: Flowers of Fall. What is happening to the flowers? Who visits them? Why are they important in September? 10:30 - 11:30 a.m.

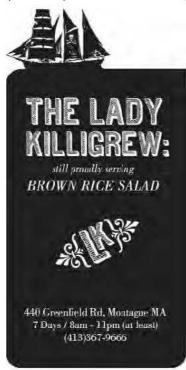
Rt. 63 Roadhouse, Millers Falls: Love Bomb. Rock & roll covers, come to dance, 9:30 p.m.

SATURDAY, SEPTEMBER 27th

Recovery Jam! Sober music festival. Seven hours of music with singer/songwriter Don White of Lynn, MA, Humble Streak, One Night Stand, Black Top Kenny and Laurie B. In addition to music, there will be food for all, which comes free with the ticket price, as well as a bouncy house and face painting for children. Tickets \$6 ahead/\$10 at the gate. More info: The Recover Project, 68 Federal St., Greenfield, MA., (413) 774-5489 or www.recoverproject.org. Held at thye Polish Picnic Grounds, 249 Plain Rd, Greenfield. Drug & alcohol free

Polish Supper at Montague Center Congregational Church. Golabki, pierogi, apple crisp! \$9/\$4, call for reservations 774-7256.

Hallmark Institute of Photography public reception for Lois Greenfield,





Steady Bongo, Sierra Leone's AfroPop world beat star performs Thursday, October 2nd, 6 - 9 p.m., at a house party at 71 Main St. Montague Center.

Celestial Bodies/Internal Souls. 1 to 5 p.m. in Gallery 85. Artist Talk in the auditorium at Hallmark Institute of Photography, 27 Industrial Boulevard, Turners Falls, 7:30 p.m. Refreshments, free. www.hmcp.org.

Arcadia Players Chamber Ensemble presents: *Music of Beethoven and His Contemporaries* at Caswell Library, Deerfield Academy. Advance tickets: \$20, at the door, \$30/\$10 students. Info. (413) 534-8888 or *www.arcadiaplayers.org*. Pre-concert talk 7 p.m., concert 7:30 p.m.

At the Bookmill, Montague Center: Author Katharine Weber reads from her acclaimed novel *Triangle*. Copies available for purchase and signing. A brilliant, haunting novel about one of the most terrible tragedies in early twentieth-century America. 2 p.m. www.katharineweber.com.

Deja Brew, Wendell: Hilltown Brewfest 2008! Noon to 5 p.m. Music, raffles, 13 breweries, mead & cider! All receive a souvenir tasting glass. \$18 advance/\$20 door. Benefit for Wendell & New Salem Meetinghouses. And in the evening: world folk music with Molanti, 9 to 11 p.m.

Rt. 63 Roadhouse, Millers Falls: Heros First Time Back. Rock & roll covers, 9:30 p.m.

At The Rendezvous, Turners Falls: Jones Trio, jazz that thumps, \$3.

THROUGH SEPTEMBER 27th

Photography by Gloria Kegeles: Chrome Dreams and Jitnapa Suthikant: StereoTyped. On display at Gallery A3, Amherst. Open Wed. to Sun., 1 to 7 p.m. www.gallerya3.com.

SUNDAY, SEPTEMBER 28th Deja Brew, Wendell: Warped Americana with Steve Crow, Peter Kim & Joe Fitspotick, 7:30 - 10 p.m.

At the Rendezvous, Turners Falls: Le Cabaret de Rendee-voo (open mic) Special feature jazz stan-

dards & improv with Lisa Davol & the Ghost Quartet. 8 p.m. Free.

Asters and Goldenrods Field Walk, Join naturalists Lula Field and Christine Beckert Long for a ramble at Tully Dam in a search for these beauties (and other fall bloomers), and discussion of botanical nomenclature. Meet at River the Millers Environmental Center, 100 Main St., Athol, 9 a.m. Free (978)249-0246. www millersriver net

MONDAY, SEPTEMBER

Evening Sing-a-Long at the Montague Center Library, 6:30 p.m. Linda Hickman, plays guitar and banjo and performs a variety of children's music. Info, call the Carnegie Library 863-

3214 during the week, or Montague Center Library, 367-2852, Monday evening

At the Discovery Center, Turners Falls: *Nature at 8*. Walk led by nature interpreter and geologist Steve Winter. Free, 8 to 9 a.m. Info call 863-3221, continues - 9/29.

Deja Brew, Wendell: A night of spoken word: All Small Caps, 7 - 10 p.m. Open mic starts at 7 p.m. Guest readers at 8 p.m. Special poetry night menu available, bring a friend and your appetite!

TUESDAY, SEPTEMBER 30th

At The Rendezvous, Turners Falls: Jeffery Foucault & friends, 9 p.m., \$3.

WEDNESDAY, OCTOBER 1st

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

Heart of the Valley Chorus Guest Night. Like to sing? We've got a place for you! At JFK Middle School, Florence, 7 p.m. No professional singing experience required. Info 665-0924, www.heartofthevalleychorus.org. Continues Oct. 8, 15, & 22.

THURSDAY, OCTOBER 2nd

AfroPop world beat of **Steady Bongo**, Sierra Leone's most celebrated musician on a rare visit performing along with local artists Freddie Bryant, Wes Brown, Boo Pearson, Jay Stanley, and Imani Deva-Brown, at this special event to raise funds for Steady Bongo's musical, political and social activism in Sierra Leone. Enjoy the music and an African-style dinner at this

fundraiser. Free CD with a \$25 donation. 6 - 9 p.m., 71 Main St. Montague Center. Info. call Marina (413) 367-0036 or marinagold2@yahoo.com

Gallery A3, 28 Amity St., Amherst: Signs of Life, encaustic & mixed media by Sue Katz and paintings by Claudine Mussuto. Opening reception 5 to 8 p.m. Open Artists forum, Thursday, October 16, 7:30 p.m. On display until November 1st. (413) 256-4250 www.gallerya3.com

FRIDAY TO SUNDAY, OCTOBER 3rd TO 5th

Ja'Duke at The Shea Theatre, Turners Falls: *The Producers*. Cowritten by Mel Brooks and Thomas Meehan. The Producers skewers Broadway traditions and takes no prisoners as it proudly proclaims itself an "equal opportunity offender!." Continues 10/10 to 10/12. Fri & Sat at 8 p.m., Sun. at 2 p.m. (413) 863-2281 ext. 2. Adults \$12/\$10 for 12 & under & 65 & older.

SATURDAY & SUNDAY, OCTOBER 4th & 5th

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

SATURDAY, OCTOBER 4th

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

MONDAY, OCTOBER 6th

Hope & Olive Restaurant Soup & Games Night Benefit, 5. to 8 p.m. at 44 Hope Street, Greenfield. Free soup, bread, and board games. The bar will be open to serve drinks, and there will also be entertainment provided by Arena Civic Theatre. There is no charge, but donations are encouraged. A portion of the proceeds will go to Arena Civic Theatre. Info. (413) 774-3150.

FRIDAY, OCTOBER 10th

Great Falls Coffeehouse: Francis Doughty. An exciting folk instrumental guitarist who has been playing music since his early teens. Sliding scale donation of \$6 - \$12. Great Falls Discovery Center, Turners Falls, 6:30 - 9 p.m.

SATURDAY, OCTOBER 11th

New England Forests and Global Warming. What role do New England forests play in the global warming

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story? Julian Hadley and Fisher Museum Coordinator John O'Keefe will share their expertise in forest canopy research and land use history. Lecture followed by a 30 min. hike to observation towers. Meet at Harvard Forest, Petersham. Limit 15 participants. Call to register: (413) 659-3714. Free. Ages 12 and older. 1:30 – 4:30 p.m.

SATURDAY, OCT 18TH

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



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LIVING ALONG THE RIVER

MORE THAN JUST A SONG CONTEST

BY ANNE HARDING

GREAT FALLS - It was standing room only at the Great Falls Discovery Center's (GFDC) monthly coffee house on Friday. September 12th, which featured a 'sing-off' of the twelve finalists of the Connecticut River Watershed Council's (CRWC) songwriting contest (CRWC). Chairs had to be commandeered from area churches, and many in the overflow crowd were forced to stand outside i m a g i n e under the shelter of a tent in the Easthampton's courtyard, listening through the back doors of the Great Hall.

It was a remarkable evening of music and an opportunity to learn more about the role of the visiting host organization. Executive director Chelsea Gwyther spoke eloquently of the three missions of the CRWC advocacy, outreach and restoration. Members of the watershed council staff who talked about their efforts to protect the Connecticut River introduced the songwriters.

With over 65 songs submitted, screening committee members had faced a daunting task in winnowing the list down to ten finalists. Ultimately, they raised the number of finalists to twelve. Screening committee member and contest organizer Pat LaMountain said she did not envy the judges their task in picking the top three winners. As she predicted, it was a tough job. At the end of the night, the judges needed extra time to make their decisions.

Many songs spoke of our connection to the river. The judges' top pick, "The River," by John Currie of Orange, was also the audience favorite, a rhythmic folk number with a catchy chorus. The song evoked the river's seasonal changes while relating Currie's childhood memories and past and present uses of the river.

Tony Lechner's danceable "Riverside" resonated with local audience members as he and two members of the band Wildwood sang of the sun setting over Sugarloaf and lazy afternoons on the river. The bluesy "River of Tears" by Thomas Anderson, of Putney, VT was inspired by an afternoon on the river with his little brother: "Just give me a boat

Great Falls Farmers Market Wednesdays 3 - 6 p.m. Rain or Shine May thru October -Avenue A & 2nd Street Produce in Season Baked Goods Maple Products Ad sponsored by Franklin Community Cooperative

to float on and I will be just fine... floating on this river of tears of joy."

Another common theme among the songwriters was the importance of the river to our

sense of place, and some of the songwriters evoked images of the river's scenic beauty. You could just Claire Dacey sitting on the shore as she sang of the river's 30 million years of giving and taking and how it made her home, "from the slopes of old Mount Tom to the cornfields of Hadley." "This River" well deserved its second place award.

Sixteen-year-old Chelsea Rancourt sang about the river letting you push your troubles to the side, and the desires of a young girl to escape life in a small town on the river "flowing like my life that's up ahead." At the same time she revealed her conflicted feelings, not sure whether she really wanted to leave the place that is home. "Coming Back" was the winner of the under 18 category, in addition to being one of the contest finalists.

The history of the people of the river valley was wrapped up in many of the songs. Emily Samuels of Gill sang, "The Ballad of George Van Dyke" which told the tale of the not-sowell-loved lumber baron and his infamous fatal tumble over the embankment and into the river. Like many songwriters, Samuels' historic research came to life with her song.

Roland Lapierre's "Still Belong" shared the lives of people on the river with a chorus that reminded the audience of the timeless nature of their stories. "All the tears and blood spilled in the river, Get washed away as time goes on, But all the stories stay alive forever, Deep in the water, they still belong."

The sole Connecticut based finalist, Grayson Hugh, was accompanied by his wife Polly for his funky number, "Swamp Yankee" dedicated to his Uncle Carl and all the other fishermen. As Grayson said, "Imagine James Brown goes to Gloucester and discovers his Pequot roots." It was hard to sit still during this

Third prize winner Charlie Conant's "River Day" fit many of the categories. Accompanied

by Katie Clarke he sang of a river born in a glacier's wake, of fertile soils, native peoples, settlers arriving, ferries, mill towns, logging and the annual spawning runs of shad. He was introduced



Rob Skelton and his daughter Daisy Whitcomb-Skelton of Montague were among the Connecticut River Songwriters Contest finalists. Brian Roderick on bass.

by CRWC outreach coordinator Christine Luis-Schultz, who said his images of the river were both specific to the area but universal enough to speak to lovers of any river, anywhere.

It was interesting that two songwriters chose humor to tackle one of the more serious aspects of the CRWC's mission - restoration of breeding habitats for the annual spawning migration of the watershed's anadromous fish. As river stewards Megan Hearne (Connecticut), Andrea Donlon (Massachusetts) and David Deen (Vermont and New Hampshire) acknowledged, fish passage facilities have been installed on the main stem of the Connecticut River, where the fish elevator at Holyoke and the fish ladder in Turners Falls assist the migrating fish. Much of the CRWC's current restoration work has been focused on removal of dams no longer in use on the tributaries feeding the Connecticut. More than 40 miles of riverine breeding habitat have been re-opened as a result of their efforts.

Davis Johnson of Monson dedicated his song "Close Encounters" to Mickey Novac, a friend and neighbor whose life revolves Connecticut River salmon restoration efforts. Performance histrionics helped, but if you listened to the lyrics you had to laugh as Johnson warbled his way through his satiric tune, sharing the experience of a salmon lifted over the Holyoke Dam in an elevator, milked of its roe and trucked upstream - the salmon's Roswell equivalent which ended with the line, "close encounters of the Holyoke kind."

Russ Thomas also employed humor in "Sammy the Spawning Marshall - whose antics had the crowd in stitches. Though he introduced the song as a serious number celebrating the progress we've made undoing the damage wrought by mankind, his tonguein-cheek lyrics were clearly intended to entertain, and they

Salmon," describing the epony-

mous hero's counter current

quest and the pursuit of anadro-

mous dreams. Thomas was

accompanied by the Spawnelles -

The more serious side of the CRWC's advocacy mission was most apparent in Montague resibor."

Though much progress has been made in the fight to reclaim the Connecticut River - once known as the "country's best landscaped sewer" and more recently designated as one of the first "American Heritage Rivers" - the CRWC was there to remind us that raw sewage is still being dumped into the river to the tune of two billion gallons a year, a sobering statistic.

> We were also reminded that October 4th is the date of the Twelfth Annual Connecticut River Sourceto-Sea Cleanup, and of the incredible clean-up efforts of Franklin County residents, who have accounted for more than 30% of the volunteers in the watershed wide effort over the last eleven years.

> For more than 50 years, the Connecticut River Watershed Council has pushed for environmental protections for our river. While acknowledging the need to balance the needs of corporate and public entities; and recognizing the vital economic value of the hydroelectric industry, the council considers their most crucial role to be that of a

citizens' advocate. To that end, they have been tireless in their efforts to review environmental permitting, hold river polluters accountable, and raise awareness of the issues with thermal discharge from the Vermont Yankee Nuclear plant. They expect to be active during the relicensing of hydroelectric projects governed the Federal Energy Regulatory Commission



Contest winner and audience favorite John Currie, of Orange. His winning song, The River, evoked seasonal changes and childhood memories along the Connecticut.

dent Rob Skelton's edgy "Hey Beautiful River." He dared to mention the days when "litterbugs ruled and sewage ran free" in a fast-paced, complex number performed with his daughter Daisy Whitcomb and bass player Brian Roderick. He spoke for us all in the refrain, "Hey beautiful river, so glad to be your neigh-

Their first Connecticut River songwriting contest was a rousing success. If you missed the finals, they will be aired on MCTV, Channel 17. Contact the CRWC for more information at (413) 772-2020 or visit their website www.ctriver.org