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THE VOICE OF THE VILLAGES

SEPTEMBER 24, 2009

Fire on L Street



RICHARD BARNES PHOTO

David Perry was the only tenant at home at the time fire broke out at 62 L Street on Tuesday afternoon, causing extensive damage to the building and killing five cats. Perry was unbarred.

BY DAVID DETMOLD

TURNERS FALLS – Fire once again came knocking in downtown Turners Falls, as an old wood frame two family house at 62 L Street was the scene Tuesday of a smoldering blaze that gutted the second floor.

One tenant was home when the fire broke out, but was sleeping at the time. Dave Perry, 54, said he woke to smell smoke, and left the building wearing only pajama bottoms, his white hair disheveled.

Perry said the fire appeared to have started in housemate Jackie Oranellas' (45) bedroom at the rear of the second floor; she was not home at the time. He said the air conditioners were on, and he thought one of them might have been the source of the spark that caused the fire.

On Wednesday, Turners Falls fire chief Ray Godin said the cause of fire was inappropriate use of extension cords. "No question about it. There were too many appliances attached to extension cords. We think one of them got crimped in the bedroom near the

see **FIRE** pg 14

Senior Center Project Revived

BY DAVID DETMOLD

ERVING – The selectboard breathed new life into the twice defeated senior center project on Monday, September 21st when selectboard chair Andy Tessier told a gathering of Erving seniors that he favored bringing the plan for a new \$2.3 million senior center back to annual town meeting in May of 2010.

"Go back in May," said Tessier. "See if the votes are there. Be ready to go forward by next fall."

Board member Andrew Goodwin floated an idea of using available town funds to finance part of the project soon, to take advantage of the current favorable construction climate, by installing water and sewer infrastructure at the site of the proposed building, on town owned land off Route 63, just north of the elementary school, but Tessier returned to the original concept of going out to bond for whatever part of the project could not be afforded from free cash, and seeking up to

\$600,000 in community development block grant (CDBG) funding the following year to help bring down the cost of the project for the town.

Erving has already invested about \$220,000 of combined town and CDBG funds in the design phase of the project, which failed to gain the two-thirds majority needed for approval by just four votes at town meetings in both May and June.

Council on Aging chair Collis Adams, who helped bring the project to town meeting floor this year, said he emerged from Monday's meeting, "re-energized. It was greatly relieving to me that Andy Tessier recommends we put it in front of the townspeople again."

Tessier also suggested the seniors mount a public relations campaign, using the pages of the *Around Town* newsletter and other means to convince the public at large that the new 7,000 foot senior center would provide opportunity

see **SENIOR** pg 9

ARTS AND LEAVES

Woven River Readied for Viewing



DETMOLD PHOTO

Sebastian Gutwein wraps up the Woven River project next week.

BY DAVID DETMOLD

TURNERS FALLS – Residents on the Hill will have an easier time getting to the art walk on October 3rd and 4th. The newest installation is practically at their doorstep, inviting them to travel the art pathway to downtown.

Woven River, an art project by ecological designer Sebastian Gutwein and friends, has been taking shape along both sides of the concrete walkway that leads from the intersection of Avenue B and High Street down to the curve of 7th Street. It will have its opening on Saturday, October 3rd, from 1 to 3 p.m., as part of

see **ART** pg 8

Sheffield Elementary Test Scores Show BIG Improvement



PHOTO BY ELLEN BLANCHETTE

Members of Ms. Klaiber's 5th grade class at Sheffield were among the students who scored so well on last year's MCAS tests. Sheffield exceeded all its annual yearly test score targets.

ELLEN BLANCHETTE

TURNERS FALLS – According to Sheffield School principal Elizabeth Musgrave, MCAS test scores for all grades tested, in all categories and

across all levels showed improvement beyond annual target requirements at the Sheffield Elementary School last year.

Musgrave said student

improvements were seen in every subject, many dramatically above target for annual yearly progress.

Sheffield became a newly configured grade 1-5

see **SCORES** pg 12

PET OF THE WEEK

Sweet & Snuggly



Xena

My name is Xena and I'm a seven-year-old female mastiff mix in need of a good home. Calm, sweet and snuggly. I'm like a giant teddy bear – I'm over 100 pounds! I am an ideal dog for someone who is home most of the time and wants a low maintenance, easy companion. I don't have the best leash manners but it's not too late to teach me!

I'll be a great dog for some lucky family. I can live with children over eight. I do need some help to learn to share my things, though, so no small children please. And no dogs or cats, please – I prefer to be the only (pet) love in your life! For more information on adopting me, please contact the Dakin Pioneer Valley Humane Society at (413) 548-9898 or via email: info@dpvhs.org.

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WENDELL LIBRARY NEWS

Wrestling with the Muse

Wrestling with the Muse, a free five-session poetry workshop, will be offered at the Wendell Free Library on Monday nights October 12th through November 9th, 6:30 to 8 p.m., in the meeting room.

Led by Wendell poet, Iina Singh, the course will be of interest to adults wanting to support their poetry reading and writing

practice. We will read, write and talk about poetry: what it is, why we write, and why it is absolutely necessary. Beginner poets are welcome.

Feel free to consult the books placed on reserve prior to the beginning of the workshop. Bring a poem that is important to you to the first class. Sign up at the Wendell library: (978) 544-3559.

CUSHMAN LIBRARY NEWS

Book Sale

BERNARDSTON - Cushman Library, at 28 Church Street in Bernardston, will hold its annual Book and Bake Sale on Saturday, September 26th from 9:00 a.m. to 4:00 p.m., with a rain date of September 27th. The sale will feature good quali-

ty used books, audiobooks, videocassettes, music CDs, DVDs, and CDRoms to benefit the Friends of Cushman Library.

Donations of materials in good condition will be accepted up to the date of the sale. For more info: contact 648-5402.

CARNEGIE LIBRARY NEWS

On Top of Spaghetti



LINDA HICKMAN PHOTO

LINDA HICKMAN
TURNERS FALLS – Camryn Laster of Gill, age 2½, enjoyed his spaghetti at the Spaghetti Story Hour at the Carnegie Library on Wednesday, September 23rd.

Story Hour meets every Wednesday morning at 10:15 at the Carnegie Library. It is designed for young children of

all ages and run by Ruth O'Mara. Each week there is a theme, stories, snack, and activities.

This week the children enjoyed spaghetti with a choice of toppings and juice, sang "On Top of Spaghetti," made pasta necklaces, and enjoyed hearing stories. For more info, call the Carnegie Library, 863-3214.

SENIOR CENTER ACTIVITIES – Sept 28th to Oct 2nd

GILL/MONTAGUE Senior Center, 62 Fifth Street, Turners Falls, is open Monday to Friday from 9:00 a.m. to 2:00 p.m. Congregate meals are served Tuesday through Friday at 11:30 a.m. Meal reservations must be made a day in advance by 11:00 a.m. Messages can be left on our machine when the center is not open. Meal site Manager is Becky Cobb. Council on Aging Director is Roberta Potter; call 863-9357. Reserve your tickets now for the Salem Cross Inn Harmoni-Cats trip on October 20th. The Polka Fest trip on September 29th has been cancelled. Tai Chi classes begin on October 15th, 10:00 a.m. Free workshop October 1st: "Is it Alzheimer's or Just Forgetfulness?" with Wanda Landry, Director of the Quabbin Valley Alzheimer's Center. Painting class begins October 13th. Register now, \$10 Gill Montague Seniors and \$15 from

other towns for six sessions.

Monday, Sept. 28th

10:00 a.m. Senior Aerobics

10:45 a.m. Easy Aerobics

1:00 p.m. Knitting Circle

Tuesday, Sept. 29th

9:00 a.m. Walking group

10:30 a.m. Chair Yoga

1:00 p.m. Canasta

Wednesday, Sept. 30th

10:00 a.m. Senior Aerobics

12:45 a.m. Bingo

Thursday, Oct. 1st

10:00 a.m. Workshop: "Is It Alzheimer's?"

1:00 p.m. Pitch

Friday, Oct. 2nd

10:00 a.m. Senior Aerobics

10:45 a.m. Easy Aerobics

1:00 p.m. **FRTA Forum**

ERVING Senior Center, 18 Pleasant St., Erving (Old Center School, 1st Floor), is open Monday through Friday from 9 a.m. to 2 p.m. for activities and congregating meals. For info and reservations, call Polly



DETMOLD PHOTO

By Joseph A. Parzych – E.T.&L. Corp has spared no equipment on the Spring Street bridge replacement job in Turners Falls. There are three excavators – one equipped with a large breaker. The old bridge is not as ready to collapse as once thought. A fourth piece of heavy equipment is a tall crane-like machine owned by HUB Foundation, not pictured here, used for boring holes for the foundation of the new bridge. HUB bored foundation holes for piers when the new bridge in Millers Falls was under construction in 2006.

MCTV Channel 17

Visit www.montaguema.net
for complete schedule

BOOK and BAKE SALE

September 26th

(Rain Date: Sept. 27th)

9:00 – 4:00

Cushman Library

28 Church St.,

Bernardston

413-648-5402

FRTA Open Forum

The Franklin Regional Transit Authority management team will hold an *open forum* at the *Gill-Montague Senior Center* to discuss senior transportation needs and issues on Friday, October 2nd, at 1:00 p.m. Seniors are urged to attend; information gathered at this forum can affect their ability to get around. Free transportation to the meeting is available. Call 773-8090 extension 204 by Wednesday 9/30 for a ride.

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

NOTES FROM THE GILL-MONTAGUE SCHOOL COMMITTEE

District Meeting Set for September 30th

BY ELLEN BLANCHETTE - Superintendent Carl Ladd announced the date for the district meeting, for the towns of Montague and Gill to try to come to an agreement on the '09 operating for the district schools will be held on Wednesday, September 30th, at Turners Falls High School at 6:30 p.m. All registered voters from the two towns are welcome to attend.

Ladd asked the school committee members for guidance as to how to present the district's proposed \$16,657,788 budget to the towns.

Ladd was concerned the committee was divided on the budget, and he was not clear how strongly he should endorse the budget, though the committee had previously voted to approve it. Ladd said, "I think it's time to vote for the budget and move on," but didn't want the public to get mixed messages.

Jeff Singleton, member from Montague, suggested Ladd and school committee chair Michael

Langknecht simply present the facts of the budget, and said it was "OK to say we have disagreements."

Jen Waldron, member from Gill, said, "I think we should stand by our budget."

Joyce Phillips of Montague said, "I do not believe voting down the budget is the way to bring the state to the table. It's not going to happen." Phillips said when you have someone like Senator Stan Rosenberg saying, "You don't have any unfunded mandates; you just don't always get the money," it will take more than voting down the budget to solve the problem. She said the townspeople deserve the facts. "Just saying vote it down is not going to get us anywhere."

In further discussion, Sorrel Hatch of Gill said, "The only way forward is to support our own budget."

Emily Monosson of Montague said she was torn. She could see that things were getting worse budget-wise over the years, and

felt something had to be done to bring change, but she wanted to support the schools. Still, she said she might be willing to "take a risk" to keep the state at the table. Kristin Boyle said voting down a budget just to make the state take notice was not a tactic she condoned. Boyle suggested the committee should be proud of what they've accomplished in the district and decide based on whether the budget is good for the kids and their education.

The school committee voted 5-3 to support the budget, with Singleton, Monosson and Sandra Brown of Gill voting against, and Langknecht abstained.

District treasurer Peter Roy-Clark asked the school committee to approve his decision to move the Mery C. O'Brien Scholarship trust fund from the Bank of America to Bank of Western Mass Wealth Management. He said the school district had received a very generous offer from the Bank of Western Mass to charge a .35% annual fee to manage the fund, which is currently close to \$400,000. The Bank of America is currently charging .5% to .75% of the balance in fees annually. Moving the

trust saves half of the finance charges and also puts the district in compliance with regulations that require them not to have the trust in an account that includes stock investments. The committee voted unanimously to approve the change.

Boyle asked members to refrain from sending materials by email, and asked for all committee correspondence be sent to her by mail. She said it seemed like the committee has been "trying to have a meeting by email;" she felt she couldn't keep up, because her computer time is limited.

Langknecht said he could only control official materials sent from the district. Principals Musgrave and Rita Detweiler of Gill Elementary, in the audience, spoke among themselves about their concerns that emailed correspondence between school committee members could constitute violations of the open meeting law.

ENERGY SAVINGS WORKSHOP

BY TRACY ROGERS

GILL - The Center for Ecological Technology will present a free Introduction to Home Energy Savings workshop at the Gill town hall on Monday, September 28th at 6:30 p.m. Sponsored by the town of Gill, the workshop will provide simple steps to reducing the use of electricity, water, and heat; do-it-yourself techniques for basic home sealing and heating; and resources for financing home audits and alterations. Presenters will illustrate hands-on tips, indicate which actions are most cost effective, and provide free educational materials for everyone attending. For more information, please contact: 863-9347 or administrator@gillmass.org.

We Saved Montague Skate Park

BY ELLEN SPRING & MIKE JACKSON

TURNERS FALLS - This past Saturday afternoon, the Friends of the Great Falls Sk8 Park recognized the contributions of local youth in securing a temporary location for the skate park with a free clinic and celebration. On this perfect, late summer day, pro skater Alex Maldonado and others from Northampton's Board Room and skate park helped kids from 7 to 19 improve their skills.

The clinic was the first public event held at the park's Avenue A and 11th Street location, which has been open since April. Supporters hope the temporary park will eventually be replaced

with a permanent, concrete facility in a renovated Unity Park.

Youth on skateboards and scooters practiced their sport on the ramps, while enthused onlookers enjoyed hot dogs donated by sports footwear com-



pany Vans. adult volunteers and community leaders, helped secure the new location, when the lease on the old skate park was terminated. Their lobbying work over the fall and winter - participating in information and planning sessions, and mobilizing their friends for select-board and town meetings - paid off with a place to skate this spring and summer.

Over the summer, an old youth-painted sign reading SAVE MONTAGUE SKATE PARK was discovered at the Brick House. With the assistance of Joe Landry at the Art Jam celebration, taking place just down the bike path on Saturday, the sign was updated to read, WE SAVED MONTAGUE SKATE PARK.

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Build a Sustainable Fiscal Future

BY MICHAEL NAUGHTON
MONTAGUE – It may surprise some people to learn that the upcoming Gill-Montague Regional School District (GMRSD) meeting, on September 30th, will not decide the district's FY 2010 budget. That decision has already been made. When the Massachusetts Department of Elementary and Secondary Education (DESE) commissioner, Mitchell Chester, set the district's temporary budget at \$16,657,788 in July, he indicated it will become permanent in December if no agreement is reached before then. Since then, the GMRSD school committee has accepted that budget, and it has no plans to further discuss FY 2010.

As a result, the question right now is not what the district's budget will be, but when the decision will become official, and by extension whether DESE will be obliged to assume financial control of the district for another year. If there is no agreement by December 1st, the commissioner will set the budget, and DESE will assume control; if district voters agree to the school committee's request before then, the process will end and DESE will be off the hook.

DESE officials would like to avoid renewed oversight of the district, and they have urged the district to try to reach an agreement with the towns. At this point, Gill town officials have endorsed acceptance of the commissioner's budget.

Montague town officials, however, have recommended accepting – for the third time, in the case of Montague voters – a budget based on the "affordable assessment" calculation they developed last January. The debate at the district meeting will be over which budget, if any, to accept.

Arguments in favor of accepting GMRSD's requested budget seem to fall into three basic categories. First is a desire to avoid

another DESE takeover, either because of DESE's reluctance or because a takeover is considered a bad thing for the district. Also, there is a desire to set the district budget without further delay – to avoid "bickering" and "move forward". Finally, there is the belief that we won't get any further help from the state anyway, and we need to work among ourselves to get our local budgets in order.

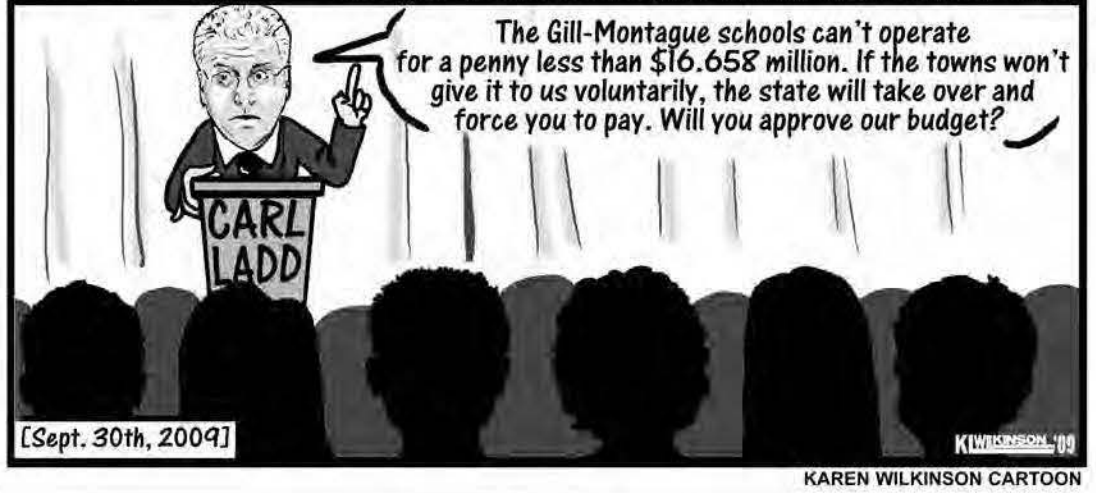
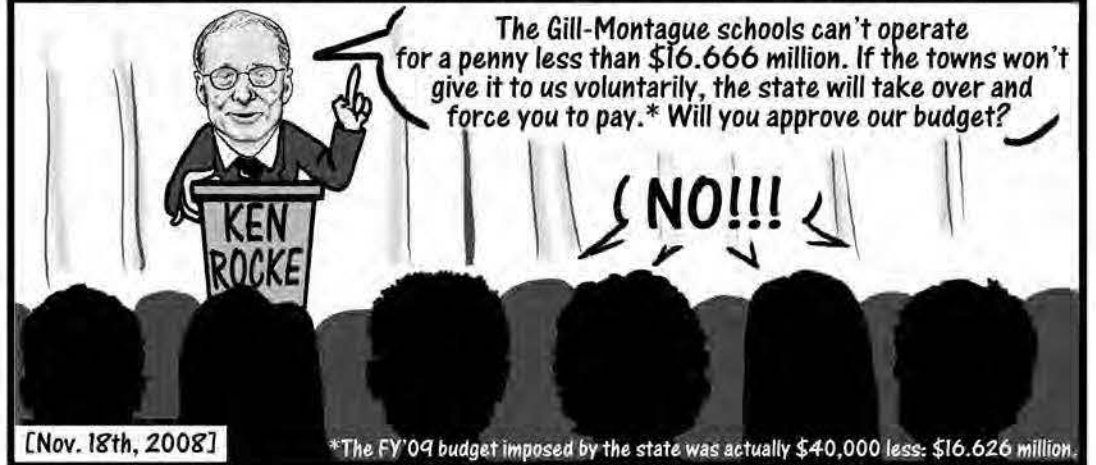
Arguments in favor of the budget based on an affordable assessment basically boil down to the belief that it's what we can afford, and approving anything higher would be irresponsible. If that means another DESE takeover, then so be it. Some of us even believe that continued DESE involvement would be a good thing, since the changes GMRSD needs to make will be impossible without cooperation from the state.

If DESE finds this inconvenient, they might remember Montague has been very clear and consistent over the past nine months about what we can afford. We have had a number of conversations with DESE representatives, and they never challenged either our calculations or our resolve not to spend above our means. Nevertheless, the commissioner is now asking the towns to spend an additional \$216,000, with no rationale beyond saying he believes the district can live with it. Personally, I think we need a better reason than that.

As for putting FY 2010 behind us, that's been done – I don't know anyone who wants to continue the debate. There is no "bickering", and both the towns and the district are beginning to look at FY 2011. And while I agree we need to work locally to solve our budget problems, I don't see how it helps anything for the towns to agree to spend money they can't afford while

see **FUTURE** pg 6

HAVE YOU LEARNED YOUR LESSON YET?



LETTERS TO THE EDITOR

Gill-Montague Fact Check

As the Gill Montague Regional School District prepares to present its budget to the district meeting on September 30th, 6:30 p.m. at the Turners Falls High School auditorium, some GMRSD school committee members have chosen to express their views on the budget and the budgeting process to a wider audience through a variety of mass media, including the internet and local newspapers.

I support my colleagues in their efforts to bring this discussion to a larger audience. We are elected, public officials and should be responsive and communicative to our constituents, and the following clarification is in no way intended to restrict or restrain the discussion on the

GMRSD budget, nor should my statement be construed as endorsing or opposing any of the expressed positions.

Rather, in keeping with my responsibility as chairperson, I'm just trying to keep the facts straight.

Despite what has been asserted, the GMRSD does not have a "draft, two or three year plan for fiscal stability." Last May, we were presented with a draft of a plan to survive the next two years in hopes the economy rebounds and somebody comes through with more money. That plan included no innovation or reform but, rather, relied on "stimulus funds" for the 'out year' (2012) that have since been applied, by state government, to the 'in year'

(2010). The author of that draft, former GMRSD superintendent Ken Roche, has long since repudiated that plan as being completely ineffectual.

The GMRSD has never posted a budget deficit, and so, can't possibly have "recovered" from one.

While these assertions don't quite amount to propaganda, they are still profoundly misleading and must not be allowed to confuse discussions over issues that are complicated enough already.

Thank you and please participate in your community.

– Michael Langknecht

Michael Langknecht is the chair of the Gill-Montague school committee.

Recover Jam an End of Summer Blast

Summer is over, and crisp nights are upon us. But last weekend was pure delight, with Indian summer in full swing at the Sober Jam fest at the White Eagles campground out on Plain Road in Greenfield. This terrific picnic and music festival was sponsored by the Recover Project, located on Federal Street in Greenfield.

If you don't know about it, this organization helps people who have had trouble with drug or alcohol addictions. The non-profit agency serves as a peer-driven

resource center and a meeting place for family and friends of folks who are transitioning back to society. The backbone and organizer who runs the center is Linda Sarage. She and her volunteer staff must have put in 60 hours a week lately getting the Sober Fest off the ground, and getting out the word about September being national 'Recovery Month.'

The Sober Fest ran from 1 p.m. to 6 p.m. with terrific food and soda provided by an all volunteer staff, and cake and ice cream for dessert. Last Saturday, the gorgeous weather and the scenic backdrop of the Green River

drew a crowd of between 200 and 300 people through the day. Five bands – Black Top Kenney, T I M E, Laurie B, One Night Stand, and Thin Ice – played. There were many children who enjoyed themselves, having their faces painted and jumping on the giant balloon bouncing cage. Music and dancing were high on the agenda, and all seemed to enjoy the scene immensely.

This is an annual event, so mark it down on your calendars for next year. As a member of the recovery community, I invite you to drop by or check us out on our website: www.recoveryproject.org

– Greg Williams
Turners Falls

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GUEST EDITORIAL

Letter to the Commissioner

To: Mitchell Chester,
Commissioner
Massachusetts Department of
Elementary and Secondary
Education

**BY JOHN HANOLD &
PATRICIA PRUITT**

MONTAGUE – As you may know, at our annual town meeting on June 6th, Montague town meeting voters approved an assessment of \$7,125,199 for the Gill-Montague Regional School District (GMRSD), by a two thirds vote. That figure, recommended by the finance committee and selectboard, was based on a calculation of what we believe our town can sustainably afford.

After the school committee chose not to accept that figure, Montague voters reaffirmed their vote at a subsequent special town

meeting on August 5th, adjusting the number to \$7,120,370 for changes in state aid.

In the interim, you chose a budget that generates an assessment of \$7,302,783 for our town. We are writing to request an explanation as to why you believe we can afford this higher figure. Since your department assumed fiscal oversight of the district back in December, 2008, we have met repeatedly with associate commissioner Jeffrey Wulfson and George Gearhart. We have provided them with extensive documentation of our town's financial situation, along with possible plans for the future and our specific rationale for recommending the assessment that we did.

As you are no doubt aware, in

recent years both Montague and the GMRSD have relied to an unhealthy extent on one-time revenues and fiscal reserves to balance their operating budgets. Continuation of this practice will result in a catastrophic adjustment when those resources are exhausted, and will undermine the financial stability necessary to support future municipal and educational needs. Rather than continue this trend, we in Montague are trying to get our fiscal house in order. Our assessment recommendation this year was made with the dual purpose of trying to ensure that our schools get their "fair share," while at the same time making necessary reductions in our use of one-time funds to balance our budget. To us, that seemed like the prudent and responsible thing to do.

see **LETTER** pg 12

The Jack Bassett Montague Mile Returns to Support Our Students

BY STACEY LANGKNECHT

It's back! The Montague Mile will be held this year on Sunday, October 18th, at 1:00 p.m., at the Turners Falls High School track. This great family event is open to all ages and abilities: participants simply walk or run the mile around the track and raise money to directly enhance education at each of the Gill-Montague Regional schools.

This year, in addition to honoring the event's namesake, Jack Bassett, who has been a terrific supporter of our community and schools, we are also honoring an unusual recipient: the *Montague Reporter*!

Honoring a newspaper may seem strange, but when you think about all the *Reporter* has done to help our community, it makes sense. This fledgling weekly newspaper, turning eight years old next week, has provided a service to the entire town of Montague and the surrounding towns of Gill, Wendell, and Erving by covering events and issues in depth that are important to these communities. It has also created a wonderful community feeling by providing us with homey columns like the Montague Energy Corner, the

Gardener's Companion, and, of course, Jep's Place, currently taking a break. The paper also covers town library activities, senior center activities, and naturally, GMRSD activities.

When approached by the Montague Mile's co-coordinators, Bob Avery and Stacey Langknecht, about honoring the weekly newspaper, editor David Detmold was surprised, and expressed his gratitude for the honor. He met with Montague Mile organizers recently to talk about the newspaper and its supporters.

The *Montague Reporter* is a community-owned newspaper that recently attained federal 501c4 non-profit status, with about 50 volunteer writers, artists, editors, and board members who work with the one full-time staff member and five part-time staff members. Together, they make this venture quite an amazing feat of production each week.

The newspaper adapted the masthead of our town's original newspaper, published from the 1870s to the 1920s, the *Turners Falls Reporter*, carrying on a great tradition for Montague.

see **BASSETT** pg 6

Live Action Now with Turners Soccer



The Turners Falls Boys Varsity Soccer Team

An article in the *Republican* called the September 17th game a thriller, one of the "great high school games of the year so far."

Granted the season is just getting going, but I couldn't have expressed last Thursday night's boys soccer game against undefeated first ranked Granby in better terms. Though the score was a heartbreaking 3-4, I'd count the game as a win for coach Greg Bergstrom's team.

As I watched, I couldn't help but think how far this young men's team has come since last

year, when I repeatedly told my son, then a Turner's freshman, that this was a team for the future. Judging from last Thursday's game, the future is now.

Despite the lax (and that's putting it kindly) referees, our Turners players played on, keeping tempers in check, and their heads in the game. A difficult feat when the elbows are flying, but the yellow cards are apparently tucked away in places the refs can't seem to find.

Not only that, but last

Thursday's game was a demonstration of skill versus might. While Granby repeatedly hammered the ball down the field, the Turners team dribbled and passed their way around them – showing incredible restraint and skill.

These guys have talent, and if you're looking for live action rather than televised, check out any one of their home games. If the future isn't now, it'll certainly be here soon with this team!

– **Emily Monosson**
Montague Center

Bus Service for Shutesbury

My name is Miette Muller, and I have a suggestion for the Franklin Regional Transit Authority. I am 12 years old, and I live in Shutesbury. I was talking to my friends the other day and we were thinking about how wonderful it would be if there were a bus that went through Shutesbury, Leverett and Pelham. I know we are not the only people who would enjoy a bus that went through these three towns, and I know we wouldn't be the only people who would use it.

I talked to my dad and this is what he proposed: a bus that went from Greenfield through

Montague, Leverett (stopping at Leverett Co-op), Shutesbury (state beach and Shutesbury Center) and from there taking 202 North to New Salem then Orange or 202 South to Pelham.

I know plenty of people who would use this transportation regularly. Also many students live in Shutesbury on the lake, as well as UMass employees. They would love to be able to go to Amherst after school and take public transportation home around 4:30 or 5:00 p.m. We would appreciate if you considered our request.

– **Miette Muller**
Shutesbury

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NOTES FROM THE MONTAGUE SELECTBOARD

Boundary Survey for Montague Ctr School

BY BILL DRAKE – The Montague selectboard has approved spending \$5,000 dedicated to surveying the Montague Center School property boundary lines.

“There were a number of issues raised about the boundaries, which then affects the number of parking spaces the school property can provide,” town administrator Frank Abbondanzio told the selectboard on Monday, September 21st.

The town of Montague hired Greenberg and Associates, of Putney, VT, to create a reuse plan for the former elementary school building, which has been closed since 2008. Greenberg and Associates used assessor maps as well as deeds to determine the property boundaries, but abutters to the school feel the property is smaller than Greenberg and Associates’ findings.

The \$5,000 allocated is higher than the four quotes the town received for surveying the land, and any unused portion of the funds will return to the town’s program income fund.

In addition to the \$19,400 the town originally allocated for the re-use study, Montague has also approved spending \$67,500 for maintenance of the former school building over the last two years. The latest appropriation brings the total the town has invested in the school building since fall 2008 to around \$92,000.

Greenberg and Associates have reported that the easiest reuse for the building would be as

a school, although condominiums for seniors or co-housing have been listed as alternatives.

Ambulance Service

Also on Monday, Abbondanzio discussed a proposed contract with Baystate Health Ambulance Service, out of Greenfield. Baystate Health wanted the town of Montague to sign a three-year contract in which BHA would provide two fully staffed and equipped vehicles for the coverage area that includes Montague and other towns.

After reading from a letter signed by Mark Allen, chair of the prudential committee of the Turners Falls Fire Department, Abbondanzio instead recommended the town not sign the contract as written.

In the letter, Allen stated his intent to place a resolution before voters of the Turners Falls Water District this winter to authorize the Turners Falls Fire Department to provide ambulance service for the Montague area. The department hopes to improve response times for emergency calls and to help reduce the tax burden on residents.

Reached by phone, Allen said his committee is still working out the numbers, but an estimate suggests the number of calls for ambulance service in Montague could generate enough revenue to hire four full-time employees to join regular firefighters, and staff an ambulance twenty four hours a day, seven days a week, in ten-hour and fourteen-hour shifts,

and still have about \$100,000 left over to support operational costs for the department.

“With tight budgets, towns are feeling the need to generate new revenue, and that’s what we’re doing,” Allen said.

If passed by the voters, basic ambulance service will be available through the Turners Falls Fire Department in July 2010, with a steady ramping up to full paramedic service in 12 to 18 months.

Allen suggested that BHA and the town of Montague sign a full contract for fiscal year 2010, and a paramedic back up contract for FY 2011. Also, Allen suggested the town sign a six months notice of termination instead of 12 months, to give the town more flexibility.

Currently, there is no formal contract in place between BHA and the town of Montague.

Peter Golrick, chair of the Turners Falls airport commission, briefed the selectboard on the hiring process for a new airport manager. Mike Sweeney resigned his post as the part-time airport manager on September 4th, after nearly six years on the job. The airport manager search subcommittee met on Monday, September 21st to work out the advertisement wording, and will report back to the full commission at their next regularly scheduled meeting, on October 12th.

Golrick said that the airport runway expansion is “on target” and should be completed “at around Thanksgiving.”

BASSETT from pg 5

And they’re planning to expand soon to cover the town of Leverett, because, Detmold said, their goal is to cover not just the town of Montague, but all of its bordering towns.

One of the objectives of choosing an honoree for the Montague Mile each year is to select a great role model for our students. All of the volunteers helping out with the Montague Mile felt this wonderful community newspaper sets a great

example for our young people in many ways, primarily with their community involvement and demonstration of how important good journalism can be for a region.

In fact, Detmold said he has been trying to get our high school students more involved with the newspaper and welcomes their input. In particular he’d love to get a student or two to cover TFHS sports events, but he’d also welcome other ideas and correspondence – even poet-

ry and cartoons – from the students.

Together, the *Montague Reporter* and the Montague Mile hope to beat last year’s fundraising goal of \$2,000 to continue to provide additional educational opportunities to the students attending our local schools.

To participate in the Montague Mile, please contact Bob Avery at 863-9205. To sponsor the event, please contact Stacey Langknecht at 367-9418.



NOTES FROM THE WENDELL SELECTBOARD

Town Hall Insulation on Wendell’s Agenda

JOSHUA HEINEMANN – Keeping heat in the town hall, keeping heat out of the foyer of the new town offices, and keeping moisture out of the basement of the senior center were all on the docket at the selectboard meeting on Wednesday, September 16th.

And then there was the matter of the missing frozen food.

Following up on a complaint from the Wendell Full Moon Coffeehouse committee, the town is looking into replacing fraying insulation above the ceiling of the town hall with better material that will hold in the heat without showering performers with powdery debris.

Town administrative coordinator Nancy Aldrich reported that Eastern Weatherization of Montague Center had provided an estimate of \$8,000 to insulate the ceiling and walls of the town hall.

Aldrich said there might be funds to reimburse this expense available from the American Recovery and Reinvestment Act (ARRA), but the paperwork could take so much time the work

might not get done before winter.

Selectboard member Jeffrey Pooser suggested the annual cost to heat the building now is probably \$10,000.

Board member Daniel Keller said he would talk with the finance committee about possible ways to get the work done and paid for before heating season arrives. Better work fast.

Between the foundation stones and the interior of the basement, there are gaps where daylight shows through. These could be sealed by the town custodian with spray foam insulation.

Amherst Glass declined to bid on the job of replacing fixed windows in the town office building vestibule with windows that vent, but two other bids came in. The board is interested in installing windows that open, because the foyer heats up to well over 100 degrees on sunny summer days. The board approved the bid from Greenfield Glass to do this work for \$2,225.

The building construction account still has enough money to cover this amount.

see WENDELL page 13

FUTURE from pg 4

hoping the future will be better. I also believe finding a truly sustainable solution will be impossible without significant involvement by the state (not necessarily money), and if they have financial control of the district they will be that much closer to the discussions.

There are some who believe the voters should reject all budget proposals until the district and the towns have a viable plan for a sustainable future. While I agree that having a plan is absolutely necessary, I’m not willing to go that far. I think supporting Montague’s “affordable budget” will indicate that we have considered the problem and are willing to shoulder our respon-

sibility to support education, while at the same time recognizing the financial realities we face.


It’s time for the district and the state to admit that hope is not a plan, and to join town officials in working to build a truly sustainable future.

Mike Naughton has lived in Montague since 1974, and has been a town meeting member from Precinct 2 for over a decade. He rejoined the finance committee in July, 2008. He can be reached at mjnaught@crocker.com or by looking in the telephone book. The opinions expressed here are his own and are not necessarily shared by anyone else in town government.



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NOTES FROM THE ERVING SELECTBOARD

Thirty-Six Show Up to Speak at Gas Station Hearing

BY BILL FRANKLIN

ERVING – There seemed to be some confusion as to the actual purpose of the public hearing before the planning board held Thursday night, September 17th, at the Erving Elementary School regarding proposed changes to the town's zoning bylaws.

Erving is considering allowing construction of a gas station within the aquifer protection zone, which would require a zoning change. A number of individuals attending the hearing expected they would be able to present evidence for or against the proposed change to Erving's five-year-old aquifer protection plan.

Jacque Boyden, elected as acting chairperson of the board, stated that Thursday's hearing was not for the purpose of argument pro and con. Rather, said Boyden, the limited scope of the hearing was "to inform; make recommendations; get comments; and to clarify the issues."

The proper venue for argument and evidence, Boyden said, will be the special town meeting on zoning changes to be held on October 5th, at 7 p.m., also at the Erving Elementary School.

The proposed changes to Erving's zoning bylaws would permit a gas station with above-ground fuel storage tanks to be constructed within the aquifer protection overlay district in Erving. A second revision would allow the construction of a fast food restaurant within the same district. The proposed changes have come about in response to a petition drive initiated by French King Entertainment Center owners Ralph and Eric Semb, who hope to build a fast food restaurant and gas station on Route 2 at the site of their former Cintree Living Restaurant.

At the table with Boyden sat planning board members Bill Morris and Carol Lyman. Peggy Sloane, planning director for the Franklin Regional Council of Governments, was present to clarify technical and procedural issues.

The planning board's regular chairperson, Jeff Dubay, recused himself from the hearing, in response to a charge of conflict of interest leveled by finance committee member Daniel Hammock at the August 13th planning board hearing. Dubay's wife owns Freight House Antiques, a business with a coffee counter that might be negatively affected by the construction of a new convenience store in town.

At an earlier hearing this past April, the same proposal drew a large crowd, where a majority of those in attendance registered strong support for the proposed zoning changes through a straw poll, called for by Eric Semb.

Presently, Erving residents drive to either Gill or Orange to buy gas; there is no filling station in Erving.

Sloane said there would be oversight of any gas station built in an aquifer protection zone to ensure safety of the town's water supply. This process would include "110% containment and testing," along with approval by the Massachusetts Department of Environmental Protection (DEP).

Currently, because of the high quality of Erving's drinking water, the DEP has granted a waiver to the town, requiring testing of the aquifer only every five years, rather than the quarterly testing that would be required if the gas station were built in the aquifer protection zone.

Dubay, speaking from the audience, asked who would bear the cost of increased testing.

Boyden indicated the water commissioners (the selectboard) will be responsible for the testing. Dubay drew laughs when he pointed out that, in Erving, "you can be water commissioner without knowing how to spell 'water'."

Sloane said that in complex matters, Erving's bylaws allow the town to bring in outside experts.

Rosemary Mathey, speaking from the audience, asked, "If

there is contamination, if the worst should happen, what is our game plan?"

Sloane explained, "The responsible party must clean it up – or find another source [of drinking water]."

"We need to look at a worst possible scenario and have a contingency plan," added Mathey.

Stanley Gradowski, also speaking from the floor, stated he had participated in clean-ups involving PCBs and contaminants far worse than gasoline. "I've seen how it works. There's not only testing at the time, but in the future."

Gradowski asked, "Can we build a ship that won't sink? Sure we can – ask the people on the Titanic." But he added, "We can only give it our best efforts."

Ivan Ussach, from the Millers River Watershed Council, who had intended to present evidence of existing fuel spills in Northfield, Athol and other areas, stated, "There will be a risk. You can not eliminate that risk."

Joe Graveline came hoping to present evidence of a recent spill at a Northfield Mobile station that operated there for three decades. When the station

closed and the storage tanks were removed, the unreported spills were discovered. "Nine hundred and sixty tons of impacted soil – and they're not done yet... It's like asking the fox to give a tally of hens in the henhouse every day – which ones died naturally and which ones ended up in his belly. The honor system didn't work in this case," Graveline added, "We have a wonderful opportunity to learn from other towns' experiences."

As to the drive through zoning change, Dubay questioned the fairness of the proposed neighborhood commercial district. This change would affect an area so small that only one property owner would be able to build a drive-through restaurant, thus granting an advantage that other businesses would be hard pressed to compete with. This might give the appearance of "spot zoning," and be rejected by the state attorney general.

Dubay added, "People who are complaining about driving to get gas will have to drive the same distance to get milk when the local businesses go under."

In response, Gradowski suggested that people driving from points east will stop to get gas and "look around to see what other businesses are around," and hopefully patronize those businesses.

"People come from all over the world to enjoy our town's natural beauty," said Dubay. The bylaws' charter is to promote the general welfare and to protect Erving's quality of life.

In an unrelated matter, the planning board voted not to change the building height restrictions in the commercial district. Rather than a 35 foot restriction, the board affirmed a 45 foot limit.

Special Town Meeting

ERVING will hold a special town meeting on October 5th, at 7 p.m. at the Erving Elementary School. On the agenda are proposed zoning changes to allow for the construction of a gas station within the aquifer protection zone and to allow for the establishment of drive through restaurants in a designated zone in Erving.

Also on the warrant is an article to allow the planning board to hire outside consultants to assist the board. Other articles would provide \$10,000 for police salaries, \$20,000 to send a police officer to the training academy, and \$6,000 to cover the town's expenses in the upcoming special election to fill the vacant U.S. senate seat from Massachusetts.

HIGHLIGHTS FROM THE ERVING POLICE LOG
Motor Vehicle Mayhem

Wednesday, 9/16

2:15 p.m. Motor vehicle accident on Route 2 near westbound bypass.

6:33 p.m. Report of two cars racing on Route 2, westbound. Stopped same and spoke to both subjects.

Friday, 9/18

3:50 p.m. Mutual aid to Gill police, report of suspicious activity on West Gill Road. Checked area, all OK.

6:00 p.m. Report of motor vehicle crossing lanes on Route 63, southbound. Unable to locate.

Saturday, 9/19

3:30 p.m. Report of erratic motorcycle operation with a child on the

back, Route 2, eastbound. Located same and spoke with operator of vehicle. Report taken.

4:10 p.m. Report of child endangerment at a High Street address. Under investigation.

6:55 p.m. Report of past breaking and entering at a Prospect Street address.

10:45 p.m. Report of a motor vehicle crash, car vs. construction sign on Route 2 at Erving Paper Mill. Unable to locate vehicle or damaged sign.

Sunday, 9/20

12:00 a.m. Report of a large gathering of underage youths at a West Main Street address. Party dispersed.

3:00 p.m. Motor vehicle accident without injury on Route 63 at Lillian's Way.

Monday, 9/21

5:25 p.m. Report of child endangerment at a High Street address. After investigation, charges filed.



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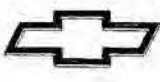
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Lake Pleasant Holds a Gala Reunion



Left to Right: Nathan Hurley, Joyce Cote, Dotty Zellman, Sarah Ray and Kim York at the pie auction at the Lake Pleasant reunion on Saturday

BY DAVID JAMES

LAKE PLEASANT – More than 100 vehicles – stacked three deep across the back boundary and lining the length of the northern driveway of the Independent Order of Scalpers, Miscoluspi Lodge, off Lake Pleasant Road –

functioned as time-travel machines Saturday, September 19th, transporting more than 200 people back to yesteryears of life and times in this smallest of Montague's five villages.

Declared as a Lake Pleasant Reunion – the first such event

since village Old Home Day celebrations drifted into discontinuation in the late 1970s – those gathered renewed old acquaintances and recounted multitudinous and multifarious, angelic and nefarious, remembrances of things long since transformed into legend.

The reunion began at noon with a potluck buffet of homemade foodstuffs ranging from appetizers to a broader assortment of desserts than available from the menus of the finest restaurants. Throughout the blue-skiied cloudless afternoon, while adults rested and reminisced, children labored at play on an inflated bouncing toy.

A silent auction netted \$250 for the Lake Pleasant Women's Club, which sponsors seasonal events for village children. A baked goods auction, animatedly

conducted by Kim York of Lake Pleasant Road, amassed \$308 for the Lake Pleasant Village Association, which maintains the Bridge of Names. This is the landmark footbridge that spans a gorge at the southwestern end of the community's namesake body of water, where the lake spawns a stream that meanders to the Sawmill River. Totty Linscott of Massasoit Street held the winning ticket in a 50/50 raffle.

While there were no prizes for those who came from the greatest distance to attend the reunion, unofficial honors went to Bob Evans of California and Ed Abbott and Marge Evans Hill of Florida and Maine. Marian Bordeaux, 92, who has lived in Lake Pleasant for more than 60 years, was the oldest person attending the event.

As darkness descended and the sounds of a horseshoe tourna-

ment rang in the rapidly cooling evening air, Karen (Reil) McCormack conducted a post-mortem summary of the Lake Pleasant Reunion.

"Everybody thought it was fantastic," she said, "and they want to keep doing it." McCormack and Nancy (Baker) Jackson, both now living in Greenfield, were the prime movers of a committee that organized the event.

Lake Pleasant was founded in 1870 as a summer campground. From the mid-1870s through the 1920s the village was the largest gathering place for Spiritualists in the United States, drawing believers from throughout the country, as well as from the British Isles. With a remnant of Spiritualists associated with the National Spiritual Alliance located across from the post office, Lake Pleasant remains the oldest continuously-existing Spiritualist center in the nation.

from ART pg 1

the weekend Arts and Leaves open studio and downtown walking tour. Woven River was commissioned by the Turners Falls RiverCulture project, following a call by Stevens Street resident Diane Ellis to re-imagine and beautify the walking paths that connect the Hill to downtown.

These well used paths, some town owned, some private, some paved, some dirt, had fallen into disrepair over the years, and were marred by litter and graffiti. After a clean-up of two of the pathways on Earth Day 2008, coordinated by Ellis with the help of elementary school students and Boy Scouts, and a community charette held at the Great Hall of the Discovery Center to brainstorm ways to revitalize the old walkways, RiverCulture coordinator Lisa Davol issued a request for proposals for artists to submit their ideas. Gutwein's project was picked from among proposals submitted by artists from around New England.

At the Earth Day clean-up on April 22nd, 2008, Ryan Chapdelaine, 11, said, "This place is beginning to look a little like a landfill," as he held up an empty Jack Daniels bottle beside the path school children use to walk to school each day.

But today, the trash has largely vanished from the side of the pathway from High Street to 7th. Instead of broken glass, hubcaps, cat litter boxes, old baseball gloves and cast-off sneakers, pedestrians now encounter woven apple branches in a low wattle wall, wending its way

among the oak trees. From one high branch, a railroad lantern swings on a linked chain. A cement obelisk rises next to a low brick structure, made of bricks from the burned down Building #10 of the Strathmore Mill.

The cement object represents the dam on the Connecticut River, a solid manmade form harnessing the energy of the river, and the bricks represent, of course, industry, which profited from the river's power.

A vessel woven from elm branches sits at the bottom of the path; a low stone wall, comfortable for passersby to use as a restful seat, lies at the top of the path, by High Street, where saplings of shad bush, crabapple, and chestnut

are planted. The wall is made from arkose (redstone), volcanic basalt, mudstone and river stone, some formed here by siltation and compression over millennia, some carried here by glaciers from far away.

Verses of a poem by Greenfield poet Maria Williams-Russell run up the path, stenciled on the cement sidewalk tiles in white paint. This could be read backwards, as you walk down the

hill, or more properly, frontwards, walking up, and either way it speaks to a sense of time passing through the particular place we inhabit. Here are the verses:

"This is a village / We are woven bricks / Mudstone and fish / Train rails and intention / We are arrowhead and industry / Water flying over cliff / We are shad bush and oar / Artist and bridge / A village / A quiet cradle of churches / Chestnut and shoal /



DETMOLD PHOTO

The Woven River pathway where it joins High Street..

Lantern and flicker / We are sewn / Brothers and sisters / Soil, song and river"

The meaning of any work of art is a subjective thing, individual to the viewer. Gutwein said he was working with symbols of the village of Turners Falls, using some materials that are prone to decay, others more permanent, to convey the idea of "rebirth and reinvigoration from outside things, bringing back the past by

reincorporating some part of the present."

For example, the chestnuts he planted at the top of the path are hybrid between Chinese chestnuts and American chestnuts. The latter once dominated woodlands in the Northeast, until the chestnut blight, accidentally introduced from Asia in the first decade of the 1900s, virtually wiped out mature chestnuts on this continent. The hybrid strain,

Gutwein said, incorporates the growth characteristics of the American chestnut, reaching 70 feet, with the disease resistance of the Chinese strain.

At the bottom of the hill, the woven willow basket that Gutwein completed in spring was knocked down by vandals a few months ago. He has now replaced this with another woven vessel, this time made from elm, a rougher material, but still very

flexible. He said elm, another native species hard hit by disease, seems to sprout up again very commonly in abandoned areas or near abandoned buildings.

The woven basket is intended to provide a receptacle for bypassers' wishes and dreams, which they can leave inside the vessel on scraps of paper, to decay and become part of the process of giving birth to the future of the place, the future of the village.

Gutwein did not seem too upset that vandalism had hastened the process of decay of the first, willow basket. "It was somewhat discouraging, but I also got a lot of positive feedback from folks, saying, 'I'm sorry to see that happen.' It gives me a sense people appreciated it before it was destroyed."

Although it is not part of his contract, Gutwein said he plans to return each spring and re-stencil the verses of the poem, which will wear away with foot traffic and weather. He may re-weave some of the wattle fences, while other parts molder away. "I've put a lot of time into this," said Gutwein. "I'd like to look after it."

That's a sentiment widely shared about the village of Turners Falls, and all who hold it are welcome to attend the opening of Woven River on October 3rd. After you speak with Gutwein and Williams-Russell, the poet, and admire their work, continue down the hill to see the studios where other artists and photographers will be displaying their inspiration and art in the heart of our old industrial town.

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Last year's Harvest Supper at the Brick House

Harvest Supper at the Brick House

TURNERS FALLS – The Brick House Community Resource Center, located at 24 Third Street in Turners Falls, will host the second annual Harvest Supper on September 29th, with a rain date of October 1st. The free dinner will be served beginning at 6:00 p.m., but everyone is encouraged to come early and participate in the meal preparation.

The free community meal is sponsored by the Communities that Care Coalition as part of Family Day activities around the area. Produce and other ingredients are being donated for the occasion by local farms and businesses, and the meal will be prepared by the farmers of Undergrowth Farm in Gill and other community volunteers.

The goal of the Harvest Supper is to promote "a day to eat dinner with your children."

The meal will consist of ham-

burgers, veggie burgers, lamb, quiche, potato salad, collard greens, cole slaw, pumpkin and apple pie, all comprised of local ingredients. Apple cider will be made from the apples growing in downtown Turners Falls.

Local businesses donating to the dinner include Upingil Farm, Natural Roots Farm, Diemand Farm, Coyote Hill Farm, Clarkdale Fruit Farm, Wheel View Farm, Leyden Glen Farm, Four Star Farm, 2nd Street Baking Co., Seven South Bakery, Real Pickles and Northfield Mount Hermon Farm.

Volunteers for preparation or clean-up should contact Jared at (413) 863-9559, or: jlibby@brickhousecommunity.org.

"Last year's Harvest Supper was the most successful first run event we've ever done," said Brick House teen center coordi-

nator Jared Libby. "We got the maximum number of participants we could handle, about 60. We decided this year we would try to ramp it up, and shoot for 80 to 100 people."

Libby said last year, the Brick House simply put up a few posters, and stuck a few flyers in the doors at nearby Power Town Apartments to get the word out. "People saw it happening, they came to check it out, and we told them to bring their family and friends."

This year, the event will feature live music and improv theater.

"The overall goal is to encourage families to spend time together and eat together and talk to each other. But family can be whatever people feel their family is, that's fine," Libby added. "Anyone is welcome, and it's free."

SENIOR from pg 1

for Erving seniors to benefit from social and health programs important for their age group. He recommended seniors meet with the finance committee to try to gain their support, and to do so in part by pinning down projected building maintenance costs.

The selectboard meeting on Monday was held in a first floor classroom of the old elementary school in Erving where the senior center has been housed since 1974. Plastic dumbbells rested in the chalk tray, and sketches of senior citizens shared blackboard space with announcements of September Senior birthdays, including dates for Dot Black, Pete Kavanaugh, and Aileen Clark.

In their present 3000 square foot facility, explained senior center director Polly Kiely, seniors do not have enough room to hold programs for different age

groups simultaneously. Younger seniors are interested in more physical fitness and recreational activities, while older seniors might be more inclined to enjoy quieter pastimes. Now, seniors share one bathroom, not up to modern code requirements; a chair lift provides access to the main floor; the kitchen is crowded into a former coat room; and the senior center director's office is partitioned off with low dividers, providing little privacy for health exams, to cite some of the current center's deficiencies.

In other news, Mahar school committee member Dana Kennan accompanied superintendent Michael Baldassarre to invite the Erving selectboard to attend upcoming meetings on the idea of joining a K-12 regional district with Mahar.

Tessier said he would be interested in attending, but pressed Baldassarre for statistics about

graduation rates of Mahar seniors who go on to attend two- or four-year colleges, information about advanced placement programs, and the like. Goodwin wanted to know about the social environment at Mahar – drug use among students and teen pregnancy rates, for example.

Baldassarre said Mahar's MCAS scores in 10th grade were "outperforming the state." He said, "Mahar's a very good school. We have parents who care about their kids' education. Come and visit while the kids are in the classroom."

Baldassarre talked of savings in the salaries for superintendents, if towns with elementary schools but no high schools, like Erving, Wendell, New Salem and Petersham, for example, were to regionalize K-12 with Mahar. He said Mahar had room for 300 more students in their newly renovated building, and could fit 90

or so from Erving with ease, if Erving decided to send their upper school students to Mahar instead of to Gill-Montague.

Kennan said the state formula for Chapter 70 and minimum contributions for education had changed since Erving voluntarily withdrew from the Mahar district many years ago. "At that time, Chapter 70 aid was killing us, because Erving was so wealthy, with the Northfield Mountain project." Mahar as a region would no longer be penalized if Erving were to rejoin the district, he said.

Kennan, from Petersham, noted state aid formulas for education were now, "causing Wendell heartburn. They have considerable excess capacity and considerable stabilization reserves. This boosts their minimum contribution and drops the state aid. That's why they pay so much. They pay more per student than Petersham."

Peter Valinski, engineer from Tighe and Bond, consulting for the town, gave updates on three wastewater treatment projects, the water tower repainting job in Erving and the sewer relining project in Erving Center.

Valinski said the \$6.4 million renovation of the Erving treatment plant is nearing completion, and should be wrapped up by November. Change orders, many related to a security system added after the bid went out, have added about \$200,000 to the \$4.3 million construction cost.

At the Farley treatment plant, which uses sand beds for filtra-

tion, renovation work is also nearly complete. Valinski said highway superintendent Paul Prest had saved the town around \$10,000 by installing piping on that project, rather than relying on the contractor to do the work.

Valinski ran down scenarios for how the town could keep the Erving Center treatment plant running if the Erving Paper Mill were to shut down. The board stressed this was merely a contingency plan; Erving Paper, which is in Chapter 11 bankruptcy proceeding in hopes to reduce its pension fund liabilities, is still operating at full capacity.

Valinski laid out a number of scenarios for how the oversized treatment facility could be retrofitted to handle just the small flow from residential users in Erving Center, and a reduced septage load from private haulers. The cost to the town of the various options would run from \$.75 million to \$2 million, in round numbers.

Valinski said M.K. Painting of Wyandotte, MI (where the official unemployment rate is the highest in the nation at 15.6%) would soon arrive to repaint the Erving water tower, now that they have secured insurance for the job. M.K. Painting was the low bidder, at \$257,000.

He said the relining of sewer pipes in Erving Center was also ready to go, and the board added about \$4,500 to the \$102,400 Insituform Technologies of Chesterfield, MO bid for that project, to include more pipes on High Street.

Montague Energy Corner

Lower Your Energy Bills

The Montague Energy Committee has organized two fall workshops where Montague residents will learn how to receive up to \$2,000 to make their homes more snug, reduce their energy bills, and enter a drawing to win a free gas hot air furnace. You are invited! The first workshop is on Oct. 10 in Lake Pleasant and the second is on Nov 7 in Turners Falls. Folks from all five villages are welcome at either workshop.

At the workshops, residents will learn from energy experts on ways to "keep the warm in your home" this winter so you can spend less on your heating bill and live more comfort-

ably. They will explain measures you can take that are simple, immediate, and don't require a lot of tools or specialized equipment. Better yet, residents will learn how the MassSAVE program will pay for 75 percent (up to \$2,000) on attic, wall and basement insulation and sealing air leaks. Residents will also learn about MassSAVE's 0% interest loan for up to \$15,000 that can pay the other 25 percent of the cost and pay for additional insulation, air sealing, high efficiency heating systems, windows, and solar hot water systems.

"The MassSave program is structured so that anyone can reduce

their monthly bills immediately upon completion of an energy efficiency upgrade," said Chris Mason of the Montague Energy Committee.

The Lake Pleasant Energy Saving Workshop will be held on October 10th from 9:45 a.m. to noon at the National Spiritual Alliance Meeting Hall in Lake Pleasant. The Turners Falls Energy Saving Workshop, which will have special information for renters, will be held on November 7th, from 2:00 to 4:00 p.m. at the Brick House, 24 Third St., Turners Falls.

For more info: contact 413-367-0082, or SJP@crocker.com

HIGHLIGHTS FROM THE GILL POLICE LOG

Assessors Draw Suspicion

Wednesday, 9/16

11:23 a.m. Breacking and entering in progress at a West Gill Road residence. Under investigation.

Friday, 9/18

8:10 a.m. Report of past suspicious vehicle on Vassar Way.

3:55 p.m. Suspicious motor vehicle on West Gill Road.

Saturday, 9/19

12:14 p.m. Alarm at Main Road business, checked OK.

3:20 p.m. Court process served on Chappell Drive.

4:11 p.m. Motor vehicle accident on French King Highway near Greenfield town line.

9:25 p.m. Criminal complaint sought against [redacted]

[redacted] Charged with operating a motor vehicle with a suspended registration.

Sunday, 9/20

5:28 p.m. Assisted Bernardston police department with stolen motor vehicle and arrest.

6:21 p.m. Dog struck by a vehicle on West Gill Road. Report taken.

Monday, 9/21

12:01 p.m. Suspicious

motor vehicle on Main Road. Determined to be town assessors, all OK.

8:15 p.m. Assisted Montague police with disturbance.

Tuesday, 9/22

10:58 a.m. Assisted with medical emergency on Franklin Road.

1:15 p.m. Welfare check of despondent subject at a French King Highway address.



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It is difficult
to get the news from poems
yet men die miserably every day
for lack
of what is found there.

- William Carlos Williams

Poetry Page edited by
Christopher Sawyer-Laucanno,
and Janel Nockleby
design by Boysen Hodgson

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

THE AIR

for Dana Ward

Forsooth forsooth
my friends
no-braining the sunset
which is never deadly
winnowing the whole of virtue
leaner and leaner as sun sleeps
I please the air clawing it ragged
for love of breathing
in Western altitudes
the way gas stations pulse closed
and an evening cloud stains the nasturtiums
and it's only been a year
so why should our courage
control more than an aspect of love's shadow
my cape and mustache
flapping in the sweet tobacco breeze
I please the air
with incipient conspiracies
blooming preposterous in sudden cluttered beds
and it's only been a year
of promising to stay contagious
I love that you'd have me
eschew baser insanities
like that of being an animal
whose paw forever writhes
in the tangled net of heaven
so why should I stagger in a pale rage
at the light falling like anvils
when a full moon rising over the turnpike
is distorted into greasy shimmering
by the windows of this Chinatown bus
and Tupac is laughing
in the vacuum between verses
I love that the air
stupidly throbs open
with tiny speckles of dead breath
so forsooth my friends
I ain't mad at cha
I'm just gasping

--Chris Martin

Brooklyn, NY

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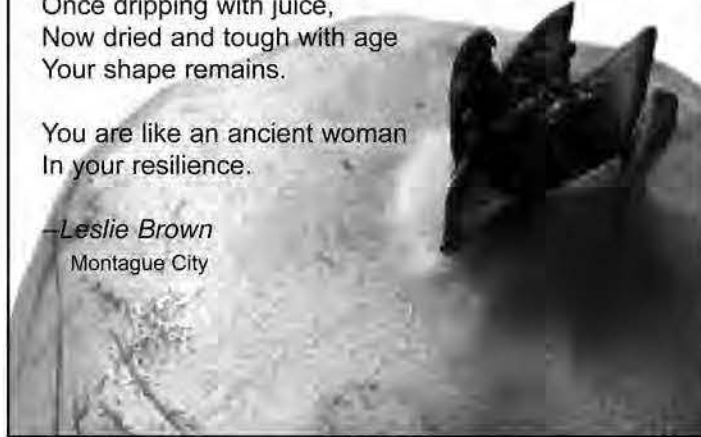
Pomegranate

Lobed, bruised and dented,
Once a beauty in red,
Persephone's fruit, the seed of winter.

Once dripping with juice,
Now dried and tough with age
Your shape remains.

You are like an ancient woman
In your resilience.

--Leslie Brown
Montague City



Everyone: French the Sequoias!

Now is the form designated for freaking
the pastoral on the dance floor.

Because the bees are pretty much Fallujah.

Because the sea foam and klieg lights tell me
30 versions of green.

Because I've always been more interested in the futon
that kills my back, then decides upon my heart.

Because troops has such a long sound in the middle,
it is easy to forget things along the way.

Because always on some city block
a perfect hydrant waits, and waits.

Because every copse has a clearing,
and every clearing has a colonialism.

It might as well be said
that when faced with famous, high-minded oceans,
I've always thought the dunemat looked hottest
in espadrilles.

-- Brian Baldi



THE PUPIL

for Jess Fiorini

Gnashing sun
into eye's
grimy black dot
got it clean
enough for sleeping in
or so I thought
posting torrid flowers of rage
like a sky I've punctured
with drowsy sequins to sleep under
I never meant to please myself
but bathing in coarse light
keeps happening on the way
already less here somehow
joking with the fuzz
on fifth avenue
for a change
I leapt
all bitterness
to go hungry
to go waves again
with a suffocating candor
this grimy black dot
that would steal the world
but could never seal it
one grimy black dot throbbing hollow
between floating columns of nuclear trash
I asked the sun how
loud a universe could be
crammed into one dot
and tumbling out again
its music unspooling
in cacophonous fits
of light
coarse light
concussive morning light
canceling the fist
thought brings to day
coarse vectors of light
which guide the eye back
to flesh in concussive shocks
the kind of light you find
vibrating in coils of animal stillness
as the day slowly darkens
and night parts the abdomen
allowing each red convolution
to breathe it in
runny evening light
which feeds even
this dot's
dilating circumference
another universe expanding
for some fool's
sad jangle to fill

--Chris Martin

Brooklyn, NY

CONTRIBUTOR'S NOTES:

Chris Martin is the author of *American Music*, selected by C. D. Wright for the Hayden Carruth Award and published by Copper Canyon. His latest chapbook, *The Small Dance*, is available online from Scantly Clad Press. Originally from The West, Martin now skims his head on the smoke alarm in his Brooklyn apartment when he's not teaching strange and wonderful young humans in the big city.

Edmund Berrigan is the author of *Disarming Matter* (Owl Press, 1999) and *Glad Stone Children* (Farfalla Press, 2008), editor of the *Selected Poems of Steve Carey* (Sub Press, 2009) and co-editor with

Anselm Berrigan and Alice Notley of the *Collected Poems of Ted Berrigan* (University of California Press, 2005) and a forthcoming *Selected Poems of Ted Berrigan* from the same press. He also performs music in and around New York under the nom de guerre I Feel Tractor.

Jessica Fiorini is the author of *Sea Monster at Night* (Goodbye Better, 2007). Her poems have appeared in the *Boog City Reader*, *Lungfull!*, the *Poetry Project Newsletter*, *The Brooklyn Rail*, and at *puppyflowers.com* and *feralangua.it*. She lives in Brooklyn, NY, and

received an MFA from the University of New Orleans in 2008.

Kevin Smith is 51 years old, a Turners Falls resident, tubist and therapist, as well as a poet.

Leslie Brown gardens in Montague City and writes about her experiences among her plants and vegetables in her column for the *Montague Reporter*.

Brian Baldi is a graduate of the U.Mass MFA Program.



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Armies blot the veil of darkness
 Oddly losing their gears
 It's a short drive to Mississippi
 from the neck
 & I go barefoot

Of course
 I love you
 baby
 & if it weren't
 for these
 damn electrons

I'd pass right
 through you

I was raised
 in an enclosed space -

It took patience -

It's one of my bitter
 strengths in an expanse

--Edmund Berrigan
 New York

COMMITMENT

The glue that holds
 us together is
 golden, grace
 amid turmoil
 in a world of flux.
 Flaxen strands shimmer
 on our skin, the smile
 we cannot hide
 from those who know
 how to look.
 Committed to
 our souls' adhesive core,
 our songs stretch
 taut like joy
 in a resonant laugh.
 Caprice dance of life;
 a rainbow's reminder
 before the moon,
 and the sun's reassurance after. There is
 no revenue in running,
 and the safety nets
 we once built
 are now danger zones. To feel
 pain is to feel
 from the ground up.
 No fraud,
 nor friendly foe's promises
 of Edens in the air.
 Just solid, honest ground,
 and the spiral of knowing
 which emerges -
 graceful willow,
 rooted in truth, billowing
 prism, faith

--Kevin Smith
 Turners Falls



Salt

I've inherited my maidenhood from the moon
 That lunatic orb which tugs on the ocean
 fill the womb my salt water creature
 You never met Jesus, he was born way after
 This valley was shorn my locks have groaned
 under the weight of eras agents never clean tressed
 dress skirts layered to ruffle and sway

Trilobite gymnast tumbles through reeds
 Messages without bottles nosed to shorelines
 All hail the ideo that separate calends

Bicycle wheel progression is felt in the wrists
 knee to chest
 knee to path
 knee to chest
 knee to horizon
 I'm stuck here to the hips meant for birth
 Escape is possible through the re-arrangement of molecules
 But I forget that trick in the past present future present
 If I ever get free with can make love in an explosion of planet
 a new thread to live on and walk across

Helium

Scientists mistakenly thought it was a metal
 whose names usually end in "ium"
 They named it for the sun Helios
 but I knew it was a gas not a metal
 and it dwelt in the night
 it was heavier than stars
 with it there was no horizon
 faced with it there was nothing but my profile
 imprinting unto itself I claim the bay for the clams
 'cause clams always know what magnetism we're on
 In one stroke the universe became vastly larger
 all because a gas cannot be a metal
 and I cannot view a horizon
 we all know the further away a galaxy is
 the faster moves the redshift
 I've always admired star stretch
 constant candle yogis reminding us of dynamic pasts
 perhaps in another past I've excised this line
 but no matter, it's all in this room with me
 vibrating and spinning in miniscule differences that
 charge everything
 Multiverse appeals because it accepts defects
 perhaps in the nearest verse a metal is a gas
 and the fog is heavy with silver so all I see is horizon
 instead of these stacked layers that confound
 A mirror beautifully shattered gives texture to the world

-- Jessica Fiorini Brooklyn, NY

Rebirth

On the 28th measure
 On the 1st of deer month
 On the 28th sharp-horned crescent
 in the orange period
 There began a decomposition
 There is attraction
 The flesh has fled hours ago
 The year of the bone has not begun
 Soul of sun escaping
 Soul of sun dispersing
 Attraction will build mass
 Mass accepted the priestess
 Soul undone unravel undone
 Soul travels pastways identically
 not so the mirror image distorts
 On the 28th sharp-horned crescent
 The first of rains rot the rope month
 A collision A dance A masquerade
 the soul spirit remade into frenzied charges
 The south soul breathes slow
 Now the soul pressed through the fabric
 choices are raw
 cuts are raw
 bled through
 mend through
 mass has grown
 Mass takes on mass
 Pressed through the skin
 Housed wombwards
 An individual reformed

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SCORES from pg 1

elementary school last year with the consolidation of students and teachers from Montague Center School and the first and second grades from Hillcrest. Within this new consolidated school, with a little more than 300 students, teachers, parents

and the community have pulled together and worked as a team and the result, said Musgrave, is that students are energized, teachers are working hard, staying late, coming in early, all working towards the goal of providing the best education for the students.

In English language arts,

scores for grade 4 showed a gain of almost 20%, and in math the gain was 12%, both well over the target level. In grade 3, 22% of students showed advanced performance levels, indicating they are working above proficiency. Improvements were seen in all subjects and at all levels, including special education and low income students. Sheffield is a Title II school with 65% of students in the low income category, as measured by free and reduced lunch applicants.

Principal Musgrave attributes these improvements to two things: a dedicated teaching staff that came together not entirely by choice, as some had been teachers at the two schools integrated into Sheffield in 2008, but made the commitment to work together as a team. And secondly, the excellent curricu-

lum put in place under the guidance of Chip Wood, director of curriculum for the elementary schools, and now showing results. She said implementation of Math Expressions and the English language arts Houghton Mifflin Reading curriculum had made a big difference in student gains.

Both programs require significant teacher training, and she felt that as teachers became more comfortable with the new programs, students also learn to work with them to their advantage. It takes a few years for teachers to gain confidence and learn how best to use a new curriculum, Musgrave said. She explained the "responsive classroom" structure makes a school into a real community, with the day focused on learning. She said Sheffield has very few disruptions, as both teachers and

students work within a predictable structure and know what is expected of them. This works across the curriculum, so students moving from one grade to the next find consistency with what they've learned before.

To expand on the concept of the school as community, Sheffield holds many events. There will be an open house tonight at 5:30 p.m. where parents can come and meet with teachers and staff. Next month will feature a Math Blast, where parents will learn how to help their children with math homework while students are doing math games. Sheffield's commitment to art is evident, with lots of student art gracing the walls of the school. There is also "Bingo for Books" and "Dr. Suess Night" where books will be read aloud for all to enjoy.



LETTER from pg 5

We are struggling to understand how your imposed assessment helps us to achieve either of these goals. We are fully aware of the district's needs; we hope that you can appreciate that we are also fully aware of the equally pressing needs faced by our other town departments, none of which, sadly, benefits from having a state department to monitor its health and effectiveness.

We have heard from your representatives that you believe our problems have primarily been caused by the

recent recession, and that an improved economy, coupled with unspecified regionalization efforts, will lead to fiscal sustainability. With all due respect, we are unconvinced. We have been facing an increasing financial crisis for most of the past decade, well before the onset of the recession, and we don't believe that an economic turnaround will change that. Furthermore, we have not seen any regionalization or "regional cooperation" scenario that comes close to solving our financial problems.

Thus it appears to us that we are in the position of being asked

to use fiscally irresponsible amounts of our reserves to fund unsustainable GMRSD assessments, based on the vague promise that "things will get better" in the future. That is why we are writing to you now. We would like you to explain your vision as to how our acceptance of your imposed assessment for FY 2010 can be part of a fiscally sustainable future. We look forward to your response at your earliest convenience. Thank you for your attention.

John Hanold is the chair of the Montague finance committee. Patricia Pruitt is the chair of



HIGHLIGHTS FROM THE MONTAGUE POLICE LOG

Three Reports of Larceny

Thursday, 9/17
10:55 a.m. Report of larceny of at an East Main Street address. Advised of options.
5:16 p.m. Report of burglary/breaking and entering at a Greenfield Road address.
Friday 9/18
1:21 p.m. Report of larceny at Turners Falls High School. Investigated.
3:06 p.m. Report of burglary/breaking and entering at a Turners Falls Road address. Investigated.
3:32 p.m. Report of larceny at a Turners Falls Road

address. Referred to an officer.
3:50 p.m. Report of larceny at a Griswold Street address. Services rendered.
7:50 p.m. Report of a domestic disturbance at a Dell Street address. Services rendered.
9:17 p.m. Report of larceny at Aubuchon Hardware, Avenue A. Investigated.
Saturday, 9/19
9:18 p.m. Report of a robbery at Crestview Liquor, Unity Street. Investigated.

Sunday 9/20
4:08 a.m. Report of a fight in the Fourth Street alley. Arrested [redacted].
[redacted] on a probation warrant.
11:00 a.m. Report of a domestic disturbance at a Montague City Road address. Services rendered.
3:20 p.m. Report of vandalism at an Avenue C address.
6:40 p.m. Report of vandalism at a Davis Street address.
9:27 p.m. Officer initiated arrest of [redacted].

[redacted] on a probation warrant.
Monday 9/21
1:18 p.m. Report of vandalism at an East Main Street address. Referred to an officer.
3:46 p.m. Report of passing a bad check. Advised of options.
7:07 p.m. Report of trespassing at an Avenue C address. Services rendered.
Tuesday, 9/22
2:15 a.m. Officer initiated investigation of illegal dumping in the area of high tension lines, Old Northfield Road.

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JESSICA HARMON ILLUSTRATION

BY FRED CICETTI

LEONIA, NJ – Flu season in the northern hemisphere can range from as early as November to as late as May. The peak month usually is February.

However, this coming season is expected to be unpredictable because of the emergence of the H1N1 influenza virus or swine flu. The H1N1 has caused the first global outbreak-pandemic of influenza in more than four decades.

There is concern that the 2009 H1N1 virus may make the season

THE HEALTHY GEEZER: Flu Season

worse than a regular flu season. It is feared that there will be many more hospitalizations and fatalities this season. The 2009 H1N1 virus caused illness in the U.S. during the summer months, when influenza is very uncommon.

The 2009-10 flu vaccine protects against the three main flu strains that research indicates will cause the most illness during the flu season. The seasonal vaccine is not expected to protect against the 2009 H1N1 virus. A vaccine for 2009 H1N1 is being produced and may be ready for the public in the fall.

The 2009-10 vaccine can be administered anytime during flu season. However, the best time to get inoculated is October-November. The protection provided by the vaccine lasts about a year. Adults over 50 are prime

candidates for the vaccine, because the flu can be fatal for people in this age group.

The Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) estimates up to 20 percent of the population gets the flu each year.

The CDC reports vaccination rates are better for those over 65. About 7 in 10 seniors get their flu shots. You can get the flu vaccine from your doctor, at public health centers, senior centers, pharmacies and supermarkets.

For more than four decades, the flu vaccine has been strongly recommended for older people, but now some scientists say the vaccine probably doesn't work well for those over 70. About 75 percent of flu deaths happen to people in this age group.

Flu is a contagious illness of the respiratory system caused by

the influenza virus. Flu can lead to pneumonia, bronchitis, sinusitis, ear aches and dehydration.

Droplets from coughing and sneezing spread the flu. An adult with flu can infect others beginning one day before symptoms develop and up to five days after becoming sick. Children may spread flu for more than seven days.

The best way to combat the bug is to get the flu vaccine. You have to get inoculated annually, because new vaccines are prepared every year to combat new versions of the virus. When you battle the flu, you develop antibodies to the invading virus, but those antibodies don't work on new strains. The vaccine does not prevent flu in all people; it works better in younger recipients than older ones.

Contrary to rumor, you can't catch the flu from the vaccine. The flu vaccine is not made from a live virus.

The recovery time for the flu is about one to two weeks. However, in seniors, weakness may persist for a longer time.

The common scenario for flu is a sudden onset of symptoms, which include chills, fatigue, fever, cough, headache, sore throat, nasal congestion, muscle aches and appetite loss.

While nausea, vomiting and diarrhea can be related to the flu, these are rarely the primary flu symptoms. The flu is not a stomach or intestinal disease. The term stomach flu is inaccurate.

When symptoms strike, get to a doctor as soon as possible; the faster the better. There are prescription antiviral drugs to treat flu. Over-the-counter medicines can help relieve symptoms of the flu. You should also drink liquids to prevent dehydration, and sleep to bolster your immune system.

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

WENDELL from page 6

To deal with a problem of too much moisture in the basement of the senior center, Keller reported he had bought a dehumidifier and installed it. The dehumidifier brought the relative humidity down from 80% to 55% in the basement. Keller said the basement now might make a good place for document storage. He suggested a work day to clean and sort items currently stored there, some of value, some not.

Also on the 16th, assessor Tom Mangan met with the selectboard about the loss of twelve personal packages of frozen food that had been removed from the freezer compartment of the town hall refrigerator. The board of health had seized his packages, as they do not allow items to stay in the refrigerator more than two weeks.

Mangan wanted to pursue the issue of compensation for his food, and Keller said a definitive selectboard response would require consulting both the board of health and a lawyer; the latter would cost the town money. Mangan still wanted to go in that direction.

Selectboard member Geoffrey

Pooser was several minutes late arriving at the September 16th selectboard meeting, and he apologized to the other board members, but he sounded exasperated by what had kept him. He said that three weeks ago the conservation commission demanded documentation of his fish farm, because he sold fish from the pond near his house. Now he was delayed by an environmental police raid because of the construction on his property, where he said he has gone to great lengths to mitigate impact on the stream and wetland. Pooser said he had constructed a new wetland to catch any silt movement, and had paid the extra expense of using biodegradable oil for coating the concrete forms.

Before Pooser arrived, town office interior design committee member Carolyn Manley said the committee had a collection of historic pictures to hang in the meeting room.

Jonathan von Ranson stepped in early and said he had taken care of the oversights in his building permit application for a non-electric, low impact apartment in the barn he is rebuilding next to the existing house. At the plan-

ning board hearing on September 15th, members tentatively approved von Ranson's special permit application to construct the apartment, with conditions that he meet those local requirements, and that he provide independent monitoring of the impact of his proposed composting toilet and wastewater systems.

Von Ranson said he had wanted to include monitoring all along, as part of his effort to show simple living can be both comfortable and benign.

Paula King came in to reserve the town hall as a backup in case of rain for the Western Massachusetts Climbing Coalition gathering on September 26th and 27th. Aldrich found that the hall was already reserved for a private event, so King left, hoping for good weather that weekend.

The town website shows only town events at the town hall, and Pooser said he would get private bookings added to the town hall calendar on the website. The website is still in a beta version to allow for such adjustments.

Bob Cellucci from National Grid met the selectboard for a pole hearing, this one to perma-

nently relocate a wire across the street from where it is now on Wendell Depot Road, 750 feet north of Mormon Hollow Road. The relocation will give National Grid crane access to the nearby high tension wires, and will provide shorter spans between poles. Cellucci said no trees will be cut down, but some trimming might be necessary. No abutters came or objected in writing, and the selectboard approved the request.

Aldrich said that the reason why Wendell no longer is eligible for the Franklin Community Development Block grant funds for housing rehabilitation is that new regulations require an annually updated community development strategy. The town already has a published Community Development Plan, with strategies listed at the end. Annual strategies are changed as one objective is achieved, and another replaces it. Annual updates need not take long, and selectboard members agreed to create an updated strategy in time for the next round of community development block grants.

Helicopter Overflights

Pooser said he spoke with

police chief Ed Chase about recent incidents of helicopters flying low over parts of Wendell. Chase did not know who was flying the helicopters, and on the telephone the state police said it was not them, but might be the National Guard, or the Drug Enforcement Agency (DEA).

Heard said a neighbor had spoken to officers who drove up not long ago dressed in camouflage and traveled in three SUVs, and they identified themselves as state police.

Pooser suggested townspeople could document the low flyovers with a video camera and a hand held rangefinder.

The road crew may be up to its full complement of workers for winter work. New hire Rich Wilder says the department loves their new (used) backhoe.

The selectboard signed appointment slips for Wendell's newly formed energy task force. Members will be Paul Newcombe, Bob Schulman, Lori Didonato, Jonathan von Ranson, and Gloria Kegeles.

The selectboard went into executive session at 8:30 and did not return for open session.



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Gill to Provide Videotaping of Selectboard Meetings

For years, Gill cable television subscribers have had to put up with rebroadcasts of selectboard meetings in Montague or city council hearings in Greenfield. Now, they will be able to watch the proceedings of their own town government on cable television, in the parts of town that are wired for cable, (Riverside and much of the Main Road, West Gill Road area, and cross streets) on MCTV, Channel 17. After a successful trial run at the recent town meeting, MCTV cameraman Don Clegg has been hired to tape meetings of the selectboard on Monday afternoons, and to train Rick James, a local volunteer, to continue taping them once

he is familiar with the equipment.

For now, the Gill meetings will be rebroadcast (see MCTV schedule on www.montaguevtv.org or call 863-9200 for rebroadcast times), but the town may soon be able to view the meetings live, once necessary equipment is purchased. The money for this will come from a pool of funds built up from a monthly fee on Gill cable user bills, to provide for local cable access to government meetings.

Recently elected selectboard member John Ward had made televising the selectboard meetings part of his campaign platform for more openness in town government.

Con Com Reviews Construction Near Wetlands

WENDELL - After a member of the conservation commission noticed construction taking place near a wetlands at the home of Jeffrey Pooser, on Lockes Village Road, the commission researched the matter at their regular meeting on September 16th.

The commission found that on May 20th of this year, newly elected selectboard member Pooser had met with the conservation commission, and received the needed sign off for a building permit for an addition to his house, 182 feet from the brook, as measured to a pre-existing dam on his property.

But associate commissioner Mason Phelps said distances must be measured to the border of the wetlands, not just the brook.

The conservation commission then conducted a site visit at Pooser's property on Friday, September 18th, and determined the border of the wetlands was within the 100 foot distance cov-

ered by the Wetlands Protection Act, and therefore the construction should have been subject to conservation commission review.

Still, chair Charles Smith said, "What [Pooser] has accomplished, I think, is something we would approve."

For his part, Pooser said he believed he had followed proper procedure by appearing before the conservation commission in May for a sign-off on the building permit. He said he had gone to considerable personal expense to include features to prevent harmful impacts to the pond or brook, by using biodegradable oil for the concrete forms on the foundation of the addition to his house, and establishing an additional wetland plant buffer last year in anticipation of his building project, among other measures.

The conservation commission will discuss the matter with Pooser at their next regular meeting, on October 7th.

FIRE from pg 1

boxspring mattress and shorted out."

The downstairs tenants were not home. Ed Lego (76) was in Franklin Medical Center with pneumonia, and his wife, Linda (59) was visiting her husband at the time the fire broke out. Their three parakeets were rescued, one by one, and seemed happy to see daylight, fluttering in their cages as firefighters carried them to safety.

The Turners Falls fire department, assisted by Montague Center and Greenfield, responded quickly to the scene, and soon had the fire knocked down and under control. The call came in at 1:13 p.m.

Minutes earlier, the same block was quiet, as pedestrians walked their dogs or pursued their errands. The smell of fall was in the air. By twenty minutes past one, smoke choked the downtown streets and alleys, and a crowd of neighbors gathered in the parking lot behind the Cutlery Block to watch the blaze.

The police blocked off L between 2nd and 3rd; within minutes WMECo arrived to shut off power to the building, as firefighters did their work.

The rear window closest to the parking lot on the second floor was broken from inside. Smoke poured out, and billowed from all sides of the attic eaves. A firefighter tossed an air conditioner out the window. A hose was trained on the back wall from within, and water came pouring out the shattered panes. Two large pumpkins sat undisturbed on easy chairs on the second floor landing.

Soon, a young firefighter emerged with a black and white cat, alive, and delivered it to Perry's care. Perry said its name was Tippy, owned by his downstairs neighbors.

His housemate owned five cats; they all perished in the smoke on the second floor.

But Perry's dog, a purebred toy box terrier named Roxy, came out next, carried by Turners Falls firefighter Brian Stafford.

"He wasn't breathing when we brought him out," said Stafford, after he and Greenfield chief Mike Winn administered oxygen and CPR to the small dog for five minutes on the parking lot. "He's breathing now."

Roxy was transported to veterinarian Lauralyn Brown's for treatment, and reportedly was recovering well on Tuesday evening.

Stafford said he had found the dog practically inert on the floor of a front bedroom on the second floor, along with "two or three cats" that all appeared to have succumbed to the smoke.

"You watch 'em for a while to see if they move," Stafford said. "He moved."

Firefighters broke windows in the attic to ventilate the building. Soon debris was being tossed out the broken windows, as department personnel moved the crowd back.

The house, owned by Jeanie Crane of Peabody, was advertised for auction in a bank foreclosure next Wednesday, September 30th. Perry said he and his housemate had moved in only three months earlier.

Oranellas returned from visiting friends in Greenfield by 2:30 p.m. and seemed devastated by the scene. She said she had left the house at 11:30 that morning, and had left the air conditioner on in her bedroom, as usual. She

said the electrical appliances in the apartment had given her problems in the past, with power going out when both the electrical range and washer were in use simultaneously, but that Crane was unresponsive to complaints about problems with wiring or plumbing in the apartment.

Crane, reached Wednesday, blamed the second floor tenants for overloading circuits with appliances on inappropriate extension cords.

Tuesday afternoon, Oranellas sat on the pavement, surrounded by friends. She sobbed, "My kitties. I need my kitties." She said, "We were moving out October 1st."

She was also concerned about two pairs of parakeets, and pet fish.

Godin said it appeared all pets in the second floor apartment, other than the dog, had not survived.

Building inspector David Jensen said damage from the fire, mostly from smoke and water, was confined largely to the second floor and attic, and the rear of the first floor. Structural damage appeared minimal, Jensen said.

Godin complimented his men for their professional response to the fire. "They contained it pretty much to the room of origin. The guys on duty did a really good job. It was a really timely response. Another two or three minutes and we would have been knocking holes in the roof."

The Red Cross responded to the scene Tuesday afternoon, to see to the tenants' needs. The Legos are reportedly staying with family in town; Perry and Oranellas were given lodging in a motel. The tenants were to meet with a follow-up team from the Red Cross on Wednesday.

Wendell Cultural Council Seeks Applications

The Wendell Cultural Council (WCC) seeks funding proposals for community-oriented arts, humanities and science projects. Proposals must be submitted or postmarked by October 15th. These grants can support a variety of artistic projects and activities in Wendell — including exhibits, festivals, workshops, performances, and lectures. The WCC will also

entertain funding proposals from schools and youth groups through the PASS Program, a ticket-subsidy program for school age children.

The Wendell Cultural Council is part of a grass roots network of 329 local councils that serve every city and town in the state, funded through the Massachusetts Cultural Council. This year, the WCC will distrib-

ute \$4000 in grant funds. Application forms and specific guideline information available at the Wendell free library, the Wendell town hall, the Wendell post office, the Wendell Depot post office, and the Wendell Country Store, or on the web at www.masscultural.org/lcc_public.asp. Contact Linda Hickman, WCC chairperson, at (978) 544-8604 for questions.

Town of Montague Tax Bills Due

First half of the Fiscal 2010 real estate and fire district taxes are due by Thursday, October 1st, 2009. Payments received after that date are subject to 14% interest. For the convenience of Montague residents, you will now be able to pay all real estate, district and personal property bills on line. Go to www.montague.net, select departments, Treasurer/Collector, online bill payments. The tax office is open Monday, Tuesday and Thursday from 8:30 to 5:30; Wednesday until 6:30. Town hall is closed on Friday.

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ARTS & ENTERTAINMENT



THURSDAY, SEPTEMBER 24th

Deja Brew, Wendell: *Larry Kopp*, Country and City Blues Guitar with vocals, 8 to 10 p.m.

At the Rendezvous, Turners Falls: *The Perfect Fruit* book release party, 5:30 p.m. free. *Jay Bethea, Michael Melivier and Jose Docen*, singer-songwriters at 8:30 p.m. no cover.

FRIDAY, SEPTEMBER 25th

Deja Brew, Wendell: *The Equalites*, this legendary reggae band will keep you dancing all night, 9:30 to 11:30 p.m.

At the Rendezvous, Turners Falls: *Play* with DJ Lance, \$3 cover.

At the Bookmill, Montague Center: *MAWWAL* performs original world fusion music and original arrangements of traditional Middle Eastern music in a spirited and beautiful trance-inducing acoustic/electric ensemble. Inventive vocal arrangements in English and Arabic weave through a laouto (Greek lute, with bass and drums, augmented by traditional percussion (tabla, dumbek, frame drum, riq) and violin) in what has been called a "new genre" by Progression Magazine.

SATURDAY, SEPTEMBER 26th

Polish Supper at the Montague Center Congregational Church, 5:30 p.m. Golabki, pierogi, sauerkraut casserole and apple crisp. \$9 adults, \$4 children under 10 yrs. Reservations, call 774-7256.

Great Falls Discovery Center, Turners Falls: *Gripping Strength of an Eagle-Understand psi*. 1 to 2 p.m. A raptor is a bird of prey that hunts and kills with its feet. Different raptor species have different gripping strengths. Learn how to measure psi, and then see how yours compare with that of an eagle.

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Mawwal has a new take on "world" music. Jim Matus has created a sound that is at once familiar and totally new, with subtle elements of folk, jazz, and groove rock mixed with traditional indigenous sounds and textures. Hear them at the Bookmill, Montague Center, Friday, September 25th at 8 p.m.

Arcadia Players Founding Trio 20th Anniversary Concert, 7:30 p.m. at the White Church, Deerfield. Arcadia's Founding Trio, Violinist Dana Maiben, cellist and gambist Alice Robbins, and harpsichordist & organist Margaret Irwin-Brandon, will play favorites from their Baroque repertory. Reception to follow concert. Info: www.arcadiaplayers.org.

Fiber Twist, a celebration of all things fiber, At Greenfield High school. Showcasing sheep and fiber farmers, spinners, knitters, dyers, felters and other fiber artisand. 10 to 5 p.m. Workshops and demonstrations. www.fibertwist.com

Deja Brew, Wendell: *Eric Love*, singing all your favorite covers from the 60's & 70's, 9 to 11 p.m.

At the Rendezvous, Turners Falls: *Rusty Belle*, \$5, 9:30 p.m.

Echo Lake Concert Series, Leverett: Labor champion *Tom Juravich* performs, 7:30 p.m. The concert will be preceded by a pol luck supper at 6 p.m. \$8 to \$10. Info: (413) 548-9394. www.tomjuravich.com.

Route 63 Roadhouse, Millers Falls: *Evenspeak*, 9:30 p.m.

SUNDAY, SEPTEMBER 27th

Family Dance at the Montague Grange, Montague Center, 3:30 to 5:30 p.m. Family-style contra dancing with caller Tim Van Egmond and live music with Shingle the Roof. Simple contras, circle dances, and singing games with easy instruction for beginners of all ages, especially those with little feet. \$4 per person or \$10-15 per family, includes a light snack. Continues on the last Sunday of each month, September to April. Info (413) 367-9608, or visit www.MontagueMA.net/Montague_Grange.

KwajmalJazz Band performing at the Rendezvous, Turners Falls, 5 to 7 p.m. 863-2866, www.rendezvousfma.com

MONDAY, SEPTEMBER 28th

Deja Brew, Wendell: *The Return of All Small Caps*. A Night of Spoken Word, open mic at 7 p.m. Guest readers 8 p.m.

At the Rendezvous, Turners Falls: Open Mic, 8 p.m. www.rendezvousfma.com.

WEDNESDAY, SEPTEMBER 30th

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

The Super Fun Bowling Club is a non-competitive club devoted solely to the enjoyment of bowling. At the French King Entertainment Center, Erving. The SFBC meets every other Wednesday at 7:30 pm This week's theme: Pirate Party! Aye, matey! Polish that peg leg and get ready to rough it up on the lanes! Wednesday, October 14th: Wild West! It's time to go wild - wild west, that is! For any questions, contact Laura at laura@ladyelvis.com or (413)-423-3027.

Deja Brew, Wendell: *Knitting & Crafts Night*: 7 to 10 p.m. Any craft and any skill level welcome. Get a chance to win our monthly crafty gift with every \$5 you spend at Craft night. Drawings held on the last Wednesday of the month.

At the Rendezvous, Turners Falls: OSR



Charles Neville Quartet opens the Wendell Full Moon Coffee House Season on Saturday, October 3rd at 7:30 p.m.

reads and plays, eclectic variety music and words, 9 p.m. \$5 cover.

THURSDAY, OCTOBER 1st

At the Rendezvous, Turners Falls: *Falltown String Band* (old timey, americana, etc) 7:30 p.m. no cover.

FRIDAY, OCTOBER 2nd

At the Rendezvous, Turners Falls: *Evolution Trio* (jazz) \$3 cover.

SATURDAY, OCTOBER 3rd

13th Annual Source to Sea Clean-up! Volunteers needed for clean-up and hauling: call (800) 859-2960 to register your helping hand for this important event. Meeting with instructions 9 a.m. at the Great Falls Discovery Center, Turners Falls.

Public Art Unveiling, 1 p.m. Artist Sebastian Gutwein will give a tour of his

new Turners Falls Public Art installation, *Woven River*, exposing some of the history of Turners Falls and the reincorporation of the past into the present through a series of installations connected by a woven wall of branches. The artist will be present to give a tour of the work from 1 to 3 pm.

Arts and Leaves seasonal Art Walk in downtown Turners Falls. All Day. Artist's Reception for Jim Gambaro, for insights and information on his photographs. These will be exhibited in the Great Hall of the Discovery Center during the month of October. Light refreshments will be served. 1 to 3 p.m.

Wendell Full Moon Coffee House: *Charles Neville Quartet*, 7:30 p.m. \$6 to \$12; partial proceeds to benefit the Wendell Full Moon Coffee House. Mr. Charles Neville will grace the stage of the Wendell Full Moon Coffee House, opening the new season with his "indefinable something." The second eldest and most musically diverse of the Neville brothers, Coffee House listeners have described his horn playing as spiritually healing. Jazz fans will appreciate the chance to see Mr. Neville perform in such an intimate venue. Desserts you won't want to miss! www.wendellfullmoon.org

At the Rendezvous, Turners Falls: *Opel, Watcher, The Original Cowards* (rock, indie) \$5 cover.

At Route 63 Roadhouse, Millers Fall: *Girls, Guns & Glory, Americana / Country / Rock* band from Boston, 8 p.m.

SUNDAY, OCTOBER 4th

Early Bird Birding. Join Jeff at 7 a.m. as he explores the North Quabbin area for fall migrant birds. Come for as long as your schedule allows. Meet at the Millers River Environmental Center, 100 Main Street, Athol. Severe weather cancels. Info: Jeff Johnstone, (978) 249-9052.

SATURDAY, OCTOBER 10th

Memorial Hall Theater in Shelburne Falls kicks off its new season of live high-definition broadcasts of the Metropolitan Opera on the big screen on Saturday October 10 with a production of Puccini's *Tosca* at 1 p.m. Tickets \$23 www.shelburnefallsmemorialhall.org.

UNTIL OCTOBER 15th

AWE - Artists Window Exhibit: The Artists of Franklin County are pleased to present art in Greenfield storefront windows up and down Main, Federal, and Miles Streets. Anyone interested in purchasing art on display is asked to contact the artists directly.

UNTIL OCTOBER 27th

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

ONGOING

Social Ballroom Lessons at the Montague Elks, Turners Falls. \$8 per person, 7:30 to 9 p.m. every Wednesday night. Call for September's focus. (413) 885-8888. October is Rumba!

Deerfield Valley Art Assoc. Gallery 38: *It's Fair Day* showing thru September 30th. Avenue A, Turners Falls. Show hours: Wed, Fri, Sat, 1 to 6 p.m.

HOT SPOT TEEN CENTER
MONDAYS - Drop-in, 3 to 6 p.m.
TUES & WEDS - Ongoing Music Project, 3 to 6 p.m.
THURS - Drop-in, 3 to 6 p.m. & Movie Night, 6 to 8 p.m.
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Showtimes for Friday, Sept. 25th to Thursday, Oct. 1st

- PANDORUM R**
DAILY 6:30 9:30
FRI, SAT, SUN 12:00 3:00
- CLOUDY WITH A CHANCE OF MEATBALLS PG** in DTS sound
DAILY 6:30 9:30 FRI, SAT, SUN 12 3:00
- JULIE & JULIA PG13**
DAILY 6:30 9:00
FRI, SAT, SUN 12:00 3:00
- THE INFORMANT R**
DAILY 6:45 9:20
FRI, SAT, SUN 12:15 3:15
- JENNIFER'S BODY R**
DAILY 6:45 9:15
FRI, SAT, SUN 12:15 3:15
- I CAN DO BAD ALL BY MYSELF PG13** in DTS sound
DAILY 7:00 9:30
FRI, SAT, SUN 12:30 3:30
- GAMER R** in DTS sound
DAILY 7:00 9:30
FRI, SAT, SUN 12:30 3:30

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The Equalites Reggae
Saturday, 9/26, 9 to 11 p.m.
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8:30PM: Jay Bethea | Michael Melivier | Jose Docen (singer-songwriters)
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SAT: 9/26 | 9:30 PM | \$5
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A Weekend of Happenings in Turners Falls



DON CLEGG PHOTO

Richard Wablstron, Air Force, Korea; Earle King, Marine Corps, Vietnam; Leo Parent, Army, Vietnam; George Cowan, Marine Corps, Korea; and Jim Crowley, Navy, Vietnam were among the local heroes honored by the Greenfield Savings Bank on Friday



DETMOLD PHOTO

Bill Roberts touches up an oil painting at Deerfield Valley Art Association's Artists in Action demonstration Saturday, 2nd and Ave A



DETMOLD PHOTO

Fiesta! Mexican Independence Day Celebration at La Bodega, 4th and L, on Sunday



JANEL NOCKELBY PHOTO

At the Art Jam, at the Youth Sculpture Park, Canal and 3rd, on Saturday

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