TURNERS FALLS MILLERS FALLS LAKE PLEASANT MONTAGUE CITY MONTAGUE CENTER GILL ERVING WENDELL LEVERETT

The Montague Reporter

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In Busy Midterm, Local Votes Echo Statewide Trends

By MIKE JACKSON

FRANKLIN COUNTY – Tuesday's national midterm election saw few competitive races in local towns, but a panoply of ballot questions lured a strong turnout for a midterm.

The *Montague Reporter*'s core coverage towns – Gill, Erving, Wendell, Leverett, and the six-precinct town of Montague – generally backed winners across the board for state, county, and question results.

Incumbent governor Maura Healey, for example, won 62% statewide, won the towns by a range of 50% (Erving) to 84% (Leverett), and won Montague's precincts by a range of 57% (Precinct 2) to 77% (Precinct 1).

Incumbent Franklin County sheriff Lori

see **MIDTERM** page A5

MONTAGUE SELECTBOARD

Towns Urge State To Kick in More For Tech School

By JEFF SINGLETON

The project to build six units of affordable housing on First Street in Turners Falls took another step forward at Monday night's Montague selectboard meeting, as the board approved a deed transfer and land development agreement (LDA) with Franklin Hampshire Habitat for Humanity, Inc., which will construct the homes.

The board requested that the Gill-Montague regional school district initiate an agreement needed to fund a feasibility study for the town's elementary schools, considered joining with Greenfield and other towns in calling for increased state support for the construction

see **MONTAGUE** page A7

AMUSEMENT

Pinball Returns to Turners



Dan Levine, in foreground, and Bob Krzykowski make sure the pinball machines are ready for tomorrow's grand opening of Mystic Cat Pinball on Avenue A in Turners Falls.

By BEN GAGNON

TURNERS FALLS – The metallic twang of the spring-loaded plunger launching a ball into play, the *thwack* of the flipper coil firing, the sound of metal balls hitting rubber rings, the rhythmic thud of thumper bumpers, and the whirring and clicking of points being registered. The sound of pinball machines is unmistakable.

As part of this month's First Friday celebration in downtown Turners Falls, that sound will return as Mystic Cat Pinball opens its doors at 113-115 Avenue A, six years after the ravages and social distancing of Covid closed Mystic Pinball. The new location also features a bar and lounge area. Adding the word "cat" to the new name was an effort to reflect a new era.

"I wanted the name to be similar but different," said owner Dan Levine of Leverett. "It's a new iteration, a different location, it's twice as big, and now we have a bar and a

see **PINBALL** page A8

Districts Eye 'Low-Hanging Fruit'

By MIKE JACKSON

MONTAGUE – Representatives from town hall, the Turners Falls fire district and its water department, and Montague Center's autonomous fire, water, and lighting districts convened for the second time at the public safety complex on Wednesday to discuss possibilities for change.

"Anytime I speak with people in my field and I describe how many districts we have, they are in stark disbelief," Adam Tocci, the town's director of assessing, told the group. "It's so convoluted!"

A week ago, town administrator Walter Ramsey circulated a 16-page "living document" gathering together the facts of the patchwork system of governance and suggesting overall approaches.

see **DISTRICTS** page A6



Walter Ramsey, flanked by fire chief Luke Hartnett and town treasurer Eileen Seymour, facilitated.

The Week in High School Sports Only MIAA Tournaments Remain

By MATT ROBINSON

TURNERS FALLS –The Vocational and Western Mass playoffs concluded this week, and the MIAA statewide tournaments kicked off. The Franklin Tech field hockey team played in both championship games before heading to Wilmington for the state tournament, while the Tech boys' soccer team advanced to the Western Mass title game. The hybrid girls' soccer team won two straight, qualifying for the playoffs, and the Turners volleyballers completed the season on a positive note.

Girls' Soccer

FCTS 2 – McCann 0

FCTS 3 – St. Mary's 0

Last Thursday, October 29, the Hybrid Eagles swatted the visiting Green Hornets of McCann. The game was loud and crowded, with the usual supporters lining the sidelines. The talk was of the potential playoff implications. Because I had the ear of coach Jason Butynski, I knew that if Tech won the match, they would qualify.

Thursday's game remained 0-0 even though Tech seemed to be dominating, mounting several attacks and keeping the rock in the Hornets' nest. But during one, the ball went off one of the Green defenders and bounced out of the end zone, awarding the Eagles a corner kick.

Faythe Sobieski set the ball on the near sideline while the players walled up in front of the goal. As she went to kick, they broke off in different directions, drawing the defenders away from the goal. Sobieski hooked the ball and it hit the upper right part of the net just out

see **SPORTS** page A4



Foreground, left to right: Turners Falls's Kim Ramirez-Martin and Lillianna Miller vie with McCann Tech's Alayna Bishop for control of the ball as the Franklin Tech Eagles hosted the McCann Tech Hornets last Thursday. Turners Falls High School students compete on Franklin County Tech's co-op soccer team.

Private Equity Purchase of Canal, Mountain Final

By REPORTER STAFF

FRANKLIN COUNTY – The sale announced in May of the US assets of FirstLight Power – the Northfield Mountain pumped-storage station, the Turners Falls dam, canal, and hydroelectric plants, 11 other hydro plants in Connecticut and Pennsylvania, and three solar arrays – was finalized this week, according to a company announcement.

The buyer, Hull Street Energy, LLC, is a private equity firm based in Maryland which has been purchasing a number of power generators in the country's Northeast and upper Midwest since its founding in 2014.

Hull Street Energy founder Sarah Wright said in a written statement on Monday that the acquisition is "an important addition to our portfolio," and "underscores our conviction

see **HYDRO** page A5

GILL SELECTBOARD

Loans Available For Home Rehabs

By KATE SAVAGE

Gill's selectboard held another lightning-fast meeting Monday, with members discussing the town's housing rehabilitation loan program and the Riverside municipal building.

Town administrator Ray Purington gave an update on the housing rehab program, which is funded with community development block grants. The current round of the program has a goal of rehabbing nine houses in Gill and New Salem. One unit in Gill is under contract, with two more in town in the "inspection and bidding phase," and an additional application in process and under review.

New Salem has two houses in the inspection and bidding phase, and one in review.

"The good news is that means there's room for at least two more projects," said Purington. He encouraged those interested to sign up soon

see **GILL** page A5

For Lo! The Wind Was Blusterous.

In Stark Disbelief.....A1
Entangled in the Machinations.....A2
Limiting the Burden.....A3
Led the Rushing Attack.....A4
Less Emphatic Than the State Average.....A5
Both Human and Aqueous.....A6
Swelled to Capacity.....A7
Within a Few Miles.....A8
Up Close in Perfect Light.....B1
A Little Shy With Handling.....B2
Acting Like Sea Creatures.....B3
Knowing You Belong.....B4
Doing Nothing But Lying There.....B5
Junk Orbit, God's Wisdom, Pumpkin Swap...B6
Connect Four, Paper Jays, Input Session.....B7
Following the Exodus.....B8

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NINA ROSSI ILLUSTRATION



Diemand Farm in Wendell has raised over 3,500 turkeys for Thanksgiving this year, though pre-orders are now closed. The biggest turkey raised in recent years – in 2021 – weighed in at 47 pounds! Here are the owners, left to right: Peter Diemand, Faith Diemand, Tessa White-Diemand, and Anne Diemand Bucci.

CORRECTIONS

We jinxed ourselves last week by jokingly titling our table of contents "Can You Spot the Error Carefully Hidden in This Edition?" – as it turned out, there were at least two.

First, in our Montague selectboard coverage (*Trash Pickup Price May Rise; Tree Advisors 'Demoralized,'* Page A1), when we wrote that the board had given a "first reading" to a draft policy governing the relationships among the town's public works department, tree warden, and tree advisory committee, we mischaracterized its authorship.

Town administrator Walter Ramsey had publicly said: "I took the first crack at drafting it, and reviewed it with [selectboard member] Nate [Card] and the selectboard, and [public works superintendent] Sam [Urkiel], and we arrived on a draft, sent it to the tree committee a few months ago, and asked for comments."

We incorrectly summarized this as: "which Ramsey said had been written with Card, reviewed by Urkiel, and also sent to the tree advisory committee..."

We have since been notified that Card merely provided comment on an early draft, and that Ramsey had presented that draft to him as a document "that Sam and I worked up." We are happy to help set the record straight.

And in *Rendezvous Staff, Owners Unveil Plan for Cooperative* (Page A1), reported and edited under the joint supervision of the *Reporter* and *The Shoestring*, we wrote that "[Chris] Janke and his wife Emily Brewster bought, renovated, and reopened the Rendezvous as a restaurant with Mark Wisnewski in 2007."

There is a glaring omission there, which should have been caught at the *Reporter*: the business was established and opened with a fourth owner, Jamie Berger.

We apologize to our readers, and especially to Mr. Berger, for our mistake and this misrepresentation.

Letters to the Editors

Villagers Grateful for Traffic-Calming Measures

Many residents of Montague Center have communicated with our Town staff over the years to voice concerns about traffic speeds and pedestrian safety in the village.

Our pleas for alterations to slow traffic have been heard. Our main street has been narrowed, our entries and exits from North and Center Streets have been improved, and several new speed tables and crosswalks have been installed.

We say *Thank You!* to our town planner for securing a state grant, to our town administrator and assistant town administrator for overseeing the project, and to our DPW for assisting and maintaining the improvements.

Julie Kumble
Judith Lorei
Paul and Eileen Mariani
Emily Monosson
Will Quale
Leigh and John Rae
Laurie Rhoades
Harry Rockland-Millar
Jon-Marc Seimon
Montague Center

Things AI Can't Do

Like many people these days, I'm worried about all the things that AI might take away from us. Touted by its makers – and owners – as potentially the tool to usher in the golden age of leisure, it's also possible it could destroy humanity. Take your pick.

But while we are enthralled – in fear, in awe, or both – by the vast power of what AI can do, we often forget all the things that it cannot, and never will be able to. As a human concerned about our future relevance, I found it enlightening to start a list of the things that AI will never do. I offer it as an inspiration. Feel free to add.

AI will never:
Bake bread.
Grow food.
Host a Thanksgiving dinner.
Rake leaves.
Give a hug, a kiss, or an arm around your shoulder.
Put on a play.
Be a real orchestra, or a band filling a stadium.
Play basketball.
Play football.
Hold a child's hand when she's afraid.
Make a fire.
Go camping.
Go on a hike.
Cry.
Ride a bicycle.
Get dressed up for Halloween (although a scary clown robot could hand out candy).
Smile at a butterfly.
Take an interest in birds at the birdfeeder just because they're funny and beautiful.
Drink a coffee with you.
Be a proud parent at a child's graduation.
Anguish with friends over which wedding dress to choose.
Have fun.
Laugh out loud (for real).
Chuckle.
Be human.

Annababette Wils
Montague

Open Letter to Congressman McGovern

Congratulations to us. We won! But now comes the hard part: governing in a way that honors the hopes, dreams, and aspirations of Americans who believe in a new beginning for America.

It is unfortunate that we have become entangled in the machinations of the oligarchic elites. Unfortunately, too many in the Corporate Democrat wing of the party are poised to continue to serve genocidal wars, industrial pollution, AI-generated intrusions, and ever-increasing societal controls, to name a few ills of the era.

And though I appreciate many endeavors and Hakeem Jeffries's leadership skills, as Sludge reports (*readsludge.com*), "Executives at Anduril and Palantir, crypto industry advocates, and investors giving through AIPAC helped fund the Democratic leader preparing to become speaker."

I fear that if Jeffries were to be elected Speaker of the House, the efforts of hundreds of thousands of re-energized Democratic volunteers and donors would be undermined, and the hopes of millions who voted for the Blue Wave during the midterms would be thwarted.

I urge you, as a man quite capable of becoming Speaker, to run to replace Jeffries. And if not you, then some other congressional Democrat you believe might lead the country forward, against genocidal wars and towards healthcare for all, environmentally sound policies, and commitment to free enterprise that offers good-paying jobs and products made in America that we can be proud of.

Genevieve Harris-Fraser
Orange



The Red Queen made no resistance whatever; only her face grew very small, and her eyes got large and green: and still, as Alice went on shaking her, she kept on growing shorter – and fatter – and softer – and rounder – and –

– and it really was a kitten, after all.

ILLUSTRATIONS BY JOHN TENNIEL, "THROUGH THE LOOKING-GLASS," 1871

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TURNERS FALLS AND VICINITY.

Compiled by MIKE JACKSON

It's been warm. **Rain's coming**.

Don't forget to wear fluorescent, **preferably orange**, if you're running around in the woods this season. It's bear-hunting season, and deer-hunting-with-a-bow season; after Thanksgiving things kick into high gear with deer shotgun season and then primitive firearms time.

The Healey-Driscoll Administration announced last week that 200 state hazardous materials technicians will be outfitted with **personal radiation detectors** through a federal grant program. Oh good.

Veterans Day is next Wednesday. Here in downtown Turners a short ceremony is scheduled for 10:30 a.m. at the Soldiers Memorial Park, hosted by the Montague selectboard, Montague Elks, and the Soldiers Memorial committee.

The bigger attraction, though, is up in Gill at 11 a.m., where the town will dedicate a new monument to veterans of post-1975 conflicts.

These could include the multinational force in Lebanon; Operation Urgent Fury (invading Grenada); Operation Earnest Will (escorting Kuwaiti tankers in the Persian Gulf); Operation Just Cause (invading Panama); Operations Desert Shield and Desert Storm; Operation Restore Hope (to Somalia); Operation Joint Endeavor, Operation Deny Flight, and the allied force in Bosnia and Kosovo; Operation Enduring Freedom (invading Afghanistan); Operation Iraqi Freedom; Operation Nomad Shadow (in Turkey and Georgia); Operation New Dawn (Iraq still); Observant Compass (parts of Africa); Operation Inherent Resolve (Iraq, Syria, Iran, Israel, Jordan, and now the Red Sea), Operation Freedom's Sentinel (Afghanistan still); Operation Odyssey Lightning (Libya); and now Operations Midnight Hammer and Epic Fury (Iran).

The Heartwing Center delivered **200 turkeys to community members** last year with the help of I Love Boston Sports and New England Patriots kicker Andy Boragales, and they plan to do it again this Thanksgiving – and they're looking for community support to do it again.



Montague's public works department poured concrete last week to secure the pole for a hoop at Montague Center's future basketball half-court on School Street.

Executive director Heather Wood told me the organization is trying to raise $4,800 to buy the turkeys, which will bring the Patriots back to match with the rest of the meal and infrastructure.

"We understand that the same financial pressures affecting this event are also affecting local businesses and the families we serve," Heartwing writes. "That is why we hope to share the cost among a small group of community partners rather than ask any one organization to carry it alone. We do not want to miss this opportunity to bring our neighbors together or disappoint the community members for whom last year's event meant so much."

Call Heather at (413) 210-6379, or "even better," email *heather@heartwingcenter.org* if you or your business can help out with this.

Ilan Pappé, a leading figure among Israel's New Historians movement and a bestselling and controversial historian of the Palestinian expulsion, will be in Greenfield Thursday, November 19 to discuss his new work with neuroscientist Yoav Litvin, *Wired to Steal*.

The authors use "history, behavioral neuroscience and investigative narrative to examine how ruling classes in settler colonial projects 'exploit human **vulnerability to fear and social belonging** in order to turn communities against others, justify mass violence, and conceal theft as self-defense.'"

Tickets to the event, which starts at 7 p.m. at All Souls UU Church, are still available, at *givebutter.com/wired-to-steal-oqu7xu* for free or by donation.

Have you ever wanted to see the Trans Siberian Orchestra in Worcester? Do you have blood?

You may be in luck – **blood, platelet, and plasma donors** can earn rewards points redeemable for two tickets to their concert at the DCU Center on Saturday, November 28. See *RedCrossBlood.org* to find out how. "While supplies last."

Send your little bits of news to editor@montaguereporter.org.

FROM THE DESK OF THE MONTAGUE TOWN ADMINISTRATOR

Maintaining Momentum – and Managing Costs

By WALTER RAMSEY

MONTAGUE – In my first column this August, I wrote about the momentum building in Montague as years of planning began to translate into action. Over the past four months, voters have made decisions on three major public building initiatives that will shape our community for generations: a new public library, a regional vocational high school, and a feasibility study for our elementary schools.

These are important investments in Montague's future. At the same time, we are entering a period that will demand careful financial management. Our challenge is to sustain this momentum while remaining realistic about what taxpayers and ratepayers can afford.

Managing Our Investments

These three initiatives represent significant undertakings, and each deserves careful oversight. The Town's responsibility is to manage them diligently, maximize state assistance, pursue additional funding opportunities, and communicate clearly about costs and schedules.

We must also consider these projects within the larger financial picture. Residents expect good schools, modern public facilities, and reliable municipal services, but our ability to pay for them is not unlimited. Responsible management means evaluating these investments together, rather than in isolation. Town staff are committed to ensuring every public dollar is spent wisely.

Another Challenging Cycle

As we begin developing the Fiscal Year 2028 budget, the Town faces a familiar challenge: the cost of providing existing services continues to rise faster than our available revenues.

Our goal is to maintain current service levels wherever possible, but doing so will require difficult choices. Employee benefits, utilities, equipment, and other operating expenses continue to increase even when staffing and services remain unchanged.

Residents should also anticipate an increase in curbside trash collection fees. The Town has not raised its trash sticker price in 19 years, while collection and disposal costs have increased substantially. As a result, a growing share of the program's cost is supported by property taxes rather than user fees. Adjusting fees will help put the program on a more sustainable financial footing and reduce its reliance on taxation.

Another concern is the closure of the Lightlife food manufacturing facility in Turners Falls. Beyond the loss of local jobs, the plant has been a major contributor to the Town's sewer revenues. Without a new industrial user, the loss of this revenue could place considerable pressure on sewer rates next year, as operating costs must be shared among fewer customers. The Town is working with state legislators and economic development partners to identify opportunities for the facility's reuse.

These are difficult challenges, but residents deserve to understand the financial pressures facing the Town before decisions are made. We will continue seeking efficiencies, protecting essential services, and communicating the tradeoffs clearly. And we commit to continuing the development of financial relief programs, such as Municipal Electricity Aggregation and Senior Tax Work-Off.

Sustainable Partnerships

The October election demonstrated strong local support for exploring a new regional school district. Although the proposal did not receive the necessary approval in neighboring communities, Montague voters supported regionalization by an overwhelming margin.

I believe this reflects a recognition that long-term financial and educational sustainability will require us to think beyond traditional municipal and district boundaries. While that particular proposal will not move forward, the underlying challenges remain. We will continue exploring partnerships that can improve services, share costs, and strengthen our institutions.

That same approach is guiding our newly launched Montague Villages Sustainability Initiative. A working group has begun examining the long-term sustainability of Montague's four special districts: the Turners Falls Fire District, Montague Center Fire District, Montague Center Water District, and Montague Center Lighting District.

The goal is to identify opportunities for cooperation and more sustainable service delivery.

A Productive Season

Amid these longer-term challenges, it is worth celebrating improvements residents can see and enjoy today. This year's construction season brought investments throughout Montague, including the Montague Center Complete Streets project, improvements to the Industrial Boulevard intersection, a new tube slide at Unity Park, a basketball court in Lake Pleasant, and downtown streetscape accessibility improvements.

These projects vary in size and purpose, but each contributes to a safer, more accessible, and more enjoyable community. They also reflect the combined efforts of Town staff, volunteer boards, contractors, and state funding partners. I am grateful to everyone who helped bring them to fruition.

There is more progress ahead. Nearly $500,000 in grant funding will support infrastructure engineering at the former Farren Care Center property, an important step toward redevelopment. Additional funding will support an accessible ramp serving the storefronts between Upper Bend Café and Waterway Arts in downtown Turners Falls. A grant-funded Housing Production Plan will also help guide future development.

These investments demonstrate the importance of pursuing outside funding to improve our community, limiting the burden on local taxpayers.

Looking Ahead

Montague has inherited a remarkable collection of public buildings, infrastructure, neighborhoods, and village centers. Maintaining these assets while adapting to changing economic conditions and welcoming new residents is an ongoing responsibility. There is much to be optimistic about, but optimism must be matched by disciplined financial management, thoughtful planning, and honest communication.

I encourage residents to follow the upcoming budget discussions, attend public meetings, and ask questions. November through January are particularly important months to engage in the development of next year's budget, when priorities are being evaluated and funding recommendations are taking shape.

These conversations will not always be easy, but they are essential to keeping Montague both vibrant and financially sustainable.

Walter Ramsey is Montague's town administrator. He lives in Turners Falls.

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SPORTS from page A1

of the reach of the goalie, drawing first blood and handing the Eagles a 1-0 lead.

Three minutes later, with the players jammed up in front of the Hornets' net, Lillianna Miller got the ball, dribbled back, and passed it to Layla Hammond who kicked it in for the insurance goal. The Eagles played keep-away to ice the shutout, earning their way into the MIAA playoffs for the fifth consecutive year.

On Monday the Eagles concluded their regular season on a high note, shutting out the St. Mary's Saints at the White Oak School field in Westfield.

Tech took a lead in the first half when Sobieski kicked the ball to Kaelyn McLean, who booted it in. In the second half, Sobieski scored on a direct kick, then Sobieski fed the ball to Summer Williams, who kicked it into the goal for Franklin's third of the afternoon. Sheyenne Ballentine made four saves to preserve the shutout.

The win gives the Eagles a 10 – 8 regular-season record. This Thursday they receive their seed in the MIAA D-5 bracket.

Boys' Soccer

FCTS 3 – Lenox 2
Mt. Greylock 5 – FCTS 2

Last Friday the Boys' Eagles outlasted the Lenox Millionaires 3-2 in the Western Mass Class C semifinal round. Tech was comfortably ahead 3-1 by the time I arrived, but the Millionaires scored with 26.59 left to play, drawing concern from the Franklin Faithful and cheers from the visitors.

The Eagles players were not too concerned and continued to dribble at midfield and make great passes. But Lenox started to wage desperate attacks, drawing the defense away from the net while keeping the ball directly in front of Tech's goal. At 10:20 a Lenox kick went high, and when the goalie deflected the ball the entire goal uprooted from its post. The officials, the coaches, and some of the players carried the goal back in place and anchored it down.

Lenox continued to threaten to tie the game up as it wound down, forcing coach Dan Prasol to go into strict clock-killing mode. "Park the bus," he called to his players. This basically means pulling all players back onto defense. "We may score, but we want to prevent them from scoring," he called to his players as they raced to defend the goal.

Every time Tech's goalie got the ball, Prasol called out "Use your six!" and then counted to six before the goalie kicked it upfield. When the horn finally sounded, the entire team rushed onto the field in celebration.

Nate Gheorghita scored Tech's first goal, assisted by John Gheorghita; Cody Yetter scored the second, assisted by Nate, and Carter Leete made the last goal unassisted.

On Sunday the Eagles traveled up Mohawk Trail and lost to the Greylock Mounties in the Western Mass title game. John Gheorghita scored both goals, while Nate again gave an assist.

Like the girls, the boys' team will learn their seeding in the state tournament this Thursday.

Football

FCTS 36 – Mahar 6

On Friday, the Franklin Tech crowd celebrated 13 senior footballers and one senior cheerleader. Because it was Halloween Eve, the cheerleaders were decked out in costumes. One was dressed as an old lady, walker and all. I didn't realize she was actually a student until she began to cheer.

Tech made a wonderful opening drive, and at 8:45 Nolyn Stafford caught the ball and twisted into the end zone for the 6-0 lead. The Eagle defense stopped the Senators, but on their next drive Tech fumbled the ball away and the visitors tied it up. On the ensuing kick, the Sens kicked an onside kick, and again Tech fumbled it away.

As I walked the sidelines, one of the regulars said, "I told Bubbles" – coach Mike Blanchard – "not to take Mahar too lightly. When they finally got their first win, they have been undefeated."

Neither team was able to score again until the final drive of the half. With just 25 seconds left in the period, Mason Bassett ran a keeper and crossed the goal line. But confusion reigned. No signal was made, and the clock kept ticking down, forcing coach Joe Gamache to call a timeout.

The ball was spotted on the two, and Tech lined up. When the fans loudly objected, one ref turned to the crowd and calmly said, "It was a touchdown." The board was adjusted to read 12-6 and the clock was wound back, putting 23 seconds left in the half.

I sat with the refs at the break as they discussed the last touchdown. It seemed that none knew who was carrying the ball, but when they discovered that Bassett had it and had cleared the goal line, they awarded the points.

On Mahar's first series of the second half, Jaxon Silva picked off a pass and returned it 67 yards to the visitors' 8-yard line. Tech scored quickly and caught the 2-PAT to increase their lead to 20-6.

On Mahar's next possession Tech made some mistakes. The kick went out of bounds, giving the Politicians the ball on the 35. Facing fourth-and-10, the Eagle defense jumped, and then on fourth-and-5 they jumped again, giving up an unearned first down.

But the Senators simply couldn't keep up. Tech scored again to make it 28-6, and when they scored again in the fourth to earn a 30-point cushion, the mercy rule kicked in and the clock ran nonstop.

Mason Bassett completed six passes for 126 yards and two touchdowns. Catching for Tech were Hunter Donahue, Stafford, and Brady Gancarz. Gancarz also led the rushing attack with 147 yards, followed by Wyatt Whitman, Hunter Donahue, and Mason Bassett.

Defensively, Donahue made nine tackles, returned an interception for 33 yards, and recovered a fumble; Justin Lent made eight tackles; Silva returned the interception 67 yards and recovered a fumble, Stafford jumped on a fumble; and Seamus Collins got a sack.

With the win, the Eagles improved their record to 7 – 1, earning them a #12 seed in the Division 8 state tournament. They travel east this Friday to take on the #5 Lynn Voc Tigers.

Volleyball

PVCA 3 – FCTS 0
TFHS 3 – Ware 2

Last Thursday Tech's volleyballers traveled to Springfield and lost to the Pioneer Valley Christian Academy Eagles in the Western Mass Class C semifinals. Sarah Beckwith made four kills and 10 digs.

The next day, Turners Falls edged out the Ware Green Indians 3-2, bringing their record to 7 – 12 and earning a #30 seed in the Division 5 bracket. The game was sparsely attended, but the visitors and the home folks mingled together nicely. Because neither team excelled this season, the fans could just sit back and enjoy.

The first set went down to the wire, but the Thunder finally won it by two points. Green took a late-game lead in the second, and every time they scored, their bench chanted, "Do it again, do it again…" in quick succession. They won the second set to tie it up, and that's when I headed for the Franklin Tech soccer pitch.

Abby Moffatt finished with 23 digs, Maddie Haight led in kills and assists, and Jakhia Williams made three blocks.

This Thursday, the Blue Thunder hosts the #35 seeded Salem Academy Navigators in the Division 5 preliminary round, while the Eagles host Greenfield in the Round of 32.



Franklin Tech's Cody Yetter (right) makes a pass as Lenox's Langston Cotton moves in to defend during the Western Mass Class C semifinal game last Friday in Turners Falls. The Eagles stayed strong, finishing with a 3-2 win over the Lenox Millionaires.

Field Hockey

FCTS 2 – Hampshire 1
West Springfield 4 – FCTS 1
Wilmington 2 – FCTS 0

The Franklin Tech Eagles defeated the Hampshire Field Hockey Raiders in the Western Mass Class C Tournament last Thursday. They led in the third after Leah Meattey scored an unassisted goal, but the Raiders came back to knot it at 1-1 after regulation.

Neither team could put the ball in the net in the first sudden death period, and the game went into a second OT. Teagan Donahue then got possession and passed the ball to Amelia Rider, who shot it in to win the game and advance into the championship.

On Halloween, the top-seeded Eagles went to a designated neutral venue to play the #2 West Springfield Terriers for the Western Mass championship belt. As it turned out, that neutral venue was Clark Field in West Springfield, so the underdogs were playing at home while the favorites had to travel almost an hour.

West scored in the first period and twice more in the third to take a 3-zip lead. The teams traded goals in the fourth, giving the "visiting" Terriers the championship ring. In goal, Redyn Gutierrez made five saves.

On Monday, the traveling Eagles were blanked by the Blackstone Valley Regional Voc Tech Beavers in the MVADA championship game out in Upton.

On Wednesday their miracle season came to an end as they lost to the Wilmington Wildcats in the MIAA Division 3 preliminaries. But the Sticking Eagles have nothing to hang their heads about: they finished the regular season 13 – 4 – 2, and made it to both the PVIAC and the state Vocational championship games.



Franklin Tech senior Amelia Rider takes a shot on Hampshire goalie Grace Layman during the Western Mass Class C semifinal last week. Minutes later Rider sent the ball into the cage, breaking a 1-1 tie in second overtime.

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HYDRO from page A1

that firm, clean resources like FirstLight's hydropower and energy storage facilities will play an increasingly vital role in the Northeast's evolving energy landscape."

A FirstLight spokesperson told the *Reporter* that no significant changes had been made in the deal since the May announcement, and that the company will not disclose the purchase price.

The Federal Trade Commisson authorized the purchase in late June.

The Federal Energy Regulatory Commission (FERC) then approved it on October 15, ruling that it was "consistent with the public interest." Technically, the Turners Falls infrastructure was owned by FirstLight subsidiary FirstLight Renewables, while Northfield Mountain was owned by a second subsidiary, FirstLight Storage Company. The package amounts to 1.4 gigawatts (GW) of power capacity.

The Canadian Public Sector Pension Investment Board (PSPIB), which has owned FirstLight, announced Monday that it will rebrand its remaining Canadian generating assets "Caelo Energy."

"Completing this transaction concludes a successful decade of building FirstLight into a leading North American clean energy business," managing director Andrew Alley wrote, "and we thank the US team for everything they accomplished."

FERC's order notes that Hull Street is "controlled by" Wright.

In the late 2000s the FirstLight facilities were owned by another private equity firm, Energy Capital Partners, when Wright was a partner there, and were part of the portfolio she managed.

FirstLight's licenses to operate the Turners Falls and Northfield projects were due to expire in 2018, and have been continuously granted exensions by FERC while the company's renewal application is pending.

MIDTERM from page A1

Streeter, meanwhile, defended her position with 70% of the vote countywide, winning in these towns from 49% (Erving) to 84% (Leverett), and in Montague from 56% (Precinct 2) to 70% (Precinct 1).

Her closest challenger, Northfield police chief Jon Hall, garnered 18% of the votes countywide, but garnered 31% in Montague's Precinct 3 – and 40% in Erving. He edged out a win in Northfield.

Wendell was one of only a handful of towns in which the third candidate, Gary Gagnon, came in second place.

Local opinion on the ballot questions was fairly congruent with the statewide outcomes.

Majorities in all five towns and six Montague precincts agreed with statewide winners Yes on 1, calling for document transparency on Beacon Hill; Yes on 2, allowing public defenders to unionize; and No on 3, which would have replaced party primaries with a so-called "jungle primary" system.

Only in Montague's Precinct 3 – the eastern section of the Hill neighborhood – did a majority (50.8%) oppose Question 4, support for same-day voter registration.

And only in Erving did a majority (50.7%) favor Question 5, which would have changed the state's tax cap formula to produce lower caps.

Support for the creation of a state conservation fund, Question 6, ranged from a low of 56% in Erving to 76% in Wendell and Leverett.

Question 7 saw the most significant local dissent from the apparent outcome: modest majorities in Montague's Precincts 1, 4, and 6 and a whopping 72% support in Precinct 5, downtown Turners Falls, resulting in a 55% majority townwide. Leverett was even more in favor at 57%.

A Yes vote would allow the construction of a single-family home, by right, on any lot at least 5,000 square feet in area with 50 feet along a road and access to sewer and water service. The issue has pitted supporters of a housing buildout against those concerned that the end run around local zoning could be harmful.

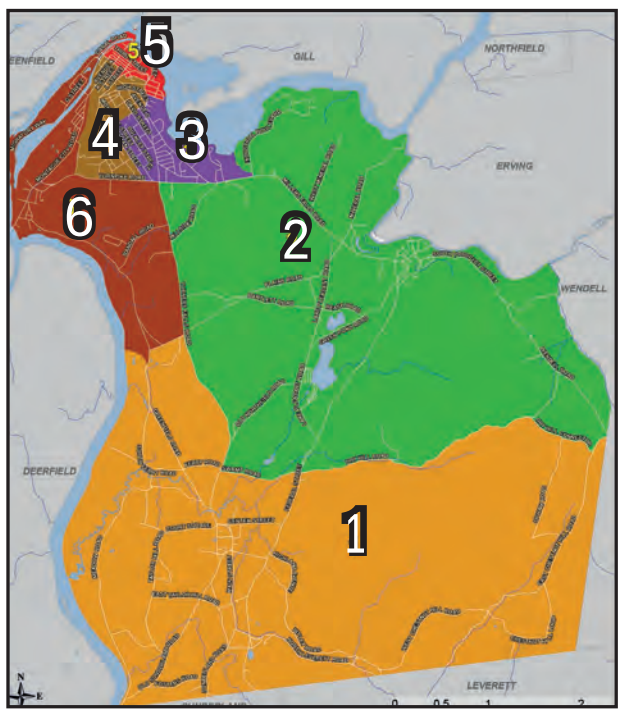
"Many Franklin County towns do not have that many parcels that are both on public water and sewer in which this would apply," Franklin Regional Council of Governments livability program manager Megan Rhodes told the *Reporter*, "and many of the historic village centers have development patterns that match lot sizes of about 5,000 square feet. However, the way the ballot measure was written may have unintended consequences that are not yet clear in the way properties are assessed, the impact on water and sewer capacity, and the role of municipal control on land uses."

As of press time, Question 7 was losing by a slim margin of 33,000 votes statewide, 50.7% to 49.3%.

Question 8, the attempt to re-ban cannabis, lost statewide at 77% No, but every *Montague Reporter* town was more emphatic, ranging up to 85% No in Wendell. Only Montague's Precinct 3 was less opposed than the state average, though still came in at 75% No.

Perhaps surprisingly to anyone who was making predictions based on lawn signs, the 68% statewide Yes on 9 vote, to uphold the 2024 gun control law, was echoed with majorities locally everywhere except Erving (55% No), with the lowest Montague vote in Precinct 6 (54% Yes) and the overall highest, predictably, in Leverett (78% Yes).

MONTAGUE PRECINCT MAP



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The Town of Erving is Hiring

The Town of Erving is seeking motivated, community-minded individuals for the following positions:

Police Department

- **Patrol Officer –** Full-time and benefited. Patrol Officers perform routine and specialized law enforcement work to protect lives and property, prevent and suppress crimes within the community, and carry out the enforcement of federal, state, and local laws. Officers work a 4 days on/ 2 days off rotating work schedule in accordance with the collective bargaining agreement with NEPBA Local 121.
  Anticipated hiring pay range: $28.44/hour to $30.17/hour.

Health Department

- **Health Agent –** Full-time (40 hours/week) and benefited. The Health Agent works under the direction of the Erving Board of Health and serves as the lead employee for a two-town Franklin County Health Services Partnership that represents the towns of Erving and Northfield. The Health Agent will work on a variety of public health matters that include, but are not limited to, the inspections of housing, Title V, public pools, food establishments, and recreational camps. This is a public facing position that works directly with co-workers, citizens, property owners, and our regional and State officials.
  Anticipated hiring pay range: $36.21/hour to $38.42/hour.

Highway Department

- **Snowplow Operator –** Seasonal & Per diem. The Town of Erving seeks motivated winter staff for our Highway Department for snow plowing this wintertime season. Reliability, flexibility, and ability to cooperate is a MUST. Experience operating a snowplow is preferred for the positions. The seasonal employment runs from December 19, 2026, to April 3, 2027.
  Anticipated hiring pay range: $24.90/hour to $26.41/hour.

To learn more about these opportunities, interested candidates can obtain the full position descriptions, review minimum qualifications, and an employment application by visiting *www.erving-ma.gov/employment*.

How To Apply: To be considered for these positions, candidates must submit a completed employment application with resumé, references, and a cover letter to: Town of Erving, Attn: Emily Pollard, 12 East Main Street, Erving, MA 01344 or in a PDF format via email to *careers@erving-ma.gov* with the subject line stating the position being applied for. Applications for all positions will be accepted until the positions are filled, with a preferred submission deadline of **Monday, November 9, 2026, at 5 p.m.**

The Town of Erving is a drug-free workplace and is an equal opportunity employer.

SCENE REPORT

Stumping for Nature on the Common

By SARAH ROBERTSON

WENDELL – Wendell open space committee chair Daniel Leahy spent all day Tuesday on the town common holding signs and advocating for Question 6. He spoke with passersby from just after sunrise to well after sunset, and was joined for a short time by state representative Aaron Saunders.

"I can't say it was a landslide, but with 60% or more you've had a very successful campaign, for whoever is running or whatever the issue is," Leahy said after the votes were in.

The initiative will reallocate a portion of the state sales tax revenue from the sale of sporting equipment, and other outdoor goods to a fund dedicated to conservation, restoration, drinking water protection, and public parks. Advocates estimate the fund could receive as much as $100 million per year.

Having worked for the US Fish & Wildlife Service for 27 years, Leahy is familiar with how the Pittman-Robertson Wildlife Restoration Act and Dingell-Johnson Act have diverted revenue from fishing and hunting equipment to conservation at the federal level.

Leading up to the election, Leahy had spent two Saturdays at the transfer station collecting signatures in support of the initiative.

Leahy also accepted gifts of warm food and hot tea with honey from neighbors. Despite having packed a lunch for the day, he also accepted Annie Diemand's offer to deliver him soup and molasses bread.

"I wouldn't turn down a Diemand meal," Leahy told the *Reporter*.

More than half the registered voters in Wendell cast ballots Tuesday, and 76% supported Q6.



"Just being connected to your neighbors is a wonderful thing, and I felt that on Election Day," Daniel Leahy said. "All politics is local."

GILL from page A1

by contacting Bridget Phillips at the housing authority at (413) 223-5203 or *bphillips@fcrhra.org*.

Through the program, residents with qualifying incomes can receive interest-free and deferred-payment loans to repair their homes and bring them into compliance with code.

Selectboard member Charles Garbiel shared updates from the committee for the Riverside municipal building's roof. He said the group was getting the current roof tested for asbestos, and looking at vendor options for shingles. In the meantime, the committee's next actions are installing additional tarps in preparation for winter.

Selectboard member Jenn Waldron said the Riverside building's reuse committee had also met, and discussed potential outdoor uses for the plot and looked at grants the town could apply for.

Janet Masucci, who sits on the energy and cable advisory committees and also works as the selectboard meeting videographer, said she was talking with selectboard members about hosting a town "fix-it" day where handy people would help residents repair broken objects.

The meeting ended with Garbiel giving a "big thank you" to the recreation committee.

"This is the first year my daughter did soccer," he said. "Seeing first-hand what Isaac [Bingham] and his crew of coaches do – I just want to say, they do a phenomenal job."

Garbiel said there were so many kids who enrolled this year that Gill had four soccer teams, instead of the usual three. "The way they work with those kids is just amazing. I just want to give them a big thank you for reviving the rec department and keeping it alive today," he said.

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The Commonwealth of Massachusetts
Department of Public Utilities

NOTICE OF FILING, PUBLIC HEARING, AND REQUEST FOR COMMENTS

D.P.U. 26- 125 November 2, 2026

Petition of the Town of Montague for approval by the
Department of Public Utilities of a municipal aggregation plan pursuant to G.L. c. 164, § 134.

On October 15, 2026, the Town of Montague ("Town") filed a request with the Department of Public Utilities ("Department") for approval of a municipal aggregation plan pursuant to G.L. c. 164, § 134. General Laws c. 164, § 134 authorizes a municipality to procure electric supply on behalf of consumers within its municipal borders through a municipal aggregation program ("Program"). Eligible electricity consumers not already enrolled with a competitive electric supplier would be automatically enrolled in the Program unless they choose to opt out, in which case they would continue to receive basic service provided by their electric distribution company, National Grid. The Department docketed this petition as D.P.U. 26-121.

The Town has retained MassPowerChoice, LLC to serve as its consultant
in this proceeding and to assist in the implementation of the Program.

The Department will conduct a virtual public hearing to receive comments on the Town's filing. The Department will conduct the hearing using Zoom videoconferencing on **Monday, December 7, 2026**, beginning at **2:00 p.m.** Attendees can join by entering the link, https://us06web.zoom.us/j/81659739598 from a computer, smartphone, or tablet. No prior software download is required. For audio-only access to the hearings, attendees can dial in at 309-205-3325 (not toll free) and then enter the **Meeting ID# 816 5973 9598**. If you anticipate providing comments via Zoom during the public hearing, to the extent possible, please send an email by the close of business (5:00 p.m.) on **Friday, December 4, 2026**, to timothy.m.federico@mass.gov with your name, email address, and mailing address.

Alternatively, any person who desires to comment on this matter may submit written comments to the Department no later than the close of business (5:00 p.m.) on **Monday, December 7, 2026**. Please note that in the interest of transparency any comments will be posted to our website as received and without redacting personal information, such as addresses, telephone numbers, or email addresses. As such, consider the extent of information you wish to share when submitting comments. The Department strongly encourages public comments to be submitted by email. If, however, a member of the public is unable to send written comments by email, a paper copy may be sent to Peter Ray, Secretary, Department of Public Utilities, One South Station, Boston, Massachusetts 02110.

All written comments or other documents should be submitted to the Department in **PDF format** by email attachment to dpu.efiling@mass.gov and timothy.m.federico@mass.gov. In addition, all written comments should be emailed to counsel for the Town, Paul Gromer, Esq., at pgromer@gromerllc.com. The text of the email must specify: (1) the docket number of the proceeding (D.P.U. 26-125); (2) the name of the person or company submitting the filing; and (3) a brief descriptive title of the document. All documents submitted in electronic format will be posted on the Department's website as soon as practicable at www.mass.gov/dpu. The email must also include the name, title, and telephone number of a person to contact in the event of questions about the filing. Importantly, all large files must be broken down into electronic files that do not exceed 20MB.

The Town's filing and all related documents submitted to or issued by the Department will be available at the Department's website as soon as is practicable at https://eeaonline.eea.state.ma.us/DPU/Fileroom/dockets/bynumber (enter "26-125"). To request materials in accessible formats (Braille, large print, electronic files, audio format) for people with disabilities, contact the Department's ADA coordinator at eeadiversity@mass.gov.

Translation and/or interpretation are available upon request. To request translation and/or interpretation in a language other than English, please contact Paralegal Specialist Kaylee Burgess at dpu.ej@mass.gov no later than 5:00 p.m. on **Wednesday, December 2, 2026**.

Any person desiring further information regarding the Town's filing or a paper copy of the filing should contact Paul Gromer, Esq., at pgromer@gromerllc.com. For further information regarding this Notice, please contact Tim Federico, Hearing Officer, Department of Public Utilities, at timothy.m.federico@mass.gov.

Translation and Interpretation Services

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(Arabic) العربية
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DISTRICTS from page A1

The main goal of the session was to discuss four main priorities for potential reform: the town's limited emergency medical services (EMS) coverage; the administrative burden borne by the tiny Montague Center lighting district; growing strains, both human and aqueous, on the Montague Center water district; and the capacity to maintain two separate fire departments.

Emergency Priority

Luke Hartnett, the fire chief in both districts, explained that neither section of town has a contract to receive advanced life support (ALS) service. The private Greenfield-based company American Medical Response (AMR) provides services, but bills through insurance, and at the end of the day can "decide where they want to go."

The professional Turners Falls fire department can provide basic life support (BLS), but it would take millions in investment to build ALS capacity in-house. And while the Montague Center department has a first responder service, it has no dedicated ambulance service; the town receives some coverage from AMR, with additional ALS from the Amherst fire department via mutual aid.

"I'm feeling that this one rises to the top," Ramsey suggested – but, complicating matters, the town has been waiting a year and a half on a study of the situation by the Franklin Regional Council of Governments (FRCOG).

"They're doing also another region-wide study that's looking at the bigger picture," Ramsey explained, "and they're trying to see what we fit into that bigger picture."

"Their spectrum grew from just EMS to fire and police," said Hartnett, later adding: "Their funding changed."

Lighting Low-Hanging?

Chris Wise spoke on behalf of the lighting district's prudential committee.

"Did you guys want to kind of dissolve?" Ramsey asked bluntly.

"Yes – I think we're all agreed that it's silly the way it's set up now," Wise replied.

Sam Lovejoy, there in a personal capacity as a veteran of past reform efforts, said that out of an estimated $10,000 in annual revenue, the district spends about $1,200 collecting the revenue.

"Occasionally we have to send out refunds that cost less than the price of a stamp," Wise added. He suggested that his district could be a "low-hanging fruit" for the group to address, but Ramsey said that as changing any of the special districts will require an act of the state legislature, it might make sense to bring several together.

"It's a pain in the ass to do, and it's not that big of a deal, so it just sort of gets kicked down the road," said Wise. "I get that."

Further complicating matters, both the town and the Turners Falls fire district are responsible for various lights in Turners.

Might Change Quick

Longtime Montague Center water commissioner Gary Dion said he had recently received a study of the extent of his small department's PFAS contamination, but had not yet read it all.

"We've never had a detect yet," Turners Falls water superintendent Jeff Hildreth bragged.

"Sooner or later it's going to be everywhere," Dion told him. "You're not stopping it."

In this case one of the biggest obstacles to change is mechanical: the much larger Turners Falls water system runs on wider pipes and at a much higher pressure. Simply hooking it up to the northern end of the Montague Center's system requires a pressure reducer, and there would no longer be enough pressure to fill the tank south of the village at the Montague Center fire station. Engineers have priced a direct line through the village at $4 million.

"I think the state would be willing to help in something like that," Hildreth said, "because I think it's beneficial to merge the two, for water quality and stuff like that."

"The other thing is, our operator is getting to the point where he's looking to retire," Dion said. "A lot of these things might change really quick.... We don't have any younger people in our district, that's the problem."

Consolidating Savings

Finally the two fire departments were discussed. When Ramsey heard there was no formal agreement about their now-shared chief, he commented that it was "probably a good area to focus on."

It was reported that the two prudential committees have not met, except several years ago to resolve a dispute over a bill for services.

Hartnett said staffing was his "number one" priority for attention.

"We're going to have to look at apparatus," said Peter Lapachinsky of the Turners district's prudential committee. "It's hard to quantify, but I think that's where savings might be."

"Is there a way you could study to see if everything could be combined into the town?" Dion asked.

After praising the Montague Center volunteer force, Tocci pointed to one of the elephants in the room, the wildly divergent fire district tax rates. "It seems like the tax burden... falls on Turners Falls," he observed. "I understand that there's wonderful volunteer work being done, and it sort of seems like they get a break in taxes through that... Just speaking from the town's budgeting, and what we're already looking at with departments and trying to save money, this is relatively low-hanging fruit in terms of consolidation."

Ramsey's paper suggests that the group weigh three alternative scenarios: "strengthened cooperation" among the existing entities, including formalized agreements and coordinated planning; combining both fire departments into one fire district, still autonomous from town hall, and tasking it with securing ALS coverage; or combining them instead as a department of the town.

The group agreed, roughly speaking, to meet again in January. Hartnett suggested asking FRCOG to share the data from its incomplete EMS study before that session.

In related news, the prudential committee of the Turners Falls fire district, which oversees the water department indirectly, is down to two members, and a special election will be held Monday, December 14. All residents of the district may vote at the water department office.

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THE SPIRIT SHOPPE

MONTAGUE from page A1

of a new Franklin County Technical School, and approved the use of public property for several holiday events.

Town administrator Walter Ramsey introduced the deed transfer and LDA by noting that the town is "very close to closing on [the sale of] this property," probably in the next two weeks. He also said the agreement, which defines the project's scope and the developer's obligations to the town, had not changed significantly since it was published as part of the bidding process when the town chose Habitat For Humanity for the project.

Both the deed transfer and LDA were endorsed by the board with no discussion.

The board also approved Habitat's request to be allowed to fence the property in and do "one more round" of soil tests. The property has been a parking lot, but toxic fill was discovered beneath the surface that was removed with funding from state and federal environmental agencies.

The board also approved Habitat for Humanity's request to be allowed to fence the property in and do "one more round" of soil tests.

In other housing news, after the board approved payments to the contractor HM Nunes for its work on an Avenue A streetscape project, Brian McHugh of the regional housing authority, which oversees the federal community development block grant (CDBG) program that has funded the ongoing work, gave an update.

McHugh said that the latest project had "come in under budget," and that there was $124,000 left in the block grant account that could be reallocated, potentially to housing rehab loans for low-income homeowners. This reallocation would require a public hearing.

Board member Nate Card asked if eligible projects could only involve the "physical building of the housing," or if the loans could be used to improve "any part of the property the housing is on." After McHugh responded that the town could not build new housing with CDBG funds, Card asked if a curb cut could qualify.

McHugh said a curb cut would likely qualify as long as it was on property owned by its residents, and would improve access to the building. If it were on town property, he said, it would not qualify.

Selectboard chair Rich Kuklewicz said the program "also helped seniors with staying in their homes."

Airport

Ramsey reviewed the results of the October 28 special town meeting, at which all proposed articles passed, including annual deficits in the municipal airport budget and "structural deficits" created by the town's failure to fund its share of state or federal grants, most of which were also for the airport.

Card said he was continuing to hear concerns about airport budgets from town meeting members.

"Short term, we're going to have to be [more] realistic in the budgeting, and there will probably be more of an upfront share for the town – and hopefully not these surprises," said Kuklewicz.

When Kuklewicz and Ramsey brought up the proposal by airport manager Brian Camden to lease land for an electric storage battery as a source of revenue, Card asked what environmental review the town could require.

Ramsey replied that it would entail a site plan review and special permit from the planning board, and that he was "pretty sure" the land in question was not designated as protected habitat.

Town meeting member Ariel Elan expressed strong concern about the risk of a large battery catching on fire.

School Buildings

Ramsey said that given the special town meeting's endorsement of funding for a study of the options for consolidating Montague's elementary schools, the board needed to request the school committee to designate the town as the borrowing agent for the project. The school district and its appointed building committee had requested the bonding, but as the elementary school buildings are town-owned, the town must implement the borrowing.

The request had in fact already been approved by the school committee, Ramsey added, but it was nevertheless necessary for the selectboard to approve the request, which it did by a unanimous vote.

A letter in the board's meeting materials estimated that the town would first borrow $1,750,000, the amount approved at the town meeting, where members were assured by the building committee that 76.7% would be reimbursed by the state. The remainder of the debt service would come from Montague's capital stabilization fund.

Ramsey also proposed that the board join with the Greenfield mayor's office in asking state legislators to seek more funding for the Franklin County Technical School building project, which was approved by voters in the 19-town district in a recent election. The majority of Greenfield voters had voted against the project, which Ramsey said would require future debt exclusion votes in nearly all towns in the district.

"I don't think there's any harm in doing such advocacy," Ramsey said. "They've provided a draft letter, but I want to rework it for Montague."

Elan said she had spoken with state senator Jo Comerford in May about "all she's trying to do to get more resources into this project."

The board did not deem it necessary to take a formal vote, but authorized Ramsey to send a letter similar to Greenfield's.

Other Business

On the festive side of the agenda, the board authorized the use of public property for a visit by Santa Claus to Spinner Park on Friday, December 4 from 6:30 to 7:15 p.m., and for a Santa Parade organized by the Montague Center Fire Department on Saturday, December 12. The parade, featuring Santa in a fire truck, will start at the Montague Center common at 1:30 p.m. and arrive at Rutters Park in Lake Pleasant at 2 p.m., the Millers Falls Library at 2:30 p.m., and the Turners Falls fire station at 3:15 p.m., assuming neither the fire department nor Santa is called to put out a battery fire.

A request by assistant town administrator Chris Nolan-Zeller for the board to approve a contract with Bowman Consulting Group for the redesign of the town's two traffic lights, both on Avenue A in Turners Falls, was approved. The $120,000 contract is being funded by a state Municipal and Tribal Assistance grant.

Will Quale was appointed to the town historical commission, and a change in management listed on the Elks Lodge's liquor license also received a blessing.

The next selectboard meeting will take place Monday, November 9.

LOOKING BACK:
10 YEARS AGO THIS WEEK

Here's the way it was on November 3, 2016: News from the Montague Reporter *archive.*

Board Chooses a New Frank

The Montague selectboard, after interviewing two finalists, voted unanimously to offer Steve Ellis the position of town administrator. Ellis, who moved to Turners Falls in the 1990s, has been a town meeting member and served on a number of local committees. He has also raised two children here.

Current town administrator Frank Abbondanzio, who will retire in December, said he was impressed with Ellis's experience in program evaluation. "We have a lot of programs that could probably use that attention," he stated. Ellis has limited practical experience overseeing roads, sewers, police departments and municipal budgets – a fact he freely admitted at his October 27 interview.

Humane Cages

On Wednesday, about 50 people attended a "buy-in" at Diemand Farm in Wendell to support a "no" vote on Question 3. Speakers described the farm as a "sacrificial lamb" to a Humane Society strategy aimed at large factory farms outside the state.

Diemand is the only farm in Massachusetts directly affected by the question's mandate that laying hens not live in cages.

20 YEARS AGO

Here's the way it was on November 2, 2006: News from the Montague Reporter *archive.*

Ire of the Crowd

More than 100 parents and town officials packed a public hearing on school closing at the Montague Center School on Monday. By the time Superintendent Sue Gee finally got there, the airless auditorium had heated up and swelled to capacity.

To no one's surprise, when the floor was finally opened for public comment, first to the microphone was Montague finance committee chair Jeff Singleton, an advocate of small neighborhood schools. "I hope the school committee does not say 'I didn't want to close a school, but we had no choice,'" Singleton argued. "You do not have to close a school, and you do not have to close this school."

The superintendent has estimated the schools' operating budget will rise by at least $800,000 for the next fiscal year, if cuts aren't made or if a school isn't closed.

140 YEARS AGO

Here's the way it was on November 2, 1886: News from the Turners Falls Reporter *archive.*

Turners Falls and Vicinity

The electric lights of Turners Falls can be seen in all the surrounding towns.

A new iron bridge has been built over the canal at Sixth street, to take the place of the old wooden one that broke down.

The drought locally was the severest ever known. The Griswoldville mills at Colerain were without water for 98 days, and had to use steam.

Cider apples in Franklin county have been a drug in the market this fall and could not be sold. Slate & DeWolf, of Greenfield, however, have just taken an order for 25 carloads for New York parties.

The plumbers have finished connecting Fay's block with the sewer, and the building has the most thorough plumbing of any in town. All the waste pipes are large, of the best materials, and double trapped everywhere, so that there will be no danger from sewer gas. Water closets have also been put in different parts of the block.

Jeweler John H. Starbuck has an electric motor in his window which moves a turn-table on which is displayed wares for sale.

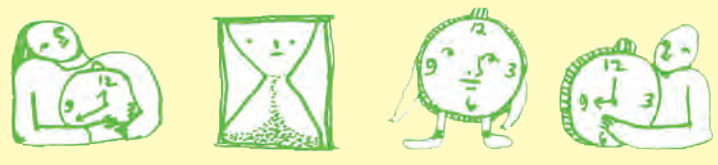
Some hoodlums at the other end of the town have been amusing themselves with tearing down advertising signs put up by Sullivan & Carroll.

A large number of bicycles will be owned in this village next summer. Now is the time for a novice to buy a wheel and get well learned before the winter, and the early spring months can then be improved. A "Facile" may be ridden half through the winter.

The will of the late John Keith has been filed at the probate office. His entire estate, after payment of debts, is left to his wife, Mrs. Sarah E. Keith, who is made the executrix.

Charles Knowlton, of Riverside, who has been very sick with typhoid fever, is now convalescent.

A child died last night of malignant diphtheria, and a public funeral was held this morning, little children occupying carriages following the hearse. In a few days when other children are taken sick and die, it will be called visitation of God, but visitation of a decent sized club over the heads of stubborn people would stop public parade of grief and consequent spread of disease. These visitations of God unfortunately come of human stupidity.



MR Wrapping Paper Edition • Artist Profile #5

By REPORTER STAFF

TURNERS FALLS – This summer we invited people to submit design proposals for our fifth special Wrapping Paper Edition, to be printed in November. This fundraiser for the *Montague Reporter* will feature full color designs printed on double pages of newsprint, meant to wrap presents in. We received 34 submissions to our call, and we have selected seven artists, including one Youth artist, for our edition this year.



We can't wait to bring these wonderful designs to life in this special edition, which will go to press on Thanksgiving week! We are introducing the artists to you by asking each the same three questions.

Eva Pfeiffer of Readsboro, Vermont is our Youth Winner this year, at only four years old! She answers our three questions this week:

MR: *What would you want your wrapping paper to say, and feel like, for the person it is being gifted to?*

EP: Happy! And I want them to feel surprised. I don't want them to rip it up!

MR: *What gifts would you want to receive wrapped in your paper?*

EP: Elsa things. And a toy! I want some kind of treat, too.

MR: *What other gifts have newspapers given you over the years?*

EP: None. I do like to look at the pictures. It inspires me.

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PINBALL from page A1

For pinball players there will be a one-time entry charge of $13 for adults and $11 for kids under 12 to play to their hearts' content – no quarters necessary – though at Friday's opening the admission will be cut in half. The 25 pinball games reflect pop culture themes from *Indiana Jones* to *Star Trek*, the *X-Files*, and *The Big Lebowski*. Both new and vintage t-shirts will be available.

Levine grew up in Pittsburgh, where he found a coffee shop with a few pinball machines in back.

"When I was old enough to go out on my own, pinball was being replaced by video games, but I was fascinated by the machines," said Levine. "The physics, the electronics, the kinetic movement, it just drew me in."

It's no surprise that Levine ultimately moved to Chicago, where virtually all the pinball designers and manufacturers are still located, and became part of a community of pinball aficionados. He even befriended Roger Sharpe, who famously demonstrated to the New York City Council in 1976 that pinball was not a game of chance for gamblers but a game of skill.

While making final preparations for the opening earlier this week, Levine played the Indiana Jones game and showed how to pass the ball from one flipper to another.

"Pinball became a thing I loved doing, and wherever I traveled I would look for the pinball arcades," he said.

Levine was living in Leverett in 2017 when Mark Hankowski opened Mystic Pinball.

> **"It's absolutely about skill, but there's still luck involved, because you can always get a bad bounce."**
>
> **– Dan Levine**
> **Owner, Mystic Cat Pinball**

"I couldn't believe this fantastic range of games showed up in my backyard," he said. "Eventually I became more involved running the New England Pinball League, and that passion led me to be a partner with Mark."

Now Levine is the sole owner and is still involved with the pinball league, which includes 25 to 30 locations around New England.

"I never intended to own a pinball arcade, but things kind of escalated into it," he said. "It took years of searching through websites, forums, and auctions, but now we've got a collection that represents pinball through different eras. It's unique."

Levine said he enjoys the mixture of skill and luck that is the essence of pinball.

"It's absolutely about skill, but there's still luck involved, because you can always get a bad bounce," he explained. "I think what's great about pinball is that it's unpredictable. It's not like a video game that's all pre-programmed."

Levine wants Mystic Cat Pinball to reflect the Montague community, so he'll be serving a range of beverages – beer, hard cider, mead, and non-alcoholic kombucha – often from local sources.

"I want to make this a special, unique place, and having uncommon drink options is part of that," he said. "I want to celebrate local brewers, so a fair amount of what we'll serve comes from within a few miles."

The bar offers stools, of course, but also comfortable lounge chairs and a back room with couches that's available for private parties. But there will be no TVs.

"It's going to be a low-tech place," Levine said. "No TVs and big screens is very intentional. I want this to be a community gathering place for all ages. Instead of being bombarded with TVs, this is a place for socializing that fosters community and engagement. And, of course, I want people to come and play pinball and fall in love with it. I'm hoping to spread the love for pinball."



GAGNON PHOTO

Dan Levine serves friends and coworkers at the new bar.



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INVITATION TO BID
Shea Theater Rooftop Unit Replacement

The Town of Montague is accepting sealed bids for replacement of a defective Rooftop Unit (RTU) on the Shea Theater at 71 Avenue A, Turners Falls, MA.

Sealed Bids, plainly marked **"Shea Theater RTU Replacement Bid"** must be received by Tues. December 1, 2026 @ 1:00 PM, at which time all bid packages will be publicly opened and read at the Town Hall Annex Meeting Room at 1 Avenue A, Turners Falls, MA, 01376.

A bid conference will be held on Mon. November 16, 2026 at 9:00 a.m. at the Shea Theater, 71 Avenue A, Turners Falls, MA. Attendance is not mandatory but is strongly encouraged. The IFB is available at *www.montague-ma.gov/BIDS*. Registration is required. Written questions can be submitted to the Project Manager, Chris Nolan-Zeller, at *chrisn@montague-ma.gov* until Thurs. November 19, 2026 at 4:00 PM.

The Town of Montague reserves the right to accept or reject any or all bids, in total or in part, as they deem in their best interest. This solicitation is being undertaken per M.G.L. c.149 and work is subject to Prevailing Wage Requirements, a 5% bid bond/deposit, and 50% Payment Bond.

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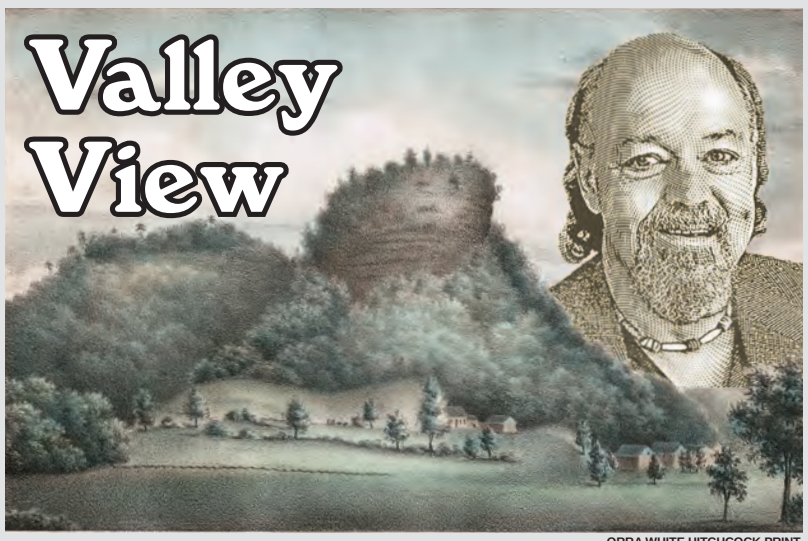
Year 24 – No. 43

B1



features@montaguereporter.org OF THE MONTAGUE REPORTER NOVEMBER 5, 2026

Above: The Wiley & Russell Dam on the Green River in Greenfield, with the Meridian Street arch. "This dam is on a state Department of Fisheries and Wildlife hit list to be razed," photographer Ed Gregory writes. "Because of its historic connection with the Wiley & Russell Manufacturing Co., resistance to the possibility of its removal is a factor."



ORRA WHITE HITCHCOCK PRINT

A Most Skillful Reproduction

By GARY SANDERSON

GREENFIELD – A good deed is done in the quaint upper Meadows neighborhood I call home.

Next-door neighbor friend Ben Clarke was the wind behind the sails. He found the right outfit, Hired Hand Signs, to revive a ghost trade sign painted seven generations ago on a panel spanning the dormered facade of his tidy three-bay mid-19th-century Cape, bordered north by the picturesque Hinsdale Brook.

For more than a century the sign has been undecipherable from the street, as shown by the 1890s Howes Brothers photo printed on a 2007 Greenfield Historical Society calendar that displays not a hint of the faint letters underneath a coat of white paint. That's what passersby have seen for generations, denying the public a tasty slice of local history that dates back to the arrival of railroads and the end of the stagecoach and tavern days.

As the railroad whistles blew, the formula for endangered coach-road taverns was bleak indeed. The more tracks laid through the countryside, the fewer mail coaches and roadside taverns needed. Replacing them were crowded passenger trains emptying out at downtown railroad stations, necessitating larger hotels capable of accommodating dozens, not handfuls, of guests. Plus, the mid-19th century marked the peak of the temperance movement, which stopped taverns from selling "spiritous liquors" to travelers and a regular array of community characters and gossip hounds alike.

Up close in perfect light, the old trade sign painted across Clarke's home could be easily read. I was introduced to it by octogenarian Lucius Nims, who sold us our adjacent home in 1997. It was important to him, so he took it upon himself to march me into the backyard and point out the overpainted letters reading "H.A. EWERS. BLACK-SMITH".

see **VALLEY VIEW** page B2



Jess Marsh Wissemann of Hired Hand Signs fills in the lettering on the former blacksmith shop by hand.

REPRINT

Excerpt from 'Voices Urge Wendell to Curb Its Growth' (1985)

In 1985 the Wendell Post *– one of the forebears of this newspaper – published a two-part essay by Jonathan von Ranson titled "Development Dollars & Sense," taking stock of the town's various pressures from the outer world. We are reprinting it here, 41 years later, to offer our readers the thrill of considering how much has changed and how much has stayed the same. Thanks to Jonathan for his permission.* ***– Eds.***

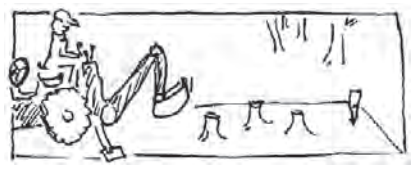
By JONATHAN VON RANSON

The woods of Wendell are athwang with the sounds of house construction. The planning board reports the creation of 70 house lots in the last year and a half. State and national indicators show a sharp upsurge in housing starts and housing prices. A number of older Wendell residents all at once seem to be selling lots to finance a move south or elsewhere.



Are towns like Wendell being irresistably pressed into the suburban mold? Is there good reason to try to fight the pressure? Is it only a matter of personal taste how densely Wendell should get developed? Is there a way to channel the forces into less dense, more appropriate, development? Does Wendell have the imagination to weave a kind of social Gore-Tex that excludes suburbia but includes the poor, that discourages commercialism but encourages local work?

There are both long-range and pragmatic, short-term reasons to try to do it. "No matter what you say, new construction hurts a town financially," Chester Zaik, CMA and Franklin County assessor-consultant, told a few people in the assessor's office recently. "The general consensus among assessors is new construction brings in new problems." And in his opinion, Wendell



is ripe for a surge of "home construction like crazy."

Here, lots are still available for $8,000, according to Zaik. "Five miles beyond Shutesbury and Leverett and it's $10,000 cheaper," he said. He is referring to development pressure from the Northampton-Amherst-Greenfield quarter. Further, he said, with a required road frontage of only 100 ft., there is danger of "some developer bringing in 50 or 100 modular homes and putting them on a single parcel."

Others see equal or greater pressures from the other direction. Orange and Athol are unabashedly

see **REPRINT** page B8



Traci Talbert: Creating Opportunities, Preserving Culture, Challenging Systems

By MPRESS BENNU

GREENFIELD – For this interview I sat down with Traci Talbert, Racial Justice Community Engagement Director at the Franklin County Community Development Corporation (FCCDC). Talbert is an esteemed educator, entrepreneur, and community leader. I first met her in 2022, during the planning process of the first Annual Greenfield Juneteenth Celebration. Over the years I have grown to have astounding respect for her, and I am honored to feature her in this month's *Front of the Line*.

When I sat down with Talbert it quickly became clear that everything she does is connected by a common purpose: ensuring that people who have historically been overlooked are seen, heard, and valued. Whether through racial justice initiatives, higher education, cultural preservation, or community development, Talbert has spent years asking difficult questions about opportunity, representation, and responsibility.

In her role at the FCCDC, as the founder of the African American Female Professor Award Association (AAFPAA) and *A Journey in Jazz*, as an educator and a consultant, Talbert wears many hats, but she describes



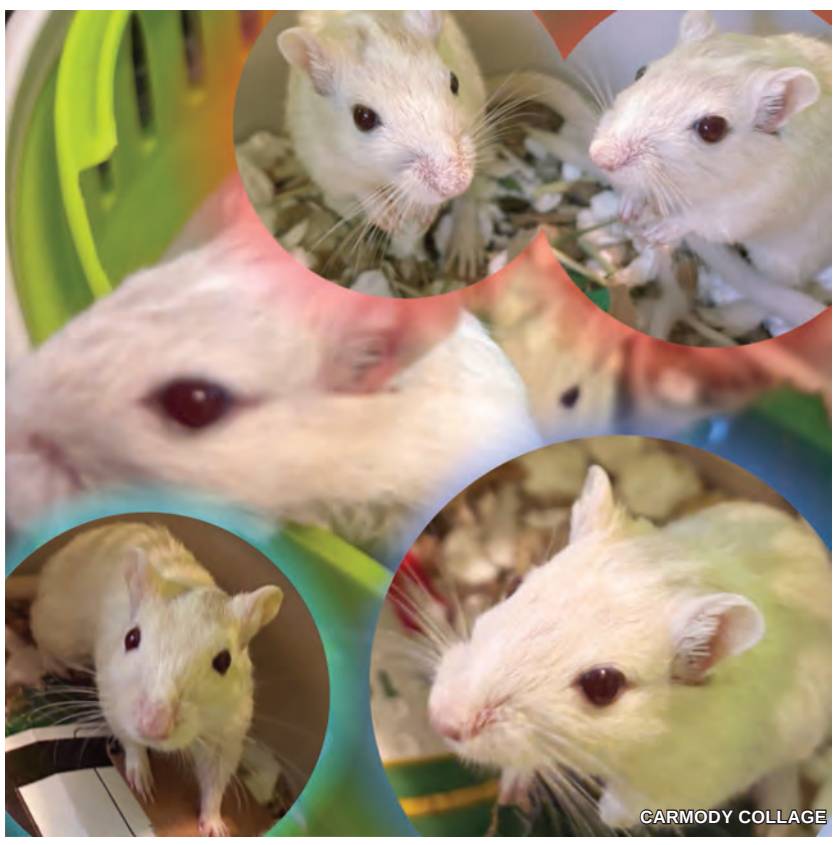
Traci Talbert helps organizations understand and reflect on how their everyday decisions affect people, particularly those facing systemic barriers.

her work as part of a single mission.

"My work began with three questions," she told me: "Whose voices are heard? Whose contributions are recognized? And who has access to opportunities?"

see **FRONT OF THE LINE** page B4

Pet of the Week


CARMODY COLLAGE

'Maren, Tessa & Indigo'

This group of ladies have been in foster care for the last few weeks. They are all aunts, moms, and cousins, and they love each other. They spend their days tunneling, chewing on toys, and enjoying a variety of fresh snacks. They are gentle gals and a little shy with handling, but never bite, and are easy to pick up.

Gerbils can live three to four years. Your housing must be at least a 15-gallon aquarium with a wire mesh cover, or a 20-gallon aquarium with no cover – bigger is always better – in order to adopt them. Please don't attempt to introduce unfamiliar adult gerbils to each other.

As most of the small animals at Dakin Humane Society are in foster care, if you're ready to adopt now and want to learn more about this pet, the best way to start the process is to call (413-781-4000 x 1) or email *springfield@dakinhumane.org*.

The adoption fee for a trio of gerbils is $37. If you already have a cage, please send a picture of your cage when you inquire.

Senior Center Activities

NOVEMBER 9 THROUGH 13

GILL and MONTAGUE

The Gill-Montague Senior Center, 62 Fifth Street, Turners Falls is open Mondays through Fridays from 9 a.m. to 2 p.m. For more information, please call 863-9357.

Monday 11/9
10:15 a.m. Aerobics
11 a.m. Chair Exercise
12 p.m. Pot Luck Lunch
1:15 p.m. COA Meeting
3:30 p.m. Drop-in Quilling Group
Tuesday 11/10
9 a.m. Chair Yoga
10:15 a.m. Therapy Balls
12:30 p.m. Tech Tuesday
3 p.m. Tai Chi
Wednesday 11/11
Foot Clinic by Appointment
4 p.m. Mat Yoga
Thursday 11/12
10 a.m. Coffee and Conversation by the Friends of the Senior Center
1 p.m. Pitch
Friday 11/13
10:15 a.m. Aerobics
11 a.m. Chair Exercise
2 p.m. Chair Dance

LEVERETT

Chair Yoga classes are held Wednesdays at 10 a.m., hybrid, at the town hall and on Zoom. Foot care clinics are the third Tuesday of each month. The next clinic is November 17. Luncheons are held on the fourth Friday of each month at town hall. For more information, contact (413) 548-1022 or *coa@leverett.ma.us*, or check the town newsletter or the Leverett-Connects listserv.

ERVING

Open Mondays through Fridays from 8:30 a.m. to 3 p.m. at 1 Care Drive. Daily snacks and coffee. Fitness room and pool table open.
Monday 11/9
9 a.m. Good for U
10 a.m. Seated Fitness
12 p.m. Pitch Game
1 p.m. Yoga
Tuesday 11/10
9 a.m. Stretch and Balance
10 a.m. Line Dancing
11 a.m. Social Stringer
1 p.m. Friends Group
Wednesday 11/11
Closed for Veterans' Day
Thursday 11/12
No classes
Friday 11/13
8:30 a.m. Quilting/Open Sew

WENDELL

Foot care clinic is the first Wednesday of each month. The next clinic is December 2. Call Katie Nolan at (978) 544-2306 for information or appointments.

For Senior Health Rides, contact Nancy Spittle at (978) 544-6760.

VALLEY VIEW from page B1

Nims, a Greenfield native with deep Meadows roots, told me Ewers had been the last tavernkeeper at my home, operating the establishment along the old post road to Bennington, Vermont until 1857. After that, it became just an Upper Meadows residence at the fork in the road, with "Old Tavern Farm" splashed in bold white letters across the carriage sheds. The tavern legacy that began under the 18th-century ownership of the Hinsdale family and continued under Hollister B. Thayer and Ewers had fizzled out.

Ewers appears to have arrived in Greenfield from Colrain in 1845, four years after Thayer opened his spruced-up tavern in 1841. Thayer hired him as his blacksmith, needed to maintain stages, shoe horses, and carry out other smithing and wheelwright chores required to keep the mail coaches running across rough roads.

An 1849 deed records Ewers's purchase of the small, abutting, 40-rod parcel on which he would soon build a home and run a shop. At the time of purchase the lot already held a blacksmith shop and outbuildings, one of which stands today as Clarke's garage, woodshed, and workshop.

From Nims I learned that the home's long, rectangular roadside parlor, with an exterior chimney supporting its fireplace, had once served as Ewers's shoeing shed. Though that type of neighborhood tradition is usually difficult to verify, it does seem to fit the deed profile. Town records would pin down the year the home was first taxed, but that could be a laborious task and unnecessary for this narrative.

We know the house was not there when Ewers purchased the lot, and was indeed standing when he sold it on his way to Wisconsin in 1857. It's safe to assume the home was built closer to the arrival than departure date.

Born in 1806 to a Gill farm, Ewers appears as the head of a Colrain household of five free white persons in the 1840 Massachusetts census. A decade later, the 1850 census puts him in the Upper Meadows, heading a household of eight – including another blacksmith, a teenage horse-breaker, and an Irish farmhand. This census listing probably places him in his new two-bedroom home. The occupancy figures may have been a combined count from his dwelling and tavern house occupying the same triangular parcel between the brook and the fork in the road.



The sign's faded former letters, before priming and painting.

Over the years, Clarke and I occasionally discussed our tavern history, Ewers, and the possibility of bringing the sign back to light. Then, as the likelihood accelerated in recent years, a recommendation dropped right into his lap during a trip to his 18 Green River Road mailbox. There he received a great tip from a neighbor who had noticed for the first time the veiled letters on the wall. She knew the right person to repaint the historic sign. He swung into immediate action.

Hired Hand Signs to the rescue. The brainchild of Sunderland proprietor Jess Marsh Wissemann, her Turners Falls studio at 151 Third Street cozies up to the Unity Park softball diamond. Wissemann, a Michigan native, studied art history at The College of Wooster in Ohio, married into the Sunderland Warner Farm family, put her creative touch to colorful signs for their vegetable stands and other ventures, and started the sign business that continues to bear economic fruit.

Downtown Turners Falls regulars must know Wissemann's vintage, pea green, compact-sized pickup truck with its tasteful sideboards advertising her business. The classic 1969 Ford 100 is a traveling business card created by her own talented hand.

Clarke arranged a meeting at his home, where Wissemann assessed the project, agreed to take it on, and returned in October to recreate the historic sign, undoubtedly painted by famed downtown Greenfield folk artist and house, carriage, sleigh, and furniture painter George Washington Mark (1795-1879).

Mark is Greenfield's only recognized primitive artist, and he had deep connections to the Ewers family through his first wife, Mary Ann Skinner, whose grave lies in the Ewers' plot a half mile down the road at the North Meadows Cemetery.

Skinner, from Williamstown, had likely joined the Ewers family in Gill as an adopted teen, brought in to help care for the children and do household chores following the unexpected 1813 death of their father, Henry, at age 33.

The Mark attribution alone justifies saving the sign. He is an important 19th-century Greenfield character, recognized for his artistry, not to mention his floppy, yellow pantaloons, and eccentric ways about town. Evidence suggests he was a popular, lifelong tavern-goer and tradesman at public houses from Franklin County to his hometown of Charlestown, New Hampshire.

When Wissemann inspected the 175-year-old painted letters, she found them to be dry and unstable, not candidates for only a new coat of paint. Unable to execute a restoration, she consulted with experts on both sides of the Atlantic before forming a plan. She settled on a precise reproduction, which entailed scraping off the old letters and repainting them in their original settings.

First, she used a carpenter's pencil to darken the outlines that needed help. Then she covered the entire sign with transparency paper, on which she traced an exact copy with the able assistance of her former Deerfield Academy colleague and master painter Rob Morgan, recognized for painting many Martha's Vineyard paintings.

Morgan returned to the scene in a day or two to scrape off the old black letters and clean and prep the underlying panel before priming and painting it for Wissemann's finishing touches. When Morgan's paint dried, the ghost letters were still discernable underneath.

Wissemann used a special pointed wheel to perforate the outline of each letter on her pattern, thus opening tiny holes to allow penetration of a pulverizing charcoal bath she applied on site to outline the letters. Then, with the outlines established by faint gray pinstripes, she freehand painted in all 21 characters.

In my opinion, the finished product is a home run, capturing important historical context in a section of Greenfield steeped in history. Perhaps it'll inspire future neighborhood research into the taverns, the stages, the distillery, the blacksmith shops – and a quirky primitive painter named George Washington Mark, an American original.



PHOTOS COURTESY OF BEN CLARKE
The finished product, restored to how it is presumed to have looked in the 1850s.

Gary Sanderson lives in Greenfield. Questions and comments welcome at gary@oldtavernfarm.com.

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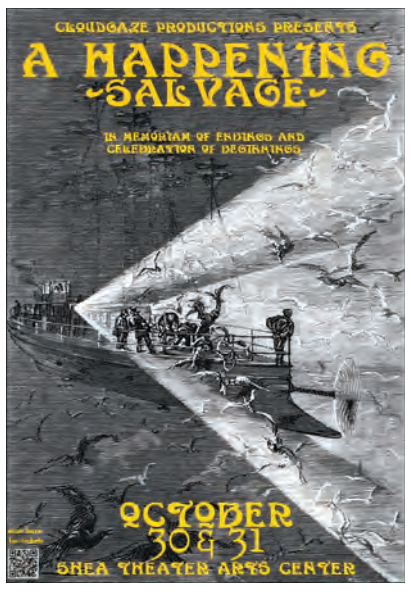
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SCENE REPORT

‘A Happening VI’ at the Shea

By MELISSA WLOSTOSKI



TURNERS FALLS – A two-day immersive festival called “A Happening: Bestiary” took place last year at the Shea Theater, which I went to and enjoyed very much. It was a unique festival, presented by Eggtooth Productions and Cloudgaze. So it was just too tempting to not try and get there again this year.

This one was called “A Happening: Salvage” and was held October 30 and 31. It featured people visiting “Restoretown, a community shaped by loss, and mov[ing] through memories that lead to joyful celebration.” We are told it was inspired by everything from Shakespeare’s *Tempest* to *The Legend of Zelda*.

Usually when this is held at the Shea, the audience can see some interesting rooms and also some interesting performances. The first sight I saw coming in was a lounge scene featuring actors acting like a bunch of drunken sailors. One performer spoke of a tree against a setting of a town on the stage. The audience at the stage made up a nice crowd of people.

A couple of the other rooms were interesting. One had a person acting like a fortune teller in it, telling people’s fortunes and in another room you could leave messages for people. In another room you could look at an old photo album.

This show had a handful of people performing music on instruments and singing. A lady in a white princess costume and another woman with an accordion performed together. They sang an intriguing song. In another scene, a woman with a guitar sang something that sounded like it should be something out of a church. In another, two individuals dressed like skeletons were playing guitars, and it looked very cool.

Last year I didn’t notice many of the costumes people in the show were dressed in, but some of the costumes and scenes were cooler than last time – some of the things people were wearing were a sight to behold. One costume had someone performing as what she called the “Guardian of the Dream Realm.” I would describe her as some kind of magical wizard-like character. One other person’s costume was a jester outfit.

A scene I enjoyed was a man in a costume with glasses and a top hat going over maps and charts. Audience members could help out with the maps, and look through a telescope for the guy and do some charting themselves. There were books off to the side like he was really using them to chart.

The scene at the beginning that featured the sailors changed into people in unique costumes dancing to the music. Inside on the stage there was another dance number with a couple dancing and a line of people moving behind them.

The next act resembled some sort of lost-at-sea scene, and in fact, about half of the stage shows had a sea theme to them. One featured people acting like sea creatures while others sang, and a slide show was also going on with narration to it.

Singing and dancing acts have always been huge highlights of these events. The highlights didn’t change in size at all. It was a lot, but some of it stuck out quite visibly. A woman in what I was told was a sailboat costume sang, though I enjoyed the sight of the white princess and her musician more than that – it was one of my favorite highlights, mostly because of the costumes they were in for the performance. Two of my other favorite scenes were the fortuneteller and the map charter. The show had some pleasant surprises to it this time!

HIGHLIGHTS FROM THE MONTAGUE POLICE LOG

Fender-Benders and Rear-Enders; Cash Happily Just Misplaced; Cat Deceased; FBI Really Calling; Missing Phone Tracked to Turners

Monday, 10/26

8:03 a.m. Officer checking on a vehicle with no plates in the Second Street public parking lot. Vehicle towed.

8:20 a.m. A 53-year-old woman with no known address was arrested on a default warrant.

12:45 p.m. Walk-in reports that the intersection of Court Square and Main Street continues to be very dangerous due to hedges and trees blocking the view and drivers speeding off of Main Street heading toward School Street. Party has been complaining about this situation for many years. Advised party that complaint would be documented and added to police log notes for discussion.

9:25 p.m. Request for officers to deliver a death notification to an L Street residence. Services rendered.

Tuesday, 10/27

9:14 a.m. 911 caller reporting a vehicle on fire in Wendell. Transferred to Shelburne Control.

9:51 a.m. 911 caller reports that a male broke into an Avenue A apartment and hit her. Four witnesses on scene. Male reportedly then ran into the apartment next door. Female and male given statement forms to fill out; conflicting stories. Witnesses removed from apartment due to squatting.

11:18 a.m. Caller from Food City reports that a female walked out of the store with a cart full of Monster and did not pay. Caller will share footage with police. Report taken.

3:41 p.m. F. M. Kuzmeskus bus company advises there was a fender-bender involving a bus and another vehicle in Colrain. No injuries reported. Transferred to Shelburne Control.

3:49 p.m. Caller reports she was rear-ended on Canal Street near the paper mill. States she is uninjured; the party that struck her vehicle appears to be elderly. Officer advises involved vehicles are on bridge, creating a traffic buildup. Cars moved to side of roadway; no longer a hazard. Report taken.

4:39 p.m. Caller states that an individual appeared to bury something, possibly a wine bottle, in a pile of leaves near the swingset at the Montague Center playground. Officer advised of the call’s nature.

5:24 p.m. Report of individual soliciting without a permit on Hillside Road. Units checked area extensively; unable to locate.

Wednesday, 10/28

6:55 a.m. Report of ongoing harassment. Caller advised of court options and parameters involved in process.

11:11 a.m. Caller states that she had some cash in her kitchen and now it is gone. Caller called back and stated that she found the money.

1:55 p.m. 911 caller from West Mineral Road requesting fire department assist her with removal of diesel fuel that spilled in her van. Transferred to Shelburne Control.

4:28 p.m. Report of harassment on Park Street. Officer advises involved party is an insurance adjuster and was following up with the reporting party, who was a witness to an accident. Party advised of trespass order.

7:23 p.m. Caller states that she had a family member on L Street who passed away and left behind two dogs that appear to be severely malnourished. Animal control officer (ACO) responding to location; requesting officer on scene to assist in making entry. Officer sought, and received, permission to enter the residence. ACO has possession of dogs; residence has been secured. ACO bringing both dogs to VESH in South Deerfield.

Thursday, 10/29

10:18 a.m. Caller from Chester Street states that three men carrying large bags are going house to house, walking onto properties, and looking at the sides of the houses. Units checked surrounding areas; unable to locate.

3:20 p.m. 911 caller reports that he struck a man on an ebike on High Street and the man is injured. Ambulance request given to Shelburne Control by dispatch; PD responding. Officers bringing bike to victim’s residence on L Street.

4:53 p.m. Passerby reporting a deceased cat on Third Street that was struck by a vehicle. Animal is on tree belt, covered with a blue towel. DPW notified.

Friday, 10/30

11:19 a.m. Caller states that her juvenile daughter was just harassed again at Avenue A and Third Street by the same man who did it a couple of weeks ago. Investigated.

11:42 a.m. Officer assisting FBI with security breach at A.H. Rist Insurance; also confirming for agency that it is indeed the FBI contacting them.

1:23 p.m. Caller from Second Street would like it noted that this morning the female who lives on the second floor was yelling, slamming doors, and swearing at nobody while in the common hallways. Ongoing issue. Advised of options.

4:58 p.m. 911 call reporting disturbance on Fourth Street. Not as reported; situation mediated; male leaving for the night.

8:35 p.m. 911 caller from Griswold Street states that someone came to her sister’s door accusing her of stealing a cell phone. Female then left, stating she will be back tomorrow. Officer advised parties of options and told them to call the PD if the female shows up again.

9:07 p.m. 911 caller reports that there is music playing so loud in an Avenue A apartment that it’s shaking the windows. Caller is not home, he is in Greenfield, but his wife is home. States no one should be in the apartment because the landlord threw their belongings out the window today. Quiet upon officers’ arrival. Spoke to others who state nothing was heard.

Saturday, 10/31

12:01 a.m. Caller states that his vehicle is locked behind the gate at the tech school; wondering if an officer could open the gate so he can retrieve the vehicle. Officer responding with gate key; states gate opened, vehicle on way, and units clear.

2:35 p.m. Caller from Avenue A believes that a man in a wheelchair is consuming alcohol that he keeps in an orange backpack in front of the apartment building where she lives. Officer advised.

Sunday, 11/1

5:24 a.m. 911 call reporting disturbance on I Street. A 73-year-old Turners Falls resident was arrested and charged with domestic assault and battery on a family or household member.

11:23 a.m. 911 caller states that his phone went missing from UMass yesterday and is now showing up as being at a Second Street location, fully charged. Phone is inside of a parked and locked vehicle. Officer going to residence to locate vehicle owner. Phone returned to its owner.

4:55 p.m. Officer advised that he clipped a car on Fourth Street while responding to a call. Spoke with neighbors; unable to locate vehicle owner. Left message on vehicle with accident number and a request to call the PD.

6:49 p.m. Caller from Plains Road reports that a car has been parked on her yard for 15 minutes with its headlights on. She does not know who it is and does not feel comfortable going outside. Officer advised. Amazon vehicle; moving along.

Monday, 11/2

1:23 a.m. Control asking if MPD has officers to back up Sunderland at a domestic incident that is happening on Montague Street in that town. Involved male is intoxicated and has two guns. Officers heading that way. Radio states that male is now dropping lit cigarettes around the house. Officer clear; Sunderland has male under arrest.

PUBLIC SERVICE ANNOUNCEMENT

Got Leaves? Fall is a Great Time to Start or Improve Home Compost Bins!

By AMY DONOVAN

FRANKLIN COUNTY – Autumn, with its abundance of fallen leaves and decaying pumpkins, is a great time to start a home compost bin, or enrich existing bins. Fall leaves provide carbon, a necessary element of effective food waste composting. Since leaves and yard waste are banned from the trash in Massachusetts, composting is a useful disposal method that can also benefit lawns and gardens.

MassDEP studies show that over 23% of the state’s trash is food waste. Households that compost food waste can reduce the amount of “pay-as-you-throw” trash bags or stickers they use.

Another way households can save money is by using homemade compost on gardens and lawns instead of buying bagged soils. Finished compost helps lawns and gardens retain water, adds nutrients and minerals to soil, and improves soil structure. Composting also reduces climate-changing gases emitted from landfills and long-distance trash hauling.

Low-Cost Bins

Composting can be even easier with effective, low-cost compost bins. The Franklin County Solid Waste Management District (FCSWMD) sells “Earth Machine” bins. Each features a door in the bottom that can be opened to shovel out finished compost. Residents of 16 FCSWMD towns [*ed. note:* including all five *Montague Reporter* coverage towns] may purchase a bin for $25 through a subsidized pricing incentive provided by these towns. Call the District at (413) 772-2438.

The FCSWMD also sells “Sure-Close” compost collection pails for $5 each. Each 2-gallon pail sits on the countertop or under the sink to collect food waste before it goes out.

Greenfield residents may purchase Earth Machine compost bins and Sure-Close compost pails at the Greenfield transfer station; call the Greenfield DPW at (413) 772-1528 for more info.

How to Compost at Home

In the kitchen, use a pail or similar covered container to collect fruit and vegetable scraps and peels, eggshells, coffee grounds and paper filters, bread crusts, and more. The following materials are *not* recommended: meat, bones, poultry, fish, cheese, pet wastes, and oily foods such as peanut butter and salad dressing.

“Compostable plastics” will not break down in home compost bins or piles; these materials are designed to break down in higher-heat environments at commercial facilities.

When adding kitchen scraps to your bin, cover them with leaves or other carbon-rich materials, such as finished compost from inside the bin. Covering the scraps reduces insects and odor and speeds up the process. A compost pile should ideally contain three parts “brown,” carbon-rich material such as fall leaves, brown yard waste, straw, paper towels, and ripped-up egg cartons, to each part “green,” nitrogen-rich material such as food waste, coffee grounds, and grass.

Maple leaves are ideal for composting, but avoid oak leaves and pine needles as they break down slowly and can be acidic. Saving leaves in a covered trash can or under a tarp makes it easy to add them all year long.

The composting process needs oxygen, and “turning” the pile with a shovel or pitchfork will speed it up. Introduce helpful microorganisms by adding a few shovelfuls of garden soil or finished compost. Add water as needed to keep it as damp as a wrung-out sponge. It is ready to spread when it resembles crumbly, dark brown or black, sweet-smelling soil.

Amy Donovan is the program director at the FCSWMD. For more information, including about municipal compost programs, visit franklincountywastedistrict.org.

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FRONT OF THE LINE from page B1

Those questions have guided her throughout a career dedicated to helping organizations, businesses, institutions, and community leaders examine how their policies, practices, and everyday decisions affect people, particularly those facing systemic barriers. For Talbert, racial justice is not abstract. It is reflected in hiring practices, workplace culture, educational access, and people's willingness to examine assumptions.

Over the past six years at FCCDC, Talbert has worked with over 20 local businesses to review their job descriptions, internal communications, codes of conduct, and personnel policies. The goal, she explained, is not simply to spark conversation, but to encourage these organizations to look closely at how their practices shape opportunity.

"Good intentions matter," she said, "but we also have to ask difficult questions and examine the systems that create barriers."

Knowing You Belong

That same philosophy inspired Talbert to establish the AAFPAA in 2016. During our conversation she reflected on her own educational journey, one that did not begin until she was in her 50s.

"I committed to earning both my bachelor's and master's degrees back to back, and I did just that," she recalled. "But during that entire seven-year journey, I didn't have a Black professor until my final semester of graduate school."

That experience left a lasting impression. Seeing the lack of representation firsthand motivated Talbert to create an organization that would celebrate African American women professors and encourage future generations of scholars.

"Representation means knowing you belong," she told me. "It means understanding that your knowledge has value, and that others see your potential."

What began as an idea has grown into a nationally recognized organization preparing to celebrate its 10th annual "Crown & Gown" event this month. The organization has honored professors, awarded scholarships, expanded into multiple states, and recently received recognition beyond the United States, including in Jamaica and throughout parts of the Caribbean.

Reaching the 10-year mark, Talbert said, reminds her of what can happen when people invest time, energy, and resources in a shared vision.

Another milestone in 2026 was the 10th anniversary in June of *A Journey in Jazz*, an organization she founded in the Springfield area to preserve culture, celebrate community, and recognize those whose contributions often go unnoticed.

For Talbert, honoring people while they are alive is especially important. "People should not have to wait until they're gone before their work is acknowledged," she said.

A Journey in Jazz has become a gathering place where music, history, culture, and community come together. It also carries personal meaning. The annual gala event honors the legacy of her mother, Elaine Talbert, and reflects the connection she sees between cultural heritage, community recognition, and family.

Throughout our conversation, Talbert repeatedly returned to the importance of reflection. This idea has evolved into another venture she is currently developing, Reflective Systems Consulting. The project focuses on helping leaders and organizations connect self-examination with meaningful action.

"What distinguishes my work," she explained, "is the connection between examining systems and changing them."

She encourages organizations to look beyond statements and intentions and instead consider how beliefs become policies, practices, and outcomes.

"Addressing racial justice in conversation is not the same as changing how an organization operates," she added.

That commitment to reflection extends into her classroom. For nearly eight years, Talbert has taught at colleges including Bay Path University, Cambridge College, and Massachusetts College of Liberal Arts. Whether



SUBMITTED PHOTO

The author (left) with this month's interview subject, Traci Talbert.

teaching leadership, business ethics, diversity in the workplace, or operations management, she invites her students to think critically about the impact of their decisions.

"I encourage students to question assumptions and consider how decisions affect historically marginalized groups," she told me.

Everyday Choices

That work is not always comfortable – in fact, Talbert said she believes discomfort can be one of the most important parts of learning and growth.

One of the biggest challenges she faces, she said, is helping people remain engaged when difficult topics create tension or resistance.

"People often ask for data and outcomes," she explained. "My response is that discomfort is data, too."

Rather than avoiding uncomfortable conversations, she encourages people to explore them.

"What am I reacting to? What assumption is being challenged? What am I avoiding?" she asks. "Those questions can tell us a lot about what needs to change."

Looking ahead, Talbert said her goals center less on expansion for expansion's sake, and more on sustainability: strengthening partnerships, increasing scholarship opportunities, engaging future generations, and creating systems that will continue to thrive long after her direct involvement.

"Growth and community responsibility belong together," she said. "I always ask how we're growing, who benefits, whose voices are shaping decisions, and whether our choices reflect our values."

The path has not always been easy. Balancing multiple organizations, teaching responsibilities, community engagement, and professional work requires patience and persistence. Talbert credits collaboration as one of the keys to sustaining it all.

"Collaboration means sharing influence, not simply inviting participation," she said.

That belief is reflected in work that she started this year through a five-year Health Resources in Action grant with a cohort of four other Black women – Dr. Angela Campbell, Janine Fondon, Mari Severin, and this reporter. Our group will be helping guide racial justice initiatives and participating in the ongoing development of a shared "Racial Justice Reflective Journey."

Talbert speaks about collaboration with enthusiasm, emphasizing the strength that comes from collective knowledge and shared purpose.

As our conversation came to a close, I asked what she hoped readers would take away from her work. Her answer reflected the same themes that had surfaced throughout our discussion.

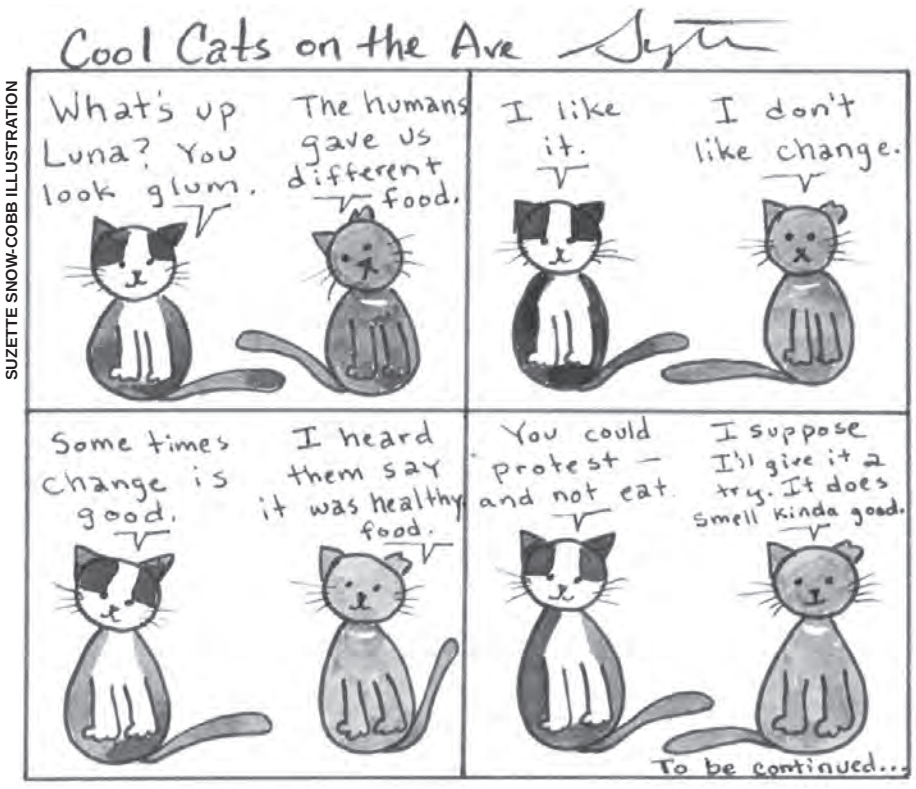
"Building a stronger community is a shared responsibility," she said. "It begins with everyday choices: how we treat people, whose voices we hear, which stories we tell, what opportunities we create."

"What matters," she added, "is not only what I accomplish, but what the work makes possible for others."

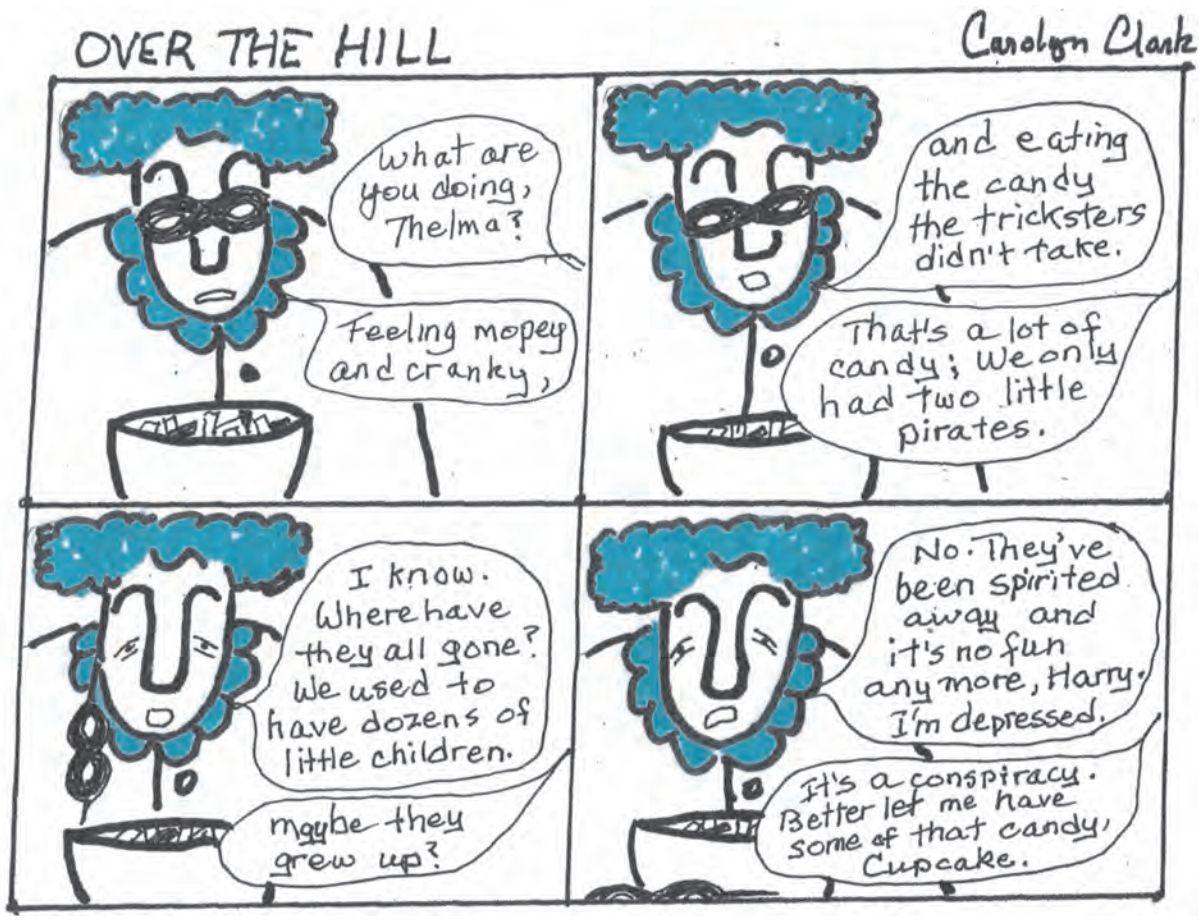
And after spending time with Traci Talbert, it is clear to me that possibility, opportunity, and community remain at the heart of everything she does.

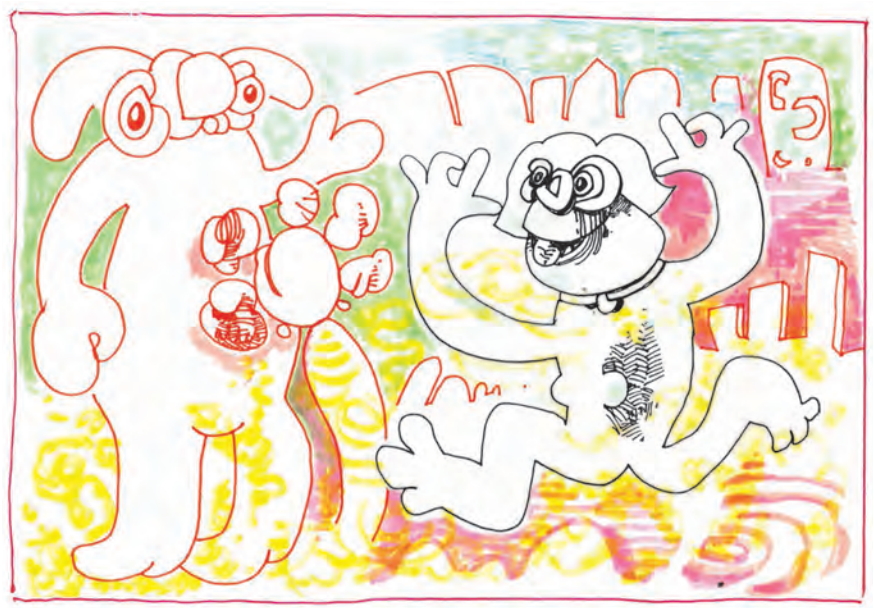


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the poetry page

Do not be afraid of your own heart beating
Look at very small things with your eyes
& stay warm

— Bernadette Mayer

edited by Corbett Bresner and Adam Tobin
Readers are invited to send poems to the *Montague Reporter* at: 177 Avenue A, Turners Falls, MA 01376
or to: *poetry@montaguereporter.org*

The November Poetry Page

from Situation Department

Dear world, I said, I have finished my recording.
Ok, said the world, but what's your favorite font?
This one, I said, and then I flung it towards the light.
Thanks, said the spectral hollow beneath the stairs.
It sung to me every night. It hung on my teeth like yogurt.
They say a screen degrades, but a better way of putting it
is that we degrade a screen, the screen doing nothing
but lying there trying its best to stay the same.
Would you like help writing a letter?
Or dragging a polyester blackout curtain
through floodwater made of light? Or trying to put it
in the laundry after? A big commercial machine?
Wow, everyone repeated. Imagine all those gallons.
We stood a while imagining all those gallons
until it was time to leave. Thanks everyone,
I said, then dimmed the signals.
But the corroded fonts would not recede.

– Nora Claire Miller
first published in *Common Place Poetics,* third spring issue

Pronounced Ditto

Xerox in the place between flutes
[carry over the one word]
A spirit duplicator outside the place
[what is spirit outside]
Breezes are as real as highways
[do you always?]
I always say a breeze blows true
[travel down highways]
Please accept it as my apology
[a joke about sadness]
Like a clown's preface, never finished
[lament a lost object]
What's lost is everything when lost in sound
[how much air inside our lungs right now]
The entire wind on the other side of the window

– Corbett Bresner & Adam Tobin
first published in *VOLT,* issue 28

from JOAN

it was midnight at dusk it was twilight at noon
the birds were migrating
to the cellars the nightjars
were locked in the river
the deer were grazing the ramparts
the fawns slept
on the ramparts while
flowers bloomed and
withered from swordbelts
I became a pavilion where
others rested like a long sentence
separated by clauses where
you may take your breath but
the pain was real my skinned terror
bitten through with panic dripped &
glazed in heatstroke armor
moments turned the clawed earth
seen through a hole
in the throat
of a man
reclining
a great cause needs
only a minor champion
and there's no leaving now
I am what I want which is more
than I could ever possibly weigh
the tiny rebellions we gave to ourselves
as a point of departure are wedged into lament
a new alphabet emerges now &
full of plunging space

– Jake Rose
JOAN published by the University of Chicago Press

Contributor Notes

Nora Claire Miller is the author of *Groceries* (2025), which was selected by Srikanth Reddy as the winner of the Fonograf Editions Open Genre Contest. They live in Western Massachusetts where they're the editor-in-chief of *Ghost Proposal* and the founder and director of Somehow School, a creative writing school for kids in Easthampton.

Jake Rose is a poet and artist living in California's Central Valley. They are the author of *JOAN*, winner of the 2026 Phoenix Emerging Poets Book Prize, published by The University of Chicago Press, and longlisted for the 2026 National Book Award in Poetry.

Corbett Bresner is the author of *Can We Anything We See* (Spuyten Duyvil, 2025), *the empty season* (Diode Book Prize, 2018), and the chapbook *Some Break A / Others Say Do* (Press Brake, 2026). They are the new co-editor of this poetry page at the *Montague Reporter*.

Adam Munsey Tobin runs Unnameable Books. His chapbook *Animatronic Head Trophy* is available from Press Brake. He is the new co-editor of this poetry page at the *Montague Reporter*.

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EVENTS

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THURSDAY, NOVEMBER 5

The National Spiritual Alliance, Lake Pleasant: *Home Recording and Mixing Basics,* musician workshop with Ethan Lindblom. Register at *spiritualallianceusa.org*. 6 p.m. $.

Shea Theater, Turners Falls: *An Evening With Double Edge Theatre*. Documentary screening and book talk. 7 p.m. $

Deep Thoughts, Northampton: *Bob Desaulniers, Girshwin, Junk Orbit*. 7 p.m. By donation.

FRIDAY, NOVEMBER 6

Leverett Library, Leverett: *Computer and Internet Basics*. 1 p.m. Free.

Discovery Center, Turners Falls: *Bird Beak Buffet Investigation Station*. Learn how birds have adapted to eat different foods. 3 to 5:30 p.m. Free.

Spinner Park, Turners Falls: *Pumpkin Swap*. Drop off your pumpkin for composting at the Montague Transfer Station; receive a slice of pumpkin pie. 5 to 7 p.m. Free.

Mystic Cat Pinball, Turners Falls: *Grand Opening Gala.* 5 to 10 p.m. $.

Music Connection, Turners Falls: *Wain, TFR, Friends We Keep, Cleansed, yourarmsaremylegs, Caedus.* All ages. 6 p.m. Free.

Rendezvous, Turners Falls: *Drew Paton*. 6:30 p.m. $.

Greenfield Records, Greenfield: *Aaron Russell, Parashi-Rambutan Duo, Michael Slyne*. 7 p.m. By donation.

Epsilon Spires, Brattleboro: Screening, *Spectrum Hunter* (2012), with preshow music by *God's Wisdom*. 7 p.m. $.

Living Room, Florence: *Kristine Leschper, Hoonah, Mr. Michael Motorcycle*. 7 p.m. By donation.

Marigold Theater, Easthampton: *Misty Blues, Little House Blues*. 7 p.m. $.

Holyoke Media, Holyoke: *Marty Ehrlich/Tomeka Reid Duo*. 7:30 p.m. $.

Shea Theater, Turners Falls: *Dead Man's Waltz*, triple Grateful Dead, Allmans, The Band tribute. 8 p.m. $.

Deja Brew, Wendell: *Simon White & Rhythm Inc*. Día de Muertos and Boo Pearson's 75th birthday. 8 p.m. $.

Marigold, Brattleboro: *Lexi Weege, Moon Hollow, Bandit Queen of Sorrows*. 8 p.m. Free.

Midnight's, Brattleboro: *Deerest, Libby Quinn, Virgo's Moon*. 8 p.m. $.

Iron Horse, Northampton: *Daniel Lanois Trio*. 8 p.m. $.

SATURDAY, NOVEMBER 7

Carnegie Library, Turners Falls: *Used Book Sale*. 10 a.m. Free.

The National Spiritual Alliance, Lake Pleasant: *Winter Makers Market*. Local art, handmade gifts, jewelry, bake sale, more. 11 a.m. to 2 p.m. Free.

Dickinson Library, Northfield: *Dungeons & Dragons*. Single-day campaign for ages 16 and up, all XP welcome. Register at *northfieldrec.com*. 11 a.m. Free.

Wendell Free Library, Wendell: *Artist reception for Elaine Reardon*. 1 to 2 p.m. Free.

Leverett Library, Leverett: *Friends of Leverett Library Annual Meeting*, followed by a concert tribute to *"Fats" Waller*. 1 p.m. Free.

Roundabout Books, Greenfield: Book release, *Hector Fox and the Snowy Surprise* with author and artist Astrid Sheckels. 2 p.m. Free.

Edwards Church, Northampton: *Arcadia Viols* play English music for voice and viols. Dowland, Purcell, more. 5 p.m. $.

Two Ghosts, Turners Falls: *Figurine, Sable Island Pony, Hauzu*. 6:30 p.m. $.

Looky Here, Greenfield: *Readings and open mic*, featuring participants of the 100s class. 7 p.m. By donation.

Living Room, Florence: *Jeff Coyne, Purse, Jetties, beetsblog*. 7 p.m. $.

THCC, Easthampton: *Deragon, Brujo, Gloons, Andy Beresky & The Whispers In His Ghost*. 7 p.m. $.

Holyoke Media, Holyoke: *Marty Ehrlich Rites Quartet*. 7:30 p.m. $.

Nova Arts, Keene: *Slob Drop, Young Other, Deadweight*. 7:30 p.m. $.

Shea Theater, Turners Falls: *Wooden Horse*, dual America and CSNY tribute. 8 p.m. $.

Blackbird, Northampton: *LOADED: A Live Tribute to the Velvet Underground*, with members of Dust Witch, Owsley's Owls, Mibble, and Hung Trucker. 8 p.m. $.

Haze, Northampton: *All Feels, Wallball, Red Loves Blue*. 8 p.m. $.

Marigold Theater, Easthampton: *Nate Martel Band, The Ol' Brandon Band.* 8 p.m. $.

Tin Can Alley, Southampton: *Two Point Oh, Dolly Sods, Sleep Destroyer, Saliba*. 8 p.m. $.

Rendezvous, Turners Falls: *Riot Frog*. 9:30 p.m. $.

SUNDAY, NOVEMBER 8

Discovery Center, Turners Falls: *French/Breton Jam Session*. 2:30 p.m. Free.


ERIKA KAPIN PHOTO

Multi-reed improviser Marty Ehrlich will get his exercise this weekend in a three-day "Marty Ehrlich Festival" organized by Pioneer Valley Jazz Shares. He plays at Holyoke Media this Friday night in a duo with cellist Tomeka Reid, and again Saturday in a quartet featuring trumpet titan Ralph Alessi. On Sunday he'll be at CitySpace in Easthampton, leading a world-class sax quartet through compositions by Julius Hemphill.

Iron Horse, Northampton: *ALOK*. Sets at 3 and 7 p.m. $.

Belltower Records, North Adams: *Sunburned Hand of the Man, Fugue State, Nod.* 5 p.m. $.

Stone Church, Brattleboro: *Autophobic, The Cheese Priests, Cold Hard Truth, Zoe Montgomery,* many more. 6 p.m. $.

No Fun, Troy: *Sweeping Promises, Sky Furrows, Baddreamadventure*. 7 p.m. $.

Second Congregational Church, Greenfield: *GCC Community Chorus* fall concert, "Songs of North America." 7:30 p.m. Free.

CitySpace, Easthampton: *Open Air: The Saxophone Quartet Compositions of Julius Hemphill*. 7:30 p.m. $.

MONDAY, NOVEMBER 9

Montague Center Library, Montague Center: *Artist reception* for Kate Spencer flower show. 5:30 p.m. Free.

EXHIBITS

Waterway Arts, Turners Falls: *Revisit*: *Exploring Nostalgia and Memory,* giftable small works by 11 local artists. Through December, with an opening reception this Friday, November 6 at 5 p.m.

Ritual Bowl, Turners Falls: *In Watercolor,* paintings by Reiner Wilhems-Tricarico. Opens with a reception this Friday, November 6 at 5 p.m.; continues through November.

Discovery Center, Turners Falls: *Migrations,* colorful works depicting scenes of village life, history, and Mayan culture in Guatemala, through November.

Montague Center Library, Montague: *Flower Show*, paintings by Kate Spencer. Through November, with a reception this Monday, November 9 at 5:30 p.m.

Sawmill River Arts, Montague: Guest artist *Emet Aron* displays prints, ceramics, and wearables; guest jeweler *Chelsea Dupuis*. Both through November.

Rhodes Arts Center, Northfield Mount Hermon, Gill: *Breathing Room*, paintings, drawings, and monoprints by NMH faculty member Clara Cruz. Through December 18. Viewable by appointment: *mseno@nmhschool.org*.

Fiddleheads Gallery, Bernardston: *Beverly Phelps,* a tribute in honor of the 95th anniversary of DVAA. Through this Sunday, November 8.

Leverett Library, Leverett: *Art of Diane Shanti Kennedy.* Through December.

Leverett Crafts & Arts, Leverett: *Susan Mulholland: New Paintings* and *Friends Who Paint,* a group show, both through November, with a joint reception Sunday, November 15 at 3 p.m.

LAVA Center, Greenfield: *Seventh Annual Community Art Show* on the themes of "Home" and "Resilience." Opens with a reception this Saturday, November 7 at 11 a.m.; through December 19.

Greenfield Library, Greenfield: *Julia Shirar*, paintings. Through November, with a reception Monday, November 16 at 5 p.m.

GCTV, Greenfield: *Headspace 3,* immersive installation of over 150 large multimedia illustrations and sculptures by Connor O., through December.

Gallery A3, Amherst: *Mixed Media,* work by Keith Hollingworth, through November 28 with a reception this Friday, November 6 at 5 p.m.

Shelburne Arts Coop, Shelburne Falls: *Imagine,* group show by gallery members, through November.

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CALENDAR

Shutesbury Public Library, Shutesbury: *Richie Davis*, reading and author talk. 6 p.m. Free.

Blackbird, Northampton: *Hazel Basil* album release, *Corey Laitman, Camille Asia*. 7 p.m. $.

TUESDAY, NOVEMBER 10

Wendell Free Library, Wendell: *Digital Legacy Planning*. Prepare your wishes for your online accounts. Registration req'd. 2:30 p.m. Free.

Millers Falls Library, Millers Falls: *Montague Housing Production Plan Community Input Session*. 5 p.m. Free.

Tilton Library, South Deerfield: *Richie Davis*, reading and author talk. 6:30 p.m. Free.

WEDNESDAY, NOVEMBER 11

Soldiers Memorial Park, Turners Falls: *Veterans Day Ceremony*. Prayers and speeches by representatives of the Montague selectboard, Montague Elks, and Soldiers Memorial Committee. 10:30 a.m. Free.

Gill Veterans Memorial, Gill: *Dedication Ceremony* for a new monument honoring those who have served in conflicts since 1975. Speakers include state senator Jo Comerford and Navy Seal Team 2 member Michael Walsh. 11 a.m. Free.

Shutesbury Town Hall, Shutesbury: *Community Sing-Along*, sponsored by Neighborhood Aging and Dementia Support. 2 p.m. Free.

Latchis Theater, Brattleboro: Documentary screening, *All the Beauty and the Bloodshed* (2022), and student gallery show. Fundraiser for In-Sight Photography. 7 p.m. $.

Hutghi's, Westfield: *Sam Wenc, Connect Four, Diapason, Solum*. 7 p.m. $.

Rendezvous, Turners Falls: *Falltown String Band*. 8 p.m. No cover.

THURSDAY, NOVEMBER 12

Discovery Center, Turners Falls: *Nice & Easy Walk*. 1 p.m. Free.

LAVA Center, Greenfield: *LAVA Film Festival Opening Reception*. Meet filmmakers, watch trailers, consume light refreshments. 5 p.m. Free.

Millers Falls Library, Millers Falls: *Book Club*. Rebecca Solnit, *The Beginning Comes After the End*. 5:30 p.m. Free.

Four Phantoms Brewing, Greenfield: *A New Blue Jazz Ensemble*, with open jam. 6 p.m. No cover.

The National Spiritual Alliance, Lake Pleasant: *Tea & Crumpet Society*, reading group. 6:30 p.m. Free.

Marigold, Brattleboro: *Holy Basil, Moose, Oscar Shaw*, poetry by *Daryl Gussin*. 7 p.m. Free.

Shea Theater, Turners Falls: *Valley Voices Story Slam*. 7:30 p.m. $.



Georgia-to-Brooklyn-to-LA indie-pop songwriter and multi-instrumentalist Madeline Babuka Black, a.k.a. Slippers, is on a full band tour behind her most recent album, Slippers 08, *and tacked Turners Falls to the end of a generally more urban East Coast itinerary. Jake Latakas Orrall (JEFF the Brotherhood), Providence janglers Time Thief and locals Stoner Will & The Narks support.*

Nova Arts, Keene: *Lafayette Gilchrist, Hearing Things*. 7:30 p.m. $.

The Drake, Amherst: *Kaleta & Super Yamba Band*. 8 p.m. $.

FRIDAY, NOVEMBER 13

Brick House, Turners Falls: *when the time comes, yourarmsaremylegs, Farewell Sarathael, Halfhearted Comeback*. 6:30 p.m. $.

Montague Common Hall, Montague Center: *Square Dance* with *DePaolis and His Porcupine Pals*; Grace Clements calling. Jammers welcome. 6:30 p.m. By donation.

Discovery Center, Turners Falls: *John Stacey & Friends*. Fundraiser for the Friends of the Great Falls Discovery Center. 7 p.m. By donation.

LAVA Center, Greenfield: *LAVA Film Festival*. Experimental films and comedies; Q&A with filmmakers. 7 p.m. $.

Marigold, Brattleboro: *Ashtray Angel, Slow Pony, Marxist Jargon*. 7 p.m. $.

Blackbird, Northampton: *Sarah Noell, Erin Morse, Hazel Basil*. 7:30 p.m. $.

Shea Theater, Turners Falls: *Upstate*. 8 p.m. $.

Sirius Community, Shutesbury: *John Genyo Sprague, Daniel Wininger, Shane "Bray" Kerr*. Piano concert. 8 p.m. $.

Midnight's, Brattleboro: *Jake McKelvie, Bird Friend, Dylan Patrick Ward*. 8 p.m. $.

Visions Video, Northampton: Premiere screening, *In the Shadow of the Haunted Mountain*, new experimental film about Mount Tom by Alle Kern; preshow music by *Lendl, Inner Cross*. 8 p.m. $.

De La Luz, Holyoke: *Los Gaiteros de San Jacinto, Fruko, Carmelo Torres*. 8 p.m. $.

Hutghi's, Westfield: *Subjects, Identity Shock, Period Bomb, Demented FX, Human Ignorance*. 8 p.m. $.

Rendezvous, Turners Falls: *Slippers, Jake Latakas Orrall, Stoner Will & The Narks, Time Thief*. 8:30 p.m. $.

SATURDAY, NOVEMBER 14

Shelburne-Buckland Community Center, Shelburne Falls: *Christmas Fair*. Crafts, gift items, bake sale, auction, food, raffles, more. 9 a.m. to 2 p.m. Free.

LAVA Center, Greenfield: *LAVA Film Festival*. Screenings and question-and-answer sessions with filmmakers. Dramas, 12 p.m.; documentaries, 3 p.m.; thrillers, horror, science fiction, 7 p.m. $.

Discovery Center, Turners Falls: *Fairy House Crafting Party* for kids and teens. 1 p.m. Free.

Leverett Library, Leverett: *Leverett Education Forum*. 1 p.m. Free.

Wendell Meetinghouse, Wendell: Workshops with *Tony Vacca, Paul Richmond,* and *John Sheldon*. Take one or all three; tickets at *wendellmeetinghouse.org*. 1 to 4:30 p.m. $.

Guiding Star Grange, Greenfield: *Swedish Dance*. Intro workshop, yummy snacks, open dancing. Live music on five-string fiddle and nyckelharpa. All welcome. 1:30 p.m. $

Montague Common Hall, Montague Center: Open Mic, with featured performers *Michael and Carrie Kline*. 6:15 p.m. By donation.

Wendell Meetinghouse, Wendell: *Do It Now* presents "Chuckie the Rooster's Lucky Day." Valley premiere. 7 p.m. $.

Shea Theater, Turners Falls: *Little Lies*, Fleetwood Mac tribute. 8 p.m. $.

Midnight's, Brattleboro: *Wolf Girlz, Green Knuckle Material, Tysk Tysk Tysk, Match*. 8 p.m. $.

Stone Church, Brattleboro: *THAO, Al Olender*. 8 p.m. $.

Rendezvous, Turners Falls: *Paper Jays, Bent Light, Creative Writing*. 9 p.m. $.

SUNDAY, NOVEMBER 15

Shelburne-Buckland Community Center, Shelburne Falls: *Christmas Fair*. Crafts, gift items, bake sale, auction, food, raffles, more. 9 a.m. to 12 p.m. Free.

Artspace, Greenfield: *Holiday Market*. 10 a.m. to 2 p.m. Free.

Wendell Free Library, Wendell: *Leather Tooling with LaunchSpace*. Registration req'd. Ages 10 and up. 1 p.m. Free.

Little Bug Farm, Colrain: *How to Meet a Horse*. Horses greet each other in a particular way. You'll see how, then try it with Nicky and Fern. Two sittings, each limited to five people; register at *littlebugfarm.co/gatherings/*. 1 and 2:30 p.m. Free.

LAVA Center, Greenfield: Documentary screening, *In Waves and War* (2024), portraying the impact of multiple combat deployments on three Navy Seals and their families. 2 p.m. By donation.

Montague Common Hall, Montague Center: *Improvisation Workshop* with cornetist, composer, and bandleader *Taylor Ho Bynum*. All levels welcome. 4 p.m. $.

THCC, Easthampton: *Frog Mallet, Bonginator, Cum Dumpster*. 5 p.m. $.

Montague Common Hall, Montague Center: *Taylor Ho Bynum Quintet, Montague Marching Band*. Fundraiser for the Common Hall accessibility plan. 6:30 p.m. $.

Rendezvous, Turners Falls: *Washatorium, Reklama, Recreational Vehicle*. 8 p.m. By donation.

MONDAY, NOVEMBER 16

Montague Center Library, Montague Center: *Best Brief Books Club*. Toni Morrison, *Sula*. 4 p.m. Free.

looking forward...

TUESDAY, NOVEMBER 17

Epsilon Spires, Brattleboro: *RESAVOIR, Jake Meginsky & Lemuel Marc Duo*. 7 p.m. $.

WEDNESDAY, NOVEMBER 18

Hutghi's, Westfield: *Jeanines, Time Thief, Now*. 7 p.m. $.

THURSDAY, NOVEMBER 19

Bright Water Bog, Shutesbury: *Autumn Hike*. Leisurely walk along the mostly flat trails, checking out sculptures along the way. Register at *bookeo.com/northfield*. 12 p.m. Free.

FRIDAY, NOVEMBER 20

Deja Brew, Wendell: *Deep C Divers*. 8 p.m. No cover.

SATURDAY, NOVEMBER 21

Brick House, Turners Falls: *Whait, Bow and Arrow, K8A*. 8 p.m. $.

SUNDAY, NOVEMBER 29

Belltower Records, North Adams: *ICU, Corrode, Cheap Heat, PTC*. 5 p.m. $.

MONDAY, NOVEMBER 30

Deep Thoughts, Northampton: *Frank Hurricane, Tara Zorthian, bobbie*. 7 p.m. $.

THURSDAY, DECEMBER 3

Parlor Room, Northampton: *Advance Base, bobbie, Karima Walker*. 7:30 p.m. $.

SATURDAY, DECEMBER 5

Haze, Northampton: *Fred Cracklin', Sleep Destroyer, Plant Fight, Sapien Joyride*. 8 p.m. $.

SUNDAY, DECEMBER 13

Marigold Theater, Easthampton: *JEFF The Brotherhood, Cliffrose, Ian St. George*. 7 p.m. $.

THURSDAY, DECEMBER 31

Shea Theater, Turners Falls: *Max Creek*. 8 p.m. $.

THURSDAY, JANUARY 14

The Drake, Amherst: *Ethiopiques: The Either/ Orchestra Plays the Music of Nerses Nalbandian*. 8 p.m. $.

SATURDAY, APRIL 10

United Congregational Church, Holyoke: *Fred Frith / Phillip Greenlief / Evelyn Davis trio*. Guitar, reeds, and pipe organ. 7:30 p.m. $.

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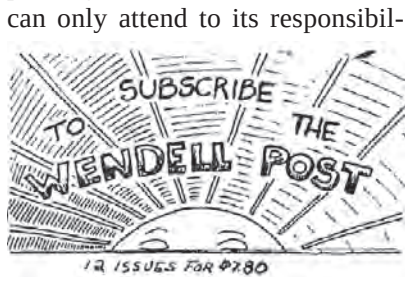
seeking big corporations – major employers to come in and take up the slack following the exodus of heavy industries from that relatively skilled labor market. Some of the growth projections that have been bandied about show an overflow into Wendell. More immediately relevant is the fact that housing has gotten so expensive in the Rt. 128 / Rt. 495 belts – "$95,000 - $125,000 for starter homes," according to Tom Wetherby, chairman of the Wendell Planning Board – that people are spilling out as far as Wendell and Warwick. Some intend to commute until they find local work.

If the state is ever successful in completing a fast highway through or around Erving (for which the South Bank through Wendell is one plan and a recent privately submitted design through Erving is another) this town will come under increasing pressure from both east and west via the most renowned suburbia-maker of all: the superhighway. With steering wheel in one hand and coffee cup in the other, the commuter could now easily live in the Depot and get to work in Greenfield or Brattleboro, or live in Farley and be at work ten minutes away in Orange... as long as gasoline stays cheap.

What is the best response? Stand and fight? Or put out the welcome mat and squeeze over in a neighborly and altruistic gesture?

Jessie Wetherby, clerk of the board of health and member of the board of assessors, thinks Wendell's resources cast the deciding vote, "especially water." The town's shallow wells have an increasing habit of going dry in years of low rainfall. And septic system troubles "will show a higher fail rate in the next five years" if wet weather prevails, predicts her son, Tom, presumably because the best house sites have mostly been taken. The glacier wasn't generous in distributing soil to Wendell. On the whole, the water table occupies relatively few feet between the surface and ledge, putting wastewater literally between a rock and a very hard place: the neighbor's yard.

Land use is where charity runs up against natural limits – just as a boat can squeeze on only so many passengers before it sinks, a town can only attend to its responsibilities to newcomers for so long before its best reasons for existence are canceled out.



Some point out that Wendell State Forest occupies 30% of the town's area. Does Wendell really need further protection against development?

Though Wendell is blessed in geographical beauty and an openness rare in Massachusetts, the state forest is not the property of local residents for their agricultural, fuel, recreational or even open space desires, but rather the property of the people of the entire state. No scenario is inconceivable for use of this land in the hasty adjustments of the no doubt troubled future.

Can Wendell afford the expense of development controls? The answer to this is another question: What is the value of a community that works, that still has the capacity of functioning self-sufficiently, as opposed to a community that has exceeded the limits of its own resources, become a dormitory for strangers and the municipal equivalent of a restaurant without a kitchen?

If, as Chester Zaik says, development hurts a town financially with its accompanying requirement for more school space, busing, teachers, and general town services, the town may decide to find ways to pay... much as a homeowner puts an expensive new roof on the house because later costs are avoided. In theory, anyway, balancing incentives (which "cost" a town money) with disincentives (which gain taxes and cost the property owner) can pay the bill.

So assume Wendell voters decide to institute development controls of some kind. Assume they face head-on the legal obstacles to home rule on these matters and the political difficulties of accommodating the unwealthy. Assume their motives are not frivolous or narrowly selfish, but to save a future for themselves and the kids by recognizing everybody's dependency on – and identity with – sensible natural limits while guaranteeing the proper rights of property ownership. What form might those measures take?

There is no shortage of principles legally available by enabling legislation: zoning, municipal purchase, state purchase, private purchase (including land trusts and wildlife preserves), purchase or trade of development rights, enrollment in state land use protection programs like Chapt. 61 (forestland protection), Chapt. 61A and Mass. Agricultural Preservation Restriction Program (farmland), Chapt. 61B (recreational land), state Scenic and Recreational Rivers Program (land along Millers River), local tax incentives, plus aquifer and floodplain zoning and wetlands protection laws....

There are also many legally toothless ways that invite cooperation with unofficial smiles: trusts to which land or development rights can be donated, requests to those selling land to first offer it to neighbors (or give them an opportunity to match offers from outside), voluntary thoughtfulness about whom to sell land to or how to develop one's own….

Arrangements like these would depend on everyone's continued awareness of the threat and its capacity to hurt the quality of their lives... and on its opposite: the trap of exclusiveness. Wendell's refusal to either be overrun or become snobs will be only as successful as the community's determination is strong.

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