



BOOSTER DAY PARADE
Celebrates High School Spirit
Page 3



THE WEATHERMAN
at Montague Center School
Page 8

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YEAR 5 - NO. 46

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THE VOICE OF THE VILLAGES

SEPTEMBER 27, 2007

G-M Committee Votes to Lower Threshold on School Closing

BY DAVID DETMOLD

The Gill-Montague school committee voted on Tuesday, September 25th, to propose an amendment to the regional school agreement to make the process of closing an elementary school easier, by reducing the number of votes needed to close a school from eight out of nine committee members to six out of nine. The vote to amend



DETMOLD PHOTO

The Gill-Montague school committee deliberates on a motion to make it easier to close an elementary school in Montague on Tuesday, September 25th.

the regional agreement, which will need the approval of a majority of town meeting voters in Gill and Montague to be enacted, came, by coincidence, on a six to three vote of the committee. Voting in favor of the lower threshold to close a school were school committee chair Mary Kociela, and vice chair Valeria Smith, who were joined by Joyce Phillips, Kristin Boyle, Terry Lapachinski, and Linda Kuklewicz. The motion was opposed by Michael Langknecht, Ted Castro-Santos, and Sandra Brown, who failed to persuade the committee to

see CLOSING pg 9

G-M Schools Ratify GIC Plan; Town Hall Employees Do Not

BY DAVID DETMOLD

MONTAGUE - The employees and retirees of the Gill-Montague Regional School District ratified an agreement to join the state of Massachusetts Group Insurance Commission (GIC) earlier this week, while the majority of town hall employees and retirees turned down the opportunity to join the state health care plan.

Seventy percent of the town's public employees had to agree to accept the GIC plan by the October 1st deadline, in order to qualify for coverage beginning July 1st, 2008. Of the four unions involved in the town hall negotiations, only the police union, weighted with 19.1% of the vote, agreed to accept the cost saving plan. The town hall employees' union, the union representing the sewer treatment plant and highway workers, and the town retirees all turned the plan down.

At the G-M school committee meeting of September 25th, interim

see SCHOOLS pg 9

G-M SCHOOL OVERRIDE SCRAPPED

BY DAVID DETMOLD

MONTAGUE - The Montague selectboard voted on Monday, September 24th to abandon their plan to place a \$150,000 override request in front of the voters in November, for the Gill-Montague schools' current year operating budget, fearing the measure would go down to defeat and require yet another town meeting before the '08 tax rate could be set and tax bills mailed. To meet this year's school assessment, the town of Montague is on the hook for an additional \$297,586, over and above the appropriation voted at Montague's annual town meeting of June 2nd (\$6,825,257).

Montague's additional obligation came from the passage of a \$16,180,901 total operating budget for the

G-M schools at a special district meeting held at the high school on July 31st. That budget passed by a two-vote margin, 132 - 130, at the district meeting, which was open to all of the approximately 5500 registered voters of Gill and Montague. By law, the two towns of the school district are now bound to meet the higher assessment figures passed by the district, whether or not the voters of Gill and Montague approve tax overrides to meet them.

"There is no good pollster in town," said selectboard member Allen Ross. "But, especially since there's going to be a major debt exclusion for the police station, my guess is the override is going to fail, and we're going to wind up meeting our obligation to the schools anyway."

Pending passage at a special town meeting on October 11th, the voters of Montague will be asked to approve a debt exclusion to pay for most or all of the estimated \$5.6 million price tag for a new police station planned for Turnpike Road. That vote is scheduled to take place on November 6th.

Town tax collector Patti Dion estimated that borrowing \$5.6 million, at 5% interest, for 20 years to build the new police station would cause an annual \$115 increase on the property tax bill for the average (\$200,000) home. Unlike passage of a Proposition 2½ override, which results in a permanent increase to a town's levy limit, a debt exclusion expires once the project it is approved for is

see OVERRIDE pg 9

EIGHTH WONDER OF THE WORLD COMES TO TOWN

BY JOSEPH A. PARZYCH

TURNERS FALLS - The demonstration of the Montague police department's new Segway on Tuesday afternoon was uneventful. The Montague police did themselves proud. After a few brief instructions, they were silently gliding around the parking lot on the Segways like swans on a black

lake. No one fell off, as George W. Bush managed to when he tried riding a Segway, making this not much of a photo op. Still the demonstration was impressive due to the ease and speed with which police officers mastered the two-

see SEGWAY pg 10

Turners Falls police officer Chris Lapointe rides the new Segway.



PARZYCH PHOTO

VILLAGE SKETCHBOOK

To Honor the Fiddler

BY DAVID BRULE

ERVINGSIDE - It was one of those Saturday mornings, unlike this brilliant September Thursday. It was wet. A drenching rain, needed since early August, was pelting the trees in the overgrown pasture, causing the din of a rain forest cascading waterfall through the leaves still holding onto their green. Doubtful about the forecast, we headed for Greenfield around 10:00 a.m., like many residents of our villages who go over the hill for various reasons of a

Saturday morning. But we were going to the Green River Cemetery, the one recently infamous for having some of its tombs sliding into the Green River.

In this cemetery, wet, cool, and gray, the distant sound of spirituals and hymns drifted up from among the worn grave-stones. Eighty or so of us were gathered to celebrate the placing of a tombstone, and to honor the memory of John Putnam. He was a man of many identities, but until today had

no stone to identify his grave. He was a celebrated musician; he traveled far and wide throughout Franklin County in the 1870s through the 1890s to play his left-handed fiddle and to call the contradances in town halls and grange halls for miles around. The contradance, if you don't know, is a dance form existent in New England since colonial times and still thriving today in most of our hilltowns and river valley towns.



Fiddler John Putnam, a resident of Greenfield from 1845-1895

But Putnam was more than a fiddler. He was a well known barber, and as has come to light he played a key role in the

Underground Railroad, helping slaves from the South following the North Star constellation - "The Drinking Gourd" - to freedom in the North and Canada.

You see, John Putnam the fiddler and the barber was also a black man. And clearly he took risks to help his people move from slavery to freedom on the way north. So deep was the family's concern about vengeful slave owners finding and desecrating Putnam's remains, even after the Civil War was over, that a headstone was never placed over John and Julia Putnam's grave, until two Saturdays ago.

That's why we were there - see FIDDLER pg 12

PET OF THE WEEK

Ring My Bell



Mishu

I'm Mishu, a four-year-old male brown and white tabby in need of a good home. I am good with other cats, a shy boy with new people but I warm up quickly. I like playing with string and those fun little balls that have bells in them. I like cats and dogs alike and am ready to snuggle into my new forever home! For more information on adopting Mishu please contact the Dakin Pioneer Valley Humane Society at 413-548-9898 or via email at leverett@dpvhs.org.

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Published weekly on Thursday, (Every other week in July and August. Wednesday paper fourth week of November. No paper last week of December.)
PHONE (413) 863-8666
FAX (413) 863-3050
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Postmaster: Send address changes to
The Montague Reporter
24 3rd Street
Turners Falls, MA 01376
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TURNERS FALLS LIBRARY NEWS

Planter Celebration

BY LINDA HICKMAN
TURNERS FALLS - There will be a walking tour of the 35 planters along Ave. A. on Sunday, September 30th at 2 p.m. The walk will begin in front of the old Cumberland Farms on Ave. A, to the left of the Great Falls Discovery Center. This tour is part of the annual Streetscape Celebration held each fall during the Arts and Leaves weekend. Various organizations, businesses and individuals have adopted, supported, and or tended the large

planters along Ave. A. The tour will include discussion of the wide variety of plantings, what has worked, and what could use improvement. Master Gardener Dawn Ward of Montague will be available for gardening questions and tips. Refreshments will be served. The Streetscape Revitalization Committee sponsors the tour. For more information, call Linda at the Carnegie Library at 863-3214 or 413-774-0204, or Michael at the Brick House, 863-9576.

MILLERS FALLS LIBRARY NEWS

Library Club

BY LINDA HICKMAN
MILLERS FALLS - The Millers Falls Library Club is a free after school program that meets on Tuesdays from 3:30 - 4:45 p.m. The drop-in sessions are designed children of all ages. Children's Librarian

Linda Hickman runs the activities, which include live music, arts and crafts, games, and homework help, depending upon the participants' ages and interests. For more information, please call the Carnegie Library, 863-3214.

Don't Miss the MBA Revival

BY DAN LAROCHE
TURNERS FALLS - On Tuesday, October 2nd, there will be an official kick-off meeting for the Montague Business Association at the Shea Theater. The festivities include a social hour beginning at 6 p.m. with wine and *hors d'oeuvres* provided by Ristorante DiPaolo along with music by the Charlie Apicella Trio. At 7 p.m. representatives from the Shelburne Falls Area

Business Association and the Greenfield Business Association will speak and answer questions about the many benefits to business owners and the community of being a part of a business association. If you are a Montague business owner and are interested in attending this important event, please call 863-3200 x 207 or send an email to planner@montague.net by Monday, October 1st to reserve your seat.

GILL TOWN HALL CLOSED THURSDAY AND FRIDAY

Gill Town offices will be closed Thursday, September 27th, through Friday, September 28th while staff attends trainings and meetings related to town business.

GFMS Students of the Week

- Grade 6:** Jacob Pieffer
Courtney Eugin
Grade 7:
Nala Vaughn
Grade 8:
Tom Anderson
Tom Sanders

FACES & PLACES

Watershed Cleanup Saturday ~ September 29th ~ VOLUNTEERS STILL NEEDED



Illegal dumpsite along the Connecticut River

GREENFIELD - Volunteers along the length of the 410-mile long Connecticut River basin will work at scores of sites this Saturday in the Connecticut River Watershed Council's 11th Source to Sea Cleanup. The fall event spans western New England from north to south, enlisting over 1,600 people from 60 groups and communities in an effort to haul off trash and litter at river and stream sites from the Quebec/New Hampshire bor-

der to Long Island Sound at Old Lyme, CT. Last year over 45 tons of debris were cleared in the Connecticut River basin during the Source to Sea event. Volunteers are still needed for this year's cleanup; contact information is on the web at: www.ctriver.org/cleanup/.

All told, nearly 400 tons of trash, tires, appliances, and discarded construction material have been removed during the first decade of Source to Sea Cleanups.

Gill Residents:
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SENIOR CENTER ACTIVITIES Oct. 1st - 25th

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

- Monday, 1st**
10 a.m. Senior Aerobics
11 a.m. Easy Aerobics
Tuesday, 2nd
9:30 a.m. T'ai Chi
Wednesday, 3rd

- 10 a.m. Senior Aerobics
12:45 p.m. Bingo
Thursday, 4th
1:00 p.m. Pitch
Friday, 5th
10 a.m. Senior Aerobics
11 a.m. Easy Aerobics

A suggested donation of \$1.00 per exercise is appreciated.

ERVING Senior Center, 18 Pleasant St., Ervingside (Old Center School, 1st Floor), is open Monday through Thursday from 9 a.m. to 2 p.m. for activities and congregate meals. For information and reservations call Polly Kiely, Senior Center director at 413 423-3308. Lunch daily at 11:30 a.m. 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 978 544-

3898.
Monday, 1st
9:30 a.m. Exercise
9:45 a.m. Library
12 Noon Pitch
Tuesday, 2nd
9 a.m. Aerobics
12:30 p.m. Painting
Wednesday, 3rd
9:00 a.m. Line Dancing
10 a.m. Weight Loss Group
12 Noon Bingo
Thursday, 4th
9 a.m. Aerobics
10:15 a.m. Pool
12:30 p.m. Shopping

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.

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Hooray for Booster Day

BY MATT ROBINSON

TURNERS FALLS - Families gathered along the Avenue on Saturday, September 23rd to watch familiar faces and sugar cereal floats march past in the

Everybody knew everybody, at least it seemed that way.

There were waves from familiar cops, veterans, and firefighters mixed with greetings from parents, cousins and little brothers.

carried the local celebs and each classes' royal couple.

The cheerleaders, bespectacled with cool sunglasses, cheered, and the marching band kept the beat.

Fire trucks from the whole district were there: Erving, Gill, Montague Center, and Turners Falls.

And the marchers and spectators grew more and more excited as each group went by.

The school spirit rose with each wave and cheer. The excitement mounted, and spilled onto the football field, where Turners triumphed that afternoon.

We won! Not just the boys on



PHOTOS: MATTHEW ROBINSON



The Booster Day Parade makes its way down Avenue A on Sept. 23rd.

annual Turners Falls High School Booster Day Parade.

Toddlers couldn't hold all the candy tossed from the floats - appropriately based on a sugar cereal theme this year - with just two hands.

Business owners stood outside their stores and offices, cheering alongside their customers, watching the procession.

school kids, cheering on their class before cheering on their school.

Jokes were told. "What are they going to with all those frosted flakes?"

Luxury cars



TFHS Class of 1957 50th Reunion

BY DAVID BRULE

ERVINGSIDE - The Class of '57 will be gathering this weekend to mark the occasion of their graduation 50 years ago. Helen Pleasant of Erving side has been the organizational force behind the reunion, assisted by co-chairs Tony Blassberg and Donald Mosher, both of New York state.

The festivities will be held at the French King Banquet Center, starting with a get-together this Friday evening at 7:00 p.m. for snacks, cocktails and a chance to get re-acquainted with classmates. This cocktail hour is open to all and it is especially hoped that friends of the Class of 1957 will attend.

On Saturday the 29th, atten-



One of the highlights of the reunion will be the participation of Fred Oakes, Class of '57 Advisor

dees will have the choice of touring the Connecticut River on the Quinnetucket II, leaving at 1 p.m. from the Northfield Mountain dock, or visiting the Discovery Center as guests of honor. That evening the class is holding a dinner at the French King Banquet Center for all classmates, reser-

ventions required.

Pleasant says currently 84 people have confirmed they will attend. One of the highlights will be the participation of Mr. Fred Oakes, '57 Class Advisor, who has reached his 94th year and is still going strong!

Helen Pleasant has compiled yearbooks containing updates on classmates from far and wide, and last minute additions can be inserted as need be. Saturday's dinner will be provided by the highly-regarded Myron's Catering, a sure ingredient for a successful evening.

The reunion weekend will conclude with a Sunday brunch at the French King Center starting at 10:00 a.m.

the field, or the coaches, or the cheerleaders, or the band or even the school. We all won. We all

beat Springfield Tech 20 - 8. Hooray for the Booster Day Parade!

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"The Voice of the Villages"

Founded by
Arthur Evans Harry Brandt David Detmold
August, 2002

Photography
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Technical Administrators
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No Road Map, No Police Station

BY JEFF SINGLETON

MONTAGUE - Over the next six weeks, the citizens of Montague will be deciding whether to spend \$5.6 million on a new police station. The committee that created this proposal will be holding numerous forums; there will be a vote at town meeting; if town meeting approves the plan, the registered voters of town will have their say on a debt exclusion vote for the new station in early November.

Generally speaking, I am inclined to support this proposal. We need a new police station. Actually, we needed one ten years ago. The current station is a disaster - an embarrassment to the town and an insult to our police officers.

Do we need a \$5.6 million police station and should it be moved from its current location? Here I have some doubts. The price tag seems very high. The move out of downtown Turners Falls appears to contradict our economic development plans for that section of town. Yet right now I am inclined to defer to the judgment of the police station committee on these issues. They have done their homework and the process that created this proposal was extremely open.

Having said all this, if the vote were held today, I would vote "No" on this project as a member of the finance committee

and a taxpayer. First of all, there has been virtually no effort to evaluate the project - its cost and scope - in the context of Montague's many other capital needs. The capital improvements committee, which is charged with doing just this, will first consider the design the day before the special town meeting of October 11th. I am not blaming the CIC for its understandable summer scheduling problem, but this is not the way major capital projects are supposed to be evaluated in our community.

More importantly, our town finances are a disaster. The town leadership has not shown a strong commitment to developing a coherent plan to confront Montague's structural budget problem. Instead we seem content to stumble from year to year, like a failing business with no long-term plan.

This problem was clearly on display at the selectboard meeting last Monday, September 24th. The board expressed a lot of negativity about a proposal from the finance committee to allocate a modest amount of money - \$10,000 - to complete a financial plan we began last spring. We also want to include the schools in this process.

A few months ago everyone seemed to understand the necessity for doing this. We were all enthusiastic about it. Now when the rubber hits the road, town leaders are dragging their collective feet. Why?

There were a number of fair questions, but the overall tone was extremely negative, suggesting a lack of commitment to long-term planning. The chair of the selectboard seemed so irritated she even tried to keep



KAREN WILKINSON ILLUSTRATION

the proposal off the town meeting warrant. Where on Earth is this coming from?

To make matters worse, there was the usual sniping at the school district and the predictable grumbling about the elementary schools. There are certainly good arguments pro and con about whether to close a school, and which one to close. We are all frustrated by the gridlock on this issue. But the impact of a decision to close an elementary school on our chronic budget problems will be virtually zero. To keep dragging this issue into the budget process is, to be blunt, misleading, divisive and unprofessional.

I would also add that the Montague selectboard, with the exception of one member, showed little leadership in convincing town employees to join the state health care group, the Group Insurance Commission (GIC). This despite the fact that everyone agrees that spiraling health care costs are a major cause of our budget gaps and joining the GIC would be a big step forward in addressing the issue. In fact, the Gill-Montague school employees showed they are keeping the interests of the towns in mind by voting to join the GIC this week, while the town employees, with the exception of the police union, turned down the opportunity.

What this all adds up to is a lack of leadership about our chronic budget problems. I am not saying we need to solve all these problems before building a new police station. That would be absurd. But we at least need a road map for the future and

some sense that everyone is pulling together to get out of the rut we are in. Instead we all seem too invested in spinning our wheels in the mud.

Should we go out and spend \$5.6 million dollars under these conditions? Right now, I do not think that would be responsible.

Jeff Singleton is the chair of the Montague finance committee.

COMMUNITY MEETINGS ON THE NEW MONTAGUE POLICE STATION

THURSDAY, SEPT 27TH:
MILLERS FALLS LIBRARY

WEDNESDAY, OCT 3RD:
SENIOR CTR, 5TH ST., TURNERS

THURSDAY, OCT 4TH:
MASONIC LODGE, MONTAGUE CITY

ALL MEETINGS WILL BE HELD AT 7:00 P.M.

LETTER TO THE EDITOR

Rosie Jiménez Day

The Hyde Amendment is a piece of national legislation banning the use of federal Medicaid funds for abortions. On October 3rd, 1977, shortly after the Hyde Amendment went into effect, Rosie Jiménez, a young woman from McAllen, TX, died from an illegal abortion. Her Medicaid insurance wouldn't cover - and she couldn't afford - a legal one, as sanctioned by the Supreme Court's Roe v. Wade decision of 1973. Even though 17 states have passed legislation enabling low-income women in their states to have access to safe, legal abortions, there are millions of women who continue to suffer the consequences of this discriminatory act of

Congress. Once again, we need to demand repeal of the Hyde Amendment and all laws at the state and federal level that restrict our rights to comprehensive health care, including abortion on demand. Honor the memory of Rosie Jiménez. Take to the streets for full reproductive freedom and justice for all women. Stand up to the politicians who are backing down from this critical issue. Attend the Rosie Jiménez Day rally and speak-out on the Greenfield Town Common at 4:30 pm on Wednesday, October 3rd.

The rally is sponsored by the Coalition for Women's Lives;

for more information, call: 413-367-9356. - Susan Dorazio
Montague Center

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American Dead in Iraq as of 9/26/07

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MARINE CORPS LEAGUE

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

GUEST EDITORIALS

Preserve the Rural Character of Wendell

BY RAY DIDONATO

In a recent edition of the *Montague Reporter* ("Notes from the Wendell Selectboard," MR V#43), you reported the Wendell selectboard has approved a prioritized list of updated Community Development Plan (CDP) goals. Among the list were a goal to "encourage 'traditional neighborhoods,' where a person's needs for work, shopping, and social gathering are all within walking distance" and a goal to "adopt a forest conservation bylaw." How different these two goals appear, but how very intertwined they could become in Wendell.

Traditional neighborhood, or village center zoning, generally implies increased density within the town center, combined with mixed-use zoning, so, as the CDP goal of the Wendell selectboard states, "a person's needs for work, shopping, and social gathering are all within walking distance."

The idea of a thriving village center may seem desirable, but it comes with drawbacks. First and foremost is increased development and density within the center, which by definition will also include increased residential densities in a mixed-use zone. What infrastructure changes would be required to achieve such a change in Wendell? Municipal sewer (attentive residents will recall a vague proposal years ago for a municipal sewer line running from Wendell to Erving) and perhaps other municipal services, in addition to sidewalks, perhaps streetlights, and other infrastructure improvements.

To balance this, a community may be tempted to transfer development rights from another

er area of town, or a "forestry zone," to achieve higher density in the town center and sparser development in the forestry zone. The trade-off sounds acceptable: village density in exchange for larger lots of forestland in outlying areas of town. But development pressures are such that when the center reaches maximum density, a move to encourage a zoning change to allow development in the original "forest zone," if not eliminating the forest zone altogether, may soon follow.

Permanent conservation restrictions within a forestry zone may help alleviate future development pressures, but will not necessarily create a cohesive pattern of forest development.

The best approach toward protecting our forestlands is to encourage open space development, a system of large and small cluster developments which, when combined with density bonuses and permanent open space set-asides, are created in such a manner as to identify open space resources, and design around them. The set-asides should include permanent access for the public, so our natural resources - and not merely green space - are pre-



The Wendell Town Common on an early Autumn day.

served. When the day does come when the "forestry zone" is amended or abolished, which will happen as development pressures mount, a clear pattern of development with pockets of land permanently protected from subdivision will have been established.

Village center zoning should be treated as a separate issue entirely.

As far as the notion of a village center is concerned, Wendell residents must weigh the infrastructure and density costs, and the impact to the rural character and shrinking agricultural resources of our town.

Some town representatives take a relativistic view of "rural character," saying it means different things to different people. To quote Supreme Court Justice Potter Stewart in a different context, "I know it when I see it."

While village center zoning is a possibility for Wendell, I know it is not rural by any

stretch of the imagination. Sure, it can be surrounded by rural outskirts, but village center zoning, to be precise, is urban in practice, not rural.

The notion of traditional neighborhood development, akin if not

identical to village center development, was introduced as an agenda item of the original Community Development Plan Committee (CDPC) at its second to last meeting in 2004. It is referenced as a short sentence in the final Community Development Plan, which belies the seriousness of its import.

As one Wendell respondent commented in a transportation survey by the CDPC, "I would like to see more ecologically viable transportation options rather than an attempt to build up Wendell in ways that would really change the nature of the town." Another respondent wrote, "In some ways I feel that the best solution may be to create more basic services in town so people do not need to travel out of town for so much."

Indeed, the proposals underway in Wendell have the potential for serious changes to our community, and we must weigh the contradicting goals before us.

With such choices before us, I hope that in the spirit of our small, rural town, we will exchange a dialogue as neighbors in town forums and community and neighborhood settings, as we all look toward the future of a town that belongs to each of us.

However, in any future proposals that arise, we must also be clear that decreased density, or forest zoning, in one area of town need not go hand in hand with increased density, or village center zoning, in another. Indeed, each proposal is different, one need not accompany the other, and each has its own set of pros and cons to be weighed separately.

Each should be decided on its own merits.

The author is a Wendell resident and past member of both the town open space committee and planning board.

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Raucous Caucus Seeking Democrats

BY JAY DIPUCCHIO

MONTAGUE - The Montague Democratic town committee is seeking registered Democrats for nomination to run for committee vacancies in the presidential primary on March 4th, 2008.

As defined by the Secretary of the Commonwealth, town committees are the basic organizing unit of political parties in Massachusetts. Each political party may elect on the presidential primary ballot a committee consisting of 3 to 35 members to a four-year term. Members represent their party at the local level by promoting the objectives of the party and by

working for the nomination and election of party candidates.

Town committees schedule and conduct the annual caucus for selecting delegates to the state Democratic convention that chooses candidates for statewide offices such as governor and US senator, and adopts the policy platform of the party. In Montague, the committee also conducts a caucus for the nomination of Democratic candidates to run in elections for all elected town offices such as selectboard, board of health, assessors and so on.

In order to be more inclusive

than towns that limit participation, Montague's Democratic town committee bylaws, as authorized by the state Democratic committee, allow for the full 35 members. The committee may fill vacancies between presidential primaries by vote at their regular meetings, but validates the membership by placing all willing and current members on the primary ballot while seeking new interest.

Some years the committee may have very little activity, only conducting the caucus and minimal organizational maintenance. In other years the committee organizes locally or collaborates with the Franklin County Democratic League to promote candidates, hold candidate forums, organize phone banks and create fundraising events. Committee work is what the members choose to make of it. Dues are

not required, though a \$10 annual contribution is requested.

November 8th is the deadline to get on the nomination list in order that supporting signatures can be gathered by the state deadline of November 9th.

If you are interested in being nominated to the Montague Democratic town committee, or want to know more, call Jay DiPucchio, Democratic town committee chair at 863-8656, or email at here now@verizon.net.

HIGHLIGHTS FROM THE ERVING POLICE LOG

Erratic Vehicle Same Time Every Night

Thursday 9-20

6:29 p.m. Disabled motor vehicle in Copper Angel parking lot. Arrested

[REDACTED], for two default warrants.

Friday 9-21

11:18 a.m. Foot pursuit off of Lester Street. Arrested

[REDACTED] for a default warrant and also charged with resisting arrest.

7:00 p.m. 911 call from the French

King Motel. Spoke with parties in that room. No problem.

Saturday 9-22

8:43 a.m. Missing miniature, long haired dachshund, chestnut in color, Central Street area.

8:52 p.m. Criminal application issued to [REDACTED] for unlicensed operation of a motor vehicle.

Sunday 9-23

9:50 a.m. Suspicious persons and motor vehicle at old cemetery on Old State Road. Three subjects advised to move on.

7:30 p.m. 911 call from River Road. Misdeal, all OK.

Monday 9-24

10:30 a.m. Report of erratic operator at same time every night on Route 2, westbound, at approximately 11:00 p.m. Red or maroon sedan flashing high beams at vehicles, speeding, tailgating, and passing.

MCTV Schedule Channel 17: Sept. 28th - Oct. 4th

Friday, September 28

8:00 am Common Man Concerts: Cowbell Prescription
9:00 am Montague Select Board (9/17/07)
10:30 am The Changing Face of Turners Falls

12:30 pm Block Party Part 4
2:00 pm Senior Center: Self Defense Part 1 & 2

6:30 pm Montague Update: Arts & Leaves
7:00 pm GMRSD Meeting (9/25/07)
9:30 pm On The Ridge: Jennifer Broome
10:00 pm Carlos W. Anderson: "Stick-To-It-Ive-Ness"

11:00 pm Independent Voices #36

Saturday, September 29

8:00 am Montague Update: Arts & Leaves
8:30 am GMRSD Meeting (9/25/07)
11:00 am On The Ridge: Jennifer Broome
11:30 am Carlos W. Anderson: "Stick-To-It-Ive-Ness"

12:30 pm Independent Voices #36
6:30 pm The Well Being: "HIV/AIDS Today"
7:30 pm GED Connection #19: Social Studies: Economics
8:00 pm Montague Police Station Tour
9:00 pm Windchanger: Dark Water Pirates
9:30 pm There and Back Karen Adams
10:30 pm Montague Music Train (1/30/07)

Sunday, September 30

8:00 am The Well Being: "HIV/AIDS Today"
9:00 am GED Connection #19: Social Studies: Economics
9:30 am Montague Police Station Tour
10:30 am Windchanger: Dark Water Pirates
11:00 am There and Back Karen Adams
12:00 pm Montague Music Train (1/30/07)
6:30 pm Gill Concert: Eric Goodchild
7:30 pm Block Party Part Four
9:00 pm Our Lady of Czestochowa
9:30 pm Birds of Prey
11:00 pm Over The Falls: "Beyond The Wall"

Monday, October 1

8:00 am Gill Concert: Eric Goodchild
9:00 am Block Party Part Four
10:30 am Our Lady of Czestochowa
11:00 am Birds of Prey

12:30 pm Over The Falls: "Beyond The Wall"

6:00 pm Senior Center: Elder Law
7:00 pm Montague Select Board (Live)
9:00 pm Gladwood Studios: Preachin The Blues
10:00 pm On The Ridge: Jennifer Broome

Tuesday, October 2

8:00 am Senior Center: Elder Law
9:00 am Gladwood Studios: Preachin The Blues
10:00 am On The Ridge: Jennifer Broome
6:30 pm The GED Connection #19: Economics
7:00 pm GMRSD Meeting (11/25/07)
9:30 pm Carlos W. Anderson: "Stick-To-It-Ive-Ness"

10:30pm Montague Grange Variety Show

Wednesday, October 3

8:00 am GED Connection #19: Economics
8:30 am Carlos W. Anderson: "Stick-To-It-Ive-Ness"
9:30 am Montague Grange: Variety Show
6:00 pm NASA Sci Files: The Case of the Technical Knockout
7:00 pm GED Connection #20: Civics & Government
7:30 pm Montague Police Station Tour
8:30 pm The Well Being: "HIV/AIDS Today"
9:30 pm Peske Park Dedication and Ceremony

Thursday, October 4

8:00 am NASA Sci Files: The Case of the Technical Knockout
9:00 am GED Connection #20: Civics & Government
9:30 am Montague Police Station Tour
10:30 am The Well Being: "HIV/AIDS Today"
11:30 am Peske Park Dedication and Ceremony
6:00 pm Common Man Concerts: Eric Goodchild
7:00 pm Montague Select Board 10/1/07
9:00 pm On The Ridge: Jennifer Broome
9:30 pm Seabrook 1977
11:00 pm Montague Music Train (1/30/07)

HIGHLIGHTS FROM THE MONTAGUE POLICE LOG

Nothing Missing but the Dog

Thursday 9-20

8:36 a.m. Report of a breaking and entering from an O Street address. Two cars had been entered and change was missing.

2:40 p.m. Walk-in to station reported a larceny from Judd Wire. Wire was missing. Under investigation.

Friday 9-21

3:45 p.m. Report of a breaking and entering at a Goddard Avenue address. Caller states that when she left home the doors and windows were locked. When she came back home her home had been ransacked. Nothing appeared to be missing but the dog. Report taken.

Saturday 9-22

12:50 p.m. After a motor vehicle stop on Avenue A at the beginning of

the bridge, [REDACTED], was arrested and charged with operating with license suspended as a habitual traffic offender, failure to wear a seatbelt, and possession of a class D drug (subsequent offense).

7:45 p.m. Report of threatening and harassment at a 2nd Street address. Subject placed in protective custody.

Sunday 9-23

1:06 p.m. Report of a loud noise disturbance at a 4th Street address. People on the porch were being loud. Group dispersed.;
10:10 p.m. Report of a domestic disturbance at a 2nd Street address.

[REDACTED] was arrested and charged with possession of a class D drug

(subsequent offense), possession to distribute a class D drug, possession of a class B drug, and

unlawful possession of ammunition.

Monday 9-24

3:40 p.m. Report of a breaking and entering at an East Mineral Road address. Several items taken.

11:54 p.m. Report of suspicious activity behind the Discovery Center. Gathering dispersed.

Tuesday 9-25

11:34 a.m. Report of a disturbance in front of Pipione's Sport Shop. Young adults hanging out on sidewalk in front of store. Moved along.

5:25 p.m. Report of a safety hazard at a Turners Falls Road address. Caller reports hearing sound and smelling something burning. Officer responded with fire department. Nothing found.

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NOTES FROM THE WENDELL SELECTBOARD

Finishing Touches

BY JOSH HEINEMANN - On September 12th, in a flurry of last minute details, the town of Wendell closed on a USDA loan for the town center building projects, borrowing a total of \$1,242,474. Construction costs for the new town office building and library ended up \$60,000 less than originally anticipated, a savings that will amount to almost \$1.00 on the tax rate. The building fund also retains a balance of more than \$40,000, which will be used for acoustical tile and floor repair.

On Saturday, September 15th, landscape committee members Christine Heard and Dianne Kurinsky took advantage of the cool rain and the help of road crewman Josh White to plant a crabapple and several mountain andromeda along the parking lot side of the office building. Another crabapple will go behind the building, and a row of blueberries will go behind that, between the mowed area and the community garden area.

Heard, in her role as selectboard member, reported that Jean Forward of the town historical commission has removed all the books she had any interest in from the town hall; any books remaining are free for highway commissioner Dan Bacigalupo to bring to the Wendell Recycling and Transfer Station (WRATS). Still at town hall is a set of scales and weights remaining from the days when every town had its own office of weights and measures. Board chair Ted Lewis said that office was filled into the 1950s in Wendell.

Board member Dan Keller said, "I would hate to see them come here. They are big (seven or eight feet by six feet by three and a half feet) and useless. There is no place to store them."

Heard said Ted Descavich, of Mormon Hollow Road, seemed to be running an automobile repair business, possibly pouring used oil onto the ground, and does not have the proper license. She said Descavich told her he is only working for some friends, but sometime in the future he may want to establish a business.

Lewis added, "He has a wrecker."

Heard said, "Everyone else complies (with the law). It's not hard."

Selectboard members have spoken with Descavich more than once about his home auto repairs, but he has never come to a selectboard meeting. The next step in dealing with him, according to the board, would be to contact town counsel.

Keller said, as a neighbor, and the only selectboard member who has not yet spoken with Descavich, he would contact him and warn him before the town takes legal action. At the same time, Keller

said, he would see how Descavich is handling used oil.

Carolyn Manley, of the interior design committee for the new town office building, told the board her committee wants to pay artists up to \$300 each for five permanent pieces of art, photographs, watercolors or other works that will hang in the back hallway of the new building. She said the possible total for purchases of art for the new building would be \$1,500, but she expected the actual total would be much less. Heard suggested applying for a Wendell cultural council grant, but Manley said the committee was already using a cultural council grant to frame a quilt, and didn't want to try for too many grants too quickly.

Longtime residents remember Jack Ellis - who farmed the land to the southwest of the town common for many years - very well. Jack Ellis' family donated the yoke from Jack's oxen team to the town, and Keller spoke of marking it with a bronze plaque dedicated not just to Jack, but to the hard work of all Wendell's citizens. Their labor made the construction of the new town office building - and living in this town of hills and trees and

rocks - possible, Keller said.

The board set Saturday, October 20th at noon as the time and date for a dedication of the town office building. The board wants time to invite people from out of town who made the project happen, including architect Margo Jones, project manager Mark Sullivan, clerk of the works John Flemming, Leo Handford, and Handford's most recent construction project manager, who saw the work through to its completion.

Bacigalupo has saved a pile of logs and some wood chips left from the July 12th tornado cleanup and stump grinding. The logs are mostly cordwood size and Lewis guessed the pile amounted to about 15 cords; they will be auctioned off. Wood chips will be delivered free by the road crew to anyone in town; contact Bacigalupo at the highway garage if you are interested: 978-544-3735.

The planning board set October 2nd at 7:00 p.m. as the time for a site plan review for renovation of the old library building into a senior center and home for the Good Neighbors community food pantry. Parking for either use is the largest issue.

The selectboard received two

bids for installing the grinder pump needed to connect a flush toilet in the old library to the town sewer line and septic system. The town already owns the grinder pump. The board accepted the lower bid of \$10,800 from Whitney Trucking. Lewis expects that Whitney will also move the war monuments from in front of the old library to the front of the bandstand on the north common, while their equipment is in town.

Only one person, Nina Keller, has volunteered to be on the town's Nuclear Advisory Committee, and she informed the selectboard she does not want to be a committee of one.

Carolyn Manley met with the selectboard a second time, this time in her role as treasurer, to discuss an auction of town owned real estate, mainly lots taken for back taxes. Before an auction is held, she needs to contact town departments and find out if any department can use any of the properties. Manley said she wants to have all 25 or 30 town-owned properties ready for the sale, and with the complications on some of the properties, she hopes to be ready for an auction by early spring of next year.



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NOTES FROM THE ERVING SELECTBOARD

Canine Concerns Top Special Town Meeting Agenda

BY NICHOLE CLAYTON ERVING - The turnout at the September 24th 15-article special town meeting in Erving was small, but the debate was lively.

Voters passed, without much comment, Article One on the warrant, which asked the town to raise and appropriate \$30,000 dollars for legal costs related to health insurance litigation the town is facing.

Then the dog bylaw came up, debate was unleashed, and opinions flew thicker than fleas. Some residents called for stricter, more enforceable dog bylaws, while others favored a 'let sleeping dogs lie' approach.

The original proposal was amended several times, including changing the number of dogs allowed in any one residence without a Hobby Kennel license, from six dogs to four. Under this clause, no one residence will be allowed to house more than four dogs over six months of age without proper certification. The last major amendment reduced the fees for individual dogs from the proposed \$10 (for spayed and neutered dogs) and \$15, back to the current fee structure of \$3 and \$6. One proposed amendment, to allow dogs without a leash in a public area if they are under the control of

their owner or being exercised, was finally withdrawn when no consensus could be reached on how to word it without rendering the whole leash law null and void. After an hour-long discussion, the dog bylaw passed as amended by unanimous vote.

Article Three asked the town to adopt new cemetery regulations and fees. Two amendments generated discussion. Under the title Interments, it was noted that the additional fee mentioned was a nominal amount of \$250. But the issue that raised the majority of debate on this article regarded a fee, eventually

deleted, for a non-resident to buy a cemetery plot in town. As proposed, Erving residents would pay a fee of \$25, while non-residents would pay \$450. However, voters felt this clause could not be legally enforced if challenged, and there may not be enough space in the town's cemetery to sell plots to folks from out of town. As amended, the article passed unanimously.

Article Four asked the town to transfer \$50,000 from stabilization for computers at the Erving Elementary school. This was passed over, as the selectboard did not feel the school committee had done its part by voting on the motion

prior to bringing it to the town for a vote.

Article Five asked the town to raise and appropriate \$1,156,728 to pay for upgrades, design and engineering costs at the Erving wastewater treatment plant. Money for this article, which passed unanimously, will come from the first two annual reimbursements from the state School Building Authority for the Erving Elementary School renovation.

The last nine articles generated little debate, mainly dealing with rewording zoning bylaws and routine bookkeeping measures.

Brandon Butcher Reveals Mysteries of the Weather in Montague Center

BY DAVID DETMOLD MONTAGUE CENTER - Springfield Channel 3's Brandon Butcher demonstrated the wizardry of modern meteorology to the kids at Montague Center School on Monday, by making at least one accurate prediction. "It might get really hot this week." Right on the button.

But the youngsters were mainly interested in lightning.

After Butcher, bouncing around the front of the community room like a boyish

Captain Kangaroo, gave an animated exposition on the water cycle, the progression of the seasons, and the characteristic storms of each, he opened the celebrity teach-in to a question and answer period. Most of the questions were about lightning. Rainbows were a close runner-up.

"If lightning strikes right next to you" one lad wanted to know, "is it safe to stand in the same place, because lightning never strikes twice?"

Not so, Butcher declared,

pointing out that the Empire State Building gets struck hundreds of times a year.

"Did Benjamin Franklin discover lightning?" Butcher gave the plucky Pennsylvanian credit for early experiments with electricity, but cast some doubt on the veracity of the kite, key and lightning legend. He explained how a metal key, like a lightning rod, would conduct electricity down to the hand that held the kite string, making such an experiment foolhardy at least and fatal at worst.

"Do you know where rainbows end?" demanded one young lady.

"I wish," replied the weatherman. Everyone sees a different rainbow, he explained, because they are an optical phenomenon derived from the ability of raindrops to refract sunlight, and depend upon the angle of sight of the viewer. He pointed out that a double rainbow, as pictured on a slideshow he brought along to depict weather phenomena, will show the colors of the spectrum in obverse pattern: red on the right and purple on the left on

one, purple on the right and red on the left on the other.

"How hot is the sun?" the



Channel 3 meteorologist Brandon Butcher at the Montague Center School on Monday

next child wanted to know.

"About 60,000 degrees." (That explains this late summer weather.) "But one bolt of lightning is hotter than the surface of the sun."

That got the children thinking about lightning again, and soon Butcher was telling them how lightning hitting a metal fence can injure cows leaning across to graze long

grass on the other side. He said cows sitting together under a lone tree in a farm field can all get struck by lightning at once. And he taught the kids a simple axiom: "If the thunder roars; go indoors."

"How do you measure the air?" asked one youngster, paraphrasing Bill Cosby.

"Great question! You use a barometer." This caused some consternation among the primary students, as indeed it would among any crowd of modern day Americans, of any age. "Air pressure is always weighing down on us." More puzzled looks. "Some days, the air pressure is high; some days, the air pressure is low." Right over their heads. "When the pressure is low, you get clouds and storms. When the pressure is high, you get fair weather. Can anyone guess what the air pressure is today?"

"Do you like being on TV?" the next child countered.

"I love it," Butcher answered. "It's the only thing I'm good at. It's like eating ice cream, and getting paid to do it."

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OVERRIDE from pg 1 completed.

Reading the fiscal tea leaves, the board strongly endorsed the upcoming police station debt exclusion vote, scrapped the planned school override, and decided to take the entire \$297,586 still needed for this year's G-M school assessment out of the town's reserve funds. But the board acknowledged the danger in this approach.

"We don't have reserves for everything," said selectboard chair Pat Allen at Monday night's joint meeting with the capital improvements and finance committees. "We've all been agonizing over how to fund the schools and the police station since May, or longer"

In answer to capital improvements committee member Mike

Naughton's question, "How much is in reserves now?" town administrator Frank Abbondanzio answered, "\$703,733 in free cash, \$536,984 in stabilization," and "\$1.7 million in the board of assessors overlay reserve account." The latter sum is not available for the town to tap into until the assessors release it, or release the portion of the overlay account they do not need to set aside for any outstanding obligations. But Abbondanzio noted the peril of the course the town was steering by going to reserves to pay for something like the schools' operating budget.

Whether or not the special town meeting on October 11th approves spending nearly \$300,000 to repair, winterize see **OVERRIDE** pg 12

Montague Reserve Funds Expended: '07-'08

Source	Amount Expended	Amount Remaining
Assessors Overlay Reserves	\$274,626	\$1.7 million (not yet released to town)
Free Cash	\$350,000	\$703,733
Stabilization	\$125,000	\$536,984
Sale of Real Estate, Industrial Park	\$50,922	not available
Additional Expenditure, for G-M schools, '08 Operating Budget		Total Remaining Reserves: \$2,643,131
	\$297,586	
Total Expended: \$1,098,134		

The town of Montague has spent \$625,984 from reserves this year on operating expenses for the town's and the G-M schools' operating budgets. With the added \$297,596 approved by the selectboard on 9/24/07 for the G-M school operating budget, the amount expended from reserves on operating budgets this year will rise to \$923,570. Additionally, \$175,000 has been spent this year on 'non-recurring expenses' such as repairs and purchases of DPW equipment, renovation of Norma's Park in Lake Pleasant, an actuarial study, and a one-year expense for the tuition of one student to the Smith Vocational School. The \$923,570 expended from reserves on operating budgets will be built into next year's budget base, without new revenue to offset the expenditure.

SCHOOLS from pg 1

superintendent Ken Roche announced agreement to join the GIC had been reached earlier that day with the three bargaining units within the regional school district. "This was a tremendous accomplishment. When we set out six weeks ago [to look into joining the GIC] it seemed the timetable was insurmountable. This could not have happened without cooperation from everyone. There was a recognition on all sides of mutual benefit."

Roche estimated the long term

savings to the district - in terms of avoided increases in health insurance premiums - at 5% to 10% annually. Roche said the district currently spends a total of \$3 million on health care benefits for its employees and retirees. The GMRSD's present health provider, the Franklin County Regional Health Insurance Group, has experienced average cost increases in the range of 16% to 18% or more in recent years, while the GIC has experience cost increases in the range of 5% to 6%. Roche called the GIC "a very flexible plan that

will give our employees and retirees security and protection."

Roche said the GMRSD was among the first school districts in the state to make the switch to the GIC, after enabling legislation was passed allowing town and school employees to enroll this summer. "We're demonstrating a way forward for other districts," Roche said, with noticeable pride.

Meanwhile, town officials expressed frustration with the failure of town hall employees and retirees to ratify the GIC plan. "Obviously we're disap-

pointed," said town administrator Frank Abbondanzio. "We did a good job of getting the information out there." But at the health information workshop with GIC representatives and providers at the high school last week, Abbondanzio said one town hall employee asked the question, "How many other towns in the state have voted to join so far?" and the answer was, "Montague would be the first."

"People were really feeling they were being rushed to make a very important decision," Abbondanzio said. "But the

rejection [of the GIC] came with a caveat that the employees would be very seriously looking at it if we brought it up again for next year."

Selectboard member Patricia Pruitt said, "This was the only opening we've had to impact the rising costs of health care."

Abbondanzio said health care costs for town employees have risen slower than for the school employees, at about 12.9% over the last eight years. That rate is still more than double the historical rise in health care costs at the GIC.

CLOSING from pg 1

accept a compromise amendment requiring seven out of nine votes to close a school. The three had argued that six out of nine votes would be a level too easy to attain for such an important decision.

Brown said, "We need to show leadership. We can get to 'Yes'. If we reached consensus [on closing a school] it would be much better received in the community. I think we're doing this to close Montague Center School. If we start to change the regional agreement just because we want to accomplish a certain goal, I think it would be a mistake."

But Kuklewicz replied, "We're not going to two thirds just to close the Montague Center building. I'm not looking at just one building. I don't think just one building is enough, from where I'm standing."

Kociela said, "If we approve this, I will do everything in my power to make sure it will not be so we can close a certain school. I believe that would be unethical; I wouldn't be part of that."

Lapachinski, who paused for nearly a minute before voting 'No' on the 7 out of 9 amendment, had this to say about the school closing process: "I feel the expressions of people last

December and January, the outrage of certain groups and the delight of the others. It's very difficult to close a school, and what that does to others who advocate for that school. I spent sleepless nights. I have no desire to do that again. But votes are coming."

The school committee also approved a stipulation that would give the town where the school proposed for closing is located a right to approve or veto the closing, by a simple majority of town meeting voters.

Interim superintendent Ken Roche, who advocated for lowering the threshold of approval needed to close a school to a two-

thirds vote of the committee, said a decision would now be made in consultation with the towns as to whether the proposed amendment to the regional agreement should be voted on at a special town meeting, or at annual town

meetings next year. The article in the regional agreement ensuring Gill's right to send students to an elementary school in the town of Gill will not be affected by the proposed amendment, Roche said.

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SEGWAY from pg 1

an upright handle and two large wheels side by side, reminiscent of an old fashioned push lawnmower.

"The Segway will allow us to cover downtown Turners much faster than a foot patrolman could," police chief Ray Zukowski said. "Four times faster. We've got two less men than we had in 1990. The

patrolling officer can check the alleys and even the bike path, which is not wide enough for a vehicle. With a new police station up by the fire department, everyone is afraid the Avenue and downtown will be left without coverage.

"We'll still have a presence downtown with a room for a meeting space in the town hall. The Segway will be kept here in a garage. While not a

sub-station, there'll be a little office with a computer, so there'll still be a police presence downtown."

Zukowski pointed out that Holyoke police chief Anthony Scott has four Segways, and found they are a great asset to the force.

With a top speed of 12½ miles per hour, there are not many criminals who can outrun a policeman on a Segway.

When asked what was wrong with a patrolman on a bicycle, officer Dan Minor replied, "You can't ride a bike in a regular uniform with polyester pants; the pants get caught in the chain. These things; you can just hop on and ride in a regular uniform."

Minor did not know how many bicycles you could buy for \$6,600, other than to say it depended on the bicycle. He acknowledged that a bicycle helmet was required when riding a Segway, but other than that, a police officer could ride one with all his gear. Better yet, an officer can direct traffic while standing on the gyroscopically controlled platform - which remains level - leaving the patrolman's hands free.

"This will be perfect for parades, football games and other gatherings to give a foot patrolman speed and mobility," Zukowski said. "It can beat a cruiser in those situations."

Powered by two 73-volt lithium ion batteries, the Segway has a range of about 24 miles and can be fully recharged in four and a half hours.

"The cost is \$6,600," Zukowski said. "But it's all from Community Policing grant money. We'll also be getting an all terrain John Deere Gator from Sirum Equipment to use in emergencies, when someone gets hurt on the bike path or places a cruiser can't go.

"The main advantage of the Segway is they are four times faster than a foot patrolman," said Jerry Condon, Segway representative. "The platform gives them a taller vantage

point in a crowd. They are better for public relations because police are more approachable than a policeman in a cruiser, and the officer does not get fatigued as a bicycle patrolman does. Saddlebags are available to carry a first aid kit and a defibrillator. Spare batteries are available. The two batteries take about three minutes to change. The city of Chicago has 100 Segways. They change batteries when shifts change. Holyoke police chief Anthony Scott says the four Segways he bought are the best investment he's made in a long time."

According to Condon, a policeman in hot pursuit can follow a suspect into a store or through other street level doorways. He pointed out they took a training ride through the Montague town hall with a Segway on Tuesday. Though the wheeled platforms cannot climb stairs, they can go through doorways and into elevators.

About the only disadvantage is the Segway's inability to travel through snow. "It can go fine in a dusting," Condon said, "But it can't travel if snow is over half an inch deep."

If a policeman needs to get off to make an arrest, or to pursue someone up stairs, he carries a remote control on a necklace. A click of a button locks the Segway's wheels. And since it weighs 105 pounds, it isn't anything someone is apt to pick up and run off with.

When you've seen a Segway in Turners Falls, you've seen everything.



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ILLUSTRATION BY ANJA SCHUTZ

BY KARL MEYER

COLRAIN - It's not every evening you get to sit down with nighthawks. As a matter of fact it's a rare event in the hills of Western Massachusetts. Sure, a few wander by in dribs and drabs in late May. And they do return south in slightly more concentrated numbers as August turns toward September. But in the tight Berkshire foothill openings you are lucky to spot fifteen nighthawks pumping by on a heavy August migration night. That's why, as I cycled around a bend of the Deerfield River a few weeks back, I was dumbfounded when confronted with a veritable swarm of common nighthawks.

The dinnertime air was humid and still. I'd decided to head out for a ride, mindful of how quickly the evening light would fade once September rolled in. Cloudy skies promised rain, but the air held the lushness of late summer - just loaded with oxygen. I headed into that tropical atmosphere knowing winter's approach would soon be wringing the humidity down to desert levels in New England.

I sailed along beside the Deerfield River where the road arced away from the woods, opening to a field. Suddenly the birds appeared, as if from nowhere. I had a split second notion they were swallows, but that simply evaporated. Nothing swoops like a nighthawk. And nothing is more unexpected than a field swarming with them as you emerge from the woods. I glided to a halt, watching a kaleidoscope of dipping wings, quartering tails and veering silhouettes. Mesmerized.

They fed voraciously, glori-

ously, stirring up the heavy air along that field. Cut, turn, rise, dip. They'd snap up one invisible bug, then veer off to the next. It was like watching feverish minutes of a professional basketball game when everyone is in motion and everything is in synch. You'd think players would be tripping, bumping heads, sprawling toward the floor. They don't. And these feathered athletes didn't either. They'd twist and turn, sprint and stutter, dive and score - as if choreographed by some unseen wizard.

I stood there for three minutes, bike in hand, nighthawks to the north of me, more aerial cartwheels to the south. They'd dip to a dozen feet off the ground; then shoot up to 50 feet. I quickly knew I couldn't leave. This was summer's last dance. And it was a sight that would not come again anytime soon. I leaned my bike next to a utility pole and walked to a little rise in the grass, taking a seat while the nighthawks had dinner.

I tried to count - 40, 60 - tough to follow this airborne circus. Above this modest-sized field a hundred seemed a fair estimate, but that was probably low. A few cars and pickups zipped by, the occupants staring at me.

I looked across the field. It was fallow this season, though it sometimes serves as a community garden. The mix of grass and wildflowers was about two feet tall and beginning to go to seed. Looking again, a small insect rose next to me, its angle nearly straight up. Then another popped up. They appeared randomly, each floating gently skyward. Another popped up, near my left shoulder. Flying ants - a whole hatch of them. This was tonight's feast.

And hovering above the ants, in the tier perhaps three-to-eight feet off the ground, were a scattering of dragonflies. They'd dart in as the ants fluttered skyward, combing the layer below the sky-sweeping nighthawks. Winged ant after winged ant continued to rise from amidst fleabane, little bluestem, and goldenrod, up into the sultry August air.

It was a celebration in silence, a feast for the eyes and belly, on air and wings. It rose in waves, and was executed in swoops, wing slashes, and the pre-dusk quiet. But, every now and then there was a faint, high-pitched "cheep," seemingly out of place.

I looked higher, perhaps 80 feet up, and there were two or three late tree swallows, gleaning ants that escaped the nighthawk dragnet.

After nearly half an hour I was ready to leave. But there was one more surprise forager pumping after the ant-protein. Up high, a single chimney swift, cousin to the common nighthawk, arced and sprinted after bugs. I watched a few more minutes; then walked to my bike. Almost imperceptibly the numbers of nighthawks began to decline. But dozens still milled above that meadow. A lone monarch butterfly tripped skyward, perhaps the only insect that would not be considered an *hors d'oeuvre* at this summer feast. Each of these creatures - besides the ants, the dragonflies, and me - would be following lush currents of tropical air to new winter quarters.

My ride along the Deerfield wasn't a circuit, but an up-and-back between towns. When I returned from Shelburne Falls via the same road fifteen minutes later there wasn't a nighthawk in sight. Within two days the field was mowed. Had

it been cut earlier, I'm not sure the ant hatch would have been what it was, nor that dance of the nighthawks. But that mowing improved the prospects for another hawk, this one a raptor in the literal sense. A sparrow hawk sat calmly on a wire as I passed, surveying the newly-mown turf for grasshoppers and field mice.

Nothing swoops like a nighthawk, it's true. But this American kestrel, silhouetted mid-flight against the sky, is the only other creature in the East that makes me think of

them. I hope this rust-colored male hangs around for a bit. It'll be mid-May before the spring spattering of nighthawks wanders through, and at that season, chances of seeing one are spotty.

Cooling thought: Like politics, all global warming is local. Take a look. Don't want big box bottlers draining the trough for sippers across the continent? Protect the local aquifer by safeguarding and drinking what comes from the tap.

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VERRIDE

continued from page 1

and maintain the soon-to-be town-owned Strathmore Mill, which Montague is taking for back taxes in the next few weeks, Abbondanzio said, "We will have used \$1.1 million from reserves so far this year. That's twice what it normally is." A large portion of that amount will be "built into the base" for next year, the town administrator said, with no comparable increase in the tax levy to support continued outlays in future years.

Naughton replied, "I think that's a problem." Besides resorting to an override or a further raid on reserves to meet the schools' operating budget, Naughton said, "There is a third

option: reduce the size of the town departmental budget. I think the town of Montague has to live within its means."

Naughton continued, "The decision of the district meeting was to move more money away from the town's operating budget and toward the schools. If so, let's not keep pretending we can meet \$1 million plus increases in the school budget each year. We don't have that kind of money to give to the Gill-Montague schools."

Once the town's reserves are exhausted, Naughton suggested within a year or two there could be "no more secretaries in town hall, no more libraries..."

Allen responded, "This is the year. This is it. I would say, if the schools don't bring in a request with less than a \$250,000

increase next year, I'm not sitting at the table with them until they do."

And Naughton replied, "With all due respect, you don't have to sit at the table."

The Gill-Montague Regional School District is currently on the state's list of underperforming school districts due to a "lack of fiscal capacity and a lack of capacity on the leadership side to improve student achievement," according to interim G-M superintendent Ken Rocke. Rocke has said the GMRSD is a potential target for state takeover if these problems are not corrected. A three-member team from the state Department of Education is examining the district schools in person this week.

Les Cromack, chair of the capital improvements commit-

tee, commenting on the decision to take more from the town reserves to fund the schools' operating budget, said, "This is a bad idea, but we have got to do it. I will support it this year, but not again."

Ross said he would like to look at eliminating the town's health service, press for school consolidation, and consider whether a town of 8600 people needed more than one library. "I'm looking for a long term solution," to the town's budget deficit, he said.

Police Station Estimate Pegged at \$5.6 Million

Speaking for the police station building committee, Jay DiPucchio said, "Given all you have said this evening, we recognize the police station comes in

the context of a lot of other issues: the schools, the Strathmore, and future obligations. We have to be upfront with our community about the cost of this project. Our committee has spent nearly a year and a half working to deliver a project appropriate for this town. We believe this will be an appropriate facility for a multiplicity of purposes in what I believe will be a very challenging 21st century."

At the September 10th select-board meeting, DiPucchio had asked the town to invest \$400,000 from reserves and \$100,000 from program income toward the \$5.6 million police station building project, to reduce the amount of debt exclusion borrowing that would be

see **VERRIDE** pg 13

FIDDLER from pg 1

family, extended family in every sense: blood relatives as well as community activists, historians, musicians and dancers. Juanita Harris, Putnam's great great granddaughter, herself a celebrated vocalist who attended the New England Conservatory of Music, lifted her voice in her ancestor's honor. Later she and her daughter Christine Lacey joined in with the Amandla Chorus, lending their rich textured voices to the ethereal light quality of the others. Then, in the mist of a Saturday morning, Susan Conger of Montague Center and Randy Miller of New Hampshire tuned their instruments and played a few dance tunes, fiddlers invited to honor the fiddler.

Afterwards, family and friends visited, drifted in and out of the various gravesites of many of Putnam's relations, many well-known in Greenfield's musical and athletic history, with names like Barnes, Harris, Peters, and now at long last the Putnams.

The celebration then moved on to the Energy Park downtown. Now, an aside. For some of you who may be curious, the fiddle is something of a mysti-

cal instrument. The mystery all starts in the making of a fiddle, or a violin, since there's no difference, except perhaps in the way the instrument is played. A good maker carefully chooses the maple for the body and the spruce for the top. The great violinmakers could thump or strike a tree high up in the hills and know that tree of all the others could make the long sought after sound. Oftentimes that tree's wood could spend ten or more years in a violin shop before it was transformed.

The voice comes from the skill of the maker, the careful whittling of the body, even the secret formula of each maker's varnish! And when the right musician comes along, and if the maker knew his trade, that violin can sing, wail, hum, whisper, cause grown men to weep and dancers to soar to the heavens. Then there are those of us who make the strings sound like shrieking cats, and make dogs howl, holding their ears as they try to harmonize or drown out the pain or just simply beg you to stop.

So you can imagine the endless possibilities when 50 or so fiddlers gather to make music together. My own connection to all of this? Other than pursuing the elusive art of fiddling over



Fiddler Susan Conger

the past years, the connection may be written in the tombstones. One up in the Green River Cemetery, and one in the Highland Cemetery in Millers Falls. The one in the Highland belongs to my great grandfather Judah W. Smith. He himself was a fiddler of sorts, also a contemporary of the honored John Putnam, although Putnam was an old man in the 1880s when Judah and he lived on the same street, Wells Street in Greenfield, for about ten years.

I'd like to think they knew each other, and that maybe Putnam showed him a few things on the fiddle. My great grandfather was young at the time, about to be married and to move to Millers Falls, where he founded our family on the Flat

in the house along the Millers where we live today. So beyond the remembrance and the festivity of communal music, I was looking for something far more intangible, trying to conjure up some feel in the air for my own ancestor.

So the Energy Park became a happening. Musicians gathered in impromptu groups to jam, dance and swap tunes. The clouds had rolled away, and although many musicians puffed on fingers to keep them nimble, the music rose up from all corners. Members of John Putnam's extended family gathered in a sort of family reunion, to retell tales, visit and welcome newcomers to the circle of extended family. Musicians and the curious wandered in and out. I welcomed a chance to renew contact with Susan Conger, who has been residing in Montague Center for years, teaching fiddle to young people as well as adults in her home there. She edited and published a collection of dance tunes composed by contradance musicians from the Connecticut River Valley, fittingly called *Along the River*.

Conger had been invited to play at the gravesite to honor John Putnam and, for most of

us, to evoke for a short time there the sound of that distant fiddle and to give tangible sense to the image in peoples' minds of the jubilation of dancers, balancing and swinging, ephemeral couples set to dos a dos and promenade in the brightening morning air. Conger said that as a fiddler she was deeply pleased to be able to honor another fiddler in this way. She said it was visible, tangible proof that this centuries-old New England tradition, that Putnam helped foster, is still thriving today. Conger feels the idea of a "session in a park" where people get out and play is quite unique.

"As musicians we're used to playing in homes, pubs, and dance halls. But to get out into the park to play, to help people realize that many, many people of all ages do play... For them to get out and see live, non-commercial music happening... well, it's moments like these where it feels lucky to be a musician."

And so, if you're at all tuned in to that bright stream of music flowing through our villages along the river, you'll get out and listen, learn to play or dance if your mind takes a fancy to it, and you'll be there too, come next September.



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THE HEALTHY GEEZER

Treatment for Heart Attacks



JESSICA HARMON ILLUSTRATION

BY FRED CICETTI

LEONIA, NJ - [In the last column, I wrote about the causes of heart attacks. In this last installment of a three-part series, we'll discuss treatments for heart-attack victims.]

Because of better care, most heart-attack victims survive today. There are improved tests, drugs and surgery to defend against heart attack.

Tests

An electrocardiogram (ECG) records the heart's electrical activity. This test is done because injured heart muscle

generates abnormal impulses. If the ECG picks up abnormalities, physicians will know that a patient has had a heart attack, or that one may be in progress.

If you have a heart attack, there are heart enzymes that leak slowly into your blood. So, physicians will draw blood to test for the enzymes.

A chest X-ray is done to evaluate the size and shape of your heart and its blood vessels.

A nuclear scan enables doctors to locate places where blood is not flowing properly to the heart. A radioactive material is injected into your bloodstream. Then cameras detect the radioactive material as it flows through your heart and lungs.

An echocardiogram can tell if a part of the heart has been damaged by a heart attack.

Sound waves are bounced off your heart and converted to images.

An angiogram employs dye injected into your arteries. The dye makes the arteries visible to X-rays, which illustrate blockages.

A stress test on a treadmill or stationary bike while hooked up to an ECG machine measures how your heart and arteries react when you exert yourself.

Drugs

Drugs that help dissolve clots blocking blood to your heart are lifesavers. These drugs are known as thrombolytics or 'clot-busters'. The earlier you are given a clot-buster, the better.

A 'superaspirin' is given with a clot-buster. The

superaspirin prevents new clots from forming.

Nitroglycerin is used to open arteries, improving blood flow to and from your heart.

Regular aspirin keeps blood moving through constricted arteries. Therefore, paramedics may give aspirin when they respond to an emergency to treat a heart-attack victim. Aspirin reduces mortality from heart attacks.

Beta blockers, which lower your pulse rate and blood pressure, can reduce damage to the heart.

Drugs to lower cholesterol may be helpful if given soon after a heart attack begins.

If you are in great pain, you may be given morphine.

Surgery

Angioplasty opens blocked

coronary arteries. In this procedure, a catheter is run through an artery to the blockage. The catheter, which is a long thin tube, has a balloon tip that is inflated to open the blockage. In most cases, a mesh tube (stent) is also placed inside the artery to hold it open.

Coronary artery bypass surgery is not usually done when a heart attack occurs, but it may be recommended after recovery.

During the operation, surgeons take a segment of a healthy blood vessel from another part of the body and make a detour around the blocked part of the coronary artery.

If you have a question, please write to fredcicetti@gmail.com.

OVERRIDE from 12

required. In light of the discussion, DiPucchio said the committee was withdrawing that request. He said his committee was continuing to seek up to one million dollars in grant funding for the new police station, but he also said it may be necessary to ask the voters to borrow and pay for the entire amount if grant funds are not forthcoming.

DiPucchio and committee member Deb Radway assured the selectboard their committee had designed the new police station with an eye toward keeping maintenance costs low, and were planning to incorporate geo-thermal heating and air conditioning to keep the ambient temperature in the new building at 55 degrees, reducing utility costs. They said there would be no new personnel costs associated with the new facility, despite its expanded 11,000 square foot size. The current station in the basement of town hall is about 1000 square feet, not

including the garage.

Allen called the new police station, "A very seriously needed capital improvement project." She said, "I believe we have to fund it this year."

Although he was supportive of that plan, Naughton said he wished the capital improvements committee had had a chance to look the project over once the design had been finalized. The CIC will meet on October 10th, the day before the special town meeting, to go over the police station plan and make a recommendation on it.

Building inspector David Jensen said, "Nobody's fully addressing the scale of this building. The police station you are preparing to build is the same size or bigger than town hall."

Allen cut Jensen off.

After the meeting, Jensen said, if the voters approve the debt exclusion, "You're building a police station one and a half to two times bigger than the current (Turners Falls) fire station. It will be bigger than most of the buildings in town,

including the Montague Center School, or all the libraries combined. What's the importance of a building this size? Maybe it's just these guys deserve it, or somehow it will make policing in Montague more efficient. To me, it just looks huge."

Strathmore Mill Repairs Estimated at \$300,000

As they moved down the warrant for the October 11th special town meeting, the selectboard turned next to the Strathmore Mill, which the town is set to acquire from owner Jerry Jones for nearly \$200,000 in back taxes, interest, and fees in the weeks immediately following a land court hearing in Boston on October 2nd. Abbondanzio issued revised estimates for what it would cost the town to secure, winterize and maintain the 244,482-square-foot, 136-year-old mill complex, particularly the buildings severely damaged in a May 26th arson fire, which need extensive roof repair. Last week, Jensen had

released an initial \$165,000 cost estimate for repair and maintenance of the mill. Revising the estimate for roof repair and changing the mill's sprinkler system from a wet to a dry system, to avoid the need to heat the mill this winter, Abbondanzio pegged the town's likely short-term investment in the property at \$300,000. This sum, if approved by town meeting, would either be drawn from reserves or taken from short-term borrowing, perhaps to be paid back over time by a developer who acquires the site.

Abbondanzio said the selectboard, if granted authority to do so by town meeting, would seek to transfer the mill property as quickly as possible to a qualified developer, through a request for proposals (RFP) process. Abbondanzio has warned the alternative would be for Montague to spend millions of dollars demolishing the mill. He said emergency preservation grant money, or grant money associated with pas-

sage of a new state law allowing Montague to employ expedited permitting (Article 6 on the special town meeting warrant) for the redevelopment of the Strathmore may defray some of the town's upfront costs in the project.


Speaking of the expenditures for Strathmore, Naughton said, "It doesn't seem we have much choice. To me, this is what reserves are for."

The meeting closed with a debate on whether or not to include a motion on the town meeting warrant brought forward by finance committee chair Jeff Singleton, to spend \$10,000 on a long-term joint fiscal management plan for the Gill-Montague schools and the town of Montague. Allen opposed the motion, but Ross, reluctantly, joined Pruitt in support. Pruitt said a long-term cost control plan, agreed to by both the town and the schools, was necessary, "So we don't keep frittering away our reserves year after year."



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ARTS & ENTERTAINMENT



JACK COUGHLIN ILLUSTRATION

FRIDAY, SEPTEMBER 28TH
Bouquet of Music Series features **5 o'Clock Belles**, a women's capella chorus, from noon to 12:45 p.m. in the Ethel Lemay Healing Arts Garden, Franklin Medical Center, Greenfield. Free.

FRIDAY TO SUNDAY, SEPTEMBER 28TH - 30TH & OCTOBER 5TH - 7TH
Ja'Duke presents Rodgers & Hammerstein's **The Sound Of Music** at the Shea Theater, Friday and Saturday evenings at 7 p.m. and Sundays at 2 p.m. Tickets are \$12 for adults and \$10 for 12/under and 65/over. Tickets available 863-2281, and at World Eye Book Shop.

FRIDAY & SATURDAY, SEPTEMBER 28TH & 29TH
Chaplin's **CITY LIGHTS** at Pothole Pictures, Shelburne Falls. \$6 or \$4 for kids under 12. 7:30 p.m. For info, call 625-2896. Music before the movie 7 p.m.

Turners Falls open studio & downtown walking tour: **Arts & Leaves** Begins 10 a.m., numerous sites throughout Turners Falls; brochures available at Avenue A Cafe, the Discovery Center, the Rendezvous and more! Info call Eileen 863-9499. www.turnersfallsriverculture.com

SATURDAY, SEPTEMBER 29TH
Hallmark Museum of Contemporary Photography artist's reception and talk: National Geographic photographer Michael Yamashita's **Great Wall of China & The Silk Road**. On display through December 16th.

The National Spiritual Alliance: **Psychic Fair** at Thompson Temple across from the post office, Lake Pleasant. 11 - 4 p.m. Readings and healings \$25 for 20 minutes.

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Deja Brew, Wendell: Acoustic: **Eric Love**, 9 to 11 p.m.

11th Annual Source to the Sea River Clean-up! 9 a.m. - noon. Pre-register, call 800-859-2960.

Wendell Full Moon Coffee House, Wendell Town Hall, Wendell. **Charles Neville Jazz Quartet** (Legendary Saxophonist of the Neville Brothers): Open Mic 7:30 p.m. Main Act 8 p.m. \$6-\$12. (Partial proceeds benefit Wendell Full Moon Coffee House)

North Quabbin's Center for the Performing Arts: 5th annual **Meetinghouse Musicfest**, noon - 7 p.m. On the ball field adjacent to the 1794 Meetinghouse, New Salem. A spectacular show, including Linq, whose music has been described as "stirring, the words poetic" and singer/songwriter/pianist Seth Glier; alternative band **Blame it on Tina**; singer/songwriter Allison Tartalia; Ethan Stone's cunning live show and **The Black Rebels**. Admission to the Musicfest is \$12 adults, children under 12 years-of-age attend free. Tickets www.1794meetinghouse.org or (978) 544-5200, and at the gate.

Rt. 63 Roadhouse, Millers Falls: **Catamount**, classic & southern rock. Come to dance! 9:30 p.m.

Nuestras Raices 14th Annual Festival de la Cosecha/Harvest Festival from 12 noon - 6 p.m. at La Finca, Nuestras Raices Farm, 24 Jones Ferry Road in Holyoke, alongside the Connecticut River. Live Spanish music, a traditional Puerto Rican-style pig roast, Paso Fino horses and pony rides and other children's and cultural activities. Entrance is free, there are charges for food and participation in certain activities.

SUNDAY, SEPTEMBER 30TH
Family Dance at the Montague Grange. Family-style Contra Dancing for all ages with **Cindy Green**. \$7-\$12 per family or \$4 per person. Simple dances with easy instruction geared for little feet. 4 p.m. to 6 p.m. Includes a light snack.

Deja Brew, Wendell: Acoustic Duo: **Steve Crow & Peter Kim**, 9 to 11 p.m.

MONDAY, OCTOBER 1ST
Live Jazz at Ristorante DiPaolo, Turners Falls, 6 to 9 p.m.

WEDNESDAY, OCTOBER 3RD
Deja Brew, Wendell: Fiddle Tune



Jeff Martell performs at the Great Falls Coffee House, Friday, October 5th, 6:30 to 8:30 p.m. In the Great Hall of the Discovery Center

Swap - open mic. 8 to 10 p.m.

THURSDAY, OCTOBER 4TH
Deja Brew, Wendell: Acoustic Rock - **Kellianna**, 8 to 10 p.m.
Film showing: **The Power of Community - How Cuba Survived Peak Oil** at Wheeler Memorial Library on E. Main St, Orange.

FRIDAY, OCTOBER 5TH
Songster Jeff Martell performs American roots music and original compositions with expert guitar and blistering harmonica. Jeff plays great music and isn't afraid to pick on a few sacred cows! This is the only local release party for his new CD, **Crazy through the Grain**. www.jeffmartell.net. Delicious refreshments, suggested donation sliding scale \$5-\$10. Held in the great hall of the Great Falls Discovery Center, Turners Falls. 6:30 to 8:30 p.m.

Rt. 63 Roadhouse, Millers Falls: **Pressure Relief**, members of Factory Defects new band. Rock; come to dance! 9:30 p.m.

Moonlight and Morningstar appearing live at Smokin' Hippo restaurant this Friday and every first Friday of the month though February, 2008.

The Smokin' Hippo, 20 French King Highway (Rt. 2), Erving. (413) 423-3220, www.thesmokinhippo.com.

SATURDAY, OCTOBER 6TH
Northfield Mountain Recreation & Environmental Center: Colors of Autumn with Deborah Bazer. Dyeing local wool and yarn using plants from our backyards and kitchen scraps. Flowers, leaves, and roots can be used to make beautiful colored yarn for knitting, weaving and other projects. We'll learn how to prep the wool, make the dye bath and dye the wool using a few different plants. 1:30 - 3:30 p.m. For ages 6 to 9, \$10 per child. Pre-register 800-859-2960.

Rt. 63 Roadhouse, Millers Falls: **Loose Change**, rock covers, come to dance! 9:30 p.m.

Deja Brew, Wendell: Jazz: **Ndigo Moon**, 9 to 11 p.m.

SATURDAY, OCTOBER 13TH
Athol Bird & Nature Club and Millers River Environmental Center invites birding enthusiasts to join Mark Taylor for **Fall Migrants in the Connecticut River Valley** - an all day trip through Hatfield, Hadley, and Northampton in search of late migrating shorebirds and passerines. Meet at 7 a.m. at parking lot opposite the Pocket Saver Store off Rt. 2, Erving center. For info (978) 248-9491 jem499872@yahoo.com.

MONDAY, OCTOBER 15TH
Deadline for proposals to The Montague Cultural Council for grants for community arts, humanities, and science projects. Priorities for applicants: Concerts, festivals, plays, projects led by local artists, environment, nature, science programs, arts & cultural organizations, school programs. Form & guidelines: Lisa Enzer at 367-2658.

UNTIL NOVEMBER 2ND
Remembering Matt, an assemblage exhibit of original, collaborative work inspired by Matthew Leighton at the Artspace, Greenfield. Many of the tribute works are on display in the windows of Matt's former studio at 9 Mill Street, just a few steps from

HOT SPOT TEEN CENTER
MONDAYS - Drop-in, 3-6 p.m.
TUES & WEDS - Ongoing Music Project, 3-6 p.m.
THURS - Drop-in, 3-6 p.m. & Movie Night, 6-8 p.m.
Free (except some trips), open to local teens. Some require permission slips.
Info: Jared at 863-9559.
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Upcoming at the Discovery Center
Summer Hours through Columbus Day: Tuesday - Sunday, 10 a.m. - 4 p.m. or by special arrangement. (413) 863-3221

SUNDAYS, SEPTEMBER 30TH, OCTOBER 7TH & 14TH Great Falls GeoWalk. Join DCR Park Interpreter and geologist Steve Winters for a leisurely 90-minute stroll back in time to rocks that formed in the Mesozoic Era about 200 million years ago—including real dinosaur fossils! About 3 miles. GeoWalk meets at 1p.m. in the Discovery Center lobby.	TUESDAYS & WEDNESDAYS, IN OCTOBER Nature@8 is an early morning nature walk over paved bike trails and village sidewalks. Meet at the bird bath outside the main entrance at 8 a.m. Walks are designed to be short but interesting, never lasting more than about 60 minutes, never more than about 2 miles over level pavement.	FRIDAY, OCTOBER 5TH The Great Falls Coffeehouse begins its second year with a move from the last Wednesday of the month to the first Friday. The coffeehouses are hosted by the Friends of the Great Falls Discovery Center. Sliding scale donation of \$5-\$10 benefits GFDC. Jeff Martel performs.
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Great Falls Discovery Center - 2 Avenue A, Turners Falls - www.greatfallsma.org

Artspace. Gallery hours are Monday to Friday, 1 to 6 p.m. The exhibit will also be open on **Saturdays, September 30, October 6, 20 and 27** from 11-2 p.m. 772-6811 for information.

Memorial Hall Theater
POTHOLE PICTURES
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Charlie Chaplin at his peak - What begins as a simple morality tale of love between a blind woman and a tramp quickly vaults into cinematic glory as Chaplin utilizes all his vast talents to craft an endearing and striking film which culminates in one of the most moving scenes in the history of cinema. 1931. G - 87 min. - B&W, Silent wire-recorded sound.
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- THE BRAVE ONE R**
DAILY 6:45 9:15
MAT FRI, SAT, SUN 12:15 3:15
- 3:10 TO YUMA PG13**
DAILY 6:30 9:30 in DTS sound
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DAILY 6:30 9:30 in DTS sound
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The Constitution's Watchdog

BY LYN CLARK

GREENFIELD - On September 19th, in celebration of the 220th anniversary of the signing of the U. S. Constitution, two students from Buz Eisenberg's Civil Liberties course at Greenfield Community College presented an analysis of two landmark Supreme Court decisions to classmates and visitors.

Eisenberg himself provided background information. In order to avoid placing absolute power in the hands of any one person or group, he said, the framers of the Constitution crafted a document that established a system of checks and balances, with three branches of government - Congress (the Senate and House or Representatives), Executive (the President) and the Supreme Court. James Madison envisioned these three branches of government as being "separate but equal." While a great deal of power rested with the first two (the Congress could declare and the President wage war, as an example) the only weapons available to the judges were "a handful of gavels." Could such a court be 'equal' in power? Many thought not. So what role would the Supreme Court play in this new government of ours?

Sam King, a student in

Eisenberg's class, ably described how in *Marbury v. Madison* (1803), the outgoing Federalist president, John Adams, made several last-minute appointments to fill vacancies in the judicial system, including that of William Marbury to a judgeship in the District of Columbia; but in the confusion and chaos of turning the reins of government over to Thomas Jefferson, the commission was never delivered. The incoming Republican Party dominated the Congress, but found itself encumbered with mostly Federalist appointees in the judiciary, so Jefferson's administration scrapped the new commissions. Marbury then sued Secretary of State James Madison in the Supreme Court to force him to deliver the job.

King explained that Chief Justice John Marshall - caught between a rock and a hard place - knew that if he awarded Marbury a 'writ of mandamus' (an order commanding the performance of a specified official act) the new administration would ignore it, and the court could not enforce compliance. That would have been humiliating to the court, and revealed its weakness.

Justice Marshall, however, was a brilliant tactician. He opined that the applicant had the

right to the office and was therefore deserving of legal remedy; however, he said, the Supreme Court lacked the jurisdiction to insist he be given that remedy, since a prior act authorizing the Court to issue such a writ exceeded the authority given to the Court in Article III of the Constitution. Marshall was thereby able to chastise the Republicans for their partisan position, and simultaneously establish the Supreme Court as an arbiter of the Constitution. A confrontation with the other branches of government, which could have ended in a defeat for the Supreme Court, was, by this decision, skillfully avoided at the same time as the principal of 'judicial review' of constitutional law by the Supreme Court was established.

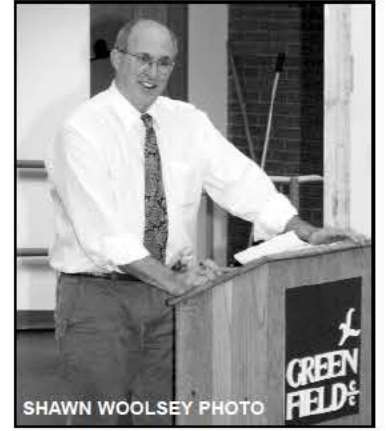
Student Kyle Deaver presented the seminal case of *Ex Parte McCordle*, illustrating how Congress could encroach upon judicial power. McCordle was a publisher and soldier jailed by a military commander during Reconstruction for sedition when he published articles criticizing Congress and the military in Mississippi. The lower courts to which he appealed found that he had no case. He then turned to the Supreme Court under the Habeas Corpus Act of 1867,

which allowed federal judges to hear appeals. Two questions arose: Did the Supreme Court have jurisdiction, and were McCordle's rights violated?

After arguments were heard, but before the Supreme Court could make a decision as to whether or not he had been imprisoned in violation of his 5th Amendment rights, Congress cleverly repealed the 1867 Act, and based on that the judges concluded it was not within their jurisdiction to render a decision.

The tug-of-war between the three "separate but equal" branches of government continues to this day, as does the tendency for expediency in the interpretation of constitutional law. In the question and answer period following the students' presentations, the predicament of the Guantanamo Bay detainees America is holding without trial as military combatants was alluded to. The 340 detainees who remain at Guantanamo (after many have been released without explanation or trial) continue to be denied the right of habeas corpus under the Military Commissions Act of 2006, which allows the government to detain them indefinitely without access to a lawyer.

The delicate balance of a system based on democracy as com-



Buz Eisenberg

pared to a totalitarian state was also discussed. When total power is held by a monarch, dictator, or junta, force can be applied to gain compliance with edicts. When power is held by the people, the laws are subject to change by the people, and reflect not only their strengths, ideals, and aspirations, but also their prejudices, fears, and insecurities. In the first half of the 19th century, Germany changed almost overnight from a democracy to a dictatorship.

Eisenberg stated, when commenting on the *McCordle* case: "We're in an equally historic moment. The Constitution is in jeopardy. One branch of the government is acting without restraint."

As Justice Marshall wrote 200 years ago: "The people made the Constitution and the people can unmake it. It is the creature of their will, and lives only by their will."

Hallmark Museum of Contemporary Photography

Michael Yamashita

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