



FILM FEST!

Ashfield on the Silver Screen

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TF COMMUNITY FILMS

Five Short Films in Power Town

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LAKE PLEASANT MILLERS FALLS MONTAGUE CENTER MONTAGUE CITY TURNERS FALLS

The Montague Reporter

YEAR 9 - NO. 1

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THE VOICE OF THE VILLAGES

SEPTEMBER 30, 2010



Navajo Storyteller
Sandra Streeter 2007, Clay

BY JOHN FURBISH

TURNERS FALLS - From October 1st through 31st, the Gallery at Hallmark will mount a juried fine art show from artists around Franklin County called "Confluence."

A joint production of Turners Falls RiverCulture, Fostering Art and Culture in Franklin County, and Montague mixed media artist Claudine Mussuto, with a host of local sponsors,

Confluence will allow the work of 23 Franklin County artists to meet, merge, and flow together in the beautifully appointed interior of Montague's premier gallery.

Confluence is the inaugural Franklin County Fine Art Biennial. The organizers plan to hold more biennial art exhibits in the years to come.

Forty-three artists, representing the majority of Franklin County, towns submitted work to this first juried biennial. Nearly two dozen were selected for the exhibit, including first-place entrant Christin Couture of Shelburne Falls. Other featured artists include names familiar in Montague and Turners Falls, among them: Jessica Fafnir Adamites, Mary Averill, Nayana Glazier, and Barbara Milot.

The public is warmly invited to join the exhibiting artists for the opening of Confluence on Friday, October 1st, from 6 p.m. to 8 p.m. at The Gallery, 85 Avenue A in Turners Falls.

On Friday, October 15th, from 6 p.m. to 8 p.m., the jurors will conduct a walk-through at

the Gallery, offering conversation about the exhibition. All Biennial events are free and open to the public, with refreshments.

On October 8th, from 5 p.m. to 9 p.m., the Dadaist Invasion of Turners Falls will present an Avant Garde Art Salon in conjunction with the Confluence show at the Gallery. No explanation of this event is possible at this time, or any time.

On October 22nd, a Confluence Convocation will be held at the Gallery from 5-8 p.m.

Daniel Hales curates this event, that takes the theme of Confluence to a new level. Local writers and musicians present work in confluent media. Come hear poems that speak to paintings, songs that take their lyrics from poems, fiction that...you get the idea...

On October 29th, (rain date Saturday, October 30th) from 5:30 - 7:15 p.m., an artist networking event and Water Dance closing ceremony will be held at the Gallery.

A Confluence of Fine Art, Dada, Water Dancers and RiverCulture

and 12 water carriers will lead participants from the sidewalk outside of The Gallery at Hallmark to a grassy knoll at the Discovery Center, one block away, where Water Dances will be performed.

More details about the Confluence exhibit and accompanying performances can be found at www.artandcommunity.org.

It is highly recommend that you bring family and friends with you when you visit this extremely exciting show, which includes photographs, prints, pastels, and paintings, along with works in clay, wood, fibers, and mixed media.

Beginning with a Fostering Art and Culture Project networking event at 5:30, and followed by a Water Dance performance starting at 6:30, celebration artist Phyllis Labanowski, Ariana Shelton and Laura Marie of Hooping Harmony will perform.

Water Dances serve as a gesture of appreciation to fresh waters. Thirteen hoop dancers



Occurence - Barbara Milot, 2010, photograph, paint, wire, nails, and wood

Repointing Bricks ... 175 Feet in the Air

BY JOSEPH A. PARZYCH

TURNERS FALLS - There were a couple of guys with their heads in the clouds at Southworth Paper Mill this past week. No, they weren't on a controlled substance. They are chimney repairmen from International Chimney Corporation.

The men high in the sky at Southworth Paper are from the New England division office of International Chimney. Their company, headquartered in Williamsville, NY, is involved in every aspect of chimneys, from making chimney bricks to engineering and designing chimneys, building and repairing chimneys, modifying, and even demolishing chimneys. They build steel as well as masonry chimneys, which brings us to the repair project at Southworth Paper Mill.

The paper mill's original chimney was a metal stack, according to historian Ed Gregory of Greenfield.

Gregory's records show the Esleek Paper Mill and chimney were put up between 1895 and 1905. Photos in Gregory's archives show a metal chimney of three to four feet in diameter, approximately 25 to 30 feet tall.

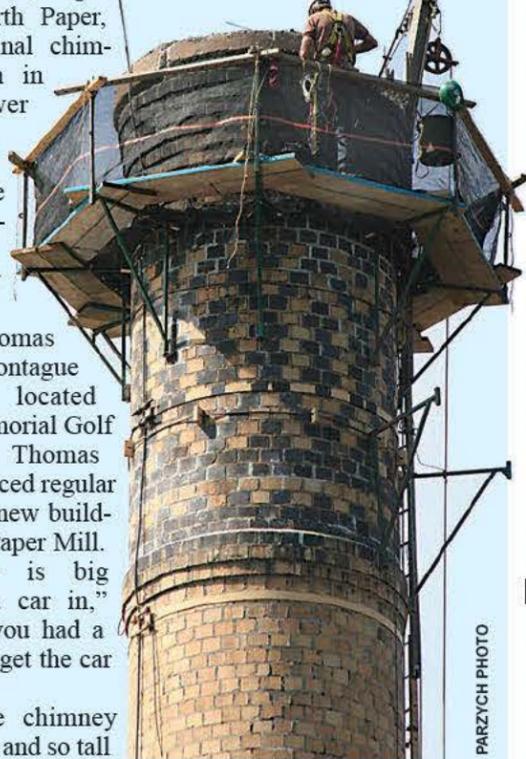
He estimates the replacement 175-foot brick chimney at the mill was built when a construction company put up new buildings there in 1919-1920.

Joseph H. Wallace, engineer for Southworth Paper, confirms the original chimney's construction in 1895. AB Power Construction Company of Holyoke built the replacement chimney with radial (curved) chimney bricks, manufactured by Thomas Brothers at their Montague City brickyard, located where Thomas Memorial Golf Course is today. Thomas Brothers also produced regular size bricks for the new buildings at the Esleek Paper Mill.

"The chimney is big enough to park a car in," Wallace said. "If you had a hole big enough to get the car inside," he added.

The reason the chimney needs to be so large and so tall is to create sufficient draft to supply the fire with sufficient air for combustion, and also to

propel smoke and emissions in order to disperse it. This is not as crucial, now that the mill burns a combination of oil and gas. In earlier times soft coal as



Andy Brower works atop the Southworth Mill chimney

see BRICKS pg 10

POLICE RESPONSE TIME QUESTIONED IN DOMESTIC VIOLENCE INCIDENCE

BY DAVID DETMOLD - In the early morning hours of Monday, August 2nd, the peace and quiet of the tree shaded neighborhood of Old Long Plain Road was shattered by the sound of a woman frantically screaming for help. A neighbor, waking to the sound of a violent fight next door, called 911.

The state police dispatch in Shelburne Falls received the call at 1:43 a.m., and immediately transferred the call to their Northampton barracks. Twenty eight minutes later, the first state trooper arrived at the scene. Following standard procedure for responding to domestic violence calls, the trooper waited for backup to arrive minutes later before entering the home and placing the alleged perpetrator, [redacted] under arrest.

On Tuesday, four neighbors from Old Long Plain Road came before the selectboard to ask if a half an hour is really a reasonable amount of time to expect to wait, in a life threatening situation, for help to arrive.

"Thank God the victim was

not mortally injured in the meantime," said one of the women at the meeting.

Police chief Gary Billings explained that Leverett has two full time police officers: the chief and a fulltime patrolman. They alternate coverage with the help of seven or eight part time officers. But in general, the town relies on state police backup for coverage from 11 p.m. until the morning shift comes on.

Billings said call volume in the rural town of 1800 people, "with no business district, no high school, and only one establishment that is permitted for alcohol sales," simply does not justify the cost of hiring a third fulltime officer, to allow for 24/7 coverage. Billings said if Leverett were to hire a third fulltimer, at a cost of about \$60,000, the town would also incur extra costs for running a third police cruiser, and to train and provide backup for vacation time for the new full time staffer. "It's a huge financial leap," for a department operating on a \$175,900 budget, after three suc-

see RESPONSE pg 12

PET OF THE WEEK**Sweet and Curious****Sookie**

My name is Sookie and I'm an 11-month-old female domestic short hair cat in need of a good home. I'm a sweet little lady, with such charming dilute-calico fur in tones of grey and tan. I have so much love to give - I'm sweet and curious, happy and so pleasing to look at too. I like to play, and I have a delicious purr. Please do come here, introduce yourself and let's fall in love. Since I have been here at the shelter for so long, I will soon be eligible for an adoption fee waiver. To find out more about adopting me, please contact the Dakin Pioneer Valley Humane Society at (413) 548-9898 or via email at info@dpvhs.org.

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The Montague Reporter

Published weekly on Thursday, (Every other week in July and August. Wednesday paper fourth week of November. No paper last week of December.)

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FAX (413) 863-3050
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Postmaster: Send address changes to
The Montague Reporter
58 4th Street
Turners Falls, MA 01376

Advertising and copy deadline is Tuesday at NOON.

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Local Subscription Rates:
\$20 for 6 months

Four Day Thrive Fest

BY ANNE HARDING

TURNERS FALLS - The buzz is definitely out - come to Turners Falls for the Thrive Fest - a four day extravaganza of music and comedy to benefit the Thrive Project. But what exactly is Thrive, and who are these people?

When I think of the Thrive Project, the word that comes to mind is 'possibilities.' The organization's mission to help young adults find their way from "merely surviving to thriving" is really about teaching them to recognize the possibilities that become dreams - ideally followed by the hard work of realizing those dreams.

The Thrive Fest begins Thursday with a musical line-up at the Rendezvous featuring a long list of Valley notables. The musicians have all been asked to perform two covers that inspired them to thrive as a musician.

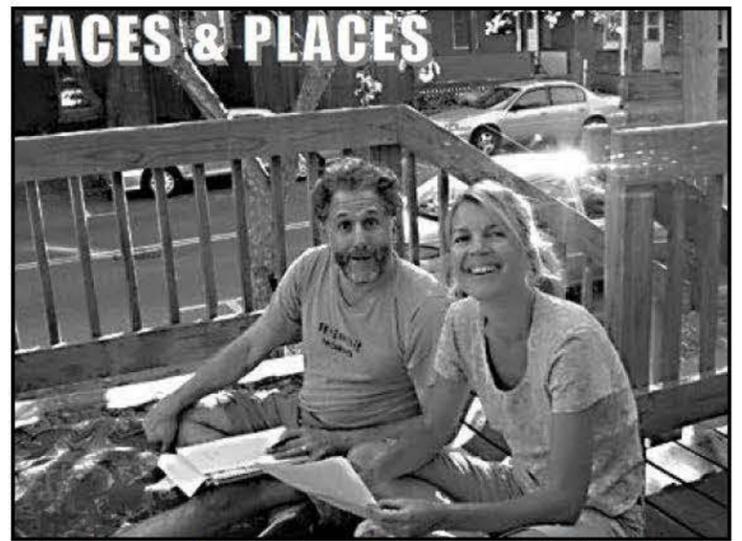
Carrie Ferguson recalls the vacation when she was 10 years old visiting her grandmother in Falls City, NE - watching tele-

vision to escape the oppressive summer heat - and "suddenly, there were the Go-Gos, singing 'Our Lips Are Sealed.' I think it is a perfect pop song." Ferguson said at that moment she *knew* she was going to be a musician.

For many young people, the 'aha' moment is nebulous. Sometimes it doesn't surface at all. Many find it difficult to find a meaningful path, and the longer they languish, the more difficult it is to make a change. Others have the dreams but not the tools to make them come true. Some grew up in foster care and found themselves out on their own at 18 years old struggling simply to make ends meet.

The Thrive Project staff and volunteers all have a story about someone or something that gave them a break and helped them recognize their unique gifts. They want to help provide that spark for someone else.

Board member Michael Phillips credits a friend for his



Jamie Berger and Liz Gardner on the front porch of the Thrive Project's new quarters, at 37 Third Street in Turners. Stop by!

about-face from the drug and alcohol haze of the hard partier to the serious mode of a self-directed student. Program director, Liz Gardner grew up with lots of opportunities and believes that "resources - especially people - should never be wasted." She believes sustainable communities must engage in a continuous, creative loop that connects community members to resources.

Thrive members will be at the Rendezvous Thursday and Friday evenings for the musical shows hosted by Jamie Berger, Thrive's executive director. They will also be on hand Saturday night at the Montague Elk's Club for an evening of comedy; and on Sunday from 1:00 to 6:00 p.m. at their new space on 37 Third Street.

For more info: go to www.thriveproject.org

MONTAGUE LIBRARY NEWS**Homeschool Program Resumes**

BY LINDA HICKMAN

TURNERS FALLS - The fall session of the Montague Public Libraries' Homeschool Program runs October 6th through November 17th. The theme is "Harvest Bounty" and it will be held weekly on Wednesdays at 1:15 p.m. at the Carnegie Library. Ruth O'Mara and Linda Hickman will be running the pro-

grams which will include books, crafts, traditional lore and agricultural information. The first three weeks' subjects will be crazy quilts, potatoes and pumpkins. The sessions are free, for all ages, and no registrations are needed. For more information please call the Carnegie Library at 863-3214.

Cockatiel Found Near Wickett Pond

BY JOSH HEINEMANN

WENDELL - After a walk through the Wendell State Forest last weekend, ornithologist Steve Johnson of Belchertown saw a bird flying low in front of his car.

He stopped when the bird lighted on the road in front of his car.

He got out of the car and put his finger in front of the bird, and the bird, a cockatiel, hopped on.

Cockatiels, native to

Australia, do not winter well in New England, and Johnson took him home.

Ward Smith of Wendell posted an email on the Wendell email list on Johnson's behalf, asking if anyone had lost a cockatiel.

People have called Johnson, looking for their own lost cockatiel, but none of the descriptions have matched the bird that Johnson found.

Johnson said the bird has

Gill Arts and Crafts Festival Returns!

RIVERSIDE - The 18th annual Gill Arts and Crafts Festival will be held Saturday and Sunday, October 16th and 17th at the Riverside municipal building, (home of the Four Winds School) - Route 2 in Gill, from 10 a.m. - 4 p.m., rain or shine. Come and support local artists, farmers, firemen and musicians! A juried craft fair with over 50 local artists will feature many new artists showing wares both fun and functional.

Farmers will sell their produce, the Gill firemen will offer their famous French Fries and hamburgers, the Gill Tavern will bring vegetarian soup, and the Friends of Gill will sell homemade apple pies. Music, children's art activities, face and pumpkin painting, drop spindle spinning, and friends and neighbors, it's just more fun in Gill!

TURNERS FALLS**WATER DEPARTMENT**

WILL BEGIN READING METERS ON MONDAY OCTOBER 4TH

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SENIOR CENTER ACTIVITIES - October 4th - 8th

GILL/MONTAGUE Senior Center, 62 Fifth Street, Turners Falls, is open Monday through Friday from 9:00 a.m. to 2:00 p.m. Congregate meals are served Tuesday through Friday at Noon. Meal reservations must be made a day in advance by 11:00 a.m. The Meal Site Manager is Kerry Togneri. All fitness classes are supported by a grant from the Executive Office of Elder Affairs. Voluntary donations are accepted. Council on Aging Director is Roberta Potter. Painting Classes with David Sund begin on October 12th. For more information, to make meal reservations, or to sign up for programs call 863-9357. Messages can be left on our machine when the center is not open. Please note that **Brown Bag** is now on the first **Thursday** of each month.

Monday, October 4th
10:00 a.m. Senior Aerobics
10:45 a.m. Chair Exercise
1:00 p.m. Knitting Circle
Tuesday, October 5th

9:00 a.m. Walking Group
No Yoga
12:45 p.m. C.O.A. Meeting
1:00 p.m. Canasta
Wednesday, October 6th
10:00 a.m. Senior Aerobics
12:45 p.m. Bingo
Thursday, October 7th
No Tai Chi
10:30 a.m. to 12:00 p.m. Brown Bag
1:00 p.m. Pitch
Friday, October 8th
10:00 a.m. Senior Aerobics
10:45 a.m. Chair Exercise
1:00 p.m. Scrabble
1:00 p.m. Writing Group

ERVING Senior Center, 18 Pleasant St., Erving (Old Center School, 1st Floor), is open Monday through Friday from 8:30 a.m. to 2:30 p.m. for activities and congregating meals. For info and reservations, call Polly Kiely, Senior Center Director, at (413) 423-3308. Mealsite Manager is Jim Saracino. Lunch is daily at 11:30 a.m., with reservations 24 hours in advance.

taken a shine to him, travels around on his shoulder as if he were a buccaneer, and Johnson said he was becoming fond of him.

Johnson put notices on missing parrot-type bird websites. He is ready to return the cockatiel to its proper owner, but he would not furnish the bird's description. If you lost a cockatiel near Wendell recently, call Johnson at (978) 544-5607.

Transportation can be provided for meals, shopping, or medical necessity. Please call the Senior Center at (413) 423-3308 to find out when the next flu clinic will be held.

Monday, October 4th
9:00 a.m. Tai Chi
10:00 a.m. Osteo-Exercise
12:00 noon Pitch
Tuesday, October 5th
9:00 a.m. Chair Aerobics
12:30 p.m. Painting
Wednesday, October 6th
9:00 a.m. Line Dancing
12:00 p.m. Bingo
Thursday, October 7th
9:00 a.m. Aerobic Classes
1:00 p.m. Bowling
Friday, October 8th
11:30 a.m. Out-to-eat - Call the Center for more information.

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

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Local Briefs

JESSICA HARMON ILLUSTRATION

COMPILED BY DON CLEGG - The **Great Falls Farmers Market** will host its final **Sunday market** of the season on October 3rd from noon to 4:00 p.m. on the corner of Avenue A and 2nd Street in Turners Falls. Set up for the Sunday market is free to all vendors, just call ahead to Don at 413-336-3648.

The Wednesday market continues until October 27th. Don't forget to pick up your pumpkins from a local vendor for the first annual Franklin County Pumpkin Fest, held on October 23rd from 3 p.m. to 9 p.m. on Avenue A in Turners Falls.

Clam Bake at Thomas Memorial Golf & Country Club, 29 Country Club Lane, Turners Falls on Saturday, October 10th, starting at 1:00 p.m. Enjoy lobster, clams, clam chowder, corn on the cob, coleslaw, red potato salad, and rolls (steak substitute available, please specify when purchasing ticket). You don't have to be a golfer to enjoy Thomas Memorial. Call 413-863-8003 for tickets and information on this public golf course.

The 14th Annual **Source-to-Sea Cleanup** is Saturday, October 2nd. Are you looking for an enjoyable way to spend time outside while really making a difference? How about pitching in for this four state cleanup of

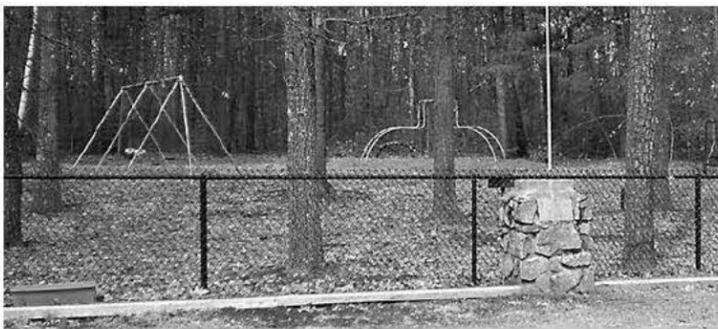
New England's longest river? Come join the school groups, scout troops, businesses, individuals and families that come together each year to clean up trash from the Connecticut's banks and tributaries. Volunteers will meet at 9:00 a.m. at the Great Falls Discovery Center, 2 Avenue A, in Turners Falls where trash bags and gloves will be distributed and sites assigned.

The clean-up will go until about noon. Volunteer trash haulers are also needed from 10:00 a.m. - 3:00 p.m. For more information, please contact Beth Bazler at 1-800-859-2960.

Celebrate **Clarkdale's Columbus Festival** on Sunday October 10th, at the height of the apple season. Enjoy pick-your-own apples, samples of fresh cider, and the beautiful backdrop of fall foliage. See the Morris Dancers and their annual performance of traditional folk dances. The farm store will be open from 8:00 a.m. until 6:00 p.m., and the Pumpkin Man will be returning. For more information go to www.clarkdalefruitfarms.com Clarkdale Fruit Farm is located at 303 Upper Road in Deerfield.

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

Norma's Park to Be Rededicated



Norma's Park in Lake Pleasant

BY DAVID DETMOLD
LAKE PLEASANT - The date of the rededication ceremony for Norma's Park in Lake Pleasant has been pushed up a week due to heavy rain on September 30th, from a tropical depression.

On October 7th, at 5:30 p.m., the Montague Parks and Rec, with appropriate pomp and circumstance and even some grilled hot dogs, will cut the ribbon on the pretty little park by the side of Lake Pleasant Road.

Some new equipment, a new fence, new flowers courtesy of the Calvary Baptist Church and Dan Johnson: a refurbished park is indeed something to celebrate! But this is not the first time round for Norma's Park.

Montague selectboard member Don Skole was on hand at the first dedication ceremony for the park on June 29th, 1974.

Back in the early 1970s, kids in Lake Pleasant enjoyed playing in a park on the other side of the footbridge, in the post office side of the village. Over on Broadway, there was a park owned by a man named Mr. Sojka, who moved away to Alaska, and sent word he

was considering selling the land.

"My mom was really upset about the idea of kids not having a park," recalled Charlene Cloutier.

So her mother got a committee together to do something about it.

Her mom's name was Norma Kennedy, and she worked with a committee including Bea Gagne, Lillian Ford, Joyce Cote and Bob Begg to raise enough money to buy a strip of land alongside Lake Pleasant Road for a new park.

"They raised money with spaghetti dinners and tag sales," said Cloutier. When they bought the land and put up the play equipment, they turned the deed over to the town of Montague so it would remain a park forever, and named it after Norma.

Charlene Cloutier's mom, Norma Kennedy, died that same fall, before Don Skole had a chance to officiate at the ribbon cutting the following summer.

Ben Lipscomb created a stone monument in the park that says Norma's Park.

On the post office side, the park that used to sit on Mr. Sojka's land is still there. They call it Rutter's Park now, and that land, too, is owned by the town of Montague now. So children on both sides of the village, joined by the Bridge of Names, have a place to play.

There are fewer children in Lake Pleasant to enjoy the village parks now than there were back in the 1970s, said Joyce Cote, former village postmistress. She recalled the Lake Pleasant Women's Club used to have to buy 85 or 90 gifts for the children at the village parties, "but nowadays we only need 40 or so."

If it hadn't been for the rain and wind blowing through on Thursday, the rededication ceremony would have been held on the 37th anniversary of Norma's death, September 30th. Many in Lake Pleasant, home to the National Spiritual Alliance, have held the belief that the spirit goes on after the body is laid aside. So even though the ceremony will be held a week late, it's nice to think Norma will be there still, looking down on the newly planted chrysanthemums, the new glider swing, the sizzling hot dogs on the new grills, and the family members gathered around the picnic table, and smiling.

Montague's Got Talent Variety Show

BY MIETTE MULLER - An entertaining evening of music, puppetry, skits and song by people in our community, for people in our community, will take place Saturday, October 16th, at 6 p.m. at the Montague Grange, on the common in Montague Center.

Enjoyment is guaranteed. The event is a fundraiser for the Friends of the Montague Grange; proceeds will go to the

building renovation fund. Interested in performing? Signup sheets are available on the Montague Grange announcement board, the Montague Center Library, the Montague MiniMart or via MontagueMA.net, then send them to 28 Center Street, Montague MA, 01351.

Any questions? Contact Miette via the MontagueMA.net website.

Dadal Invades! Turners Falls!

Co-directors John Landino and Beverly Richey are members of the group known by the mysterious title "the Dadaist Invasion of Turners Falls, MA."

Some might say, "What is the Dadaist Invasion of Turners Falls (DIT)?"

Words fail us. But, for starters, dah DIT (DIT dah?) could be described as a Social Media Public Artwork consortium planning the first of a series of public art salons on Friday Night dah DIT! from 5:00 p.m. to 9:00 p.m. at the Gallery at Hallmark, 85 Ave A, in Turners Falls, where a "Salon of

the Avant Garde" will be unveiled, or inveigled, if not publicly reviled. Performances, dancers, poets and writers will perform their experimental works or line the sidewalks with tin cans filled with pencils. Also several musical groups will provide an array of soundscapes. From 8:00 p.m. to 9:00 p.m. dah-Dah! "The Ursonata," a Dadaist orchestra, if there is such a thing, will accompany Andy Laties and Stephen Lindow, reading a famous Dada nonsense poem by Kurt Switters. (Famous on certain bathroom walls in Cabaret Voltaire.) Why! Will New York

City artist Tim Feresten show his political portraits altered by gun shots? Yes. And special guest Rebecca Migdol, interdisciplinary performer and Skype guest, not to say escape artist, from Wisconsin and Paris, France will be projected on the walls. She will. (Not for the faint at heart.) Artists, dancers writers, performers, experimental musicians who want to participate may get further, further information, or sign up at the "worksites" - dadaistinvasion.org. This is It!

(For a great shot of Landino flipping out at the Soapbox Races, go to www.montague-ma.net and click on Montague Soapbox Races.)

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Founded by

 Arthur Evans Harry Brandt David Detmold
August, 2002

Retain, Retrain, and Rehire the Vermont Yankee Workforce

BY BETSY WILLIAMS

WESTMINSTER WEST, VT In 1972, the Vermont Yankee nuclear power plant began generating electricity. From the outset, it was licensed to operate for 40 years, with a license expiration date of March 2012.

Proponents of a license extension for the 38-year-old nuclear plant argue that the state of Vermont, in seeking to adhere to the original plan and close the plant in 2012, is pursuing a punitive change of course being foisted on the plant's owners and workers by a radical, anti-nuclear fringe. Choosing to keep the old, accident-prone plant operating beyond March of 2012 would, in fact, be the radical departure.

Last January, I was privileged to be one of the people who walked from Brattleboro to Montpelier to deliver a petition to the Vermont legislature signed by more than 1,600 residents of towns within a 20-mile radius of the plant. The message we took to Montpelier was clear: "As residents of the evacuation zone surrounding the Vermont Yankee nuclear reactor in Vernon, we call upon you, the members of the Vermont Legislature, to listen closely to our perspective as you decide the future of Vermont Yankee. More than anyone else's, it is our homes, our children and grandchildren, our livelihoods, our fields and forests, rivers and streams that are at stake. Please retire Vermont Yankee on schedule."

When more than 200 of us arrived at the statehouse on January 13th, I had the opportunity to speak with many of our elected representatives. One senator, who happened not to be from Windham County, made an interesting analogy that stuck with me. He said many years ago when he worked at a ski area, he didn't start complaining when they told him his job was ending in April.

Contemplating the loss of a high paying job in troubled eco-

nomie times is a very scary prospect, there's no denying. In the case of Vermont Yankee, however, it is important to note the March 2012 closing date has been public information for 40 years – pretty good lead time for a layoff announcement. If corporate owner Entergy has still made no plans for supporting their workers through this transition, then shame on them.

Many of us who have been following the lies of Entergy Corporation, VY's owner, are not surprised to find the corporate spin doctors trying to portray the effort to make sure the nuclear reactor closes by 2012 as a neighbor-against-neighbor dispute, something along the lines of: "If you want this plant to close on schedule, you don't support your neighbors who work there."

Since the Louisiana-based multi-national corporation apparently has still not had enough time to come up with a transition plan for their valued workers, I'd like to offer a few suggestions.

When the plant closes, it will begin a process of decommissioning and decontamination. Many of the current employees, people who know the specific workings of this plant best, will be well positioned to carry out that 10 – 20 year process efficiently and safely.

The workers not employed in the decommissioning and site cleanup process will have a variety of options. Some will be approaching retirement age. Entergy Corporation could offer them a livable early retirement package, or employment at one of Entergy's ten other nuclear plants in the United States.

Since the closure of Entergy Vermont Yankee is predicted to help attract more renewable energy businesses to the state, those former employees who don't want to retire or move can seek employment in that burgeoning arena, which is esti-

see **WORKFORCE** pg 5



3,000 Years Later... the Search for Peace Continues in the Middle East

LETTERS TO THE EDITOR

Hoping for an Annual Soapbox Derby

Mic Muller deserves many thanks for what he and his crew of helpers did for the town of Montague in the presentation of what I hope is an annual Soapbox Derby.

I have not seen so many people gather in Unity Park since the days of the semi-pro football and baseball games, (and that goes back a few years).

You deserve a lot of thanks

Mic. I, for one, appreciate your hard work, and I am sure the entire community does.

- Art Gilmore
Millers Falls

And Thanks to All Who Made it Happen

On behalf of the Montague Community Television (MCTV) board of directors I would like to thank everyone who made the Montague Soapbox Race a success.

The race would not have been possible without director Mik Muller's vision, enthusiasm and countless hours of hard work and the planning committee of Brandon Stafford, Barry Savinski, Doug Fontaine, Charles Kelley, Hyrum Huskey, Jon Dobosz, Jason Burbank, Greg Garrison, Joe Landry, Deb Bourbeau and Tom Bergeron.

A special thanks to town officials in Montague and their 'event friendly' cooperation – from the fire, police, DPW and parks departments to the select board to the many town employees who volunteered their time behind the scenes and on race day. The MCTV team of Robin Mide, Dean Garvin, Kathy Lynch, Donna Festinger, Don Clegg, John Duda, AJ Cook,

Janet Masucci, Linda Downs-Bembury, and Jo Schneiderman captured racers on video and Brickett Allis provided the P.A.

Town clerk Deb Bourbeau made it official, recording racers' speeds and times on the platform but also organizing an incredible team of race officials. Dave Jensen checked in carts and drivers; Miette Muller registered late arrivals; Mandy Hampp ensured their safety inspections were in order; Bob and Wendy Bogusz lined up the racers and pushed the carts to the start line; Mike McAuliffe and Kevin McCarthy set up and released the stop blocks at the starting gate on the countdown; flagman Doug McIntosh radioed Bourbeau when carts were in position, relayed the 'time to beat' to the racer, and confirmed when the racer was ready; Linda Ackerman did the radio countdown for racers and officials; Greg Garrison operated the radar gun on loan from the Erving Police Department; and Dr. Mark Allen, Mike Burek and Jack Nelson were at the finish line to capture and relay times and speeds.

Bourbeau was joined on the platform by announcer Russ Brown and selectboard chair Pat Allen, who kept the crowd entertained between races. Allen, look-

ing punk rock in leathers and spiked hair, also judged the style awards with Senator Stan Rosenberg. Hyrum Huskey coordinated radio communications. Nancy Paglia, Nina Martin, Doug Fontaine, Chuck Vassar, and Barry, Laurie and Bill Stafford, Barry, Cody and Mary Savinski, Charles Kelley, Paul Redeker, and Lindsey Gilbert all played key roles. Tom Bergeron and the DPW ensured blockades were in place at key intersections and swept the street in advance of the race. Joe Landry set up the announcers' platform and hosted a build party. Bill Melnick arranged for hay bale delivery and Mike Blanchard coordinated volunteers too numerous to mention; thank you all.

Our underwriters were Greenfield Savings Bank, Narragansett Brewers, Kostanski Funeral Home, Montague WebWorks and Dr. Jordan Quinn, while sponsors included Maniatty Real Estate, Holy Smokes, Joe Gochinski, FirstLight Power Resources, Good Dirt Pottery, The Solar Store, Florence Savings Bank, and Power Down Debt. T-Shirts, cups and posters were screened by SilverScreen Design.

We look forward to an amazing race in 2011. Entry applications will start being accepted in May, and will be capped at 100 racers total. For more info on racing, vending, or underwriting, call Mik Muller at (413) 320-5336.

- Anne Harding, president
MCTV Board of Directors

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NOTES FROM THE GILL-MONTAGUE REGIONAL SCHOOL COMMITTEE

State Halts G-M Contract Negotiations

BY ELLEN BLANCHETTE

In an unexpected turn of events, an executive session planned to discuss the final ratification of contracts for teachers, paraprofessionals, administrative staff and cafeteria workers at the Gill Montague Regional Schools prior to the school committee meeting Tuesday night was cancelled after the Department of Elementary and Secondary Education (DESE) proclaimed that the district was not to ratify any contracts with the bargaining groups until after the state has concluded its district review at the end of October.

After months of negotiations between school committee representatives, superintendent Carl Ladd, and the bargaining units for teachers and staff, Christine Lynch, administrator of governance for the DESE, on behalf of associate commissioner Jeff Wulfson, called to stop the process in its tracks.

Ladd said he and Karl Dziura, president of the Gill-Montague Education Association, sent out a joint statement to the staff expressing their dissatisfaction over the DESE's action.

Ladd said he told Lynch, when

she called, that DESE's action would not help the district's relationship with the staff.

As the ratification portion of the agenda was cancelled, committee member Michael Langknecht asked for the contract ratification to be put back on the agenda for the next meeting. He said he felt the committee should discuss going ahead with ratification in spite of the DESE order. He said the school committee still has the right to ratify a contract with staff.

Langknecht said all parties had negotiated in good faith. Dziura said in an interview after the meeting that staff was very demoralized by the DESE's action. All bargaining units had participated in the process, and all three had met recently and voted to ratify the contract proposal.

Later, Ladd said while the school committee does retain the right to ratify the contracts, the DESE has fiscal control over the district at this juncture (following the rejection of the district's FY '10 operating budget at district meeting last year), therefore DESE has the power to reject any contract sent to them for

approval.

Fearing the complications that might ensue, Ladd said it was better to wait until after the district review was complete before finalizing the contracts, in case changes were needed to comply with the recommendations of the district review board. Ladd said he felt the district had reached a very good, conservative agreement with the unions, and is ready to move ahead with the ratification process as soon as the review board completes its work.

After two years of failed district budgets leading to fiscal oversight, Ladd said he felt the state is "tired of dealing with us," and perhaps the DESE thinks, "If they make things difficult for us we will vote a budget."

On Tuesday, the school committee approved Ladd's recommendation, offered to satisfy the directive of the DESE for spending the recently received \$280,000 federal Education Jobs funds (meant to retain teachers in

the classroom) to devote \$91,000 to meeting unmet or deferred technology needs, \$31,000 to purchase textbooks and curriculum materials, and \$18,000 for professional development, for a total of \$140,000. The remaining half of the federal funding will be reserved for FY12.

The district review now in progress was requested by Ladd in an effort to resolve the district's Level Four, or underperforming, status.

School committee members like Jeff Singleton have persistently questioned the basis for the district's underperforming status. Ladd has said he believes the district would do well in a review, and he called for an expedited review in an attempt to get the district out from under a cloud Ladd feels it does not deserve. Improvements in MCAS scores and annual performance goals have provided fresh hope that the district could move out of underperforming status now, which Ladd believes would go a long way toward improving the district's reputation in the county and perhaps improve the district's

ability to attract school choice students to the district, and retain more students from within the district, which would lead to increased state aid and ease the budget process.

On Tuesday night, members of the review board sat quietly in the audience, not identifying themselves to those gathered in the auditorium of the Sheffield building of Montague Elementary to listen to a presentation by the school principals on the subject of their student's improving MCAS scores and adequate yearly progress (AYP) status.

Ladd said the review board will be here the remainder of this week, observing in the schools and meeting with focus groups. He said Wednesday the review board would meet with select-board members and other officials from member towns. The review board's final report, with recommendations, should be completed by November 1st, 2010.

WORKFORCE from page 4 mated to create far more jobs per kilowatt hour produced than the nuclear industry does.

On February 24, 2010, the Vermont Senate voted 26 - 4 to close the Vermont Yankee nuclear plant as scheduled in March of 2012. The vote was cast in the interest of the health

and safety, reliable energy supply, and economic well being of the people of our state and our region. It is time for Vermont to move on to an energy future that is safe, renewable, locally controlled and truly invested in Vermont and New England.



Reaching Out to Build Community

Reaching Out is a retreat sponsored by Second Church, 15 Court Square, Greenfield, on Saturday, Oct 16th, 9:00 a.m. to 4:00 p.m. A lunch of soup, bread and cheese is included.

The retreat will be led by Robert Jonas, director of Empty Bell contemplative sanctuary in Northampton and the author of *The*

Essential Henri Nouwen, recently published by Shambhala Publications. The day will consist of silence, presentations, prayer, chanting, sharing, and a video of Henri Nouwen preaching at the Crystal Cathedral in 1993 with discussion afterward.

Admission is a free will offering. For reservations call 774-4355 by Oct 13th.

**This Weekend!
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There's No Way to Tell From the First Kiss!

An unrepeatable performance by Paul Richmond, Suzy Polucci and Moonlight Davis at the Shea Theater, Turners Falls. Repeated both nights: October 1st & 2nd, 7:30 p.m. in a benefit for the Montague Reporter!

HIGHLIGHTS FROM THE GILL POLICE LOG

Breaking and Entering, Eagle Injured

Tuesday, 9/21

8:20 a.m. Assisted resident at station with juvenile issues.

12:30 p.m. Subject taken into custody for a warrant of apprehension at a French King Highway residence.

1:31 p.m. Report of breaking and entering, larceny and malicious destruction of property at a French King Highway residence. Under investigation.

10:36 p.m. Responded to area of the French King Bridge, reported suicidal

subject enroute to the bridge. Unable to locate.

Wednesday, 9/22

5:45 p.m. Found wallet recovered on French King Highway. Owner contacted.

6:05 p.m. Report of larceny of a lawn mower on Main Road.

Thursday, 9/23

3:45 p.m. Car vs. motorcycle accident on Main Road.

4:27 p.m. Report of intoxicated youth in the area of Route 10 and Mount Hermon Station Road.

Saturday, 9/25

12:15 a.m. Report of jumper off of the French King Bridge. Checked area, unable to locate.

9:05 a.m. Report of an injured eagle on the side of French King Highway. Environmental Police contacted to respond.

Sunday, 9/26

10:20 a.m. Report of past breaking and entering into a motor vehicle on Myrtle Street.

12:21 p.m. Report of past breaking and entering into a motor vehicle on Main

Road.

12:45 p.m. Report of past breaking and entering into a motor vehicle at another Main Road residence.

7:03 p.m. Report of shots fired in the River Road area.

Monday, 9/27

4:32 p.m. Report of past breaking and entering into a motor vehicle on Walnut Street.

Tuesday, 9/28

2:30 p.m. Report of past breaking and entering into a motor vehicle on Main Road

7:18 p.m. Suspicious vehicle investigated at Riverview Drive and French King Highway.

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NOTES FROM MONTAGUE SELECTBOARD

Montague Keeps Wary Eye on Question #3

BY DAVID DETMOLD - Town administrator Frank Abbondanzio was not cheered by the results of a Boston Globe poll released this week, that showed the sales tax slashing Question #3 on the November 2nd statewide ballot running ahead, with 46% favoring the measure, and 43% opposed, and 11% undecided.

"There was an \$800 million cut in local aid this year already," said Abbondanzio, looking glum.

"I can't envision how the schools would function," chimed in selectboard chair Pat Allen. "That would certainly have a huge impact on the offices in town hall, the libraries, everything we do."

Pumpkin Fest

On a cheerier note, the board extended by an hour the time Michael Nelson would be permitted to block off Avenue A for the upcoming Franklin County Pumpkin Fest. The inaugural event, a year in the planning, will feature jack-o-lanterns from near and far, as well as a beer tent, food vendors, and live music.

"How will you light all those jack-o-lanterns?" Allen wanted to know.

Nelson said once volunteers began lighting the lanterns, the crowd would join in, and the rest of the pumpkins would start to glow as if by spontaneous combustion.

More Music on the Ave

David Westbrook, of PDP Productions, LLC, came before the board to ask for an entertainment license to open an all ages, alcohol free music hall in the front of the former VFW building, at 109 Avenue A.

Westbrook has not signed a lease yet on the space or worked out safety concerns with the fire chief, nor did he present a floor plan for his proposed venue, so the board delayed taking action on the request, but they indicated they would be likely to support it if these concerns were met, along with addressing noise abatement for abutters.

Westbrook said he had been in discussion with Burrito Rojo owner J.D. Keating about how the two businesses could coexist compatibly in the mall-like first floor; Westbrook would need to bring patrons and equipment in through the same side doors off 3rd Street Keating relies on for his customer entrance.

Westbrook said he got his start in the music business helping his son, Brian, promote and stage his former band, Hydraulic Sandwich, a group the younger Westbrook started in Greenfield around 2001. Since then the father-son team have worked to stage shows at the Greenfield Youth Center on Sanderson Street, produced the successful Greenfield Rock Fest, with up to 75 bands over a two day concert

in the Energy Park on Miles Street, and worked with numerous other local schools and venues, including the Shea Theater in Turners.

He said the Shea was a great place to stage a show, but it was not inexpensive to rent. "We try to keep ticket prices in the \$5 - \$7 range," said Westbrook, who maintains a day job as a researcher in the computer science department at UMass.

"We want to support local talent, give musicians an opportunity to play a quality show with people who know what they're doing with sound and lighting. We want to give people tech training, too." His son Brian has a degree in sound engineering, and volunteers in the Greenfield Middle School teaching a class in music theory.

Westbrook described his company as a not-for-profit business, "a whole community focused effort for music." He said he was working closely with Keating and building owner David Jensen to make sure "we can do everything we all want to do in the building."

Jensen said the front of the building could hold about 85 people at maximum capacity.

Keating, who also runs a music room at Burrito Rojo, bringing in acts as varied as Peter Dinklage to the Stone Coyotes, said, "I'm all for business. There are definitely issues with the room," he added. "We're in discussion with the landlord, so I'm trying to be neutral."

Precinct Redistricting

Town clerk Deb Bourbeau said preliminary results from the 2010 census indicate precinct lines in Montague will have to be redrawn, to keep representation equal in each precinct for town meeting elections. The Secretary of State's office called Bourbeau to inform her, they also let her know Montague does not need to maintain six precincts. If the town so chooses, Montague could have as few as three, since a precinct only needs to be drawn for each 4000 members of a town's population, and Montague has about 8500 people.

Bourbeau said the state is going to provide a sample map of how the town could redraw precinct lines to reduce the number of precincts by half. "Does that mean it's going to happen?" asked Bourbeau rhetorically. "The selectboard would have to approve it, and so would town meeting, and the legislature."

She added, "Where am I going to put the three polling places?" Bourbeau acknowledged there would be concerns raised if polling places are moved from central village areas, particularly in Turners Falls, where many people do not own cars. But she estimated the town could save about half the cost of elections if it reduced the number of polling places. It currently costs the town about \$4,000 to run a state or federal election, and between \$5,000 and \$6,000 to run a local election.

Great Falls Middle School Students of the Week
Grade 6
Wileshka Vega
Grade 7
James Fritz
Grade 8
Aidan Connelly
Zachary Wright

Wendell Cultural Council Grants Public Meeting

BY LINDA HICKMAN WENDELL - There will be a public meeting of the Wendell Cultural Council on Thursday, October 7th at 7:15 p.m. at the Wendell Library. Community input on funding priorities and the grant application process is requested. Help in filling out grant application forms will be available at the meeting. Grants are available for art, cultural, and

natural science projects. Applications are available at www.mass-culture.org, the Wendell Free Library, the Town Offices and at the Wendell Post Offices. Deadline for application is October 15th. Additional members are being sought for the the Wendell Cultural Council. For more information, call (978) 544-8604.

HIGHLIGHTS FROM THE MONTAGUE POLICE LOG

Hit and Run Accident, Larceny, Burglary

Tuesday, 9/21
10:58 p.m. Suspicious other at Peskeumskut Park. Services rendered.

Wednesday, 9/22
1:35 a.m. Hit and run accident at jersey barriers at Unity Street and Prospect Street. Referred to other agency.

6:14 a.m. Report of larceny at La Bodega on Fourth Street.

11:38 a.m. Report of burglary, breaking and entering on High Street.

1:32 p.m. Arrest of [redacted] for disorderly conduct, threatening to commit a crime, assault with a

dangerous weapon and carrying a dangerous weapon.

Thursday, 9/23
11:02 a.m. Arrest on Avenue A of [redacted] on a default warrant.

8:03 p.m. Arrest on Fifth Street of [redacted] on three default warrants.

Friday, 9/24
2:37 a.m. Open door/window at the Transfer Station. Services rendered.

5:26 p.m. Loud noise disturbance on Fourth Street. Peace restored.

5:44 p.m. Weapons violation near Stone's Equipment

Repair on Federal Street. Services rendered.

Saturday, 9/25
10:31 a.m. Burglary, breaking and entering on Worcester Avenue. Referred to an officer.

12:52 p.m. Burglary, breaking and entering on Second Street. Services rendered.

7:59 p.m. Liquor law violations at Crestview Liquor on Unity Street. Referred to an officer.

9:11 p.m. Report of fireworks near Old Northfield Road.

Sunday, 9/26
10:43 a.m. Loud noise disturbance at La Bodega on Fourth Street. Referred to an officer.

1:01 p.m. Idling train disturbance on Lake Pleasant Road. Services rendered.

Monday, 9/27
7:32 p.m. Assault and battery on Avenue A. Services rendered.

Tuesday, 9/28
12:45 a.m. Suspicious person at Franklin County Technical School on Industrial Boulevard. Investigated.

1:02 a.m. Suspicious person by Scotty's on Unity Street. Investigated.

9:23 a.m. Illegal dumping in Lake Pleasant in the Montague Plains. Referred to other agency.

10:44 a.m. Shoplifting at Food City on Avenue A. Investigated.

HIGHLIGHTS FROM THE WENDELL POLICE LOG

Vandalism Caused By ATV, Breaking and Entering

Monday, 9/6
Report of ATV having done donuts in the parking lot of the Ruggles Pond State building. Seven windows broken as a result of flying stones.

Tuesday, 9/7
2:15 a.m. Report of ATV's on New Salem Road. Gone on arrival.

5:26 p.m. Breaking and entering at a Depot Road residence. Copper pipes (plumbing) stolen.

Sunday, 9/19
5:01 p.m. Motor vehicle lockout on West Street.

Tuesday, 9/21
5:45 p.m. Three cows loose on Center Street, due to loggers having dropped a tree on a fence.

Friday, 9/24
3:00 p.m. House alarm on New Salem Road. All OK.

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NOTES FROM THE GILL SELECTBOARD

Gill to Decide on Farm Excise Taxes

BY DAVID DETMOLD - Voters in the town of Gill will have a chance to decide whether or not to continue levying an excise tax on farmers for farm animals and equipment, as an additional ballot item during the November 2nd gubernatorial election.

"It's like a cook getting taxed for pots and pans," said agricultural commission chair Steve Damon. "This is how a farmer makes a living."

A change in state law in 2008 made it possible for towns to decide whether to continue the farm tax, and a number of Franklin County towns have begun to take the matter up, including Montague, which abolished the farm animal and machinery excise tax this May, by a vote of 628 to 231.

In Montague, the board of assessors argued it cost their office more time and effort to collect the tax than they raised from taxing farm animals or machinery in town.

According to tax collector Ronnie LaChance, the excise tax brought in about \$1300 from a total of seven farms in Gill last year.

Town clerk Lynda Hodson-Mayo said it would cost the town of Gill \$500 to program the extra ballot question in a special electronic voting machine, which by state law is required at every polling place for the use of handicapped voters. Hodson-Mayo said no voters in Gill have used that special machine, but still the town must bear the cost.

"So, not only would we be losing \$1300, we'd be spending \$500 this year to program the handicap machine," said board member Ann Banash. "I just want people to understand, this is money we'll have to make up. Thirteen hundred dollars, for Gill, is a lot of money. We're so close to the levy limit, it's \$1300 we'll have to make up some how."

Damon said the Gill board of assessors had voted unanimously to support the agricultural commission's request to place the measure on the ballot. The selectboard voted unanimously to do the same.

Town administrative assistant

Ray Purington said getting the newly elected state representative for the 2nd Franklin District, in November, whoever that might be, to revisit the state law mandating electronic voting machines for towns the size of Gill, "is at the top of the list."

In other news, the selectboard held a hearing on the town of Gill's 2011 Community Development Block Grant application, which will probably focus entirely on zero interest housing rehab loans. Gill will most likely apply jointly with the towns of Colrain, Deerfield, Leyden and Ashfield, in hopes of each town receiving federal funds disbursed through the state Department of Housing and Community Development to upgrade housing for low and moderate income (up to \$62,500 for a family of four) residents.

Bruce Hunter, advising the town on its application process for the Franklin Regional Housing and Redevelopment Authority, the agency that typically administers annual CDBG grant funds for Franklin County towns, said there were about seven or eight Gill residents who have been pre-approved for a waiting list for the housing rehab loans, and the town might be able to meet the needs of all these residents if the grant is approved.

Town funds, from a revolving loan fund into which former housing rehab loans are paid when the rehabbed homes are eventually sold, will be used to upgrade the pumps at the Riverside pumping station, Hunter said, at an estimated cost of \$65,000.

No members of the public showed up for the hearing on how Gill could best use the discretionary federal funds. Possible uses include economic development, commercial rehabilitation, infrastructure, public facilities, planning projects and public social services to benefit low and moderate income residents.

The town of Gill will no longer be selling hunting or fishing licenses, on the request of town clerk Hodson-Mayo. She said a change in state regulations has made it difficult to make the sale of those licenses fit in with

the town's accounting policies. She said Gill had received only \$14.50 in profit from the sale of hunting and fishing licenses last year. "I don't see how it is to our advantage, at all," she added.

Hunting and fishing licenses may be purchased at Pipione's Sport Shop at 101 Avenue A in Turners Falls, open 7 days a week from 7 a.m., among other outlets.

Purington said the highway department would not be able to get to paving an additional 500 feet at the south end of Hoe Shop Road until spring, so the selectboard might want to hold a hearing on the topic of paving that stretch in March of 2011, to solicit the views of the neighbors on that road.

The town will put up four diamond shaped warning signs calling for a 20 mile per hour speed limit at the entrance roads to Riverside.

The selectboard granted a public gathering permit for the Friends of Gill to hold the 18th annual Gill Arts and Crafts Festival, on October 16th and 17th, from 10 a.m. to 4 p.m., rain or shine, on the grounds of the Riverside Municipal Building on Route 2. The Friends plan to have four different musical acts during the event, which will feature dozens of new artists and vendors, children's activities, and the regionally famous Gill firefighter's hamburgers and French fries.

Board member Randy Crochier noted that all the items at the firefighters' booth would be served on biodegradable plates and bowls this year.

Jason Edson and chief Gene Beaubien, speaking for the fire department would be inaugurating a new junior fire fighter policy, for young trainees between the ages of 16 and 18. The program would be strictly educational, and would be dependent on parental approval and adequate grades in school. The junior firefighters would not be allowed to climb ladders above one story high, or climb into second story windows, or practice with the Jaws of Life or use power tools.

"We do need volunteers from the town of Gill," in addition to

junior firefighters, added Beaubien. He said three older members of the department were augmented by a number of younger members, "but there isn't anybody in between."

The board appointed Roger Augustine to the zoning board of appeals, and Eileen Palumbo as an election worker.

Damon, the agricultural commission chair, told the board his committee would sponsor a Cheese Night, featuring samples of locally produced cheeses, on November 19th at the Congregational Church, from 7 - 9 p.m.

He brought in a biodegradable platter of sliced tomatoes, green peppers, and carrots, with a jalapeno or two thrown in for good measure, for the selectboard to snack on while they deliberated on his request for ballot access for the farm excise tax. The snacks were valued below the \$20 limit established in the state conflict of interest law for reportable gifts to public officials.

In the old days, when Phil Maddern was chair, the selectboard tended to snack mainly on candy, and it was not unusual to hear Maddern crack down hard on a sour ball while discussing the school budget. On Monday, considering the cost of electronic ballots, chair John Ward choked on a red hot chili, which may have added spice to his vehemence on that subject.

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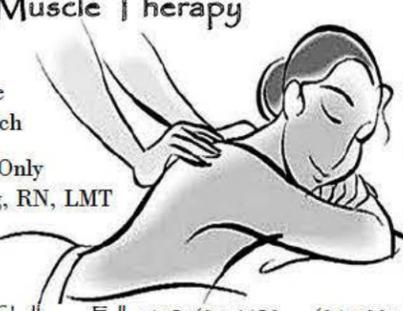
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COMMUNITY FILM PROJECT EMBARKS ON TURNERS FILM MARATHON

BY JOANNA FRANKEL

TURNERS FALLS - Move over Ashfield! Turners Falls, your five minutes of fame could be here, thanks to a half dozen short films being shot on the streets and in the buildings of Turners Falls this fall.

Carl South, a 30-year-old Bennington College student and filmmaker, has launched an ambitious project to make six short films over the next twelve weeks, each film taking two weeks to build from start to finish. The films are to be the work of a volunteer cast of actors, writers, and crew members, and area residents, be they amateurs or professionals, are invited to take part.

South, originally from

England, came to New York in 2006 in his former career as an investment banker. After his transition from banker to filmmaker, he met John Anctil, owner of Fast Lights, a film supply rental company and Turners Falls resident.

As he spent more time in Turners, which he now considers one of his homes, South began to see the artistic potential in the town. Unlike Bennington, VT where he attends college, South sees a great deal of "seamless cross-pollination" in Turners between its old mill town persona and its growing contingent of artists.

South was attracted to the town cinematically as well, with the brick buildings providing a compelling backdrop. He has

also found a community of eager participants and partners, be they individuals or organizations such as the Brick House or RiverCulture.

His first film, with the working title *Moving In*, was filmed all day last Sunday, mainly in an apartment over the former Veterans of Foreign Wars club on Avenue A. South wrote the script, but he is looking forward to handing over the writing reins to other aspiring screenwriters who might happen by. One script will be written by youth from the Brick House. A constant thread throughout all six short movies will be the town of Turners Falls, and what a leading lady she will be!

South encourages anyone



Ariana Ervin is among the local stars lighting up the screen in *Moving In*

interested to contact him and become involved in the project. Experience is not necessary, and all jobs need to be filled: actors, extras, lighting designers, sound technicians, cooks, PR workers, etc. No one will be paid for their work. The films will redefine low budget, as Anctil is loaning all the needed equipment to the project, and the resulting work is not

intended for commercial release. Some fundraising may take place after shooting is complete, perhaps with a red carpet premier in town in January.

If you're interested in participating, contact Carl South at turnersfallsfilmproject@gmail.com or find the project on Facebook by searching for Turners Falls Community Film Project.

RENOVATIONS PROCEED BRICK BY BRICK ON J STREET



JOSEPH A. PARZYCH PHOTO

De Xiong Lin on the new metal roof of his J Street property in September

BY JOSEPH A. PARZYCH

TURNERS FALLS - De Xiong Lin is hard at work renovating a large, four unit brick apartment building on J Street, most recently installing metal roofing over new rafters and new roof boards.

The building was once part of a larger block of housing for workers of the Griswold Cotton Mill, located just across the power canal, but had fallen into such serious disrepair that it had been condemned as unfit for human occupation years ago. Trash from the shopping plaza blew across J Street and festooned the yard, the windows had

been smashed, the doors boarded up, and the roof collapsed. A jagged vertical crack yawned in one side wall from gable to foundation, as if a single light blow from the wrecking ball could split the building in two.

Only a madman or a visionary would have thought the building could be saved.

Lin bought the property at auction from the town of Montague for \$30,000 at auction two years ago.

"I fix one part all the way from roof down to the bottom, all fall down, rotten," Lin said. "Old beams, 24 inches apart; new ones

light left Jensen temporarily in the dark, and he gashed his head against a concrete beam, requiring stitches.

There is no end to the headaches caused by old buildings downtown.

Speaking of Lin, Jensen said, "He's willing to learn and accept direction. The saving grace of this project is that the building is of townhouse construction," with foot thick basement to roof brick firewalls adding sturdiness to the entire structure, and allowing Lin to work on one unit at a time.

Lin has already achieved the most important milestone in this

daunting project by completely replacing the entire roof with metal roofing.

Jensen said, "He is now working with a permit to demolish and reframe one unit at a time. He is very comfortable with masonry, as his family is in the brick making business in China. He recognizes that he's got to do things right, and on some points he overbuilds."

Jensen pointed out that Lin still faces a huge amount of demolition in the months or years ahead. Each unit must be gutted from basement to attic. Then all the other mechanical problems will come to the fore - heating, plumbing and wiring, plus windows and doors to replace.

But Jensen explained Lin will be able to reduce the task to bite size projects, one unit at a time, and he seems to be an extraordinarily spirited person.

"This is one of the oldest buildings in Turners Falls," Jensen said. "It was condemned 20 years ago. I'm glad he's saving it."

"Each apartment was heated individually in the past by combination gas cooking stoves with attached gas heaters. Individual heating units are the way apartments of this type are being heated today."

Asked when he anticipates Lin will have the building renovated, Jensen replied, "I would estimate a 2018 completion

date."

Nonetheless, Lin has worked at the project in solitary single mindedness, with perseverance and energy. "People at town hall are very nice, very good to me," Lin said. "Not like health board, go crazy and lock doors, make Turners people afraid to eat in my restaurant. Building inspector very nice; show me how to do work right."

Lin was referring to his former enterprise, the China Town Restaurant which operated on the corner of 2nd Street, and which the health board closed down briefly for code violations.

Lin has cleaned up the yard, planted a garden, and repaired the large crack going up the south side of the building. "I know how to fix bricks," Lin said. "My family makes bricks in China. They make them from clay and fire them, bricks with holes, big like blocks. The bricks on the wall were soft bricks with soft mortar. I put up hard bricks and strong mortar."

Lin is concentrating all his energy on renovating the building. "I have no job; just work on the house, all a' time. My family in China send me money to fix the house."

Lin plans to keep plugging away on repairs until it gets too cold to work. "The building have no heat; too cold to work in winter," he pointed out.



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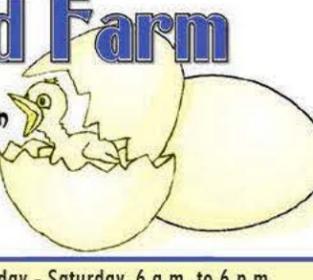
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ASHFIELD IN FILM



DETMOLD PHOTO

Harry Keramidas (left) and Baby Cecil (Chris Rawlings) officiate at the Awards Ceremony following the 4th Annual Ashfield FilmFest. Ashfield is the birthplace of Cecil B. De Mille, who would have approved of the proceedings.

BY DAVID DETMOLD - Fourteen fantastic five-minute films were on full display in Ashfield on Saturday. More colorful than a fall foliage festival, more crowded than a special town meeting, the fourth annual Ashfield Film Fest filled the town hall to overflowing and spilled across the street to the Congregational Church, where every pew and even the choir loft were packed nearly to capacity.

Harry Keramidas, the editing wizard behind such Hollywood favorites as *Back to the Future*, *Massacre at Central High* and *Children of the Corn*, is a recent Ashfield transplant and the force behind the festival's fine production values.

The festival is above all a celebration of the town of Ashfield, its rusty glory and rustic charm, and it gives visitors and home town residents alike a lighthearted look at the characters and plot-lines that weave about and bind

together this elevated enclave on the western end of Franklin County, and make it so down home lovable.

Keramides puts it all together, editing the homemade videos into a classy montage of animation, suspense, documentary, comedy, history, and even a little tragedy, that ran for about 90 minutes on Saturday and left the crowd hungry for more.

There are some running gags, like the mystery of the excellent

pancake batter at Elmer's, named by *Yankee Magazine* as the best pancakes in New England. The secret batter was at the center of a plot of one video entry last year, and filmmaker Gayle Kabaker reprised that theme with the First Prize winning *Pancaper II* this year.

Sending up the time honed tension between hilltown hick and big city slicker that reappeared in various guises in a number of the festival entries, Elmer's owner Nan Parati, playing herself, (herself a transplant from New Orleans) resists the evil blandishments of Peter Jones, doing his best Max von Sydow imitation, and his wicked metrosexual henchmen in their shady Foster Grants. They attempt to force her to divulge the secret recipe with a slice of Ashfield pizza, laced with truth serum. We loved the scene in the pizza parlor - who's cheatin' who? - and of course the cameo by Montague's own Marina Goldman, in full journalistic throttle, doing a drop dead Rachel Maddow impersonation.

Pushing up against the five minute limit and playing with the worst of Hollywood's take 'em to the cleaners instinct for sequels, *Pancaper II* ends with an effusive

Parati on the verge of spilling the buckwheat to her sinister Nordic interrogator.

But will she tell all in next year's installment?

Cornered on the steps of town hall in the run up to the awards ceremony after the show, Parati was adamant: "No Way!" But Jones looks like a man with more than one trick up his sleeve, so we'll have to wait and see.

The foundational values of rural living found their truest expression of the evening in a heartfelt documentary of the life and labors of dairy farmer William Gray, who turned the tables on city slickers everywhere with his immortal line, "As long as there's a man out there willing to spend a dollar, I'm here to take it from him."

Showing what film can do above and beyond every other means of storytelling, in five minutes flat, David Fessenden took top honors for the evening's Ashfield history prize with *Willy*, in which he gave voice to a local legend, sketching Gray at work and at rest with all his warmth, wisdom and humor. Not only did we hear Gray's voice and follow him from pasture to barn to rooftop to sugarbush, we learned

see **ASHFIELD** page 10

INDIE GODDESS BRINGS HADESTOWN TO POWERTOWN

BY MICHAEL METIVIER TURNERS FALLS - Anais Mitchell seemed genuinely surprised to be greeted by a capacity crowd at the Shea Theater in Turners Falls. True, the Vermont native has played bigger venues in bigger burbs plenty of times before, especially since the March 2010 release of her self-described "folk-opera" *Hadestown*, but Friday night's crowd felt special, buzzing with anticipation borne of breathless word-of-mouth and appreciation of the songstress's talent and vision.

The concert delivered *Hadestown* in its entirety (plus an encore performance of an outtake), an interpretation of the Greek myth of Orpheus, and his journey to the underworld to bring back his true love Eurydice against all manner of odds and Fates. Mitchell's version is set in what her website describes as a

"post-apocalyptic American Depression era," though the songs betray no hint of Mad Max-style futurism. Instead, the mythic tale of love and despair is cast in the sepia-tones of a Dust Bowl company town, where themes of poverty and class inform songs like Hades' stirring "Why We Build the Wall" and the opening Orpheus/Eurydice duet "Wedding Song".

Perhaps it is this type of contemporary resonance that has moved listeners, reconnected them to a story they may last have considered in high school, and prompted them to fill the Shea. Or it could have been the glimmer of hope that some of the musicians who sang roles on the *Hadestown* album would be present (Bon Iver's Justin Vernon, Ani DiFranco, Greg Brown). Regardless, Mitchell won the already jubilant crowd over by singing all the parts her-

self, making the audience nearly forget about all of those superstars. Backed by composer Michael Chorney, who created the orchestral arrangements for the project, and a crack five-piece band, Mitchell shone brightly center stage, imbuing each character with nuances her peers and collaborators did not. Where DiFranco's portrayal of Persephone was appropriately brash and swaggering, Mitchell's hinted at vulnerability and sweetness behind all of the bluster on "Our Lady of the Underground". Similarly, the clarity of her voice and her vibrant energy gave more emotional power to the opera's last few songs than on record.

Praise is due to Power Town Music impresario Peter Hamelin and his Brick House crew for pulling in such talent, and putting it on a stage where it would shine to its best advantage. Throughout

the night Mitchell was a consummate performer, putting everything into her songs, giving the

Shea audience a gift they won't soon forget.



Anais Mitchell

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ASHFIELD from pg 9

in quick, clear vignettes how he performed an amazing variety of treasured New England skills that would die out forever without such practitioners such as Gray to teach them to a new audience. *Willy* shows – how to form a roofing slate, and how to use it to patch a slate roof; how to build a barn that won't fall down, and how to build a stanchion inside it that won't spill hay; how to tap a maple tree with a quick twist of an augur bit, and how to win the love of a community with the modest endurance of a forthright man. This film had a more powerful punch than its brief running time could have ever packed if its final frame had not spelled out the hero's epitaph: "William Gray 1925 – 2010."

Even this local yokel picked up on the recurring leitmotif of country mouse and city mouse that enlivened much of the evening when he said, "I went to Chicago for a wedding once.

Came back and said, 'I'm back at last.' I never have to do that again!"

City slickers looking for a home, or even an ice cream cone, in the heart of the country, found minimalist expression in the handheld camera work of Thom Pasculli and Caroline Kessler's *t&c*. Cruising the streets of Northampton, looking for authenticity in Paradise and finding it in the Ashfield Hardware Store ("I hope you don't sell out") these two bird-like twenty-somethings lilt and light against the white clapboards of a farmhouse wall in silhouette, wondering whether marriage is necessary or a baby worth the effort of settling down, here, there, or anywhere. Unable to capture audio and video in one amateur act, these budding auteurs resorted to subtitles, even though they spoke more or less in English. Move over Jim Jarmusch!

Grand prize and audience favorite award both went to Ben

Murray for *Professional Man*, starring Murray himself as the superhero in suit and tie who spends his days as a mild mannered chicken farmer, leading the double life many Ashfield residents do who dream of salvation over power lunches and a brief case. Able to leap tall barns in a single bound, Murray slips into a chicken coop and emerges in his slick city duds just in time to save a young fella felled by a tree, or a lad drowning in Ashfield Lake. But when his wife gets kidnapped by his arch nemesis, *Inappropriate Man*, Murray leaves the audience literally hanging in his race to save her.

Another shameless sequel in the making, yet Murray catapulted his alter ego to undying local fame in 4 minutes 59, bringing down the house with his hilarious dinner table "I've got to take a shower" sequence, not to mention the throwaway shot of him gazing lustfully at a chicken catalogue centerfold.

There was so much more, including brilliant animation backed by the soaring young Joni Mitchell style vocals of Ashfield's own Sonya Kitchell in her song "Lighthouse," worth the price of admission all by itself, the backing track for the top prize music video of the same name by Evan Yeadon. Theo Gabriel produced the great stop animation video *the Adventure of Bob*, which took stickum notes places they never dared go before. (Keramidas said for him, one of the highlights of the evening was watching Gabriel's dad, Manfred, beaming as he watched the work of his 14-year-old son, a graduate of Red Gate Farm's film camp in Buckland.) And Gregory Thorp took top honors in the Tech category with his *School Bus Times*, a cat's eye view of the turning of the hilltown seasons as viewed against the backdrop of a passing school bus.

The Ashfield FilmFest brought together outsiders and

locals, Professional Men and farmers, librarians and punk rockers, and rolled them all up in one glorious ball of celluloid, (oh, OK, videotape) for one magic evening of unforgettable fun. It provided a panoramic view of the town, with all its desperate horsewives, silver teapots, and Wonder Bread zombies, and it also let us see it from within, glowing in the arc light of memory, and sweeter than the grade A amber from Gray's sug- arhouse. Other towns may emulate it, but there is only one Ashfield, for five minutes, over and over again.

"I won't do it forever," said Keramidas, speaking of film fests to come. "I see it as something for the town, about the town. I'm an outsider myself. I only moved here five years ago. I've been very careful not to change anything. I love what I came to. I don't want to make it different. I just want to celebrate what's here." 

BRICKS from pg 1

fuel produced heavy smoke and coal gas (methane.)

The masons, high up in their eagles' aerie, mortared new capstones in place. Without maintenance, rain water would infiltrate the brickwork, freeze and the chimney would eventually crack, crumble and tumble to the ground, as the former Griswold Cotton Mill has so graphically demonstrated.

How the masons were able to get materials up to the top of the chimney to construct scaffolding is just short of miraculous.

"The men put up ten foot interlocking ladder sections," International Chimney's New England division manager Roger Dumont said. "They secure each section in at least two places to one of the half inch copper lightening protection cables running the length of the chimney. The workman carries a wire rope with turnbuckle attached. When he gets to the top, he loops the cable over the chimney, much as you would swing a jump rope, and he fastens it together. He uses a lanyard, tethered at one end to one of the half inch copper cables from the lightning rods, and attached to his body harness at

the other.

Once in place, he attaches a bracket and pulley. His helper on the ground attaches scaffolding components to a rope running over the pulley, and hauls material up by rope. The top man erects scaffolding around the chimney. The helper also hoists bricks and mortar to the top of the chimney by pulley."

Dumont estimates the Southworth chimney is about 15 feet in diameter at the bottom, and eight to nine feet wide at the top.

"Brick masons taper chimneys during construction by using a 'batter board,' four feet long with an adjustable level," Dumont said. "The usual taper is one inch in four feet."

Dumont added, "The curved blocks are four and half inches wide; thicker at the bottom and slightly thinner as they go up. They're lettered A,B,C,D. Bricks marked A go at the bottom, and so forth. Masons cut the blocks to necessary length with a brick hammer to fit the circle. They fill the brick's hollow core with mortar to bond the bricks together.

"Chimney mortar is soft, made with high lime content," Dumont explained. "That's

because chimneys sway in the wind, and need to be flexible."

Asked how materials are hoisted to the masons, Dumont said, "They use an electric winch called a capstan, like those on fishing boats. For repairs, they put a pulley on a triangle attached to the ladder. They use a capstan to hoist the material up. On new construction they use a gin pole with a chive (pulley) atop. The pole is set at a slight tilt so that the bricks or mortar land on the scaffolding.

"In the old days, they looped a rope around a pulley at the top and hooked the rope to a mule. It was trained to walk towards a stick set in the ground, hauling the load up, stop at the stick, and back up a couple of steps. That allowed the mason up on the chimney to swing the load over the scaffold. The mule backing up set the load down. But they haven't used mules for a long time," Dumont added.

International Chimney Company moves chimneys, buildings and light houses. "We move a lot of lighthouses, and houses, away from eroding bluffs. It gets involved. Sometimes we have to take test borings to see what the soil con-

ditions are. It can cost more than two million dollars to move a lighthouse."

Asked about pay, Dumont said masons and laborers get prevailing [union] wages with extra pay for height and an allowance for food and lodging. "The pay is good, but marriages don't last with guys on the road all the time."

Dumont said he has worked in all aspects of chimney repair, from laborer to supervisor, in his 37 years with International Chimney. A typical repair job of chimney cap and repointing of bricks like the job at Southworth Paper runs between \$12,000 and \$20,000, Dumont said.

According to the Brick Layers' Union, the prevailing wages and benefits in Western Massachusetts for chimney repair work is \$57.81 per hour,

or a mere \$2,302.40 per week, plus expenses for working out of town.

That may be why Richard Brower and his son Andy, who are from Missouri, do not mind working 175 feet in the air.

How's the view from up there? "Lousy. All you see are tops of trees," Brower said.

Three of Brower's brothers, his son Andy, and five nephews work in this dangerous Spiderman occupation, where it is not a good idea to step back to admire your work. Richard and Andy Brower are lean and wiry, apparently from climbing up and down tall ladders all day.

"No one in the family's been killed," Brower said matter-of-factly. "But a lot of my friends have. I keep my lanyard hooked up 100% of the time." (The lan-



HIGHLIGHTS FROM THE LEVERETT POLICE LOG

Unauthorized Withdrawals, Brush Fire

Wednesday, 9/8

4:30 p.m. Officer received report from a Dudleyville Road resident that he was a victim of identity theft.

Unauthorized cash withdrawals made from his bank debit account. Under investigation.

6:00 p.m. Officer received a report from a Montague Road resident about unauthorized withdrawals from her

bank debit account at the same institution as the previous call. Officer took reports and contacted the institution. Under investigation.

Sunday, 9/26

5:48 p.m. Officer received a report of a possible brush fire on Long Plain Road. Officer located fire. Leverett Fire Department contacted and responded with numerous area fire departments.

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BY JOSEPH A. PARZYCH
GREAT FALLS - "The Gill-Montague Bridge project is right on schedule," said SPS Construction project manager Mark Pelletier this week. He said the painters, Mimosa Construction, with their noisy shot blasting machine, are ahead of schedule. "Mimosa is

of beams at night during a period of lower traffic flow," Pelletier said. "The studs sticking up from the stringers (longitudinal I-Beams) are shear connectors."

Atlantic Bridge Company fuses shear connectors to stringers by a process called "stud welding," where the beam is grounded and a stud gun energizes the stud with

Meanwhile, deck removal on the north side of the bridge continues.

Excavators equipped with hammers break concrete away from reinforcing bars. Ditch Witch Concrete Cutting Specialists cut the bars. An excavator with a bucket pulls up the section of deck and loads it onto either an SPS trailer dump or a Mitchell Excavating trailer dump truck for transport to Mitchell's gravel pit in Northfield for processing and recycling as road building material.

"This half of the bridge is

Community Meals More Accessible than Ever



Volunteers from Our Lady of Peace prepare to serve food at the weekly community meal. From left: Connie Sicard, Mark Thomas, Lou Soquet, and Mary Jane Gabriel. At right is Nancy Pollard, formerly an outreach worker for DialSelf Youth and Community Services

BY JOHN FURBISH

TURNERS FALLS - Every Monday evening at 5:30 p.m. and at noon on the last Saturday of every month, free community meals are held in the banquet room of Our Lady of Peace Church, 90 7th Street in Turners Falls. Now, those meals are handicapped accessible, and with the holiday season approaching there is a call for more guests to come by, socialize and eat together.

These meals are a manifestation of the "social justice" concerns held by many parishioners at Our Lady of Peace. For years, they have made free public meals available in town, and guests say the Turners community meals are the most family-like of all the

public meals in Franklin County.

The Turners meals have always been accessible to those who are down and out and hungry, young people establishing themselves in the community who are hungry, elderly or fixed-income folks, or people living by themselves who are hungry for food and for companionship. All are welcome to attend. There are no social or economic barriers. And now, with a new elevator, there is no longer a physical barrier to the parish hall for those with mobility problems!

The renovations required to bring the basement of the 1890 church building into the 21st-century cost about \$600,000 and took almost a year (during which time

see MEALS pg 13



Studs on the Gill-Montague bridge await a coating of reinforced concrete.

"This half of the bridge is the easiest," said SPS Construction's project manager Mark Pelletier.

three quarters done with cleaning and priming." They should complete their task by the end of October.

SPS excavators are removing the bridge fascia beams upon which the side railings once rested, making drivers nervous on behalf of construction workers when they glance to the side and see nothing but thin air.

Once concrete curbing is removed, Atlantic Bridge iron workers shear rivets fastening the beams together with a "Rivet Buster," an air actuated tool that knocks off the rivet head. They then drive out the rest of the rivet using the same tool, equipped with a punch.

"We schedule the delivery

high amperage electricity. As the stud nears the beam, electricity arcs to fuse the stud with the beam.

"The new deck is a composite of reinforcing bars, with a steel grid over it, like the (5th Street) bridge going to Southworth Paper Mill," Pelletier said. "Concrete, poured over the grid and reinforcing bars, ties it all together. Concrete also flows over shear connectors to anchor the deck to beams. SPS will overlay the composite deck with bituminous concrete (blacktop). This is not the conventional cast-in-place assembly."

Corrugated steel pans below the re-bars and steel grid support the poured concrete.

the easiest," according to Pelletier. The other side has much thicker concrete on the sidewalk to be removed. It is in pretty good shape, because it was seldom cleared of snow. The last time it was shoveled was by Claire Chang and Mitchell Waldron, the mayor of Gill, during one snow storm last winter. They never tried that again.

In addition, SPS has to attach a new cantilevered extension out over the river for a new sidewalk, in order to widen travel lanes.

Taken all in all, it seems unlikely the scheduled four year timetable for renovations will be much, shall we say, abridged.

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RESPONSE from pg 1

cessive years of cost cutting, Billings said.

The neighbors asked about mutual aid from other towns, specifically Amherst. "We are two minutes from the Amherst line," one said.

Billings replied Leverett does have mutual aid agreements with Shutesbury and Sunderland, but he said it was unlikely Amherst, dealing with the problems raised by an ever larger population of students at UMass, would be willing to sign such an agreement with Leverett.

"I got a call from Dudleyville Road this morning, while I was on Teewaddle Hill," said Billings, "and even though I drove my cruiser on two roads most people don't even know about, it still took me 17 minutes to get there."

The point is, Billings said, even if the town hired enough officers to give Leverett 24/7 coverage, response times would not necessarily improve over what the state police were able to offer on August 2nd.

He said this was only the third serious domestic violence call in Leverett in the six years he has been on the force.

Selectboard member Peter d'Errico said, "I'm not persuaded there's a problem here. The problem of wife beating is certainly outrageous. But twenty minutes to respond to a call is pretty fast. I'm not up for living in a town where we have so many officers on duty," that response times can be lowered much beyond that, d'Errico said.

Selectboard chair Rich Brazeau said the Leverett police department had actually seen a large increase in staffing and

budget in the past decade, and that increase had not come without friction from the call fire department, with its part time chief. But Brazeau encouraged the neighbors to research the costs of adding more police coverage, and to bring their case to town meeting.

Other ideas such as self defense classes, advertising common sense ways to protect property from theft or break-ins, and building community awareness of policing issues through the town website were also discussed.

Affordable Housing

The board reviewed the draft of an affordable housing plan for the town of Leverett with planning board member Ken Kahn. The draft had been prepared for the town by affordable housing consultant Karen Sunnaborg, of Jamaica Plain, and came in the form of a densely spaced packet of about two dozen pages.

The town of Leverett, which passed a 3% local option surcharge on local real estate transactions under the Community Preservation Act, is required by law to allocate 10% of proceeds from CPA funds towards affordable housing. At present, the town has more than \$70,000 set aside in an affordable housing trust from CPA funds, and the selectboard has been working to come up with a policy for directing those funds, which will be replenished from annual property sales in Leverett, towards their most effective use.

Kahn zeroed in on two recommendations in the draft report. He argued the town would find it easier to implement a strategy of promoting a zero interest revolving loan fund for income eligible applicants who need help bridging the cost of a mortgage, or renovating an existing home, installing a new roof or septic system for example, or converting a home to handicap or elder accessibility, than it would be to use the CPA funds to establish permanent affordability deed restrictions on properties the town helps income eligible applicants to purchase or renovate in town.

The selectboard seemed to agree with Kahn on the ease of establishing and administering

zero interest loans, which would be repaid to the town on transfer or sale of the property, as opposed to affordability deed restrictions, but also seemed to favor providing applicants with both options, to see how they worked out in practice.

Brazeau said, "I do see some downside in the zero interest loan option, if we're going to artificially inflate the value of that house."

But Kahn argued the town would be providing equivalent value in terms of affordability, whether by creating permanently affordable units of housing, through deed restrictions, or by creating revolving zero interest loans of similar worth to help applicants purchase or renovate housing in town.

Brazeau insisted the draft report should be revised and simplified, so it could pass muster at town meeting. "Get it down to five pages. We don't want anything in there to muddy the legality. We're going to have to defend this."

Bringing Broadband to Town

The meeting began with a feisty dialogue between the board and Leverett broadband committee members Rob Brooks and Connie Peterson.

Following the roll out of the Massachusetts Broadband Initiative's proposal to build a 1,100-mile open access, publicly owned 'middle mile' fiber optic network to connect underserved communities in western and central Massachusetts, using \$45.5 million in federal stimulus funds matched with \$26.2 million from the Commonwealth, the selectboard has been poring over maps and dialing up MBI consultants to find out just what these federal and state millions will do for Leverett. Presently, only a small sliver of the southern part of town has access to high speed internet services, along with key institutions like town hall, the library and the elementary school.

"Getting the middle mile will take some time," began Brooks, dressed casually in Jimmy Buffet-style Bermuda shorts with a palm tree print. "They seem to have the money, and they think they know what they're doing."

He didn't get much further than that before board member

Julie Shively, who lives at the top of Richardson Road, more than a mile from the nearest access point to high speed internet service, cut him off.

"They don't know what they're doing. They're putting trunk lines in the same places that already have high speed service," she said.

"It's not quite like that," protested Brooks, who tried to explain the trunk lines would allow drops every quarter of a mile, where private or public access providers could extend lines the "last mile" to individual's doors.

But Shively her colleagues weren't buying it.

Town administrative assistant Marjorie McGinnis said she was pressing for MBI to include the North Leverett fire station, which she referred to fondly as "that pile of bricks," as a "community institution," which by definition would trigger the routing of a loop of 'middle mile' fiber to at least to that section of North Leverett Road.

Then, "Everyone along the fiber run will have access to it," insisted Brooks.

Brazeau wanted to know why MBI was wasting time and money, reportedly at the rate of \$50,000 a mile, to run fiber optic cable along Route 202 in Shutesbury. "Nobody lives there!

Why don't they bring it down North Leverett Road, Cave Hill, Montague Road, and Route 63?" he demanded. "That would effectively serve the area not served."

Brooks and Peterson said they also represented Wired West, a recently incorporated municipal coop of underserved communities that has been developing plans to bring fiber optic cable the "last mile" to "100% of households in member towns."

"There's been no vendor come in to be the last mile provider," said Brooks. "We hope to have the Wired West initiative come in and do the work."

Shively responded with exasperation, "We keep getting put off so we can get the gold standard. But right now we're on the dirt standard."

D'Errico suggested researching what it would take for the town of Leverett to pursue hooking up every household in town through a municipal effort, paid for by the town itself.

Brooks warned that the town of Russell had recently attempted something similar, going into debt to fund a townwide broadband initiative, only to find Verizon coming in and undercutting the town with cheaper DSL service, and leaving taxpayers to pay off the bond on the obsolete municipal project.



HIGHLIGHTS FROM THE ERVING POLICE LOG

Illegal Dumping, Breaking and Entering

Tuesday, 9/21
5:55 p.m. Call of male subject walking on Route 2. Possibly in distress. Located subject and assisted to residence.
6:50 a.m. Report of unwanted male at a River Street residence. Issued no trespass order per home owner. Male subject advised to stay away. Left premises.
8:55 p.m. Report of disoriented motorist at Route 2 and Maple Avenue. Located lost elderly male. Unable to operate motor vehicle. Transported subject to station to await relatives.

Wednesday, 9/22
6:50 a.m. Report of unwanted male at a River Street residence. Issued no trespass order per home owner. Male subject advised to stay away. Left premises.
8:55 p.m. Report of disoriented motorist at Route 2 and Maple Avenue. Located lost elderly male. Unable to operate motor vehicle. Transported subject to station to await relatives.

Thursday, 9/23
7:30 a.m. Illegal dumping of hazardous waste. Six high voltage transformers dumped at WMECO switch yard on Northfield Road.

Friday, 9/24
2:15 a.m. Report of tree in road on North Street, blocking roadway. No lines down. Tree moved.
1:47 p.m. Motor vehicle crash on Route 2 at Christina's Restaurant. Assisted on scene with Erving fire, BHA transported injured subject.

Friday, 9/24
5:10 p.m. Lester Street resident reports motor vehicle was scratched. Just wanted to advise.
6:00 p.m. Report of subject riding a lawn mower up Mountain Road. Located same. Parked at a Mountain Road residence. No one was around or at home.

Saturday, 9/25
10:22 p.m. Assisted Montague Police with distraught female in Montague Center.
12:45 p.m. Call to station from Lillian's Way resident regarding internet theft. Report taken. Under investigation.
10:42 p.m. Possible breaking and entering at Forest Street residence. Access attempted, not gained. Report taken.

Sunday, 9/26
8:55 p.m. Noise complaint regarding party at Christina's. Advised owner. Moved party inside.
8:15 p.m. Report of runaway. Searched area. Report filed for missing person.

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JESSICA HARMON ILLUSTRATION

BY FRED CICETTI

LEONIA, NJ – Q. *When doctors perform a cardiac ablation, what do they use to clean the heart?*

This question made me laugh because I had the same misconception as the correspondent. We both confused ablation with ablu-tion. Ablation is a surgical

THE HEALTHY GEEZER: How Do They Clean Your Heart?

excision of tissue. Ablution is a cleansing with water or another liquid.

Cardiac ablation corrects heart arrhythmias by destroying tissue that blocks the electrical signal traveling through your heart to make it beat. By clearing the signal pathway of the abnormal tissue, your heart can beat properly again.

Normally, an electrical signal spreads from the top of your heart to the bottom. As it travels, the electrical signal causes your heart to contract and pump blood. The process repeats with

each new heartbeat.

A surgeon makes a small cut into one of the blood vessels of the groin, neck or arm. Then a catheter is inserted into the vessel and guided by x-ray into the heart. Flexible tubes with electrodes are run through the catheter. The electrodes locate the problem area and destroy it.

Radiofrequency (RF) energy usually is used for catheter ablation. This type of energy uses radio waves to produce heat that destroys the heart tissue. Studies have shown that RF energy is safe and effective.

Cardiac ablation is done in a hospital by a specially trained staff. The procedure lasts three to six hours. Some people go home the same day as the procedure. Others need to be admitted for one or more days. Most people return to their normal activities in a few days.

Before the procedure, a patient is given a drug intravenously for relaxation. The surgeon then numbs the catheter insertion site. Patients may experience some burning sensations during the procedure.

Your doctor may recommend catheter ablation if medicine can't control your arrhythmia or if you are at risk for a life-threatening type of arrhythmia or sudden cardiac arrest.

The risk of complications from catheter ablation is higher if you are older than 75 or have diabetes or kidney disease. These risks include: bleeding, infection, and pain at the insertion site; blood-vessel damage; a heart puncture; damage to the heart's electrical system; blood clots, which could lead to stroke or other complications; narrowing of the veins that carry blood from the lungs to the heart.

Although catheter ablation is often successful, some people need repeat procedures. You may also need to take medications, even after you've had ablation.

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

MEALS from page 11

the Monday meals were served in the nearby First Congregational Church). The entire basement of Our Lady of Peace was upgraded, with new electrical wiring, walls and windows, and entrance. The kitchen received commercial grade facilities: a large range with 10 burners, a convection oven to keep things warm, ventilation and fire-suppression systems.

The existing stairs on the north side were made softer and safer. An elevator was installed on the northeast side. Now, the multi-purpose room in the basement is much more pleasant and easy to use for church functions, weddings and banquets, and for community groups like AA. And, of course, for the community meal program.

Handicapped access to the church begins with the wide door off the parking lot on the south end of the church. Mobility-impaired people heading to the basement must have another person, attendant, friend, or relative with them who

can go to the kitchen and ask someone there to open the wide doors and activate the elevator.

The Franklin County Community Meals program was started by several congregations including Holy Trinity, All Souls UU, Second Congregational, and Temple Israel in Greenfield. Cath Strong and Chuck Collins were the lead volunteers who helped organize the congregations and get the meal off the ground. Bob Brick from Franklin County Mental Health gave the program space to begin serving the first community meals in 1986. Different congregations signed up to 'cater' the meals.

Soon, the meal moved to Second Congregational on Court Square. "Amy Connelly played a major part in getting the community meal established in Turners Falls," Collins recalled.

Today, inter-faith efforts have developed into the nonprofit Franklin County Community Meals Program, which brings weekday evening and Saturday meals to guests in Greenfield, Turners Falls, and Orange. With

the changes at Our Lady, now all these meal sites are handicapped accessible.

Turners Falls residents Amy Connelly and Connie Sicard were among the early organizers of this effort, so Turners Falls has had community meals for decades, in different locations. The Monday meals wound up at their present location on 7th Street about ten years ago, when the church was still called St. Mary's.

In 2006, Ste. Anne's and Sacred Heart parishes were merged with St. Mary's to form the renamed Our Lady of Peace.

Volunteer groups from Our Lady and the Montague Congregational Church serve meals one day each month. The Mount Toby Friends Meetinghouse serves every other month, the Montague Zen Farm occasionally, a Girl Scout group once a year, and presently St. Andrew's Episcopal is looking for a serving slot. The coordinator is Turners Falls resident Amy Connelly, a member of the Our Lady parish.

Connie Sicard chairs the

group of about 20 volunteers from Our Lady of Peace parish that provides meals on the third Monday of the month. They divide the task efficiently, with a third of the group preparing casseroles, salads, side dishes, beverages and dessert. Another third of the members collect bottles and cans, and redeem them to obtain money to get food and gifts handed out at the meals. The rest of the committee prepare the tables, serve the food, and clean up after the meals.

The Northfield Mount Hermon School provides volunteers on a regular basis to assist the serving groups. Some guests also assist when needed. One single parent brings her young son to help collect the salt and pepper shakers during clean-up, to install an active sense of responsibility in him.

Many guests like to arrive up to a half hour before each meal, at 5:00 p.m. on Mondays and 11:30 a.m. on the last Saturday of the month. New guests can sit by themselves, or socialize. Guests may arrive in family clusters or with friends. The

servers are very used to setting another table or two, and making sure there is enough food for all.

Last Saturday meals at Our Lady of Peace are like a year-round holiday, because Marie Putala and another group of parish volunteers provide a choice meal at noon on those days. Putala's group tries to outdo the regular Monday evening meals in quality and quantity. Attendance is lighter, which means those who do show up may get more leftovers to take home, and Putala's group tries to provide a free bag of groceries after each last Saturday meal.

After the October 30th noon meal, and the November 27th noon meal, there will be no noon meal on December 25th. The regular schedule resumes on December 25th, at noon.

Our Lady of Peace will provide a special Christmas Day meal on December 25th, at 5:00 p.m., with turkey, ham, all the fixings, a grocery gift card, and if all goes well, a bag of groceries.



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GO GREEN FAMILY

Episode 26: Tag You're It

BY JEANNE WEINTRAUB-MASON

MONTAGUE CENTER - The following week brought change to the Bartletts' normally tranquil house in Leverett. The rhythmic clanging of a drill vibrated throughout the house, and a tall stack of pipes on the driveway

awaited installation underground for the new geothermal system. Doing his best to ignore the disruption, Gerry Bartlett stormed into his wife's studio, where Beverly was draping a faux fur fabric across a child-sized mannequin, pins dangling out of her mouth.

Gerry waved his hand urgently in front of her face.

"Beverly, I just got a call from Greenfield Academy. The whole school knows Jayden's been 'tagged,' whatever that means, in some photos on Facebook wearing practically nothing. In some kind of weird fashion show in Turners Falls."

"Guess who invited her to that fashion show?" Jayden's brother Connor, entered and chimed in

with undisguised glee.

"I give up," said Gerry, in no mood to guess.

"Alex Tinker! She would have to get herself a crush on a GGF contestant, huh?"

Connor grabbed Gerry's iPhone, and clicked into the Facebook page for the Hullabaloo Pub in Turners Falls. Turning the phone over to his parents, he watched as they scrolled through the photos, pausing when they arrived at one image of Jayden with nipples and navel clearly visible through some kind of pink and orange

low cut leotard top with holes artfully cut through the midriff.

"Nice outfit," Beverly muttered, staring at the image on the iPhone. Then, to her husband and son she said loudly, "What I want to know is how she thinks she can just sneak out and go to these things without permission with that low-life, dead-end Tinker boy! She's grounded. If she insists on hanging out with him, she can kiss her wardrobe allowance goodbye."

Continued next issue...

Worried About the Future of Civilization?

Come to the Medieval Faire!

PUTNEY, VT - Calling all brave knights, pretty princesses, fine young lads and fair young lasses - on Saturday, October 9th, from 10:00 a.m. to 4:00 p.m., the Grammar School campus in Putney, VT will transform into a medieval village as it hosts the 23rd Annual Medieval Faire. Enjoy the village as King Arthur

and his royal court preside over games, feasts, and peasant frivolity. Join players gaming on the glen, merchants minding the village market, cooks tending a feast fit for a king, and musicians leading the festivities.

Traditional highlights include Merlin the Wizard, climbing walls, archery, a candy-throwing catapult, a haunted dungeon, pony rides, slay-the-dragon piñata, scavenger hunts and knights by the King himself.

Admission to the Faire is free for adults and children alike. All-day or individual game and ride passes are available with proceeds benefitting the Grammar School Scholarship Fund. The Medieval Faire has been a family favorite for 22 years. Come dressed as a brave knight, fair damsel, or come as you will - just don't miss the fun rain or shine. For additional info call (802) 387-5364 or visit www.thegrammarschool.org.



MONTAGUE ENERGY CORNER

Visit Montague's Green Homes

ing was built to house factory and paper mill workers in late 1800s and overlooks the canal. It is now a work and studio space on the first two floors and with the top floor as a living space. The building is heated and cooled with a geothermal system.

Massachusetts Woodlands Cooperative and treated with low-VOC, water-based floor finish. The home minimizes water use with low-flow fixtures, a dual flush toilet, and a rain barrel for collecting roof runoff, to water outdoor plants. Solar hot water was added in 2008.



Montague Center:

☞ Alice and Ted Armen, 68 Main Street. Open hours: 1:00 p.m. to 3:00 p.m.

This home showcases solar domestic hot water, grid tied photovoltaics ["PV," also called solar electric panels], passive solar, Energy Star appliances and weatherization. Renovations were accomplished in a manner appropriate to a house listed in the Registry of Historic Places.

☞ Jill Bromberg, 44 Main Street. Open hours: 10:00 a.m. to noon. This 1840s post and beam cape features grid tied photovoltaics.

☞ Sally Pick, 25 Union Street. Open hours: 2:00 p.m. to 4:00 p.m.

This home, built in 1856, has been retrofitted with energy saving features such as attic cellulose insulation to R-60, sealing of air leaks, and landscaping for summer shading and to direct water from the basement (which reduces the need for energy-intensive dehumidifying). Green building materials include FSC-certified birch flooring grown and harvested sustainably by the



Montague City:

☞ Tina Clarke, 14 Marstons Alley (off Greenfield Road.), Open hours: 10 a.m. to 4:00 p.m.

Winner of last year's Massachusetts Zero Energy Challenge competition, this new home is a "Power House," producing more power than it consumes, with alternative energy. Its total annual energy use from August '09 to July '10 was 1,859 kilowatt hours; during that time, the house produced 4,871 kilowatt hours of electricity. Clarke's home generates two and a half times more energy that it needs to provide heat, ventilation, air conditioning, electricity and hot water. Her home features affordable construction, a metal roof, double-stud walls, passive solar heat, super-efficient windows, low-toxic construction, recycled building materials, and more. Go see what is possible not only to save energy, but to produce it without fossil fuels, right here at home in Montague City!

PUBLIC HEARING
Street Name Change Request

The Erving Board of Selectmen will hold a Public Hearing on a request by residents of North Shore Road (Laurel Lake) to change the name of their street to Dusty Road. The public hearing will be held at 7:00 p.m. in the Erving Town Hall, 12 East Main Street, on Thursday October 7th, 2010.

Erving Board of Selectmen
Andrew N. Goodwin, Chairman

PUBLIC INFORMATION SESSION

HANNEGAN BROOK WATER SUPPLY PROTECTION DISTRICT

The Montague Planning Board in conjunction with the Turners Falls Water Department will hold a Public Information Session regarding the proposed zoning map amendment at

Millers Falls Library, 23 Bridge Street, Millers Falls, MA
on Thursday, October 7th at 6:30 p.m.

This event is occurring PRIOR to the October 26th public hearing. The public is encouraged to attend to understand more about the proposed drinking water supply protection effort and how the regulations will affect individual properties.

BY SALLY PICK - On Saturday, October 2nd, Montague homeowners will open their doors as part of the Northeast Sustainable Energy Association's (NESEA) Green Buildings Open House event. Montague will be one of roughly 6,000 communities participating in the American Solar Energy Society's National Solar Tour. The national tour has expanded this year into all 50 states, Mexico and the Virgin Islands.

Tours are self-guided, and maps, descriptions, and open hours of the host sites are on NESEA's Green Buildings Open House webpages at www.nesea.org/greenbuildings. At least five homes will be featured in the town of Montague. The Montague energy committee is promoting Montague's participation. The committee encourages readers to bike to area green open houses, or park in a neighborhood and walk around to see the green buildings.



Turners Falls:

☞ Jack Nelson & Eileen Dowd, 26 J St., Open hours: 10:00 a.m. to 1:00 p.m.

This three-story brick build-

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speaker. His new book: *JFK and the Unspeakable: Why He Died and Why It Matters*, 11 a.m. 100 Cave Hill Road; Leverett, (413) 367-2202.

Burrito Rojo, Turners Falls: *Run For Your Guns*, 8 p.m.

Gender Role Free Contra, Montague Grange, Montague Center. Experienced session 4-5:30 p.m. \$5, chili benefit supper 6-7 p.m. Evening all level dance 7-10 p.m. \$7-\$10 sliding scale, students \$5. Caller Sue Rosen music Bruce Rosen and Shirley White.

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

Route 63 Roadhouse, Millers Falls: *Two Band Show...Rod Cummings & the Vibrators* along with *Rusty Flintcock*. Members of Lama Lasagna are performing, 9:30 p.m.

The Rendezvous, Turners Falls: *Thrive Revolution Dance Party*, 10 p.m. \$2 and up donation!

SUNDAY, OCTOBER 3rd
Great Falls Birding Trip with Mark Fairbrother! Depending on the weather the trip will cover the Upper Valley area. Meet at the Great Falls Discovery Center, Turners Falls for directions and carpooling., 8 a.m. to noon.

Deja Brew, Wendell, *Abigail Houghton*, Acoustic Soul, 8 to 10 p.m.

THURSDAY, OCTOBER 7th
The Rendezvous, Turners Falls: *Falltown String Band*, 7:30 p.m. free!

Deja Brew, Wendell, *The Relics*, Brian Mallet and Lefty Cullen playing oldies from the 50's & 60's, 8 to 10 p.m.

FRIDAY, OCTOBER 8th
The Rendezvous, Turners Falls: *Blackjack Crossing, Peter Nabut and the Wild Valley Hampsters*, \$5 cover.

Burrito Rojo, Turners Falls: *Ronald Meck*, Traditional and Contemporary Celtic

and Folk, .8 p.m.

The Rendezvous, Turners Falls: *Smiley Bob, Inc*, 9:30 p.m.

Shingle the Roof performs at 7 pm on Great Falls Coffeehouse, Turners Falls: *Shingle the Roof*. American fiddle tunes and traditional songs with haunting vocal harmonies, Tim Woodbridge, Jerry Devokatis, and Kate Spencer. In the Great Hall of the Great Falls Discovery Center. Sliding scale donation \$6- \$12, free for children.

FRIDAY & SATURDAY, OCTOBER 8th & 9th

The Uncommon Players Present: *The Farmdale Avenue Housing Estate Townswoman Guild Dramatic Society Murder Mystery*. Written by David McGillivray and Walter Zerlin Jr. Directed by Kimberley Morin. Continues 10/15 & 16 at 7:30 p.m., 10/10 at 2 p.m. Tickets \$10. South Deerfield Congregational Church. Reservations (413) 665-2481.

Ambush On T Street, 8 p.m. Zen Peacemakers, Montague. Advance tickets: www.zenpeacemakers.org. Created and performed by Court Dorsey, Al Miller and John Sheldon.

SATURDAY, OCTOBER 9th

Medieval Faire at The Grammar School campus, Putney, VT, 10 to 4 p.m. Enjoy the village as King Arthur and his royal court preside over games, feasts, and peasant frivolity. Join players gaming on the glen, merchants minding the village market, cooks tending a feast fit for a king, and musicians leading the festivities. Admission to the Medieval Faire is FREE for adults and children alike. www.the-grammarschool.org.

Old 78 Farm Fall Festival, 823 Orange Road, Warwick. The festival will feature music, farm fresh food, clothing and farm product vending, an escape artist, face

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ONGOING WEDNESDAYS

Great Falls Farmers Market. On the lawn near the Discovery Center, Avenue A, Turners Falls, 2 to 6 p.m.



www.gardencinemas.net
Showtimes for Friday, Oct. 1st to Sun., Oct. 3rd

- 1. THE TOWN R** in DTS sound DAILY 12:00 3:00 7:00 9:20
- 2. LEGEND OF THE GUARDIANS: THE OWLS OF GA'HOOLE** (3D) PG in DTS sound DAILY 12:00 2:00 4:00 6:45 8:45
- 3. WALL STREET: THE MONKEY NEVER SLEEPS** PG3 DAILY 12:00 3:00 7:00 9:30
- 4. RESIDENT EVIL: AFTERLIFE R** DAILY 3:15 9:15
- 4. DEVIL** PG13 DAILY 12:15 6:45
- 5. EASY A** PG13 DAILY 12:15 3:15 6:45 9:15
- 6. GET LOW** PG13 in DTS sound DAILY 12:30 3:30 6:30 9:00
- 7. CASE 39 R** DTS sound DAILY 12:30 3:30 6:30 9:00

THURSDAY, SEPTEMBER 30th
Opening Night of *Thrive Fest* featuring solo All-Stars such as Ray Mason and many many more. At the Rendezvous, Turners Falls. \$5 to infinity donation, call 863-2866 for info.

Burrito Rojo, Turners Falls: *David Wax Musuem*. 8 p.m. \$5 at the door. www.davidwaxmuseum.com. One of the highlights of the Green River Festival! "

Deja Brew, Wendell: *Eric Love*, Acoustic Guitar, 8 to 10 p.m. Singing all your favorite oldies from the 60's & 70's.

Route 63 Roadhouse, Millers Falls: Open Mic night with host Peter Kim, Jimmy Arnold and Special Guest Guitar Mark Herschler will be in the house, 9 p.m. All players welcome.

The Rendezvous, Turners Falls: *Thrive Fest Opening Night*, \$10-infinity donation, no-one turned away. Solo All-Stars Ray Mason, Carrie Ferguson, Jazer Giles, Peter Siegel, Heather Maloney and more. www.thriveproject.org

FRIDAY, OCTOBER 1st
Brick House Community Potluck, 5:30 to 8 p.m. Join neighbors for this free harvest supper.

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Burrito Rojo, Turners Falls: *Span of Sunshine, Original Cowards and Daniel Hales*, 8 p.m.

Route 63 Roadhouse, Millers Falls: *Mass Mobil Entertainment* with DJ Kyle 9 p.m.

Deja Brew, Wendell, *Patrick Coman*, Roots Americana, 9 to 11 p.m.

The Rendezvous, Turners Falls: *Thrive Fest Day Two*, \$12 and up, donation. Winterpills, Rusty Belle, Hilary Graves and Zack Holmes, 9:30.

FRIDAY & SATURDAY, OCTOBER 1st & 2nd
Performance by Paul Richmond, Suzy Polucci and Moonlight Davis at the Shea Theater, Turners Falls. *There's No Way To Tell From The First Kiss*. A benefit for The Montague Reporter! Doors open at 7 p.m., show at 7:30 p.m.

SATURDAY, OCTOBER 2nd
Source to the Sea River Clean-up. Various locations. 9 to 3 p.m. Meet at the Great Falls Discovery Center, Turners Falls. In Gill, Montague, East Deerfield, and Erving. Call Northfield Mountain Recreation and Environmental Center, (800) 859-2960. Or Connecticut River Watershed Council (413) 772-2020 x201.

Visit Montague green homes on the Northeast Sustainable Energy Association's Green Buildings Open House self-guided tour, 10 to 4 p.m. At least 2 homes will have open hours in Turners Falls and three in Montague Center. For area open house listings, www.nesea.org/greenbuildings.

The Peace Pagoda, Leverett, 25th Anniversary event. Free and open to the public. Author James Douglass guest



Senator Dunkin Fibber pontificates Friday & Saturday, October 1 & 2, 7:30 p.m. at the Shea Theater, Turners Falls. Performance by Paul Richmond (above), w/ Suzy Polucci and Moonlight Davis, "There's No Way To Tell from the First Kiss" a benefit for the Montague Reporter!



Jazzy Blues with A Ghost Quartet at Deja Brew on Saturday, October 2nd 9 to 11 p.m.

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MARY AZARIAN WOODBLOCK

BY LESLIE BROWN

MONTAGUE CITY - What a great year for hot weather crops! The tomatoes continue to ripen in large numbers, so I am eating a couple a day, and sharing with friends. Since I do not like canning, I am also looking for other ways to save the wonderful flavor of these tangy fruits to savor dur-

ing the coming winter months. Freezing is an option. You can of course make tomato sauces and stash them in your freezer. Tomatoes can also be frozen whole and then used in soups, stews or casseroles. They will not of course hold their shape, but they will hang on to their strong flavor and will certainly be tastier than any pallid tomato you will find at your favorite supermarket.

One of this year's tomato varieties in my garden is Amish

Salad. These have produced more prolifically than any of my other tomatoes this year. They are about the size of an apricot, bright red and firm in flesh. Unhappily, they have no more taste than most paste tomatoes.

They are, however, good candidates for drying. The method is simple: slice in half, spray with olive oil and top with basil. Place on a broiler pan, or any pan with a rack, and bake at 200 - 225 degrees for 24 four hours. Cool completely. The resulting fruit will not be totally dried like those you can purchase and then resuscitate with oil or warm water.

Instead, these tomatoes are moist to the touch and should be packed in tightly closed baggies in the freezer. Remove as needed, and enjoy intense tomato flavor added to any dish.

The peppers have begun to turn red, orange and brown (the chocolates). They are especially flavorful sautéed or grilled. These too can be saved by bagging whole and freezing. They can be easily sliced while still frozen, and then added to your cooking.

My small plot of winter squash and lemon cucumbers has suffered from overcrowding. The plants were so lush in the humid, tropical weather that the most aggressive grabbed most of the sunlight and the root room. Thus, while there are large Delicata squashes and lemon cucumbers, I have seen neither hide nor hair of my favorite Butter Bush.

Anyway, the squash plants have now fallen prey to powdery mildew, so I am harvesting the squash and storing them until we have truly reached the season for heavier cold weather comfort foods.

This is a good time to assess the relative success of the no-till garden spaces. The plots laid with cardboard have done well, and the original pieces laid out have softened completely. Lifting them revealed moist dirt beneath, full of insect activity. So in the midseason I laid out another layer of cardboard.

Presumably, over the winter this paper will all break down and become not only food for worms and insects but also new soil. The newspaper sections disintegrated even sooner, but were less successful in preventing the emergence of weeds, as the newsprint absorbed water far more quickly.

It is still a hands down bet to mulch the tomato and pepper plants with black plastic. Not only does black plastic snuff out other vegetation, but just as important, it raises the soil temperature and reflects warmth

back to these heat loving plants. The landscaping cloth I laid out around the new strawberry plants was the least successful. It is so light in weight that it now rides in mounds over the weeds, which continued to grow happily in the warmth beneath. It is also the least permeable, and the plants beneath it became very dry in the late season.

Nonetheless, with all of these treatments the soil has been less disturbed and, in the paper applications has actually been improved. The only major weeding this season has required was in my raised beds, which do not lend themselves to paper mulches as the space is so small. All the same, it was so dry until recently that pulling weeds has been easy, and now the beds are ready for another planting.

Next spring's early greens can be planted this month in one or two of the raised beds. They will start to develop and produce small leaves. Do not be concerned when the frost comes, these plants seem to grow dormant and then readily show up again as soon as the snow is gone, presenting you with some of the earliest and best spinach and lettuce you will see all season.

It will also soon be the time to plant garlic for next summer's harvest. The timing depends on where you live and on the appearance of a hard freeze. Choose large cloves and plant just barely under the surface. The goal is develop a root system and just a little green growth above before the ground freezes.

If you plant too early, the tops will grow too much and then be killed by frost. Wait too long and the frost will harden the ground too much for the roots to expand.

Other than this climate challenge, it's easy to grow good garlic. Just choose large cloves of a variety that grows locally, add some compost, and bone meal if you have it, to the planting hole, and plant cloves tip up. In the spring, snip the flower heads and wait for the tops to die back in July before you pull your harvest. You will be rewarded with the freshest, most flavorful garlic you've ever experienced.

Starting green plants for the next season feels like a way to ensure that after the winter spring will return again.

Happy gardening!

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