



## ¡OLE!

Val Ramos Ensemble Wows 'em at Sheffield  
Page 16



## COME HOME

to Lake Pleasant  
Page 3

LAKE PLEASANT MILLERS FALLS MONTAGUE CENTER MONTAGUE CITY TURNERS FALLS

# The Montague Reporter

YEAR 7 - NO. 43

also serving Gill, Erving and Wendell

50¢

REPORTER@MONTAGUEMA.NET

THE VOICE OF THE VILLAGES

SEPTEMBER 3, 2009

## Montague Dedicates a New Police Station



The officers of the Montague Police Department stand proudly at the dedication of Montague's new public safety facility on Saturday. Rain did not dampen the celebration, which was attended by hundreds of town residents.

BY DAVID DETMOLD  
TURNERS FALLS -

Hundreds turned out for the dedication and open house at Montague's new state of the art police station on Saturday morning, August 29th. A steady drizzle did not discourage the crowd,

which filled the emptied bays of the adjoining Turners Falls fire station to listen to remarks from politicians and building committee members, and an emotional thank you from police chief Ray Zukowski. Zukowski choked up as he thanked his family, the

selectboard and Turners Falls Water Department Prudential Committee, the officers and dispatch staff of his department, and many more who worked with him to realize the \$5.6 million project, saying, "I am humbled by the turnout today. This is such

a great community effort. I can't thank you enough. This building will meet the needs of this community for 40 years."

Indeed, it has been nearly that long since Montague police chiefs and citizen committees have examined the needs of the

police department, and found conditions in the basement of the town hall where the department worked intolerable. There, officers, evidence, suspects, victims, and the general public had been forced to share 1200 square feet of space in a jumbled warren of badly lit, poorly ventilated, flood-prone rooms.

As of Monday of this week, that chapter of Montague's history is closed, as the police department completed its successful transition to the spacious, airy, geo-thermally heated and cooled space in the new 12,000-square-foot facility on Turnpike Road, ten times the size of their former quarters. The new building provides the police a central location from which to reach each village of Montague easily, and Chief Zukowski has promised no change to the police presence in downtown Turners.

The officers of the police department and the dispatch staff lined the back of the fire station garage, standing proudly as state representative Steven Kulik presented a plaque signed by House Speaker Robert DeLeo "to the citizens of Montague in recogni-

see POLICE pg 8

## Peter Zschau in the Running for Kennedy's Seat

BY JOE KWIECINSKI

TURNERS FALLS - Former Turners Falls resident Peter Zschau has announced his intention to run as an independent candidate for the vacant Massachusetts Senate seat held for 47 years by the late Edward Kennedy.

Governor Deval Patrick has called for a special election to be held January 19th, 2010 to fill the open office. Attorney General Martha Coakley has tipped her hat into the ring already, and many other prominent names are being mentioned as possible contenders, including Kennedy's nephew, former U.S. representative Joseph Kennedy II.

But Zschau was perhaps the first out of the gate with his announcement, breaking the news at the Montague Reporter office a day before Coakley put her name in the running.

Zschau, who moved to Nantucket in 2007, is 60 years old and has served as president of the Partridge-Zschau Insurance Agency for about three and a half decades. A hopeful 'dark horse' candidate, Zschau acknowledges he does not have a long resume in

political office to recommend him to voters statewide, but he sees that as a plus. The only elective office he has held to date was as a Montague town meeting member in the 1970s, an office to be proud of.

An affable man, Zschau is quite serious and exudes confidence about his mission. He has already released a platform built around three main ideas - term limits, wealth based pay gradations for Congress, and the reduction of campaign war chests - all of which he considers a tonic for an ailing democracy.

"I don't think we can continue politics as usual," Zschau said. (His name is pronounced like show-er, minus the '-er'.) "Look at local and state governments and see how they are suffering,



Peter Zschau

Politicians say things are getting better, but I don't see it. The only thing that's going to work is to put people back to work. But the federal government keeps printing money and running up deficits."

According to Zschau, term limits are the starting point of reform. "The most important piece of my proposals," he said, "is term limits. We've had attempts in the past, but they've been turned away. As I under-

see ZSCHAU pg 12

## Recreation Committee on the Hot Seat



The Gill selectboard went over accounts with the Gill recreation committee on Monday: (l-r) John Ward, Nancy Griswold, Ann Banash, Tracy Rogers, and committee members Cathy Demars, Rose Levasseur, and Nathan Duda

BY DAVID DETMOLD

GILL - The Gill recreation committee took center stage at the selectboard meeting on Monday, August 31st, as the board discussed ways to bail the committee out of about \$1200 of debt in their revolving account, and to plan ways to ensure smoother financial accounting of rec activities in the future.

"I think you've made some really good progress," said selectboard chair Ann Banash.

Weeks earlier, the board had proposed dissolving the recreation committee because of their tangled financial accounts, which saw the balance in their revolving fund careen from \$7500 in the

black to \$1200 in the red in the course of one fiscal year, while no clear accounting could be provided for expenditures from the committee's \$3000 expense account, provided by the town.

Before the recreation committee came in, the board said the town's accountant, Brian Morton, would not pay receipts to any vendor owed money by the recreation committee, until more money was allocated to the revolving fund.

An article to dissolve the recreation committee and turn over its responsibilities to the park commissioners (the selectboard) is on the warrant for Gill's

see GILL pg 7

## PET OF THE WEEK

### Beautiful Heart



**Bella**

My name is Bella, and I'm a five-year-old female pit bull terrier mix in need of a good home. The first thing you may notice about me is my gorgeous brindle coat, but you should know that my heart is just as beautiful. I ride really well in the car. My family took good care of me and even taught me basic commands like "sit", "lie down" and "paw". If that doesn't impress you, just wait until you see me smile!

If you love sloppy kisses, playing and snuggling then I may be the girl for you. I can live with dogs, confident cats and children 12 and over. For more information on adopting me, please contact the Dakin Pioneer Valley Humane Society at (413) 548-9898 or via email: info@dpvhs.org.

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Local Subscription Rates:  
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## CARNEGIE LIBRARY NEWS

### Music and Movement

**TURNERS FALLS** – The weekly Music and Movement series with Tom Carroll and Laurie Davidson has been moved to the Millers Falls Library on Thursday mornings at 10 a.m. during September to December. The series was going to move to the Montague Center Library for the fall, but

the location was changed due to safety issues with the site. Young children of all ages and their parents or caregivers are invited to the free programs. Registration is not required. The series is sponsored by the Family Network. For more information, please call 863-3214

## ERVING LIBRARY NEWS

### Top Readers Announced

**BY BARBARA FRIEDMAN** – Although it was a rainy summer, it was perfect for reading and enjoying the library. Our spaceship has flown away, but many children had a chance to try on our astronaut crew suit and walk – or crawl – into our manned space vehicle. Older children and adults found the command center – our computers, now equipped with wifi – a more appealing summer distraction.

During the summer, we added larger monitors and a laptop too. Top Readers in the summer reading program were Jeannette Emond, with 65 hours of reading logged, closely followed by Kristen Canedy, with 60 hours! Sixty-seven children and teens, and thirty adults, signed up for the summer reading program. Congratulations to all who enriched their summer by reading!

### Barton Cove Unsafe for Swimming

**BY DAVID DETMOLD GILL** – Rusty Fish of Gill called on Monday to tell us not to swim in Barton Cove. High levels of *E. coli* bacteria have been detected by periodic monitoring conducted by the Franklin Regional Council of Governments.

Kimberly McPhee, the FRCOG's natural resources program manager followed up with a letter on September 2nd stating, "To date, the monitoring results indicate that *E. coli* bacteria is being washed into the river when it rains, making the water unsuitable for swimming during and up to 48 hours after the rain ends. Monitoring data for the Barton Cove site indicate that the water has been consistently unsuitable for swimming this season, even when it hasn't

been raining, and can be unsuitable for boating and fishing during and up to 48 to 72 hours after a rain event. The Massachusetts Department of Environmental Protection bacteria source tracking program will be conducting additional *E. coli* sampling in Barton Cove to help determine if the most likely source of the *E. coli* bacteria is human or animal waste."

"I've been swimming all summer long in Barton Cove," said Fish. "I'm a little upset my government has this information and has taken this long to get it out to the public."

Fish said he has seen a lot of campers, boaters, and water skiers in Barton Cove this summer. "It's a safety issue," he said. "What's important is to keep people out of the damn water."

## SENIOR CENTER ACTIVITIES – Sept 7th to Sept 11th

**GILL/MONTAGUE Senior Center**, 62 Fifth Street, Turners Falls, is open Monday through Friday from 9:00 a.m. to 2:00 p.m. Congregate meals are served Tuesday through Friday at 11:30 a.m. Meal reservations must be made a day in advance by 11:00 a.m. Messages can be left on our machine when the center is not open. Meal site Manager is Becky Cobb. Council on Aging Director is Roberta Potter. For information or to make meal reservations, call 863-9357. Reserve your tickets now The Polka Fest trip on September 29 and the Salem Cross Harmoni-Cats trip on October 20. Call to sign up.

**Monday, Sept. 7th**  
Senior Center Closed

**Tuesday, Sept. 8th**  
9:00 a.m. Walking group (weather permitting)  
10:00 a.m. Brown Bag (9/1)  
12:45 p.m. COA Board Meeting (9/1)

1:00 p.m. Canasta  
**Wednesday, Sept. 9th**

9:00 a.m. Foot Clinic  
10:00 a.m.: Senior Aerobics  
11:15 a.m.: Mealsite Friends

Meeting  
12:45 p.m.: Bingo  
**Thursday, Sept. 10th**  
10:00 a.m. Coffee & Conversation  
1:00 p.m. Pitch  
**Friday, Sept. 11th**  
10:00 a.m. Senior Aerobics  
10:45 a.m. Easy Aerobics  
1:00 p.m. Scrabble  
*Gill/Montague Senior Trips: Call 863-9357 or 863-4500 for more information.*

**CHAIR YOGA** classes with Jean Erlbaum on Tuesdays from 10:30 to 11:15 a.m. on the following Tuesdays: Sept 8, 15, 22, Oct 13, 20, 27, Nov 10, 17, 24, Dec 8, 15. These classes offer a good stretch and strengthening for muscles, oiling for joints and fun! People from all towns are invited and of all skill levels, including folks in wheelchairs. There is a discounted price of \$2.00 for each class. Pre-registration is not required. For more information and for help with transportation, please contact Roberta Potter at (413) 863-4500.

**ERVING Senior Center**, 18

## FACES & PLACES



Laura Herbert and Rob Fletcher are part of the typical crowd that gathers at the French King Entertainment Center in Erving on Superfun Bowling Night, every other Wednesday. September 3rd is the 50th anniversary of the French King Entertainment Center. Owner Eric Semb says the establishment will be celebrating the week of Sept. 21st with 50 cent games, 50 cent bowling shoes, 50 cent hot dogs and pizza, and 50 cent beers: just like in the 50s!

## EXCAVATING

Fencing - Patios - Walks -  
Walls Installed - Tree Work  
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## Main Road Paving

**GILL** – The highway department will be paving Main Road from Lyons Hill to Renaissance Builders, and Boyle Road from Main Road to the elementary school, on Thursday and Friday, September 10th and 11th. The roads will remain open during the paving; through traffic is advised to seek alternate routes.

Pleasant St., Erving (Old Center School, 1st Floor), is open Monday through Friday from 9 a.m. to 2 p.m. for activities and congregating meals. For info and reservations, call Polly Kiely, Senior Center Director, at (413) 423-3308. Lunch is daily at 11:30 a.m., with reservations 24 hours in advance. Transportation can be provided for meals, Thursday shopping, or medical necessity.

**Monday, Sept. 7th**  
Senior Center Closed  
**Tuesday, Sept. 8th**  
9:00 a.m. Aerobics  
10:15 a.m. Senior Business Meeting (8/25)  
12:00 p.m. Painting  
**Wednesday, Sept. 9th**  
8:45 a.m. Line Dancing  
12 noon Bingo  
**Thursday, Sept. 10th**  
9:00 a.m. Aerobics  
**Friday, Sept. 11th**  
9:00 a.m. Bowling  
Call for Lunch info on 9/4.  
**WENDELL Senior Center** is located at 2 Lockes Village Road. Call Kathy Swaim at (978) 544-2020 for hours and upcoming programs.

**MCTV Channel 17**  
Visit [www.montaguema.net](http://www.montaguema.net)  
for complete schedule

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# Come Home, Lake Pleasant



A previous get together at the Scalpers Lodge

**BY DAVID JAMES** – The call has gone forth to all who have ever lived in the village and called Lake Pleasant home. The time has come to renew ancient acquaintances and share remembrances of the good old days of

yesteryear.

A reunion is scheduled at the Independent Order of Scalpers, Miscoluspi Lodge, on Lake Pleasant Road for Saturday, September 16th, from noon until the last person leaving turns out

the starlights.

Grills will be available and attendees are requested to bring food to share with others. Games and activities have been planned for small fry and big folk, too.

Lake Pleasant is one of the five villages of the town of Montague, the smallest and last to be settled. The village was founded in 1870 as a summer picnic place and campground. From the mid-1870s through the 1920s it was the largest gathering place for Spiritualists in the United States, and remains the oldest continuously-existing Spiritualist center in the nation.

For more reunion information, contact Karen (Reil) McCormack, (413) 772-0306, or Nancy (Baker) Jackson, (413) 774-3086.

## Wendell Website Forum

On Tuesday, September 8th, at 6:30 p.m. the Wendell website committee and the designers of the town's new improved website will hold a forum at the Wendell Free Library to solicit community feedback on the new design. The goal of web designers Christine Texeira and Christopher Parker is to create an inviting website that is easy to navigate by both town officials and the general public. The site will provide a tapestry of town

government, library, community and Wendell historical information. Part of the challenge, the designers say, is to create a graphically interesting site that runs acceptably on dial-up connections – which at the moment, aside from satellite is the only means of internet access available in the town of Wendell.

The website committee invites board and committee members, officials, and the general public to a forum designed to

provide a tour of the 'site in progress,' and to solicit community input. There will be plenty of time for questions and requests to navigate specific areas of the site, and to identify town activities that may have been forgotten.

The website, in preliminary form, can be viewed at [www.wendellmass.us](http://www.wendellmass.us). The website committee is pleased with the website's development and is excited to begin sharing their work with the community.

## SWEET TALK ON THE AVE Changing Times



CLAUDIA WELLS ILLUSTRATION

**BY BRIDGET SWEET**  
**TURNERS FALLS** – Bob Dylan's lyrics "The Times they are a-Changin'" echo in the alleys of the old downtown these days. Dancing on the Ave only a short while ago, yet autumn's stealin' in on velvet paws, with colorful leaves and a swirl of squirrels foraging as the school buses roll by. Oh, my!

May Lisa's Handcrafted Soap at 100 3rd Street open soon for our purchasing enjoyment. Lisa Adams of Lake Pleasant will have Bath Fizzies and Body Butter to soothe our soon-to-be dry, chapped skin. Adams, a Handcrafted Soap Makers Guild member, is taking the plunge and opening a storefront for her business. All of her products are chemical free, with no preservatives, no animal products, all natural, with no synthetic fragrances. Adams plans on teaching classes

on how to make all her products, too. Her website, [www.lisashandcraftedsoap.com](http://www.lisashandcraftedsoap.com), already has her soaps for sale. A real find for the allergy sensitive!

Another sign of autumn's arrival: The Salvation Army, Montague unit, needs volunteers. TSA Field Supervisor Dale Clark, based in Northampton, can meet with interested Montague residents in Turners Falls. Please contact her at (413) 586-5336 or at [dclark@salvationarmy.org](mailto:dclark@salvationarmy.org) to sign up.

Fall means back to school, and that, of course, means paper! What better source for paper than

our local paper mill, Southworth Company, at 36 Canal Street?

Ed Driscoll shared his enthusiasm about the 170-year-old paper company at the Third Annual Turners Falls Block Party on August 8th. His free sample of a 24 pound, 100% cotton notepad gave yours truly the ability to file this report. Robin Hallett is the woman to contact for sales at (413) 863-4326. Sweet deal!

Lastly, I inform my fans, Montague and beyond, this is my last column, for now. Thank you all for reading these past nine months. Higher education beckons! I have enjoyed meeting entrepreneurs and fellow writers, and sharing all the news with you. Ta-ta, dearies!



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## FALL PROGRAMS - 2009

### YOUTH PROGRAMS

**YOUTH SOCCER PROGRAMS Sept. 12 - Oct. 31**

September is Youth Soccer Month

**SQUIRTS SOCCER** – Children in grades K - 2. Saturdays; 9:30 a.m. - 10:30 a.m.  
Fees: Montague Residents - \$25.00 per week. Non residents - \$30.00 per week

**JUNIOR & SENIOR TRAVEL SOCCER LEAGUE –**

**Junior League** – Grades 3 & 4 - Games will be 4 v.4

Fees: Montague Residents: \$40.00/child/week, Non-Residents: \$45.00

**Senior League** – Grades 5 & 6 - Games will be 7 v.7

Fees: Montague Residents: \$45.00 per week. Non-Residents: \$50.00 per week

• **COACHES ARE NEEDED FOR ALL LEVELS -TRAINING IS PROVIDED.**

• **SHINGUARDS ARE REQUIRED for all levels**

• The MPRD Office will be open on **Saturday, Sept. 5th from 9:00 a.m. - 12:00 p.m.** for soccer registrations.

• All levels have enrollment/team limits

**SWIMMING LESSONS – We Accommodate Many Levels and Age Groups**

**SESSION I:** October 31st\* - December 19th (\*Tentative starting date)

Saturday Mornings Registration Deadline: Friday, October 23rd

Fees: Montague Residents: \$40.00. Non-residents: \$45.00

**Registration Deadlines: Session I - Friday, October 23rd**

**BLUEFISH SWIM TEAM – Early November through mid March 2010**

Open to all area youth able to swim one length of the pool – freestyle

**PRACTICES** – Mon./Wed./Thurs. evenings (Times subject to change)

Minnows & Guppies: 5:15 p.m. - 6:15 p.m. Dolphins: 6:15 p.m. - 7:45 p.m.

**COMPETITIVE MEETS** – Sat. afternoons (Home & Away); Dec., Jan. & February

### ADULT PROGRAMS

**Yoga Awareness Month!**

**Restorative YOGA** – September 28th - November 23th (No class Oct. 12th)

Adults 18 and Over | Monday evenings: 7:00 p.m. - 7:45 p.m.

Fees Montague Residents = \$65.00. Non-Residents = \$70.00

**Registration Deadline: Friday, September 18th**

**R.A.D. Program** – A partnership with The Franklin County Sheriff's Office

Females 13 & up. Those under 18 must have a waiver signed by their parents.

November 10th - December 8th: 6:00 p.m. - 9:00 p.m.

### FAMILY PROGRAMS

**INTRODUCTION TO WILDERNESS SURVIVAL**

with Yellowhaws Journey

Ages 8 and Up - (Youth ages 17 & Under Must be accompanied by an adult/legal guardian)

**Saturday, October 10th:** 9:00 a.m. - 5:00 p.m. Call for Fees

\*No more than two youth per adult

**Registration Deadline: Friday, September 25th**

**PRIMITIVE COOKING WORKSHOP** with Yellowhaws Journey

Ages 8 and Up - (Youth ages 17 & Under Must be accompanied by an adult/legal guardian)

**Saturday, October 24th:** 9:00 a.m. - 5:00 p.m. Call for Fees

\*No more than two youth per adult

**Registration Deadline: Friday, October 9th**

**BASIC FIREARMS SAFETY AWARENESS**

Family members, (Children 8 yrs. & Up)

**Thursday October 8th or October 29th:** 6:30 p.m. - 7:30 p.m. Fees FREE

(Participants need only sign up for one class, as both cover the same material/information)

Instructor: Alan W. Lambert, MA Cert. Law Enforcement Firearms Instructor,

M.S.P. Cert. Basic Firearms Instructor

This program is brought to you by

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**Registration Deadline: Friday, Oct. 2nd (for Oct. 8th)**

**& Friday, Oct. 23rd (for Oct. 29th)**

### 8th Annual Family

#### Fall Fun Day

**Saturday, OCTOBER 17,**  
**2009**

**1:00pm - 3:30pm**

Come out and celebrate the true New England season!

Enjoy Scarecrow Stuffing, Pumpkin Carving,

bake sale, and more! Adopt your scarecrow now,

they go fast!

Held at Unity Park, Turners Falls

Fees: Scarecrows = \$6.00 per;

Pumpkin Carving = \$2.00 per

**We need clothes for our scarecrows!**

If you have some long sleeve shirts and pants that

you're not using anymore, we will gladly take them

off your hands. Drop them off at our office.

**Thanks!**

**For additional program information**

**CALL NOW - 863-3216**



# The Montague Reporter

**Editor**  
David Detmold

**Layout & Design**  
Claudia Wells  
Boysen Hodgson  
Katren Hoyden  
Karen Wilkinson  
Suzette Snow Cobb

**Photography**  
Joe Parzych  
Shawn Woolsey  
Claudia Wells

**Editorial Assistants**  
Hugh Corr  
David Brule  
Michael Jackson

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Michael Muller  
Michael Farrick

## Try Again on Senior Center

The town of Erving is blessed with many valuable resources, natural beauty, industry, and the second lowest average tax bill in the state, due to the major utility presence in town at the Northfield Mountain pumped storage hydro facility. Erving has nearly \$4 million in its stabilization fund, and more on hand in free cash, despite the fact the town has undertaken a recent renovation of its elementary school, built a new police station, and is currently working on major overhauls of two of its three water treatment facilities.

But as in all communities, Erving's most valuable resources are human: the children in its school system, the working families and residents of its villages, and its senior citizens.

But while the town is second to none in its commitment of resources to the educational needs of the young and the infrastructure and public safety needs of its families, two recent votes at town meetings give us pause when considering Erving's commitment to the people who have worked the hardest and longest to bring the town to its present prosperity.

The senior citizens of Erving are being shortchanged by a minority of town meeting voters, who by a four vote margin have twice denied them their fair share of the fruits of their labor, by failing to muster a two-thirds majority to approve spending \$2.3 million to build a modern facility to house the town's senior center.

Given the town's large nest egg, the savings it has realized on recent infrastructure improvement projects in the current competitive bidding climate, and the demonstrable need for a new building adequate to the health, social, and recreational needs of the town's seniors, we think the town should try again, and this time pass the measure that has been worked on by a dedicated committee of senior citizens working with the selectboard and the Franklin County Regional Housing and Redevelopment Authority for the last two years.

At the first vote on the new senior center, the town failed to mention the fact that a two-thirds majority would be required to approve the \$1 million bond that would be required as part of the financing of the project. (This borrowing would result in no net increase to the tax rate, since it would pick up where the retired bond for the police station left off.) On June 22nd, a revote was ordered, and though both the yeas and nays increased their numbers, still the outcome fell four votes shy of two-thirds: 64 to 38.

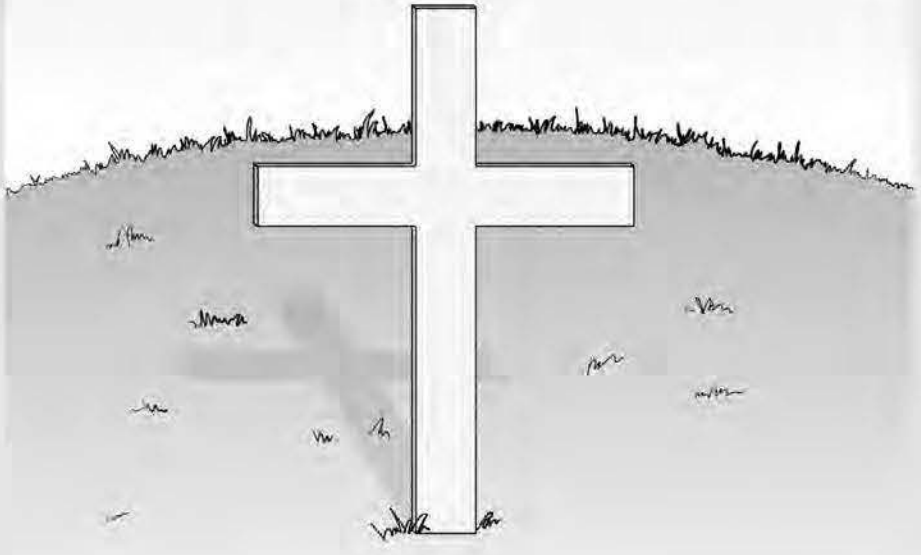
At that meeting, the selectboard cast doubt on the fact that the town is now on the hook to repay the \$162,892 the state of Massachusetts made available to Erving in Community Development Block Grant funds to design the new center. Subsequently, board chair Andy Tessier questioned Erving's owners' agent for the senior center, FCRHRA's Bruce Hunter, on this point, at a selectboard meeting on June 29th. Hunter told him point blank the town would have to repay the money to the state if the center is not built according to the plans funded by the CDBG grant. He also pointed out the town has invested \$52,198 of its own funds for a feasibility study and geothermal design, which will all go to waste if the project is shelved.

Since then, the town has saved more than \$350,000 on competitive bids for repainting the water tower in Erving and relining sewer pipes in Erving Center, of the amounts town meeting set aside for those projects following the defeat of the senior center proposal. This is a strong indicator the same competitive climate would only help bring down the estimated cost of the senior center if voters approve it soon.

Clean, safe drinking water, well-lined sewer pipes, and state of the art treatment plants are vital assets for the town, and we applaud Erving for investing in and protecting those assets. But are they really more important than the social well-being and

see SENIOR pg 5

"I shall not rest until health care is provided for all Americans."



"The Dream Lives On." - Edward Kennedy 1932 - 2009

KAREN WILKINSON ILLUSTRATION

## LETTERS TO THE EDITOR

### Gill Friends & Neighbors

This is a long overdue thank you for all the years you shared with us... for all the Gill Store memories, the many town hall meetings, the Gill school programs, and the bus rides to Fenway Park. We covered 46 years of adventures together. We are now retired and living in Greenfield Acres.

Please keep eating greens, as the Gill Greenery is alive and well, with Sean and Becky Minor and family working the farm. Life on Center Road is still good! Thank you, from a very fortunate duo,

- Phil & Susie Maddern  
Greenfield

(written on Gill Store stationery)

### Quilt Show a Success

On behalf of the Montague Old Home Days committee, the Montague Historical Society, and the many who enjoyed the quilt showing, a big thanks to Lillian Fiske for her tireless work to hold the 1st Annual Quilt Show at Montague Old Home Days 50th!

The quilts were amazing and lovely and the showing was very well attended.

Requests have been made to "Do it again, Lil!"

- Peg Bridges  
Montague Center

## Getting Back to the Garden in Wendell

Even though our summer was short, the heat wave began in mid-August, just in time for the Wendell and Montague Old Home Days.

August 15th - what a wonderful day it was - prime time summer and the living was easy. All the Old Home Days are grand when you renew old acquaintances and make new ones. But 40 years ago that day I was running down Max Yasgur's field to get a glimpse of the glory at Woodstock.

As the song goes: "I came across a child of God, he was walking along the road, and I asked him where are you going, and this he told me: 'Well, I'm going on down to Wendell town, gonna join in a rock 'n' roll band, gonna get back to the land, and set my soul free...'"

Joni Mitchell puts it much better, but Old Home Day in Wendell had many similar feelings of harmony and tranquility.



CHRISTOPHER PARKER PHOTO

A Free Box Fairy graced the Wendell Old Home Parade

Annie Hassett and Gangly Heart kicked off their set with this tune and followed it with Jefferson Airplane's, "Don't You Want Somebody to Love?" and that set the tone for the whole beautiful day. The heavens blessed us with exceptional weather and everyone shared in the rhythm. Live music was the order of the day, and not overly loud, so you could

reminisce with friends. I thoroughly enjoyed myself, watching dancing children frolicking and lovely art exhibits of many craftspeople, and delicious foods from Myron's Yakitori to Lorraine Chaisson's famous egg rolls. I was amazed by the exhibit of fresh New England wild mushrooms, and the wondrous flower arrangements from Laughing Dog Farm. The taste explosions of Tommy Chaisson's jams and preserves was magnificent!

Karen Copeland as host and MC did a phenomenal job, as did the Friends of the Library and Friends of the Meetinghouse. My day was not complete without a massage from master masseuse Sinji Morimoto.

Close friends left for Montague's Old Home Days, where they told of happy adventures capped by Karen's School of Dance's exposition. If only I could have been in two places at once!

I topped off my Wendell experience with the fabulous Diemand Egg Farm Bar-B-Q chicken, and travelled down the mountain to Turners with visions of bombers turning into butterflies... until next year.

- Gregg Hollywood Williams  
Turners Falls

American Dead in Iraq and Afghanistan as of 8/29/09



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**GUEST EDITORIALS**

**Back to School with Less Plastic**

**EMILY MONOSSON MONTAGUE CENTER**— My daughter and I recently made the annual back-to-school pilgrimage to the local big-box office store, and I am appalled. For me, the leathery smell of new shoes stirs sweet pangs marking those precious last days of summer; for my children, it likely will be the smell of vinyl and assorted plastics.

As a child of the 1960s, when plastics had yet to touch every aspect of our lives, my pencils and rulers were made of wood; my binders, cardboard and fabric; my book bag, canvas, and back-to-school shopping wasn't a major industry, let alone a 'season.'

As a toxicologist who has spent much of the last year studying the world's overabundance of plastics and their associated toxicities and as a consumer who carries cloth bags, avoids over-packaged lunch items and diligently recycles — though admittedly I am not a purist when it comes to plastic — this year's shopping left me feeling particularly hypocritical.

We entered the store armed with 'the list' sent

home by my daughter's teachers. We left with an armful of polyvinyl chloride (PVC), polystyrene, polypropylene, polyethylene, all neatly packaged in yet more polystyrene and PVC — and very little of it readily recyclable. The store's hundreds of brightly colored disposable plastic pens certainly are not recyclable. Not only are products often a combination of plastics not easily separated (polystyrene, thermoplastic elastomer and polycarbonate, for example), recycling is seldom feasible because there's an insufficient market for the materials.

By some estimates, hundreds of millions if not billions of disposable pens are sold in the U.S. each year. Once disposed of or lost, bits of those pens will eventually add to the Earth's expanding "plastic layer," a marker of our penchant for the disposable rather than the reusable.

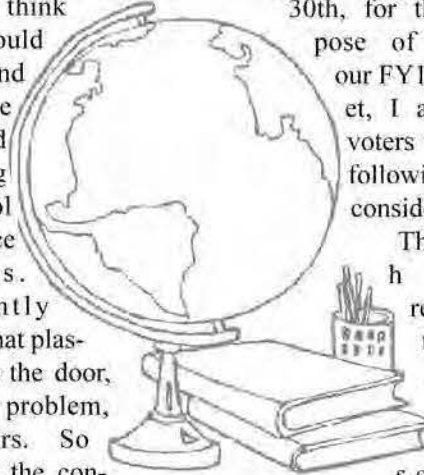
Then there is the scourge of the three-ring binder. Last year's binders were orange and yellow. This year, according to the list, they must be purple, black, green and red — a

color for each subject. Although binders in good condition can be reused, eventually they will break and join their plastic companions in the waste pile.

If the big-box stores can collect e-waste and printer cartridges, you'd think they could collect and encourage reuse and recycling of school and office supplies. Apparently once all that plastic leaves the door, it's our problem, not theirs. So much for the concept of extended producer responsibility. With nearly 56 million K-12 students returning to school, those new plastic binders, lunch boxes, pens, rulers and pencil sharpeners add up to a big problem.

It is a problem, though, that a little creativity could turn into a sobering educational opportunity. Just as students now study the water cycle, what if they studied the life cycle of their pen or their PVC notebook? They'd learn that the production of PVC may contaminate the air of local neighborhoods with vinyl chloride, a

see **PLASTIC** pg 6



**Gill-Montague Must Move Forward Responsibly**

**BY JOYCE PHILLIPS TURNERS FALLS** — When the Gill Montague Regional School District convenes the special district-wide meeting, tentatively set for September 30th, for the purpose of voting our FY10 budget, I ask that voters take the following into consideration.

The state has reviewed the towns' and school district's financial picture over this past year. As a result, I believe the state found the towns and district have the funds to afford the 1/12th budget, set at \$16,657,788 in July by Department of Elementary and Secondary Education commissioner Mitchell Chester.

Under the current economic challenges, cities, towns, and schools are expected to utilize their revenue sources to maintain quality of service. At this time, the school committee needs to move forward, setting our priorities on education and building a strategic plan with a fiscally responsible budget for FY'11.

With this in mind, "keeping the state at the table" is necessary, valuable and sensible. How we will do this and why we should do this are two key questions.

I believe that getting the state's attention, keeping their attention and bringing about meaningful results can only happen if we bring about this collaborative effort in a positive manner. I want the state to take responsi-

bility for the mandates it put forth back when money was flowing abundantly. I want the state to listen to the voices of diversity — city, urban and rural — and not just to political rhetoric combined with fear and coercion. I want the state to pay its fair share.

"Don't pass the budget" and refusing to support education would not demonstrate district or town responsibility or accountability. It's like a childish temper tantrum to say, "If the state doesn't play ball our way, then we will keep the ball." With this mindset, no one wins. The state, towns and the district must take ownership of the budget, and more importantly the future of our youth. Together we must have a vision and strategy that is focused and persuasive to our cause. We will gain nothing from the state or each other with divisive actions, pointing fingers, and verbal attacks.

At this time, the GMRSD has made significant progress in moving from a huge deficit, loss of programs and staff to a responsible financial structure, quality programs and a foundation that will not only benefit our students but provide a collaborative and creative model for many schools. We have within our reach the ability to change lives and build futures.

We have been addressing the concerns of parents and students while recognizing the value of educational research on the subject of drop-out prevention, early childhood education, effective classroom management, and all student learning. This data is being used to address the needs and interests of all students

with effective teaching for the 'whole child' from Pre-K to 12th grade. Many programs and services used here at the GMRSD are on the cutting edge for the country, and doors are open to collaboratively build programs and services that could enhance education in western Massachusetts.

The district is able to clearly define the fiscal measures it has taken to be responsible and accountable, not only to the towns but also to their educators. We were the first district in the state to voluntarily join the state Insurance Commission, a task completed in less than a month as a result of the collaborative relationship the school committee, administration and teachers association have built over the years. We were able to consolidate elementary schools and reorganize special education programs for both fiscal gain and enhanced use of services and programs. In the school year 2009-2010, there was a zero percent cost of living increased for all GMRSD staff.

Several years ago, the finance committee, under the chairmanship of Jeff Singleton, asked the school committee to apply a percent of its excess and deficiency (free cash) account to the budget in an effort to reduce town assessments. Each year since then, the school committee has continued to apply a portion of its E & D money as an investment to maintain programs, services and staff, while reducing assessments.

It has been stated that the Gill-Montague school

see **FORWARD** pg 6

**SENIOR** from pg 4 health of Erving's senior citizens?

It is encouraging to see the selectboard willing to journey to the antiquated site of the present Erving senior center, on the first floor of the old elementary school on Moore Street, for their next meeting on September 21st at 630 p.m. There, the council on aging will have a chance to show the selectboard first hand the cramped, crowded conditions, lack of privacy for health consulta-

tions, the single bathroom, not built to code for accessibility, the kitchen in a converted cloak room, the lack of exercise facilities, and all the other reasons why the new center is sorely needed by a group that constitutes 20% of the town's population — and growing.

But it is not just the size of the group that would benefit from the new center — which would also pave the way for designated senior housing on the same town-owned land,

another priority for the town that will go by the wayside if the senior center is not built. There is a moral question to be asked and answered as well.

The senior citizens have given to the younger generations of Erving by building up the town's assets with their tax dollars, hard work and care over many, many years. Is it not time for the rest of the town to give something back to them in return?



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## NOTES FROM THE MONTAGUE SELECTBOARD

# Human Services Agencies to Face More Scrutiny in Grant Process

**BY DAVID DETMOLD** – Human services providers in Montague will face a more competitive environment when applying for funds through the town's annual Community Development Block Grant process beginning this year. Town administrator Frank Abbondanzio told the selectboard on Monday, August 31st that providers have been invited to an informational session at town hall on Wednesday, September 2nd to learn about the changes, which will include a survey of human service agencies, the public, and schools, to determine the community's present human service needs, and to see whether they are being met.

Also, the selectboard has called for the creation of a human service selection committee to develop a request for proposals to address Montague's human service needs, and to choose among the applicants, and to evaluate the performance of the providers who receive grant funds.

"In an era of scarce public dollars, this provides a way of

looking at what else is out there and what needs are not being met," said Abbondanzio. "I've always found that competition improves levels of performance."

Abbondanzio said the changes in how human service agencies participate in the CDBG process were suggested by the Massachusetts Department of Housing and Community Development, which administers the discretionary federal CDBG funds on the state level.

For the better part of the past decade, two human service agencies in Turners Falls, the Brick House Community Resource Center and the Montague Catholic Social Ministries, have routinely applied for nearly equal shares of approximately \$100,000 in annual CDBG funding through the town, and more often than not have been awarded grants each year to provide services to their constituencies. In general, the Brick House has focused on job creation and technology training for teens and others, while MCSM has empha-

sized empowerment, skills development, and providing resources for women and families.

For Wednesday's meeting, Abbondanzio said, letters of invitation went out to a wider pool of service providers, including the Gill-Montague senior center, Dial Self, NELCWIT, Franklin County Home Care, and others, including the Brick House and MCSM.

Residents interested in serving on the selection committee for the providers to be included in next year's grant are encouraged to call Wendy Bogusz at 863-3200, extension 108.

Abbondanzio also told the selectboard the town had received \$579,775 in CDBG funds for its 2009 application, \$51,270 of which will pay for design of improvements at Unity Park, exclusive of the concrete skate park. Design of the skate park, which will cost an additional \$16,000, has been provided with program income funds made available for that project by the selectboard at an earlier hearing.

Abbondanzio said the eventual cost of improvements at Unity

Park will cost about \$1.2 million, and will have to be applied for in two successive grant cycles, with the skate park construction to be included in the 2011 CDBG application.

He said town planner Dan Laroche is still negotiating with abutting landowner Tim DeChristopher about the proposed closure of Williams Way, to make room for the permanent skate park as part of the Unity Park improvements. The discussion about closing Williams Way will probably return to town meeting this fall.

The rest of the \$579,775 in 2009 CDBG funds includes about \$100,000 for programs at the Brick House and MCSM, and about \$428,000 for zero interest housing renovation loans to qualified homeowners to correct code violations, in a program administered by FCRHRA.

Abbondanzio said DHCD rejected the part of this year's grant application that sought funds for a study to determine slum and blight conditions in the village of Millers Falls. This part of the application, which would have allowed the town to prepare for redevelopment and façade

improvements in Millers Falls was rejected on technical grounds, Abbondanzio said, a finding FCRHRA intends to fight.

In other news, the selectboard approved sending a letter to the Mass Historic Commission's historic preservation office in Boston in support of Jack Nelson's limited liability corporation, Artists in Residence Associates, seeking historic tax credits for a project he is preparing: to renovate an 1860's era farmhouse at 108 J Street to create artist live/work space. Abbondanzio called this an important pilot project to begin to meet a need identified by the RiverCulture project for more artist live/work space in Turners Falls.

Nelson said, "The mission of the Artist in Residence Associates is to secure affordable and sustainable housing and work space for artists in downtown Turners. This is our first project."

Nelson said he gets calls frequently from artists from as far away as Boston and the Cape seeking to relocate to Turners, see MONTAGUE page 14

**FORWARD** from pg 5  
committee has no fiscal plan, vision or strategy. I do not believe this is true. Not only are there a number of initiatives and programs currently being implemented, but we also have a two to three year draft financial plan to maintain a viable district, and

two planning grants for the study of a Readiness Advantage School and autism program.

The Gill-Montague school committee has taken an active part in lobbying for funding and accountability from the state. We need to make every effort to keep the state at the table as a partner in collaboration with the towns and district for the purpose of building a fiscally sustainable future for the youth of today and tomorrow. Let's build this partnership with respect, accountability and responsibility.

*Joyce Phillips is a member of the Gill-Montague school committee. The opinions expressed here are her own, and do not necessarily represent those of other members of the school committee.*



## PLASTIC from pg 5

known carcinogen, and may be associated with increased dioxin concentrations in local residents. Or that some portion of the plastics in their school supplies could end up circulating for decades in remote ocean regions. They'd learn that some marine birds have been found with guts full of colorful plastic bits. Or that plastic could be a good thing if we reused or recycled.

Of course, school supplies are only a drop in the plastic bucket - a small fraction of the more than 100 billion pounds of plastic resin reportedly produced by U.S. industries. This is 100 billion pounds of substances resistant to degradation. Some of the substances, as they break into smaller pieces, will release their chemical building blocks and

additives such as heavy metals and phthalates - several of which interfere with endocrine function - into the environment.

According to a 2008 Environmental Protection Agency report, Americans discarded 30 million tons of plastic in 2007 - 12% of our municipal solid waste - with only 2.1 million tons of it recycled. The rest is sent to landfills, burned in incinerators, washed up on beaches or left swirling in the huge trash gyre in the Pacific, bigger than the state of Texas. In the 1960s, less than 1% of our waste was plastic.

But there's hope. Just as plastic is a man-made modern miracle of chemical engineering, cleaning up after the plastic mess could be this century's miracle. For some products, closed-loop

processing - fully recyclable carpets, for example - reduces resource use and waste. For school supplies that can't be easily recycled, what if kids were challenged (or rewarded) to keep their plastic binders, rulers and pencil sharpeners in good shape so they can be reused? For items that don't last, perhaps a collection box piled high and then sent to key politicians or back to the store, sending a message to industry.

And better yet, what if teachers - originators of "the list" - urged students to seek out recycled, recyclable or plastic-free supplies? At the very least, let's teach them to slow the growth of the plastic layer.

*This editorial was first published in the Los Angeles Times.*



### Gill Recreation Committee

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**NOTES FROM THE GILL - MONTAGUE SCHOOL COMMITTEE**

**Ladd Calls for District Meeting**

BY ELLEN BLANCHETTE

At the last meeting of the Gill Montague Regional School committee, held on August 25th, superintendent Carl Ladd presented a letter from the Gill selectboard requesting a district meeting to agree on a budget for the district schools for the current fiscal year.

Ladd read a portion of the letter out loud to the school committee, and asked the committee to take action to call a district meeting as soon as possible.

The letter read in part, "The Gill selectboard feels that it is time for our communities to accept responsibility for their own school district... Turning back to the State and protesting to DESE about mandates and insufficient funding is, at this point, just complaining about the facts with which we are confronted and which are largely the result of policies set by the legislature and the Governor."

The letter goes on to say the Gill board believes it is the responsibility of the school committee and the school administration to "provide the best educa-

tion the district can afford," with consideration of what the school district receives from the state, and what the towns can afford. The letter called for cooperation among school committee members and towns, asking that they work together with "mutual respect."

Michael Langknecht, committee chair, proposed that the school committee vote to ask the superintendent's office to draft a letter to the towns of Gill and Montague requesting a district meeting be set to settle the matter of the school district budget. Ladd added that the meeting should not be held until after September 22nd, when district business manager Lynn Bassett would return from vacation, noting her absence at the Montague town meeting on August 5th had left him and Langknecht without support in answering questions on financial matters. The tentative date for the meeting has been picked for September 30th, pending school committee approval.

After attending orientation meetings and a retreat over the

summer, with some time spent learning about the use of technology in the schools, the school committee seemed to be focused on learning how to work together more cooperatively. Langknecht said he wanted the committee to hold meetings that were more efficient and productive. Jeff Singleton of Montague said he thought the committee should hold fewer meetings. Langknecht said the May election had ended the tenure of previous subcommittees; new assignments would be made as the need arose. He said he would like to see less work done in subcommittees, more in regular school committee meetings. He also recommended using the task force model instead of standing subcommittees. Task force members are assigned by the superintendent, rather than the school committee, and can work outside open meeting law rules.

Chip Wood, Director of Elementary Education and Nadine Ekstrom Special education director each presented reports on the next stages of two different Readiness School planning grant proposals. The district received a state grant for the summer months, for planning Readiness Schools; Wood's presentation

focused on developing a Readiness Advantage School at Sheffield and Hillcrest, while Ekstrom's focused on children with autism.

The Readiness Advantage School envisions incorporating local resources including habitat, history, architecture and social studies into the learning process. Submission of that planning grant is supported by the school committee and 80% of the teachers at those schools. Ekstrom's project, also encouraged by the school committee, envisions collaborating with other schools in the region to provide services to a small population with significant needs. There are 68 students with autism in schools in Franklin County.

Ekstrom envisions the project

as more of a 'virtual school' than a school located in one building.

The Gill-Montague school district is one of eleven districts statewide to have received Readiness School planning grants so far, and the district stands a good chance of receiving further funding to pursue these projects.

Joyce Phillips complimented Ekstrom's efforts, saying, "I really appreciated the quality of the report, how it captures the work and the vision so clearly." Other school committee members agreed.

The next Gill-Montague Regional School committee meeting will be held on Tuesday, September 8th, at 7 p.m. at Turners Falls High School.

from GILL pg 1

upcoming special town meeting on Monday, September 14th. But Banash told recreation committee chair Nathan Duda, "I would bet money that won't go through."

Duda introduced newly appointed recreation committee member Cathy Demars, who joined Duda and Rose Levasseur on the hot seats in front of the selectboard's desk.

"You're responsible for everything that's happened up 'til now," Banash told Demars, tongue in cheek.

The board hopes Demars will take over bookkeeping operations for the committee, so that Duda and Levasseur can focus on providing programs, which all parties agree are much used and much appreciated by Gill's young people.

The conversation between the board and the committee threat-

ened to get off track shortly after it began, when Banash asked Duda how much money the committee had brought in from a fundraising letter to local businesspeople. Duda said the letter had not gone out yet, because of a minor wording change he wanted to clear with the board. Banash said, in an exasperated tone, "Nate! You've got two weeks before town meeting!" to try to bail out the bad debt in the revolving fund.

Duda promised to get the letter in the mail posthaste, and to pay for the postage out of his own pocket. He said it would be OK to let the 35 kids he anticipates signing up for the soccer program this week wear last year's t-shirts, until sufficient funds were raised to pay off the debt and afford new shirts. He said the committee plans to hold a major tag sale on the lawn of Jan's Package Store

and Great Falls Coffee Company this Saturday, September 6th, from 7:00 a.m. to 2:00 p.m., which should improve the committee's financial picture.

Finance committee member Jim Poulsen offered to consult with the rec committee to help them get their books in order.

Should the town meeting article to dissolve the recreation committee fail, another article later in the agenda calls for providing \$3,000 to fund the committee this year, on the condition that each program the committee sponsors going forward be accompanied by an itemized budget and revenue source, and be followed by a financial report to the selectboard within 30 days of completion.

A separate article will ask the town to pay off any remaining debt in the recreation committee - see GILL pg 10

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from **POLICE** page 1

tion of their support of the new police facility.”

Kulik acknowledged “the serious fiscal crisis in state government at this time,” that prevented the Commonwealth from sending more than \$200,000 in state funds to help defray the cost of construction, but Zukowski thanked Kulik for his help in securing that grant anyway, saying it jumpstarted the building process.

Christopher Donelan, the Orange Democrat who represents the neighboring communities of



Ray Zukowski



Greenfield, Gill, Erving, and Orange in the General Court, was also on hand for the event, recalling his earlier career as an Orange police officer, “working from a basement of town hall, a unique New England tradition.” He praised Zukowski’s leadership on the building project, saying, “Make no mistake about it, something like this does not get off the ground unless you have a police chief who is a great guy.”

Many speakers echoed his remarks about Montague’s chief of police, confirming what Pat Allen, then chair of the Montague selectboard, had said about Zukowski on December 16th, 2004, when the board voted

unanimously to appoint him as the town’s chief of police. Then, Allen called him “the right man to guide this process forward and get a new police station built.”

Police station building committee member Jay DiPucchio prompted laughter with his reading of a local police log, beginning with some light duty items like corralling roughhousing youth at the gas station on 3rd and L, warning off a metal detecting prospector at Unity Park, and locating a stray goat under the bridge at the paper mill. But the mood turned serious as his reading continued, through items detailing a 6:00 a.m. domestic assault and battery, the transporting of a woman in need of services to a local mental health center, the rape of a child, the use of drugs for the purpose of forcing intercourse, and the sale of cocaine near a school, running the gamut “from the ridiculous to the routine to the emotionally sensitive to the outright dangerous.”

DiPucchio said despite the difficulties they face on a daily basis, the Montague police, “made do with the facility we gave them. This new facility represents our commitment to them in the ever increasing complexity of policing in our community.”

Building committee chair Pam Hanold was effusive in her praise of the hard work and professionalism of the committee in overseeing the design and construction of Montague’s new public safety facility over the last two years. She thanked the Turners Falls fire department for being patient through the disruption of the building process.

Zukowski, in his remarks, also praised the fire department for its cooperation, and joked it was nice to finally be able to tell fire chief Ray Godin, “to get off my property.”

Godin surmised, “That was your goal all along.”

But despite this good-natured ribbing, all parties seemed to agree that the police station building process was marked by a degree of cooperation and joint problem solving that would be

remarkable in many communities, but seemed to be a hallmark of public life in Montague.

It was partly this interdepartmental camaraderie – which included the Turners Falls Water Department moving water lines

for free, the DPW pitching in as needed, a local power company official speeding requests for utility hookups, and even the Archdiocese of Springfield blessing the project with a smooth transfer of land adjoining the fire station to allow room for the expansion – that clerk of the works Ted Fiffy credited for the success of the building’s construction. He also credited the depressed economy for creating ideal bidding conditions, allowing him to make good on his promise of last year to bring the new police station in “on time and under budget.”

On Saturday, a beaming Fiffy said, “We’ve done that. We’re about a month ahead of schedule, and \$344,000 under the construction budget.”

Hanold said additional grants should allow the project to shave a total of \$600,000 to \$700,000 off the \$5.6 million originally approved by town meeting to build the new police station on October 11th of 2007.

Montague voters approved that price tag by a 2 to 1 margin in a townwide debt exclusion referendum on November 6th of that year, opting to add approximately \$105 to the average annual property tax bill (for a house valued at \$200,000) for the next 20 years to afford the new building, according to figures from the tax collector’s office.

Deb Radway, building committee member, invited the crowd to make use of the new station’s 1064-square-foot community room (nearly as big as the entire former police station) for everything from yoga lessons to cooking classes. She said the room

would be available 24 hours a day, seven days a week, with advance notice; Zukowski said the department already had the community room booked for seven upcoming occasions.

Radway also said one wall of the community room would feature a bulletin board with photos and dedications to prominent community members, starting with two Montague residents who were honored then and there for

“The Montague police made do with the facility we gave them. This new facility represents our commitment to them in the ever increasing complexity of policing in our community.”

– Jay DiPucchio, member, Montague police station building committee

decades of civic involvement and volunteerism: Virginia and Walter Kostanski. She read a list of their endeavors and achievements. Virginia worked for 30 years as a nurse at the Farren Hospital, and was a founding director of the Shea Theater and a longtime registrar of voters in town. Walter, in addition to his years representing Montague in the state legislature, where he was instrumental in securing funding for the founding of Greenfield Community College and Montague’s first senior housing at Sunrise Terrace, was also

police station building committee, had bragged on the night of the debt exclusion referendum for the new building that he had made over 200 phone calls to residents urging their support for the project. As the vote came in that night in 2007, Kostanski exulted, “We won this one. Montague will finally have a new police station!”

The Kostanskis looked both proud and humbled by the accolades and applause. Their portrait was placed in a prominent spot on the community room wall, between a colorful shot of the intersection of Denton Street and Adams Road in Lake Pleasant and a plaque presented to the town of Montague by Southworth Paper Company for the heroic response of the fire department and the hard work of the police department in the wake of the arson fire at the neighboring Strathmore Mill on May 26th, 2007.

“As we dedicate the community room to all of Montague’s citizens, we challenge you to be as active as Virginia and Walt Kostanski,” Radway said.

Retired state police sergeant Dan Clark, the “Singing Trooper”, serenaded the crowd with a stirring tribute to Old



John Carey inspects a holding cell as officer Michael Sevene looks on.

lauded for being “the best ball player in Western Massachusetts,” a title no one disputed as he and his wife stood for a sustained standing ovation.

Perhaps it was no coincidence that Walter, also a member of the

Glory, as the American flag and a POW-MIA flag presented by veterans agent Leo Parent and soldiers memorial trustee chair Al Cummings were raised in the steady rain. The flags were flown at half mast in honor of departed

continued next page

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Chief Zukowski, Dan 'the Singing Trooper' Clark, and Rep. Steve Kulik

Massachusetts Senator Edward Kennedy, being eulogized at Our Lady of Perpetual Help at the same moment in Mission Hill in Boston. Chief Zukowski and Walter Kostanski used gold-plated scissors to cut the ceremonial ribbon across the front door of the new police station.

The crowd returned to the fire station bays to hear Zukowski give the closing remarks. He got no further than thanking his fam-

ily for putting up with him for the last two years before choking up with tears. He was quickly surrounded by family members, whose hugs plainly showed their support and encouragement.

Thanking the voters of Montague, along with town boards and the fire department's prudential committee, "for helping us get out of our cellar hole," Zukowski said, "This is a great thing we did for this community."



Walter Kostanski holds a pair of gold plated scissors after cutting the ribbon at the new police station, as Chief Zukowski applauds.

He thanked each member of the building committee in turn, starting with Robert 'Booda' Allen, a former state engineer and member of the first committee to examine the need for a new police station in Montague 30 years ago. He also thanked the former Montague chiefs of police in attendance, Michael Saharceski and Pat O'Brien, saying, "You gave me the work ethic I grew up with. Thank you."

Of Brian Humes, the architect responsible for the design of the new public safety facility, Zukowski said, "We could not have picked a better architect. I think he said we could keep these scissors."

He praised his departmental officers, who received an ovation from the crowd, for putting up with the difficulties of the transition while fulfilling their sworn duty to protect and serve the public, and he thanked the dispatch team for juggling the complexities of the move to the new facility.

After the speeches, hundreds of residents and well wishers poured through the corridors, interrogation rooms and holding cells of the new station, and joined a long line at the banquet table set up in the carport by the Montague Police Association.

Bernice Whitney, looking at the rows of new chairs being wheeled into the com-



Police Station Building Committee member Deb Radway invites Montague residents to make use of their new community room, as (l-r, front row) Pat Allen, Ray Godin, Mary Feeney, Jay DiPucchio and Ray Zukowski look on.

munity room, said they reminded her of the day last winter when she broke her leg on the ice on 11th Street, and the police came and carried her down the stairs to the ambulance. "They were quick and nice," she recalled.

In the patrolman's room, bigger than any individual room in the old police station, big enough to have a separate work station for each of four officers on duty at any given time, with plenty of space to spare, officer Bill Doyle stood amid a swirl of people and looked cool, calm and collected even as an anonymous woman called out over her shoulder, "I want to find where my cell is! Will it be padded or not?" as her husband propelled her forward into the corridor.

Examining the gleaming surfaces, the neatly boxed paperclips, pristine staplers, unsmudged computer monitors, and shiny new countertops, Carolyn Prunier confided, "This is unreal, compared to what they had before."

And John Little said cheerfully, "I wouldn't mind being arrested now."

But the officers, deployed to answer questions and show off all the bells and whistles in every room of their new building, were too busy to accommodate him.

"It took us a while, but we got here," said a relieved looking Les Cromack, chair of the capitol improvements committee.

Detective Brian Dobosz said, "It's definitely totally different from the old place. It's about time we got to use modern equipment, rather than the archaic stuff."

In the dispatch area, centrally located between the police and fire departments to enable dispatch operators to provide better backup for the fire department during emergencies, dispatch supervisor Marcia Odle stood before the array of radios and blinking computer consoles, like Lieutenant Uhura at the bridge of the Starship Enterprise.

"It's a little overwhelming," she admitted. "There's a lot to learn. The radio side is all brand new. There's a whole new phone system, HVAC, building security. It's all very high tech. There are going to be some very long hours coming up."

The Montague Police Station Building Committee: Mark Allen, Robert Allen, Jason Burbank, Raymond Godin, John Hanold, Walter Kostanski, Jr., Kenneth Morin, Patricia Pruitt, Paul Voiland, William Whiteman, Jay DiPucchio, co-chair, Deborah Radway, co-chair, Pam Hanold, chair

## Local Nature Notes

### September: Things to See, Hear, and Do

BY JEN AUDLEY

**WEST DEERFIELD** – The moon, full on September 4th, then waning until the new moon on September 18th.

**Flowering weeds.** Ragweed is flowering now, along with Japanese knotweed, pokeweed and jewelweed. Ragweed pollen (not goldenrod) is the culprit behind late-summer allergies for many of us, although spores from fungal bodies are a big factor, too.

**Seeds.** Many types of grass, trees, flowers, and vegetables "go to seed" about now, timing production to get the next generation into the ground before the first hard frost. Every seed that's been fertilized, no matter how small, contains the embryo of a new plant. The seed is protective packaging – it keeps the plant embryo safe until the time and conditions are right for it to grow.

Fruits such as elderberries, wild grapes, apples, and peaches are toothsome delivery systems that help plants disperse their seeds. Fleshy, good-smelling fruit

offers animals such as birds, squirrels, bears, foxes, coyotes, and raccoons a sweet incentive to carry seeds away from a plant (in their stomachs) and then, once the fruit has been digested, to deposit the seeds onto the ground.

**Migrating birds.** Swallows, swifts and nighthawks have mostly already left our area now, and the small birds called warblers will reach the peak of their migration before mid-month. Some of these warblers will fly non-stop for several days and nights, covering hundreds or even thousands of miles before reaching their winter homes! Many hawks migrate this month, too.

**The Turners Falls canal drawdown.** On Saturday, September 12th, the annual draining of the Turners Falls Canal will allow for maintenance on the Cabot Power Station and two miles of canal walls, exposing such creatures as mudpup-

pies, young sea lamprey (called amocetes), eels and other fish, plus invertebrates such as dragonfly nymphs. Look for volunteers collecting these creatures and releasing them in the main stem of the river, with help from Conte Fish Lab biologists.

**Sunset,** right now at about



Animals like the red fox help with nature's seed dispersal plan.

7:20 p.m., with sunrise around 6:15 a.m. Daylight hours are decreasing now by about three minutes each day. On September 22nd, the autumnal equinox, day and night are of equal length and fall officially begins.

**Learn more:**

**Roots an' Rocks: A Natural History of Barton Cove**  
Saturday, September 12th,  
10:00 a.m. to noon

Join naturalist Dawn Marvin-

Ward and geologist Steve Winters for a leisurely fall walk at Barton Cove picnic area. Marvin-Ward will share her expertise of the flora and wild flowers of the Barton Cove peninsula. Winters will explain the geology of Barton Cove, the origin of the Lily Pond plunge pool, and will lead an exploration of the world-famous dinosaur track quarry. This will be an easy hike along a mostly level trail, but the short descent to the dinosaur quarry may be slippery. Please wear appropriate footwear. Free, or optional donation. Pre-register by calling Northfield Mountain at (800) 859-2960. Co-sponsored with the Friends of the

Great Falls Discovery Center.  
**Third Annual Fungus Fair**  
Saturday, September 26th,  
10:00 a.m. to 4:00 p.m.

Interested in mushrooms? The Millers River Environmental Center is putting the fun into fungus with its third annual Fungus Fair. Respected mycologists from throughout New England will be on hand to share their knowledge. There will be morning and afternoon expeditions into the local

woods to identify and collect mushrooms. Regional authorities will give talks throughout the day on topics including beginner's mushroom identification, and edible and poisonous fungi. At lunchtime, enjoy a wild mushroom cook-up. Free for Monadnock Mushroomers Unlimited members; \$5 for all others. Bring lunch, a collecting basket with paper or wax-paper bags, magnifying glass, small knife, and bug spray to the Millers River Environmental Center, 100 Main Street, Athol.

**Plan Ahead!**

**Connecticut River Source to Sea Cleanup, 2009**

Saturday, October 3rd, 9:00 a.m. to noon

This is your chance to get involved in the 13th year of the Cleanup! In 2008, 275 volunteers in eastern Franklin County filled three 30-yard dumpsters with trash and also removed 512 tires, 4,000 pounds of scrap metal, nine televisions and assorted appliances from the Montague Plains and along rivers and streams in Montague, Gill and East Deerfield. For ages seven and older. Meet at Great Falls Discovery Center, Turners Falls.

from GILL pg 7  
tee's revolving fund on  
September 14th.

Town moderator Ray Steele cautioned the committee to take formal votes on each item that could lead to expenditures, to avoid the problem of individual

members incurring debts informally on behalf of the committee and the town.

Selectboard member Nancy Griswold said the work of the committee was "too important" to be allowed to fail. "The kids need it," she said.

**Special Town Meeting  
September 14th**

Going over the remaining articles on the town meeting warrant, the finance committee, meeting in joint session with the selectboard, supported the request to fully fund the GMRSD's \$1,393,201 assessment for Gill, and to call for the imposition of local option meals and lodging taxes, the revenue from which would return to the town. The new meals tax, a .75% increase, is supported by the Gill Tavern and Great Falls Coffee Company, according to town administrator Tracy Rogers, and opposed by the Wagon Wheel, among the establishments that will be affected if town meeting approves the added tax.

After lengthy discussion, both the selectboard and the finance committee supported a warrant article calling for a \$30,000 override, to be dedicated to adding funds to the town's stabilization account, which has been drained to \$101,724 to support operating budgets. The selectboard unanimously supported the measure (which would add about \$50 to the annual tax bill on a \$209,000 house, the average in Gill, if passed by town meeting and approved by the voters in town-wide election), and the finance committee approved it by a vote of 5 to 2.

Though neither board was sanguine about the chances for the measure to meet voter approval, finance committee Tupper Brown said, "We ought to make our recommendations not on politics but on what is wise,

and what we think the town can bear, meaning the average taxpayer."

Brown said next year, the voters will face the choice of cutting whole departments, rather than replenishing the stabilization fund, if they don't act now to staunch the flow of town funds.

Finance committee member Timmy Smith noted that many taxpayers are on fixed incomes, and not even receiving cost of living increases for their Social Security checks this year. She voted against the measure, along with Chris Collins.

The finance committee, with Ronnie LaChance recusing herself from the vote, joined the selectboard in supporting a measure on the warrant to give town employees a 1% cost of living increase for FY'10.

The board suggested the finance committee consider a proposal by highway department superintendent Mick LaClaire to use \$115,000 in Chapter 90 (state highway aid) money to purchase a new front end loader. The 1992 machine now in use breaks down frequently, but is nonetheless a mainstay of the highway department's day to day operations.

**Plumbing Problems**

In other news, the board met with Lynn Bassett, Gill-Montague district schools business manager, and newly appointed facilities manager Steve Roberto, to discuss problems with the well and plumbing at the Gill Elementary School. The school's well failed tests for coliform bacteria over the wet

summer, and Bassett said the GMRSD was prepared to bring bottled water into the elementary school at the start of school last week, when the final test on Tuesday, August 25th came back clean.

However, in the course of testing, Bassett said the school department learned they would be required to complete \$4,453 worth of repairs to the school's plumbing system to meet new Department of Environmental Protection regulations, which, after some discussion, the selectboard and finance committee agreed would be the town's responsibility to pay for under the lease requirements.

**Televising Meetings**

The board discussed a proposal by member John Ward to begin televising selectboard meetings, and town meetings, on the local cable access channel. Town administrator Tracy Rogers said the town had accumulated between \$6,000 and \$8,000 in a fund from a fee on cable users' monthly bills which provides cable access for local government meetings, which could be used to purchase cameras and other needed equipment, if the board chooses to broadcast the meetings. Rogers will ask MCTV what kind of set up and equipment would be needed; Ward will look into finding a volunteer who might be willing to operate the cameras. Griswold and Banash said they were cool to the idea, but not flatly opposed.



**HIGHLIGHTS FROM THE GILL POLICE LOG**

**Marijuana Eradication**

**Tuesday, 8/25**  
3:09 p.m. Motor vehicle stop on Main Road, RMV property seized and returned to registry.  
8:54 p.m. Alarm at Main Road business. Checked same, accidentally set off by employee.  
9:17 p.m. Suspicious motor vehicle on Main Road, all determined to be OK.  
10:20 p.m. Report of gun shots or fireworks in Barton Cove area. Checked area, unable to locate source.  
**Wednesday, 8/26**  
11:29 a.m. Marijuana eradication con-

ducted off of Main Road. Several plants seized. Under investigation.  
**Thursday, 8/27**  
7:01 p.m. Criminal complaint sought against [redacted] Charged with unlicensed operation of motor vehicle on West Gill Road.  
**Friday, 8/28**  
10:03 a.m. Assist Boyle Road resident with keeping the peace / court order.  
8:58 p.m. Barking dog complaint on Walnut Street. Checked area.  
**Saturday, 8/29**

10:02 a.m. 911 misdial from Mountain Road Estates, all checked OK.  
7:31 p.m. Arrested [redacted] for an outstanding warrant.  
10:29 p.m. Assisted Bernardston police with a domestic disturbance.  
**Sunday, 8/30**  
8:35 p.m. One-car motor vehicle accident on Main Road, no injuries. Report taken.  
**Tuesday, 9/1**  
3:40 p.m. Report of gunshots in Barton Cove area. Checked area, determined to be from the shooting range off of Barton Cove Road.

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**NOTES FROM THE ERVING SELECTBOARD**

# New Date Set for Aquifer Bylaw Change Hearing

BY DAVID DETMOLD

**ERVING** – Signs saying “I’m voting yes for the gas station” are sprouting up like dandelions around Erving in advance of the vote planned for October 5th, when Erving residents will have a chance to weigh in at a special town meeting on whether or not the town should allow gas stations to be built within Erving’s aquifer protection zone.

Only one gas station has been proposed within the protection zone surrounding the town’s drinking water well; that is the one planned for the lot next to the French King Entertainment Center, owned by Eric and Ralph Semb.

Last week, Eric Semb purchased 100 lawn signs with the pro gas station message, and he said, “I ran out of them in two days. People have been grabbing them out of my hands. People are just so excited. They want gas!”

There is no gas station in the town of Erving; the nearest gas

stations are located in Orange or Gill.

In 2005, Erving approved new zoning bylaws prohibiting fuel storage tanks or gas stations within the aquifer protection zone in Erving. Although gas stations are permitted in other parts of town.

After closing Jillians on the 2, the most recent business to be located on the lot across from the French King Entertainment Center, the former home of the Countree Living Restaurant, the Sembs initiated a petition drive to overturn the zoning bylaw prohibiting a gas station at the site, along with a second petition to overturn the townwide prohibition on drive-through restaurants also approved by town

meeting in 2005. More than 175 residents signed these petitions.

The Sembs hope to build a fast food restaurant, gas station and convenience store on the Countree Living lot, if the zoning changes called for in their petitions are enacted by town meeting on October 5th.

Eric Semb said residents he talks to are just as excited about the prospect of a fast food drive-through as they are about a more convenient gas station. “They want a Dunkin’ Donuts,” he said.

On April 13th of this year, Franklin Regional Council of Governments planning director Peggy Sloan told an overflow crowd at a public hearing on the proposed bylaw changes that 11

towns in Franklin County have groundwater protection zones in place, and of those 11 towns, all but Greenfield prohibit gas stations within their aquifer protection zones. Greenfield is working to enact on a ban on gas stations anywhere within their groundwater protection zone, Sloan said, and city planner Eric Twarog confirmed this change was being sought in Greenfield, since Sloan had brought the matter to his attention.

Nevertheless, a large majority of those in attendance at the April hearing indicated their support for overturning the prohibition on fuel storage tanks near the town’s drinking water supply in a straw poll.

At a subsequent discussion on the matter at a selectboard meeting on June 15th, selectboard chair Andy Tessier told Eric Semb, “I have to be honest with you. I have a major problem with [the gas station proposal]. Once the water gets contaminated, I have a problem with how much it costs to treat it at the other end.”

But this week, Semb dismissed such concerns. “When was the last time you heard a news report about a fuel storage system that leaked? It’s computerized now. These are above ground tanks we’re putting in, with a 110% containment barrier. It’s about educating the people.”

At a public hearing on revising the bylaws to allow for a gas station and drive through in the Erving aquifer zone on August 13th, former selectboard member Daniel Hammock charged planning board chair Jeff Dubay with conflict of interest for his stated opposition to opening up the groundwater protection zone to allow for construction of a gas station and convenience store. Dubay’s wife owns the Freight House Antiques on Erving Center on Route 2, which also has a coffee counter and could conceivably be impacted by the opening of a fast food restaurant in Erving.

Dubay recused himself from that hearing after Hammock made the charge, causing the hearing to be abruptly terminated for lack of a quorum on the planning board. Dubay has since written to the state ethics commission for a ruling on the matter.

The hearing will be held again on September 17th at the Erving Elementary School, at 7 p.m., to solicit public input on the zoning changes prior to the town meeting vote on October 5th. The special town meeting will also take place at the elementary school at 7 p.m.

The schedule for the hearing and special town meeting was discussed and approved at the August 31st selectboard meeting.

In other news from that meeting, former selectboard member Linda Downs-Bembury came in to complain that a hill of wildflowers planted by highway boss Paul Prest on Route 2 leading west out of Erving Center was mown down by Harry Brown, of Beulah Land Maintainers, a private contractor who maintains the landscaping at town buildings and mows some of the steep slopes around town. The board promised to contact Brown and ask him to no longer mow the hill where the wildflowers had lately been attracting positive comment and attention.

Gary Street resident Celeste Gannon came in to talk to the board about the same stretch of road. Gannon wanted the town to see if MassHighway would move the speed limit sign that raised the limit from 35 to 45 mph to the west of the Mountain Road intersection, so motorists would no longer be accelerating up the hill as cars turned in or out of Mountain Road. The board promised to communicate with Mass Highway on the subject.

Town clerk Richard Newton said the necessity to hold a primary and special election on December 8th and January 19th, see **ERVING** pg 14



Businessman Eric Semb purchased 100 lawn signs for gas station supporters.

**HIGHLIGHTS FROM THE ERVING POLICE LOG**

**Snoozin’ In The Road**

**Tuesday, 8/18**

8:25 p.m. Barking dog complaint on Ridge Road. Owner advised of bylaws.

**Wednesday, 8/19**

6:05 p.m. Arrested [redacted] Charged with operating a motor vehicle without a license, speeding, and seatbelt violation.

**Saturday, 8/22**

12:03 a.m. Arrested [redacted] Charged with operating a motor vehicle after suspension of license, speeding, and possession of a class E drug.

3:50 p.m. Barking dog complaint on Ridge Road. All quiet upon arrival.

**Sunday, 8/23**

12:30 a.m. Assisted Gill police with a domestic disturbance.

1:15 p.m. Report of a despondent female on the French King Bridge. Checked same, subject stated she was fine, no problem detected.

7:22 p.m. Barking dog complaint on Ridge Road. Checked area, all quiet.

9:30 p.m. Citation issued to [redacted]

[redacted] for operating a motor vehicle with a suspended license, speed-

ing, and seatbelt violation.

**Tuesday, 8/25**

4:05 a.m. Report of a sleeping child in the roadway on Dorsey Road. Located an adult male sleeping in the middle of Dorsey Road. Transported same to residence.

9:00 p.m. Report of past larceny from French King Restaurant.

9:30 p.m. Report of vehicle damage on Route 2 at Old State Road work site.

11:40 p.m. Assisted Montague police with a breaking and entering reported on South Prospect Street.

**Wednesday, 8/26**

8:10 a.m. Report of breaking and entering, larceny of copper wire on Northfield Road. Under investigation.

**Thursday, 8/27**

1:30 p.m. Report of a domestic disturbance at a North Street residence. Male party out of control, verbal only. Subjects calmed down.

3:00 p.m. Motor vehicle accident, car vs. tractor trailer unit at Old State Road and Route 2.

3:30 p.m. Report of loose black labrador retriever on West Main Street. Unable to locate.

10:22 p.m. Citation issued to [redacted]

Orange, for operation of an uninsured and unregistered vehicle.

**Friday, 8/28**

9:03 a.m. Citation issued to [redacted] for operating an uninsured and unregistered vehicle.

10:37 p.m. Arrested [redacted]

[redacted] Charged with operating a motor vehicle while under the influence of liquor, second offense and marked lanes violation.

**Saturday, 8/29**

10:20 a.m. Report of tractor trailer unit stuck in the mud at Route 2 and Old State Road construction area. Removed by good samaritan.

6:46 p.m. Report of a domestic disturbance at a High Street address. Arrested [redacted]

[redacted] Charged with assault and battery, domestic, with a dangerous weapon.

**Tuesday, 9/1**

2:30 p.m. Report of barking dogs at an Old State Road address. Checked same.

3:42 p.m. Citation issued to [redacted]

[redacted] for operating a motor vehicle with a suspended license and speeding.

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## NOTES FROM THE WENDELL SELECTBOARD

# Wendell Sees Steep Drop in State Aid

BY JOSH HEINEMANN

The finance committee met with the selectboard on August 19th to discuss the budget difficulty imposed on the town by a steep drop in local aid, with forecasts no less gloomy for the coming budget season, in FY '11.

Committee member Jim Slavas said state aid to the town had dropped 33% from last year's figures.

Subsequent to the meeting, Slavas explained, "Wendell received \$415,310 in local aid for FY'09. The state's final FY '10 budget has Wendell receiving \$276,427 in local aid, a reduction of \$138,883, which is just over 33%.

"The reductions are primarily the result of the significant reduction in school transportation reimbursement – from \$118,948 to \$41,772 – and in unrestricted general government aid – from \$208,264 to \$153,551."

To compensate for that, the legislature has approved new local option meals and lodging taxes, with extra receipts collected by local businesses and sent into the state, which would forward the money back to Wendell every three months.

Finance committee member Barbara Caruso said she hates the idea of adding taxes to local businesses, and Slavas said any money generated thereby would not come close to covering the loss in state aid. Finance committee and selectboard members could think of only two businesses that might be affected, the Country Store and Deja Brew Pub, and Diemand Farm, which sells sandwiches and coffee at their store. Slavas said he would talk with both establishments and get their input, but said he does not think the local option taxes are a good idea for Wendell.

Selectboard member Dan Keller said taxing utilities for additional property and equipment in town could produce some extra revenue for the town. High tension wires are already taxed, but now the town may tax utility distribution lines as well.

In a follow-up interview, Keller said the town made it through this year by "cutting back on expenses and taking some money out of stabilization to meet operating expenses." He predicted Wendell would have to follow a similar strategy in FY '11.

Slavas said that the state had certified Wendell's tax rate at \$15.83 per \$1,000 of valuation; bills should be sent out within two weeks. Preliminary property tax bills for 2010 will be sent out in December.

Heard said people can always pay early, and face only a small remainder when the adjusted bill comes out.

### In Other News

Jim May from National Grid met with the selectboard to explain why the utility charges more than a local electrician to bring electric service from the street to a house. A Wendell homeowner had questioned the expense, but later decided to install solar panels and a backup diesel generator instead of connecting to the grid, May said.

May also said a house supply less than 500 feet from the road may be installed by an electrician, but a longer distance would result in too much voltage drop, and in that case National Grid installs, owns, and maintains a primary cable at line voltage to a transformer 500 feet or less from the house. An electrician can install the secondary cable from

there to the house, and once the installation is complete the homeowner owns it and is responsible for maintenance or repair.

### Coffeehouse Improvements

Paul Richmond, representing the Full Moon Coffeehouse committee, brought six issues to discuss with the selectboard in preparation for the next Coffeehouse season, as follows:

The Holiday Fair dates, December 5th and 6th, fall on December's full moon weekend, so the committee decided to hold December's coffeehouse on Saturday, December 12th instead.

Low-voltage wires for the sound system are now strung every month by hand from a rickety ladder along the hanging lights from the stage to the back of the room. Klondike has offered to run a conduit under the floor so those wires can be left in place permanently, and the committee will build a small box at the stage, near the entry door, to hold the cable ends when not in use.

There is a plywood facade in the town hall covering a speaker the committee wants to remove and relocate toward the side of the stage. The selectboard agreed that might be worthwhile.

The lighting bar over the stage is old and has screws loose. The committee would like to replace

it with a new bar, or lights on stands on either side of the stage, whichever the board prefers. Board member Dan Keller agreed to look over the lighting and wiring improvements, for which the board gave the go-ahead.

Musicians have noticed small white particles that might be asbestos insulation falling from the ceiling during performances. Enough collects at the end of an evening that the floor needs sweeping. Town coordinator Nancy Aldrich asked if there is a way to get above the stage ceiling. Selectboard chair Christine Heard thought town custodian Larry Ramsdell or building manager Ted Lewis might know, and Keller suggested the town's newly created energy task force might look into the situation. Richmond suggested a coffeehouse could be held to create a fund to pay for some of the work, which could be expensive if asbestos is involved.

During a past coffeehouse someone had a portable radio and heard a broadcasted tornado warning. The town hall cellar is too small to shelter a full coffeehouse crowd. The committee was hoping for a clear policy on how to respond to such an emergency in the future. Aldrich suggested

from WENDELL pg 14

### ZSCHAU from pg 1

stand it, the legislation for limits never gets out of committee for vote in Congress."

Zschau considers the consequence tragic for the body politic when a ruling elite is returned to power regularly. "We have lost generations," the senate hopeful says in his flyer, "of intelligent, capable, and innovative leaders because a handful of career politicians have held the same offices for decades.

"This is America – everyone deserves an equal opportunity to hold an elected position. We need citizen politicians, not career politicians. If elected, I will serve no more than two terms as your senator."

The second plank of Zschau's platform deals with Congressional pay scales. "Why," he asks in his circular,

"are senators with millions of dollars of personal wealth paid the same as those with little or none? The wealthiest politicians – those multi-millionaires – should be only compensated for the expenses they incur while fulfilling the duties of the office. I will only keep the income needed to cover these expenses, and contribute the remainder of my salary to Massachusetts charitable organizations." The third part of his platform focuses on campaign war chests. "A U.S. senatorial campaign typically costs about three million dollars. Only a wealthy person can afford to run, or a person who's been in office for decades with a string of people he can call for donations."

A self-made businessman, Zschau said in his flyer, "Any campaign funds I do not expend during this election will be con-

tributed to Massachusetts charitable organizations."

Right now the aspiring candidate feels his lack of experience on the national stage is one of his strongest assets.

"I am not a politician," he said. "Essentially, I've made no promises to anyone. I have not received \$1 in contributions for my campaign.

"My first step is to complete my nomination papers. I have to obtain 10,000 signatures of registered voters in the state in order to get on the ballot."

The deadline for filing papers is November 24th.

Why is the former Turners Falls resident running as an independent? "You have to start leveling the playing field," Zschau said. "I would not want to be associated with either the Republicans or Democrats.

Personally, I can best express my feelings by being an independent instead of offending a party with my ideas and positions."

Independents make up the fastest-growing segment of voters in the nation.

"I've actually thought of getting into politics for 15 years," Zschau said. "I've seen the same incumbents and candidates run negative campaigns, so when you go to the polls, you end up voting for the lesser of two evils. I don't think this is the type of country we want. We want people we can select out of a wide variety of possibilities."

Zschau graduated from Turners Falls High School in 1966. He attended Bentley College for two years before completing his bachelor's degree in business administration under a work-study program in only

three semesters at the College of Insurance in New York City.

He and Melanie, his wife of 32 years, have four children: Aaron, 30; Jonathan, 27; Jeremy, 25; and Ryan, 23.

"The kids and I, along with volunteers, are going to hit the streets," Zschau promised, "to get those 10,000 signatures."

Zschau notes that people can stop in at his office to sign his papers at 25 Millers Falls Road in Turners Falls at the corner of Carlisle Avenue and Millers Falls Road, Monday through Friday from 8:30 a.m. to 5 p.m.

For further information, call (413) 218-8895 or view Zschau's website at Zschauforsenate.com.

Would Montague see any pork barrel projects if he gets elected? "I've made no promises to anyone," insisted Zschau.

But we can hope.



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**THE HEALTHY GEEZER:**

**Dealing with Sciatica**

JESSICA HARMON ILLUSTRATION  
BY FRED CICETTI

**LEONIA, NJ – Q:** *I'm getting pain in my right leg, and my doctor says it's sciatica. Could you write one of your columns about this?*

Sciatica is pain that runs down the sciatic nerve from your lower spine to your buttock and down the back of your leg. Age-related changes in the spine are a common cause of sciatica.

Other sciatica symptoms include numbness, muscle weakness, a burning sensation, and tingling. In rare cases, there is a loss of bladder or bowel control. Usually only one side of your body experiences sciatica.

Most of the time, sciatica goes away within a few weeks of rest. If it doesn't go away, see a doctor. About 85 percent of patients with sciatica get better over time without surgery.

Sciatica is caused by damage to the sciatic nerve, the longest nerve in the body. This nerve controls the muscles of the back of the knee and lower leg and provides sensation to the back of the thigh, part of the lower leg and the sole of the foot.

A common cause of sciatica is a herniated disk – also known as a ruptured or slipped disk. Disks are pads of cartilage that cushion the vertebrae in your spine. If a disk ruptures, it can press against a nerve root in your spine, causing pain.

**Other causes of sciatica include:**

- Trauma. A blow to your spine can injure nerve roots.
  - Tumors. As they grow, tumors can compress the spinal cord or the nerve roots.
  - Stenosis. If sections of the spinal canal narrow, there can be pressure on the spinal cord.
  - Piriformis syndrome. The piriformis muscle runs from your lower spine to each thigh-bone. This muscle can put pressure on the sciatic nerve.
  - Spondylolisthesis. This occurs when one vertebra slips slightly forward over another vertebra and pinches the sciatic nerve. This condition is often caused by degenerative disk disease.
- Cigarettes are bad for your back. Smoking increases your risk of developing sciatica by blocking the body's ability to deliver nutrients to the disks of

the lower back.

Get emergency treatment for sciatica if you have: sudden, severe pain in your low back or leg; numbness or muscle weakness in your leg; pain following a violent injury; or trouble controlling your bowels or bladder.

There are many ways to treat sciatica that include injections, pain-relieving drugs, muscle relaxants, hot or cold packs, physical therapy and surgery.

**To avoid sciatica, you should:**

- Exercise regularly
- Sit with good posture and lumbar support
- Take frequent breaks if you work at a desk
- Adjust your car seat so that your knees and hips are level and you aren't overreaching for the pedals.
- If you stand for long periods, rest one foot on a stool. (Bar rails were invented to reduce back discomfort.)
- When lifting, bend your

knees, not your back. Lift with your legs.

- Carry objects close to your body.
- Don't reach and lift objects; pull them close to you first. Remember this tip when emptying a car trunk.
- Sleep on a good mattress; if you wake with back pain, you need a new one.

I have a slightly herniated disk that has given me sciatica; I've gone to a chiropractor, physical therapists, and tried many self-help techniques.

I've had the most success following the instructions in a book entitled *Treat Your Own Back*. The author is Robin A. McKenzie, a New Zealand physiotherapist. I recommend it to all my friends who suffer from back pain.

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

**HIGHLIGHTS FROM THE MONTAGUE POLICE LOG**

**Intent to Commit Murder Charged**

**Sunday, 8/16**  
10:26 a.m. Report of a domestic disturbance at a Hillside Road address. Services rendered.  
4:01 p.m. Report of a domestic disturbance at a Twelfth Street address. Peace restored.  
6:11 p.m. Officer wanted at a G Street address. Arrested [redacted].  
[redacted] Charged with operating a motor vehicle to endanger, operating under the influence of liquor, second offense, and failure to use care starting, turning or backing up.  
**Monday, 8/17**  
1:01 p.m. Report of an assault at a Woodland Drive address. Investigated.  
**Tuesday, 8/18**  
3:25 p.m. Report of burglary / breaking and entering at a J Street address.  
**Thursday, 8/20**  
10:47 a.m. Report of a hit-and-run accident at the Survival Center on Fourth Street. Investigated.  
11:43 p.m. Following a traffic stop, arrested [redacted].  
[redacted] Charged with operating a motor vehicle without a license, with a revoked registration, and without insurance.  
**Friday, 8/21**  
8:04 p.m. Report of a motor vehicle accident with personal injury at the White Bridge by Southworth Paper. Subject removed to hospital.  
**Saturday, 8/22**  
7:19 p.m. Officer initiated investigation of burglary /

breaking and entering at a Meadow Road address.  
8:49 p.m. Assist other police department in the arrest of [redacted] on a default warrant.  
**Sunday, 8/23**  
11:03 a.m. Report of burglary / breaking and entering at a Fourth Street address. Investigated.  
**Monday, 8/24**  
6:50 a.m. Abandoned 911 call from a North Leverett Road address. Investigated.  
5:01 p.m. Report of an assault and battery at an L Street investigation. Reporting party advised of options.  
5:46 p.m. Report of an unwanted person at a North Leverett Road address. Peace restored.  
**Tuesday, 8/25**  
4:59 p.m. Report of an assault at a High Street address. Services rendered.  
11:41 p.m. Report of burglary / breaking and entering at an Oakman Street address. Investigated.  
**Wednesday, 8/26**  
3:13 a.m. Report of a domestic disturbance at a Seventh Street address. Peace restored.  
8:25 a.m. Report of burglary / breaking and entering at a WMECO property on Farren Avenue. Investigated.  
6:30 p.m. Report of a restraining order violation at Subway restaurant, Avenue A. Services rendered.  
**Thursday, 8/27**  
8:41 a.m. Report of an unwanted person at an Avenue A address. Peace restored.  
6:17 p.m. Report of a domestic disturbance at a Montague City Road address. Peace restored.  
6:23 p.m. Officer wanted at a Swamp Road address. Peace restored.  
**Friday, 8/28**  
12:40 a.m. Report of a domestic disturbance at an East Main Street address. Peace restored.  
2:10 a.m. Report of a domestic disturbance at an East Main Street address. Investigated.  
3:46 a.m. Report of a domestic disturbance at an East Main Street address. Arrested [redacted].  
[redacted] Charged with disorderly conduct and disturbing the peace, subsequent offense.  
11:38 a.m. Report of an unwanted person at Basically Bicycles on Third Street. Peace restored.  
5:44 p.m. Report of a domestic disturbance behind the Brickhouse Community Center, Third / Fourth Street alleyway. Peace restored.  
**Saturday, 8/29**  
12:18 a.m. Report of loud noise disturbance at a G Street address. Arrested [redacted].

[redacted] on a default warrant.  
**Sunday, 8/30**  
1:22 a.m. Report of a neighbor disturbance at a Grand Avenue address. Arrested [redacted].  
[redacted] Charged with disturbing the peace.  
4:18 a.m. Assist other police department in the arrest of [redacted].  
[redacted] Charged with armed burglary, intimidation of a witness, assault and battery, aggravated and with a dangerous weapon, kidnapping, threatening to commit a murder, and assault with intent to commit murder.  
1:20 p.m. Report of an unwanted person at a Vladish Avenue address. Services rendered.  
**Monday, 8/31**  
1:39 p.m. Report of trespassing at a Grout Circle address. Investigated.

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**WENDELL** from pg 12  
during regular announcements about exits and safety the committee might add a statement, "This is not a building to take shelter in during extreme weather conditions."

**Backhoe**

Aldrich said the town received three bids for a new used backhoe, as authorized by annual town meeting. One bid was higher than the \$60,000 town meeting authorized, another bid was for a 2004 machine and the town qualification was for a 2006 model or newer. The selectboard approved the bid from Brookside Equipment for \$57,500, with a \$7,500 trade-in on the old backhoe, for a total outlay of \$50,000.

Road boss David Bock will inspect the backhoe, and if he approves it, the town will buy it. The money will come from the town's stabilization fund.

**Raccoons in a Dead Ash Tree**

Cemetery commission chair Richard Mackey told the selectboard he had put yellow caution tape in a large circle around the dead ash tree in the Meetinghouse cemetery to keep people away from limbs the tree continues to drop.

Mackey hired an arborist to limb the tree to avoid damage to the gravestones below, but the arborist, Matt Edwards, ran into a clan of raccoons who have excavated a fortress in the dead tree, and made it dangerous to climb past them. Edwards said he could

not count how many raccoons there were, but they came out of every branch hole, hissing. In one hole, he saw one raccoon on the back of another. Mackey said nothing has worked to get rid of the bandits: when one retreats another advances, "like a giant game of 'Whack-a-Mole'."

Edwards said the best option would be to cut and limb the tree from the top down using a bucket truck, and hope the commotion scatters the raccoons so the trunk can be cut down safely. If the raccoons stay, the trunk can remain standing, and at least the tree will have no more limbs to drop.

Edwards said he can use a rear mounted bucket that can get close to the tree without damaging gravestones. He estimated \$2,000 for the work, including the bucket truck rental.

Mackey said he could use money from the cemetery's perpetual care account for the work, but he wanted to consult the selectboard first. Because the expense is less than \$5,000, and no building is involved, the selectboard was able to approve the work without going out to bid, and they did so.

**School Regionalization, etc.**

Jim Slavos reported he had missed two meetings of the Mahar regionalization subcommittee, but at one recent meeting he attended a report presented by consultant David Tobin showed Swift River School had the highest instructional and administrative costs per student, while

Orange has the lowest. Teachers at Swift River School get the highest pay, but Slavos said he pointed out that longevity at Swift River is greatest among the schools studied, so the teachers at Swift River are often at the highest step rate, while pay for comparable step rates are low at Swift River.

The report showed a possible savings of 1½% from consolidating into one K through 12 region with Mahar, with many unknowns that could skew the estimate.

In a regional school committee, representation based on population would give Orange more members and a larger majority than the nine it already has in the Mahar School Committee.

Finance committee chair Michael Idoine said Pioneer

Valley Regional School has invited other schools and school committees to look at their program.

Aldrich said that the first electric bill from Hampshire Power shows that overall the town saved \$97.27 by buying power through them. A rebate will be sent to the town at the end of the year.

She is renewing her operator's license for the town water supply.

Dan Keller reported that Nina Keller resigned her position as the town's representative to the Franklin Regional Council of Governments; she has missed meetings because of other commitments. Keller suggested Ted Lewis might take her place at the monthly FRCOG meetings.

Pooser said the beta version of the new town website should be ready soon after Labor Day, and the website committee will hold a

forum to gather feedback on the new website design at the library on September 8th at 6:30 p.m. There will be training sessions so department heads can maintain their own pages.

Pooser talked with the owner of the former Maple Valley School property, who told him representatives from a New Hampshire college had expressed interest in the property.

Heard said the town 'neighborhood committee' would hold trainings for neighborhood captains and co-captains in September. The neighborhood committee is hoping to organize the town to be better prepared in the event of a prolonged power outage or other emergency.

Heard also thanked volunteers for weeding and mulching the plants around the town offices.

**MONTAGUE** from pg 6

where prices may be more affordable.

Residents of Central Street and Prospect Street will hold their annual Prospect Street Bridge Party on Chestnut Lane this year, since the Prospect Street arched bridge is actively under renovation at this time. The date of the party, with live music and comestibles, is September 12th. The board granted permission for the party on public land from 5 to 10 p.m. on that Saturday.

Earlier that day, from 3 p.m. to 7 p.m. in the 3rd Street parking lot, a celebration will be held for

the grand opening of the new Latin style eatery in town, Burrito Rojo, on 50 3rd Street. Owner J.D. Keating said the Skin and Bonz Family Junkyard Band and the Gas House Gang Bluegrass Trio will play. There will be kids' activities, a magician, and the demonstration of an alternative personal transportation device called the Treader.

Water pollution control facility superintendent Bob Trombley received approval for a \$32,134 change order to pay for electrical issues related to the plant's supervisory control data acquisition system, the computer system that runs the combined sewer over-

flow improvements at the sewage treatment plant. Trombley said other than the still-to-be-designed sludge dewatering infrastructure, this should complete the major work on the CSO improvements at the plant.

"The automated system should be up and running by the end of this week for the 30 day test period," Trombley said. He added the plant has been handling flows far in excess of what he had predicted it could handle with the new improvements, although suspended solids have been in excess of their permitted levels during recent heavy rain. 

**ERVING** from pg 11

respectively, in connection with the Senate seat left vacant by the death of Senator Edward Kennedy would cost the town an extra \$6,000 in the current fiscal year. The board will place an article to appropriate that amount on the October 5th town meeting.

Police chief Chris Blair is seeking to fill the fulltime officer position left open by the departure of Ryan Doherty with one of the part time officers from the department, after being disappointed with the response to the advertised opening. In order to fill the post from within the ranks of part timers, the town would

have to pay to send one of the part time officers to the police academy, which could cost Erving up to \$20,000, including the cost of the part time officer's replacement while at the academy.

The board, after consulting with town counsel, will seek to reach a contractual agreement with the part time officer who may receive this training to serve the town in a full time capacity for three years, or else repay part of the training costs to the town. A request for \$20,000 for police training will be placed on the October 5th town meeting warrant, as well.


The board will hold its next meeting at the Erving Senior Center on Moore Street on September 21st, at 6:30 p.m. The board agreed to meet there in response to an invitation from the council on aging.

Following the balloting that fell four votes shy of the two-thirds majority needed to approve funding for a proposed new \$2.3 million senior center at the June 22nd special town meeting, the Erving council on aging (COA) invited the selectboard to come to the current senior center to view existing conditions.

"The motivation for having the board of selectmen meet at

the current senior center is to display to them the conditions we're operating under, the difficulties we're having, the facilities we lack, explained Collis Adams, COA chair.

"As far as where we go from there, I don't have any idea. There's no question a majority of the voters would like to see this senior center built," Adams added.

The board will also meet with Mahar Regional School superintendent Michael Baldassarre on the 21st, at 7:30 p.m., to discuss the possibility of joining in a regional K-12 school district with Mahar. 

**ERVING PUBLIC HEARING**  
The Erving Conservation Commission, in accordance with the Massachusetts Wetlands Protection Act, MGL Chapter 131, will hold a public hearing at the Erving Town Hall on Monday, September 14th, 2009 at 7:30 p.m. The request for an extension of a Determination of Applicability filed by Mass Highway for Route 2 reconstruction will be discussed.  
  
- Chairman,  
David Brule



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# ARTS & ENTERTAINMENT



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**FRIDAY, SEPTEMBER 4th**  
Deja Brew, Wendell: *Occam's Razor*. Dan Putnam and company: rock, reggae and a little funk. 9 to 11 p.m.

Filmmakers Ben Balcom and Josh Weissbach present *Heap Us 'Round Our Ruins: An Interstate Film Circuit*, which is a sixteen state (and counting) film tour that will encompass all regions within the continental U.S. One of its first showings will be at The Brickhouse, Turners Falls, 7 p.m. Each of these films is united in their interest in poetry, mythology, and perception, experienced through an interface of silence and the language of the material. This body of work is meant to be eyes seeing humanity hiding, running, lying, tearing itself apart. (413) 863-9576.

At the Rendezvous, Turners Falls: *Velveteen Underground* (Velvet Underground gone Country), *Michael Metivier*, *Green River String Band*, and *Levin Schwartz*. 9:30 p.m. (413) 863-2866. Four great acts – a steal at \$5!

**FRIDAY & SATURDAY, SEPTEMBER 4th & 5th**  
*Who Killed Doc Robin?* By Dorothy Johnson and Andy Lichtenberg. Written just for the 1794 Meetinghouse, using a large cast of local people of varying talents and great enthusiasm, the usual suspects will perform in this comedy and the audience will get to decide who dunnit. At the 1794 Meetinghouse, New Salem, 7:30 p.m. Continues 9/11 to 9/12, with a 2 p.m. matinee on 9/13. Adults/Seniors \$10. Children 12 and under free. [www.1794meetinghouse.org](http://www.1794meetinghouse.org).

**SATURDAY, SEPTEMBER 5th**  
Artist's Reception at the Great Falls Discovery Center, Turners Falls for this month's artist, Chris Curtis. Take this

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The Jason Connelley Band reunites at the Route 63 Roadhouse for a one-time event. Saturday, September 5th.

opportunity to ask questions and share stories with this nature photographer. 1 to 3 p.m.

At the Montague Bookmill, Montague Center: *Whitehaus Family Hootenany!* A fun evening of free-form music, poetry, and whatnot by the Whitehaus Family. 8 p.m. Donations by pass-the-hat form.

At the Rendezvous, Turners Falls: *Unit 7 and Jones Trio*, \$5 cover, 9 p.m.

*Jason Connelley Band* reunites at The Rt 63 Roadhouse for one show only! Original members Jason Connelley, Bob Gentry, Tom Archer, Richie DiMatteo, with Dave Purock filling in on drums.

Deja Brew, Wendell: *A Ghost Quartet*. Jazzy Blues with a taste of fist fight swing! 9 to 11 p.m.

**SUNDAY, SEPTEMBER 6th**  
The Shea Theater, Turners Falls presents the Cambridge University (UK) American Tour of Shakespeare's *Two Gentleman of Verona*. A heart-warming and hilarious story about the universal experience of being young, confused and in love. One performance only at 2 p.m. Donation accepted. Reservations: (413) 863-2281.

Deja Brew, Wendell: *Joe Laur on Guitar*, 8 to 10 p.m.

At the Rendezvous, Turners Falls: *DJ Pushplay*: Labor on the Dance Floor with DJ Pushplay, aka John Benedict. Free. (413) 863-2866.

**WEDNESDAY, SEPTEMBER 9th**  
Deja Brew, Wendell: Knitting & Crafts Night. 7 to 10 p.m. Any craft and any skill level welcome. Get a chance to win our monthly crafty gift with every \$5 you spend at Craft night.

The Great Falls Farmers Market, corner of 2nd Street and Avenue A, Turners Falls. 3 to 6 p.m.

**THURSDAY, SEPTEMBER 10th**  
Deja Brew, Wendell: *Free Range*. Rock out with Betsy, Mark & Bruce to 60's &

70's Oldie Cover Tunes. 8 to 10 p.m.

At the Rendezvous, Turners Falls: *Hallmark Students Welcome Party! Ghost Quartet, J.P. Harris and the Tough Choices*. Free. 7 p.m.

**FRIDAY, SEPTEMBER 11th**  
*Green River String Band* performs at the Great Falls Discovery Center, Turners Falls Coffeehouse. Charlie Conant (guitar, dobro) and Doug Reid (guitar, banjo & accordion) joined by Roland and Kate Lapierre (guitar, fiddle & acoustic bass) play upbeat original acoustic music, covering folk, country, traditional and alternative music styles. Doors open at 6:30 p.m. Coffee & homemade baked goods will be available. The museum and museum store will be open during intermission. Suggested donation \$6 to \$12, free for children. Proceeds to benefit the Discovery Center.

Deja Brew, Wendell: *Heather Maloney*, 9 to 11 p.m.

At the Bookmill, Montague Center: *Long Time Courting*. Take four individually accomplished traditional musicians and singers with fresh attitudes. Combine them, and you have the rich, soaring four-part vocal arrangements, and fiery Irish jigs and reels, that are *Long Time Courting*. 8 p.m. \$12 advance/\$15 door. [www.longtimecourting.com](http://www.longtimecourting.com).



*Long Time Courting* brings together the talents of Ellery Klein on fiddle/vocals, Liz Simmons on guitar/vocals, Shannon Heaton on flute/vocals, and Ariel Friedman on cello, this Boston-based band shares a love of traditional Irish and American music, as well as contemporary folk and pop. Friday September 11th at the Montague Bookmill, 8 p.m.

**SATURDAY, SEPTEMBER 12th**  
*Of Roots an' Rocks*: A Natural History of Barton Cove, walk with naturalist Dawn Marvin-Ward and geologist Steve Winters 10 a.m. to 12 noon at Barton Cove Picnic Area. Bring water and hearty trail snacks. Meet in the paved parking lot, near the kiosk, at 10 a.m. Pre-registration required by calling Northfield Mountain: (800) 859-2960. Fee: Optional donation to Friends of GFDC.

*Parting of the Seas*: The Canal Draw Down at Turners Falls. Participants ages 7 and older will go down into the bottom of a working river, 1 to 4 p.m., and gain unique insights into both the structure of the river and the animals that live there. The annual dewatering of the Turners Falls Canal allows for maintenance on the Cabot Power Station and the two miles of canal walls. Participants assemble with buckets and boots to collect mudpuppies, young sea lamprey (called amocetes), eels and other fish, plus invertebrates like endangered dragonfly nymphs that live in the canal. Creatures are then released in the main stem of the river with the help of Fisheries Biologists

from the Silvio O. Conte Fish Lab. Pre-registration required. Call Northfield Mountain (800) 859-2960. Program strictly limited to first 24 participants, so register early.

*Raw Milk Dairy Day*: Nine Massachusetts dairies that sell raw milk will be open for tours. Local farms include Upinngil Farm, 411 Main Road, Gill, 10 to 5 p.m. Chase Hill Farm, Warwick, 10 to 4 p.m. (978) 544-6327, Davenport Maple Farm, Shelburne, tours at 12:30 and 3:30, (413) 458-5888, Sidehill Farm, Ashfield, 2:30 p.m. tour, (413) 625-0011. Info: [www.nofamass.org](http://www.nofamass.org)

*Water Dance* at Unity Park: Join this magical public hoop-dancing event designed to show appreciation for the Connecticut River and the local citizens and groups who protect it. Volunteers dance with lighted hoops at the River's edge as sunset fades to night. Drummers, musicians invited too. 7:05 to 8:30 p.m. at FirstLight Power's Unity Park. Hoopers, and people who would like to learn, should wear black clothing and gather at sunset to be taught the choreography for a simple dance. Limited number of lighted hoops will be available to use or bring your own hoop. Info: [phyllislabanowski@comcast.net](mailto:phyllislabanowski@comcast.net) or (413) 219-0352.

*Burrito Rojo*, 50 3rd. Street, Turners Falls: Grand Opening! Live music with the *Stone Coyotes!* Beer & wine, WiFi and a great menu. Open 2 to 11 p.m.

Deja Brew, Wendell: *Richard Chase Group*, acoustic folk rock, 8 to 10 p.m.

At the Bookmill, Montague Center: *Sista Otis*. 8 p.m. \$8 advance, \$10 door. [www.sistaotis.com](http://www.sistaotis.com).

**SUNDAY, SEPTEMBER 13th**  
At The Barnes Gallery in the Leverett Crafts and Arts, Leverett: Closing reception for *Great Shots*, a portfolio of professional photographers. Exhibition includes work from faculty members at the Hallmark Institute of Photography; Michael Zide, John Nordell, Paul Teeling. Local photographers from Amherst, Shutesbury, Leverett & Turners Falls include, Joseph Kushick, Micheal Akresh, Kip Fonsh, Jonathan Sherrill, Chet Cramer, Howard Karger. 4 to 6 p.m. 548-9070 or [www.leverettcrafts.org](http://www.leverettcrafts.org).

Route 63 Roadhouse, Millers Falls: *Second Sunday Comedy*, 7 p.m. Free.

**SATURDAY, SEPTEMBER 19th**  
The Shea Theater, Turners Falls: Acoustic roots, bluegrass and gospel music from a Maine family band. Phil LaClaire provides vocals, guitar and banjo. Ellen lends support with the upright bass, vocal harmonies and an occasional riff on the mandolin. Jeanine Loubier plays guitar, banjo, mandolin and bass. 7 p.m. \$8 Info or tickets: (413) 863-2281 or [www.theshea.org](http://www.theshea.org).

*Artists in Action*: Thirteen artists will be doing "demos" on the lawn of Gallery 38, 38 Avenue A, Turners Falls. Come and watch them paint or put their skills to work from 10 a.m. to 3 p.m. Art will be available for sale. Rain or shine.

**UNTIL OCTOBER 27th**  
Greenfield Community College, downtown center, exhibition of works by Claudine Mussuto. Maps painted on kraft paper, entitled 'kraft triptych: eugene, far east, truro, & provincetown.'

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3. *HARRY POTTER AND THE HALF BLOOD PRINCE* PG DAILY 6:30 9:30  
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4. *SHORTS* PG  
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5. *G.I. JOE: RISE OF THE COBRA* DAILY 6:45 9:15 PG13  
6. *THE TIME TRAVELER'S WIFE* DAILY 6:45 9:15 PG13  
FRI, SAT, SUN, MON 12:15 3:15  
7. *HALLOWEEN 2* R in DTS sound DAILY 7:00 9:40  
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# FLAMENCO BRAVO



## Val Ramos Flamenco Ensemble Floors the Crowd at Sheffield

**BY JANEL NOCKELBY & CHRIS SAWYER-LAUCANNO**  
**TURNERS FALLS – Olé!** The Val Ramos Flamenco Ensemble wowed an audience of nearly 100 people who gathered at the Sheffield Elementary School auditorium on Saturday evening, August 29th for a concert sponsored by the Montague Parks and Recreation department, Turners Falls RiverCulture, the Brick House, and Montague Catholic Social Ministries. Indeed, the event was river culture at its finest, with lyrical guitar, percussive dance, and tender, evocative song moving the hearts and sparking the imaginations of audience members young and old.

Val Ramos and Jose Ramos started the evening with an enchanting guitar duet. Then percussionist Matt Moadel joined the Ramos brothers onstage with special guests, Flamenco singer Alfonso Cid from Sevilla, Spain and dancer Julissa Cadenillas, for an evening of proud, gravity-defying dance, soul-stirring guitar, and contagious rhythm.

The only complaint of the evening was that soggy weather

forced the venue change from the bandshell at Peskeomskut Park, where the ensemble would have played to a much wider audience.

For the lucky ones who sat raptly in the wooden seats of the Sheffield auditorium for the hour and half performance – when in truth many in the crowd seemed to want nothing more than to leap on stage and clap or dance along with the performers – the concert was a one-of-a-kind experience for Montague. While the applause was long and loud after each number, and the CD sales brisk at concert’s end, some may have left wondering about the origins of the music they had just enjoyed. Well, read on.

The fabulous flamenco music and dancing on Saturday has its roots sometime well before the 15th century. Where it originated, however, is a mystery, and in Andalusia a frequent topic of argument at local *peñas flamencas*, or flamenco clubs.

Some claim the music arrived with the gypsies, who migrated to Spain from India in the late 14th and early 15th centuries. Certainly, since that time, Spanish gypsies have been

among the foremost practitioners of the art.

But there are clearly other influences as well, including the traditional musical forms of the Byzantine Christians, Sephardic Jews, and Moorish Arabs. All these groups lived side by side in Southern Spain for seven centuries before the arrival of the gypsies. Likely, flamenco is an amalgam of musical forms from all these groups.

Flamenco began as a soulful chant or cry, with the only accompaniment that of a stick beating on the floor. This style, known as *Palo Seco*, or dry stick, can still be heard today, particularly in the smaller villages in Andalusia and in later incarnations called *Toñas*, where the rhythm is sharply marked by either the feet, hands or musical instruments.

Although this element is always strong in flamenco, most flamenco heard these days – as at last Saturday’s concert at the Sheffield School – is derived from what the Spanish call *cante jondo*, or ‘deep song.’ The great Spanish poet Federico García Lorca, whose early work was

influenced by the flamenco performers in his native Andalusia, wrote that “*cante jondo* approximates the rhythm of birds and the natural music of the black poplar and the waves; its style is that of ancient simplicity. It is also a unique example of primitive song, the oldest in Europe, where the ruins of history and the lyrical fragment consumed by sand appear as new as the first morning of life.”

Lorca’s poetic description serves well to describe what the Sheffield audience heard last Saturday, for flamenco is far from static, and is continually reinventing itself. As an example of how the music continues to evolve, the Val Ramos group played a




*Alfonso Cid*

variety of works that owe a debt to new world influences, particularly tango from Argentina and rumba from Cuba, as well as African and African-American music – even rap. Saturday’s concert was indeed a wonderful experience for those who came.

*Olé!*

*Top photo: (l to r) Matt Moadel, Val Ramos, Julissa Cadenillas, Jose Ramos. Photos by Lisa Davol.*



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