



The Montague Reporter

YEAR 15 – NO. 8

also serving Irving, Gill, Leverett and Wendell

\$1

EDITOR@MONTAGUEREPORTER.ORG

THE VOICE OF THE VILLAGES

DECEMBER 1, 2016

Downtown Businesses Plan Wonderful Night



Attendees at last year's Wonderful Night check in with a guest of honor.

By REPORTER STAFF

TURNERS FALLS – Turners Falls seeks its place in the lineup of holiday happenings this month with the sixth annual “It’s a Wonderful Night in Turners Falls” on Friday, December 9. Mark your calendars for this opportunity to enjoy the downtown decked out with seasonal splendor and sporting enhanced opportunities for shopping and dining, schmoozing with lamp posts and angels, plus fun activities and cultural events sponsored by local businesses, organizations, individuals, and Turners Falls RiverCulture.

RiverCulture director Suzanne LoManto is still brainstorming some surprises for this most wonderful of nights, and one new wrinkle she’s working on this year is the debut of an “Open Door Promo.” Basically Bicycles owner David Carr and Nina Rossi of Nina’s Nook helped LoManto pull together this promotion, which aims to get participants to visit at least ten businesses in the downtown

area to collect different stickers as part of a scavenger hunt.

A total of 17 businesses are “in the game,” and each will be supplied with stickers showing a photo of the door to their shop or restaurant. Game cards will be given out at LOOT and the Black Cow Burger Bar on December 9, and people can visit these businesses to collect stickers for their card anytime between the 9th and 23rd of December.

No purchase is necessary to get each sticker; the main idea is to get people to put some shoe leather down on the old bricks and “open doors” to the various businesses in the downtown.

When people collect a minimum of ten stickers on their card, they can enter it in a drawing for two hundred dollars’ worth of goods and services from these 17 downtown merchants. The drawing will be on the 23rd, giving the winner a chance to do last-minute shopping or gifting.

There are two “Pop Up” shops in town this year. Richie Richardson of Turners Falls has put together an “Ethnic Chic Fashion Show and Sell Event” at his 113 Avenue A Pop Up Shoppe that promises “Urban Cool holiday shopping in New England” with limited collections by New York City designers Simply Greta, CJ Original, Richie Richardson, G Young NY, Philleo

see WONDERFUL page A4

NEWS ANALYSIS

Council of Governments Study Dims Hopes for East County Bus Service

By PETE WACKERNAGEL

SAWYER/LAUGANNO FILE PHOTO

FRANKLIN COUNTY – Bus transit in the county’s eastern towns of Wendell, Leverett, Shutesbury, and New Salem has been deemed unfeasible in a just-released report by the Franklin Regional Council of Governments (FRCOG). Lack of sufficient potential ridership and the high cost of operating a fixed route in a sparsely-populated rural area were the main reasons cited for the report’s determination.

The report does not, however, annihilate once and for all the dream of buses sailing over the hills and through the woods of this corner of the county. The study concluded that a few key changes – in demography, technology, or funding sources – could make a fixed-route bus line feasible.

FRCOG’s study was undertaken in response to local advocates for expanded public transportation, including Jonathan von Ranson, Wendell’s representative to the Franklin Regional Transit Authority (FRTA).



The Franklin Regional Council of Governments is headquartered in the John D. Oliver Transit Center, also home to the Franklin Regional Transit Authority.

“We knew that people needed it,” von Ranson says.

FRTA itself has specific criteria to determine the viability of new routes: their ability to connect to other lines, meet “service thresholds,” and operate cost-effectively. While the routes explored by the study would connect with lines in Greenfield and Amherst, they failed

to meet “service thresholds” or achieve cost-effectiveness.

The “service threshold” is calculated by adding the total figures for employment and population in an area. FRTA’s threshold is 2,000 jobs and people per square mile. The population densities of these hill towns range from 76 people per

see BUS SERVICE page A6

GILL SELECTBOARD

Gill Complains to MBI Officials Over Frustrations with Comcast Process

By KENT ALEXANDER

Gill’s selectboard met Monday night with the town’s cable advisory committee (CAC) and three representatives from the Massachusetts Broadband Institute (MBI), who came to discuss complaints that Comcast is shortchanging Gill as it expands broadband access in the town.

New MBI chair Peter Larkin, deputy director Ed Donnelly, and GIS manager Cynthia Gaines listened to CAC chair Tom Hodak detail the difficulties his committee has faced in dealing with Comcast.

Larkin stated that the Institute’s understanding is that Comcast wants to “fold Gill into the nine-town agreement” and set up a process to ensure 96% broadband coverage within three years. He said the MBI is looking at what that coverage will look like, and intends to share with

the selectboard the progress being made during the 2017 design roll-out. He said the MBI hopes Comcast would “beat the three-year” completion deadline.

In the initial agreement with Comcast and the MBI, Snedeker said, Gill had made it clear that the maps and data Comcast was using were in error.

Gregory Snedeker, a member of both the selectboard and CAC, after politely noting that both Larkin and Donnelly were new to the discussion, took the MBI to task for its role in the dispute.

In the initial agreement with Comcast and the MBI, he said, Gill had made it clear that the maps and

data Comcast was using to determine what areas were not yet serviced were in error, and the CAC had made every effort to provide both Comcast and the MBI with more accurate and updated information.

Snedeker said he had personally emailed the MBI to say that Gill didn’t think they were going to get the promised 96% build-up, and that it was “troubling to see that both Comcast and the MBI had not yet incorporated” the corrections the town had provided.

He noted that MBI had turned to Comcast to clarify their data instead of listening to the town, and went on to say that Gill had “been left out of the other partially-served towns” by Comcast.

Gaines stated that the MBI knew “their data was not correct,” and remembered asking the cable giant how they got their 96%.

see GILL page A7

GILL-MONTAGUE REGIONAL SCHOOL COMMITTEE

A Laptop for Every Student?

By MIKE JACKSON

At its Tuesday night meeting, the Gill-Montague regional school committee discussed a proposal to provide every middle school student with a laptop of their own, beginning in two years; learned that next year’s budget may be harder to balance than this year’s; and were warned of the need for stricter accounting practices around student activities funds.

The meeting began with a public comment period. Anne Jemas of Turners Falls addressed actions the high school football team and its supporters took at last week’s Thanksgiving game which included wearing a costume headdress and performing

the “tomahawk chop,” banned by the district in 2009.

Jemas, one of the local residents who approached the committee in May to ask them to consider ending the athletic program’s use of “Indian” symbology, said she felt it was a “bummer” but hoped it would not result in punishment.

“People are kind of locked in, and not really listening,” Jemas told the committee. “For that reason, I really hope that there’s no punitive measures taken, because I don’t really see the point.” She said she hoped the district’s response would instead include “restorative practices.”

The committee did not address her comments, nor did they discuss

the game’s events. The following night, Wednesday, the committee was scheduled to hear about the Falls massacre of 1676, the first of four public “inquiry events” they had requested to educate themselves on different aspects of the issue.

One-to-One Computing

The committee heard a presentation on information technology from Tina Mahaney, coordinator of educational data services.

Mahaney discussed her department’s philosophy and approach to developing the schools’ infrastructure before moving to “the big thing: our tentative goal to undertake a new

see GMRSD page A8

A SEASON OF SHARING

BLANCHETTE PHOTO



John Merrigan (right) with a Turners Falls family in the Women’s Center on Avenue A, as they received a complimentary turkey for Thanksgiving.

By ELLEN BLANCHETTE

TURNERS FALLS – The family center was lively, filled with happy young children crawling around playing with toys on the floor while adults talked and enjoyed the afternoon. Good cheer was in the air in anticipation of the Thanksgiving holiday.

The Women’s Center of Montague Catholic Social Ministries (MCSM) on Avenue A, Turners Falls, received 40 turkeys donated by the Franklin County Opioid Task Force to be distributed to families in the community on November 22. These were just some of the 200 turkeys donated by the Task Force throughout Franklin

County for the holiday.

John Merrigan, the Franklin County Register of Probate and co-chair of the Task Force, was there to talk to the families and enjoy sharing these gifts with the community.

He was joined by Tess Jurgensen, the Task Force’s new operations coordinator, welcoming families and talking to people about the services the organization provides.

Representative Stephen Kulik was also on hand to show his interest and support for the work being done at the Center. There were big smiles on the faces of parents as they picked up their turkeys, happy to receive the gift and good wishes of a caring community.

The Montague Reporter

"The Voice of the Villages"

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Founded by
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August, 2002

Irresistibly Into the Future

Resilience.

One of the boldest buzzwords to fly around in the wake of the 2008 financial crash, *resilience* invokes perseverance and stamina while describing something structural. A network is said to be *resilient* when it can survive damage to its nodes and linkages.

According to Google Trends, interest in “resilience” in the Anglophone world has just about quadrupled over the course of the last decade. It seems to be a defining virtue of our age. As far as values go, resilience is rather more technical than moral; we are urged from all directions to build resilience, rather than bravery or honesty or kindness, in ourselves and our local communities.

It may be that resilience is coming into focus only as it is depleted. Against a backdrop of a man-made national catastrophe, we got a little reminder this week of resilience, and of its present tendency to wane. During our Monday morning editors’ meeting, as we tried to email a local organic farmer thanking him for submitting a piece of editorial writing, the *Montague Reporter’s* internet router went abruptly offline.

This piece of equipment was on loan from a company that we will not name, which we pay, each year, a sum equivalent to about thirty annual subscriptions, in exchange for the delivery of information over a local system of copper telephone lines.

Over the course of that first long workday, we spoke with no fewer than *seven* representatives of this company asking for them to fix the problem. The seventh of these acknowledged that the problem lay in “the circuit” and that the complaint had “escalated” to the attention of “the network team,” and the company opened a “ticket” committing to repair it by 5 p.m. on Tuesday.

(Along the way, there was a long sidetrack involving the idea that our service may have been suspended without warning due to “copyright infringement,” an accusation that turned out to be as baseless as it was infuriating.)

By Wednesday morning there was still no connection, though we were told to “rest assured” that there was “equipment being fixed in [our] area.”

The internet is not exactly food, shelter, or medicine, but it *is* depended on to allocate those things. And DSL may be going the way of the telegraph, but many residents of our coverage towns are stuck with dial-up, satellite or no service at all, so it seems worthwhile to pay attention to the condition of our existing rural infrastructure.

It’s interesting to think of the reasons why a company supposedly “worth” \$130 billion can so casually fail to provide one of its core products to a given paying customer. In fact, this kind of behavior is expected of firms that have achieved a certain scale of success. We hear the other major local option is just as bad.

All of our human-to-human interaction seemed to be with a parade of bright and patient but clearly under-resourced and harried call-center workers. We could hear each one turn from their workflow management software to check a global time-zone map each time we discussed the concept of time.

Those of us who are merely caught in this spiraling corporate inanity are the lucky ones. On the underside of the creature, airstrikes are targeting hospitals. But there’s a different kind of toll taken by those who work hard, year after year, only to feel pushed around by a fundamentally indifferent and irrational system.

Thankfully, we’re the *Reporter*, and we operate in resilient little Turners Falls. Another downtown bureau (which asked to remain anonymous) lent us their key, and space, and ethernet connection; our volunteer tech support from About Face came through on short notice to set up a field office; our correspondents were patient; our friends brought us food; and we got the damn thing out yet again.

Sometime Wednesday evening, when this edition was mostly finished, our connection was restored. It turned out an entire column in our circuit’s *database* had been accidentally erased, disabling service to thousands of customers.

It’s going to be a long four years. The country will be led by a conspiracy theorist, its agencies helmed by agency-wreckers, its force wielded by fetishists, its mobs thirsty for traitors. State government will be a battleground and a bulwark. And the local scene may get weird.

Resilience isn’t some shiny-eyed liberal buzzword anymore. It’s something we all need to be quickly assessing, and deliberately building. We don’t know what large-scale systems might one morning crash – or who will be blamed when it happens.

GUEST EDITORIAL

By DANNY BOTKIN

The ascendancy of Trump is an embarrassment for our country, and a huge threat to all civilized people and nations working for the betterment of the species and the planet.

There’s simply no way to sugarcoat this shocking new reality. Our beautiful and diverse citizenry, our precious environment, our bedrock legacy and essence as a multi-cultural, tolerant society, and all the social justice, environmental protection, and landmark human rights, achieved with huge effort and suffering over the last 50 years, are under assault.

There’s mourning in the land, great sadness, crushing fear... and anger. There’s plenty of good reasons to be angry, and perhaps it’s helpful to let some of it out. We’re angry at the tainted DNC, angry with “fake news” and with rampant hate propaganda, angry with those who didn’t vote and angry with faux patriots, who voted only with cynicism and hatred...

On day five, I’m herding goats on a hilltop in Gill, in the lovely autumn twilight, hunting for something, *anything* positive, wise or hopeful, a “silver lining,” a “window of opportunity” to reconcile this dreadful election result. Something good *has* to come from this Trump debacle; it must. This is our *mandate*.

The election is surely a mirror for all of us. Hence, we’re surely called to be better citizens, calmer listeners, stronger healers, smarter people, gentler men!

The ugliness and cruelty we’ve seen unleashed requires us to now elevate knowledge, truth, fellowship, cooperation, *and* beauty, unflinchingly, relentlessly, not just into “politics,” but into our daily lives, as well. And we must become allies to all, and a sanctuary for the vulnerable, including our own broken hearts...

Here’s a few potential positives that *could* come from Trump’s unfortunate victory: 1. The left will grow (up), and become more galvanized and effective. 2. The DNC will be forced to coalesce around the *real*



Searching for a Silver Lining...

people’s choice. 3. The veils of “normalcy” will be ripped away, bursting the bubble of comfort and privilege enjoyed by some, thus creating an opening for core issues to be (finally) addressed. 4. A national soul-searching will commence: on wealth disparity, on race, gender, bullying, refugees, our “democracy,” etc... 5. Communities of mutual support and “permaculture” will be fomented at a local level. 6. We’ll *all* take more ownership for creating and healing our nation, at the grass root level.

The 2016 election was so close that one could ascribe the Democrat’s historic defeat to any number of unfortunate effects: ingrained misogyny; an obsolete “electoral college”; fear of terrorism, and the false conflation of refugees with terror; pernicious voter suppression in Ohio and elsewhere; partisan FBI meddling; Anthony Weiner’s unfortunate “sexting” obsession...

But the vast majority of the American people did not vote for bigotry, scapegoating, sexual objectification, or misogyny. Few voted for conceit, narcissism, or bombastic unpreparedness. The nation voted overwhelmingly against elitism, against the “establishment,” against gridlock, and against the “corrupt Clinton Dynasty,” as it was falsely portrayed, *ad nauseum*. Those paying attention know now that the true people’s choice, Senator Bernie Sanders, would have crushed the creepy, personality-driven, un-candidate and turned back his divisive and dangerous message, because Sanders was the actual authentic reformer, not propelled by ambition, hubris, or the cult of personality.

I spent the summer and fall explaining to (and scolding!) my stubbornly “Bernie-or-Bust” wife that, despite the partisan meddling during the primary, it was time to “move on” and unite behind HRC to defeat the dangerous authoritarian with zero leadership or policy acumen. My wife took regular abuse for continuing to insist the Democratic nominee was illegitimate and for denigrating her as a flawed “lesser evil”. Listening now to Sanders’ unwavering clarity, vision and commitment post-election, one observes what a true leader looks and sounds and acts like, and our regret is multiplied tenfold.

We’re feeling beaten and bewildered, dreading the other shoe falling, cringing over the latest hawkish, regressive appointment by the President-elect. An Attorney General who denigrates Black Lives Matter? A VP who believes in “conversion therapy” for gays? A generation of Supreme Court justices stacked against reproductive rights? A White House advisor who ran the odious, hate-spewing Breitbart News? It’s a terrible nightmare.

There’ve been calls to chill out and give Trump a chance to lead. But the sad truth is, the entire nation gave him more of a chance than he ever deserved. The ratings-obsessed media that elevated this patently unqualified “candidate,” who preyed on our basest, crudest impulses, must be named for helping herd a gullible electorate on this odious “race to the bottom.”

But honestly, there may not be enough Van Joneses left to go around, enough “better listeners,” enough time for healing, enough “high road” or “cathartic evolving” left in us. The entire world agrees, America has gone stark, raving mad, and we’re all terrified of what comes next.

We will give the new president a chance to govern, yes. However, we, like our champion, Senator Sanders, will actively oppose the scapegoating of Muslims, immigrants and refugees, dismantling our paltry environmental protections, fracking us into the inferno, trampling human rights and of those of the Earth, or creating a virtual police state in the name of “national security.”

We can only hope we each have the fortitude and endurance to survive and confront this new reality, heed the wake up call, and together redefine and take back our beloved, multi-cultural, peace-loving USA. There’s no other choice...

Mr. Botkin is the farm manager at Laughing Dog Farm in Gill.

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Stumped searching for that perfect gift for your loved one? The essential interchangeability of all commodities getting you down? Well, here are **THREE WAYS** we can help each other this December! All proceeds fund our operations.

Montague Reporter Cartoon Calendars! \$15

These adorable wall calendars feature 12 cartoons from past issues of the *Montague Reporter*, all drawn by our editor and in-house cartoonist, Nina Rossi. Spiral bound on top, 6-1/2" x 8-1/2", glossy matte black and white. While supplies last.

Special Historical Edition – Complete Sets! \$10

Take a walk back in time! Our hugely popular 1/1/15 (winter), 7/2/15 (summer), 3/31/16 (spring) and 10/6/16 (fall) special editions drew deeply from the annals of the *Turners Falls Reporter*, *Turners Falls Herald*, and *Turners Falls Observer* as well as our own archives. The handsome, 64-page complete set will make an absorbing, entertaining and thought-provoking gift.

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To arrange payment and pickup, email info@montaguereporter.org, call (413) 863-8666, or stop by our office at 177 Avenue A in TFMA.



JESSICA LARKIN ILLUSTRATION

Compiled by **DON CLEGG**

The Town of Montague Winter parking ban has started. No parking on the town streets from 1 to 5 a.m., or you get a little orange envelope on your windshield.

On Friday, December 2 from 3:30 to 5 p.m., **Santa will be visiting** the Greenfield Savings Bank branch in Turners Falls. Children of all ages are welcome to bring him their lists. Complimentary 3 x 5 photos taken and available for pick up at a later date.

Please call in to register for a time slot by calling Hilary at 413-775-8267. If time allows, walk-ins will try to be accommodated, but Santa is a busy man this time of year!

The Wendell Free Library is pleased to host a talk by Kevin Gardner on Friday, December 2, at 7 p.m.

Kevin's informal talk covers topics from his popular book, *The Granite Kiss*, about New England stone walls, touching on history, technique, stylistic development, and aesthetics. The talk will kick off an art installation of photos of **Stone Walls and Stone Structures of Wendell, New and Old**.

Also at 7 p.m. on Friday, December 2, the Pioneer Valley Institute presents "**Machine Tools, Unions and Wall Street in Greenfield:**

A History" at GCC's Stinchfield Lecture Hall.

When locally founded, growing tool companies ceded control to Wall Street investors, their skilled and well-paid workers responded to worsening conditions by organizing into the United Electrical Workers (UE) union, Local 274 in 1938. Fifteen years later, the UE became a target of the McCarthy-era "Red Scare."

Building on archival materials at the Museum of Our Industrial Heritage and UE Local 274 plus personal connections with retired union organizers and members, Tom Goldscheider tells this remarkable story.

Entrance is \$5 in advance, and preregistration online is encouraged.

Enjoy a **Breakfast with Santa** at the Montague Elks Lodge, 1 Elk Drive, Turners Falls on Sunday, December 4, from 8 to 11 a.m. Adults are \$7, and children under 10 are just \$5. Don't forget your camera! The event is a fundraiser for the TFHS Class of 2019.

Our Lady of Czestochowa Church Bazaar, will be held this Saturday, December 3, from 9 a.m. to 2 p.m. Enjoy coffee and donuts, Christmas gifts, religious goods, and of course, great Polish food. The church is located at 84 K Street in Turners Falls.

Racial Justice Rising presents at its monthly free Saturday program, Taste of Brazil, **The Story of Capoeira Dance**, Saturday, December 3, from 10:15 a.m. to 12:15 p.m. Doors open at 9:45.

Capoeira, a product of the extensive slave trade between Brazil and Africa, has been described as a martial art, a dance, an art form, a form of self-defense, or any hybrid of these. Tuzinho Demelo, who began studying Capoeira as a child in Brazil and has taught it for many years, will share the real meaning behind the dance and demonstrate its complex techniques. He teaches capoeira workshops and performs around the world as an ambassador for Brazilian culture. **Family Friendly!!**

The program will be held at the First Congregational Church of Greenfield, 43 Silver Street, Greenfield. For free childcare, please RSVP to email@racialjusticerising.org. Coffee and tea and light snacks provided.

Stop and buy or browse at "**Ethnic Chic Fashion Show and Sell Event**" at Pop Up Shoppe, 113 Avenue A, Turners Falls on Saturday, December 3, from 6 to 8 p.m.

Find some urban cool holiday shopping. Featuring limited collections by NYC designers Simply Greta, CJ Original, Richie Richardson, G Young NY, Philleo, and Dean Maitland.

Come to the Wendell Free Library on Sunday, December 4 at 4 p.m. to learn more about the **future of solar in Wendell**.

Haskell Werlin of Solar Design Associates and Sunnectivity LLC is proposing to build a solar farm on Wendell Depot Road, and is offer-

ing residents of Wendell memberships with no upfront costs and a 10% discount on electric bills for 20 years. The town would be eligible for a 20% discount on the municipal electricity accounts, and would receive annual payments in lieu of taxes of \$12,500 per megawatt.

A **special tree-lighting festival** will kick off the start of the "**Gift of Light**" campaign to benefit the Farren Care Center Residents Fund on Wednesday, December 7, at 4 p.m.

Lights for the tree can be purchased to honor or remember a loved one. Prices are \$5 for one light, \$25 for six lights, and \$50 for 12. Individuals who make a contribution of \$100 or more will receive special recognition at the event. Lights can be purchased through Farren Care Center at (413) 774-3111.

The festival will include live entertainment and refreshments. The event is free and open to the public. The Farren Care Center is located at 340 Montague City Road in Montague City.

The 32nd Annual **Welcome Yule Midwinter** Celebration comes to the Shea Theater in Turners Falls on December 9, 10, and 11. Welcome Yule celebrates the return of the light with a festive family show filled with music, dance, songs and stories to drive the dark away.

Performance times are December 9 and 10 at 7:30 p.m., and December 11 at 2 p.m. Tickets are \$12 for adults, \$10 for seniors and children five through sixteen, and free for kids four and under.

Send your local briefs to editor@montaguereporter.org.

Letter to the Editors

Open Letter to the GMRSD School Committee

I am a Wendell resident. I am writing to you to share my support for changing the Turners Falls High School mascot. I attended the last public meeting, and was moved by the authenticity of all speakers, from all perspectives. As a youth educator, I particularly appreciated that students spoke.

At the same time, I heard several times the heartfelt sentiment that no one means for the mascot to be a racist symbol. The fact is, it is a symbol that perpetuates racism and the oppression of indigenous people.

Racism is a blind spot for many people, myself included. I am only just learning what systemic racism really is, how deeply ingrained it is

in me and all of us, and how I can grow more aware of it in my day to day life.

I am not calling anybody in Turners Falls racist. However, I do believe that even if someone does not overtly commit racist acts, they can still inadvertently perpetuate systems of racism. I perpetuate racism every time I buy "skin colored band-aids." (Whose skin color?)

I perpetuate racism every time I turn off the radio and say, "Not another police shooting. I can't handle this today." I doubt communities of color, who are disproportionately affected by police brutality, can handle it either. Only they can't ignore it like I can.

Indigenous Americans were colonized, brutalized, and murdered by European settlers. Their scalps were collected as prizes, their heads and genitals removed from their dead bodies and displayed as war trophies. I know it's grotesque, but it's true.

And when many indigenous people see a disembodied head on a sports jersey, what they see is their ancestors. They see themselves. Please, from the bottom and top and depth of my heart, I hope you can put yourselves in their position and see how this perpetuates the same racism that arrived with Columbus in 1492.

The mascot symbolizes to many of the residents of Turners Falls a

tradition that they are proud of, and that contributes to their sense of identity. The mascot symbolizes to many Native Americans their colonizers' tradition of massacring and beheading their people.

I think that Turners Falls residents are good people with good hearts. There has to be a way for residents to feel connected and proud without native community members feeling oppressed and violated.

I urge you to find this middle path.

Many Thanks,

Cara Michelle Silverberg
Wendell

Simon's Stamps
GRAPHICS/ PRODUCTION

Full and Part Time workers needed to help us produce great custom rubber stamps, embossing seals, signs, etc. Tasks include email and phone contact with customers, proofreading and order checking, image manipulation with CorelDraw or PhotoShop, database entry, operating our high tech machinery, assembly, shipping, cleaning etc. If you like fast paced work, with lots of attention to detail, and can stay until 7:00PM some evenings, we'd like to talk with you. For immediate consideration, please email resumetoangie@simonstamp.com.
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125A Avenue A Turners Falls
413.834.8800
www.ninasnook.com

NOTICE OF PUBLIC INFORMATION SESSION
Millers Falls National Historic Register District (Proposed)

Montague is considering a third historic district to complement those in Montague Center and Turners Falls.

Officials will present the boundaries, goals, and advantages of the proposed district. Public feedback is strongly encouraged.

Millers Falls Library, 23 Bridge Street
December 6, 2016 5:00PM

Questions? Contact
Montague Town Planner
(413) 863 3200 ext 207

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WONDERFUL from page A1 and Dean Maitland.

Lea Banks of Gill has set up her Domestic Darling Pop Up in part of the Great Falls Harvest restaurant space. Her carefully curated selection of vintage and repurposed fashions, accessories and art promises to have “everything you need, and plenty of things you just want!”

Activities start at 3 p.m., with **children’s craft making** at the Great Falls Discovery Center and Montague Catholic Social Ministries’ playgroup space at 78 Avenue A. Make a free winter bird feeder at the Center, or make greeting cards and wish lists at MCSM until 6 p.m.

The **jolly man in a red suit** arrives on a fire truck to Spinner Park at 6:30 p.m. He’s picking up wish lists and cards from the **Magic Mailbox** at the park, which folks have been filling up all along – look for it there *soon*! Enjoy hot chocolate and

music and the lighting of trees at the park.

There will be restaurant specials and shops open as late as 9 p.m.

“**Welcome Yule**,” an evening of music, dance, and song, starts at the Shea Theater at 7:30 p.m. The venue to host a viewing of the 1946 **holiday classic** *It’s a Wonderful Life* is still to be determined as of press time. And just to make it all a little more lively, there is also a **fundraiser for the Montague Reporter** at the Great Falls Harvest that same evening.

Because plans are still falling into place, **LoManto urges readers** to check on new events and activities as they are added to the evening’s schedule by visiting the Turners Falls RiverCulture Facebook page and website.

Perhaps the new parking lot at the corner of Third and Canal streets will fill up for the first time?



Turners Falls High School: The Week in Sports

By MATT ROBINSON

On Saturday, November 19, the Turners Falls Football Indians fell to the Maynard Black Tigers, 44-6, in the Massachusetts D-IVA semifinal playoff game. The loss snapped the Tribe’s 12-game winning streak and knocked Powertown out of the playoffs.

Five days later on Turkey Day, Turners avenged that loss by blanking perennial rivals Greenfield 36-0.

In other Turners Falls High School athletic news, Sienna Dillensneider was invited to play in the Spalding All-Star Volleyball Game on November 21, and on November 25, coaches and players from the undefeated 1971 and 1976 Turners Falls squads got together for their quinquennial football reunion.

Maynard 44 – TFHS 6

On their opening possession in Saturday’s game, Turners drove all the way down to the Tigers’ 1-yard line, but were unable to go the extra yard. Maynard then put together a 99-yard drive and took the lead, 8-0.

The Tribe kept the game close deep into the second quarter. “14-0, with two minutes left,” coach Chris Lapointe lamented after the game. But because of some mental mistakes by the Blue Tribe, Maynard scored two more touchdowns in the last minute and 46 seconds of the half, expanding their halftime lead to 28.

Turners’ lone score came with 30 seconds left in the game, when Owen Ortiz caught a touchdown pass from Tionne Brown.

TFHS 36 – Greenfield 0

On November 24, Thanksgiving Thursday, Turners shut out the Greenfield Green Wave 36-0, the highest-ever margin of victory for any Powertown football team on Turkey Day.

The win also extended the Tribe’s winning streak in “Thee Game” to six consecutive years. Counting this season’s September game, Turners has now beaten Greenfield seven straight times.

The victory put a cherry on top of a very successful season, and gave Powertown an 11-win season, the most wins in the team’s history.

“They should put up a statue to you,” Ray Zukowski announced at the football reunion a day later, as he raised a glass to Coach Lapointe.

“His teams have beaten Greenfield seven times in a row. Seven!” added former coach John Zywna.

“We would’ve been happy beating them twice!” someone announced from the crowd, to the cheers and laughter of his former teammates.

Such is the Pride of the Turners



ROBINSON PHOTO

The offensive line surges as Tionne Brown hands Quinn Doyle the ball during last Thursday’s Turkey Day game at Greenfield.

Falls Football Indians. Although most of these men graduated more than 40 years ago and have moved away from their little Alma Mater, last Friday they were once again 17-year-old boys, reminiscing about broken noses, the perils football camp, and the one that got away.

And in five or ten, or even 45 years from now, the boys from the 2016 football squad, when they see each other, will reminisce and gripe and fondly remember their salad days as members of the Turners Falls Football Indians.

Thanksgiving is a homecoming of sorts, and Thee Game is the venue where people meet auld acquaintances, to catch up and give condolences for those we lost since the last meeting.

I’m sure that childhood friends were reunited at the game, because at least seven kids who grew up on Wentworth Ave. in the ‘60s with me were in attendance. And those who never actually attended Turners Falls schools were there too, continuing the traditions of their parents and grandparents.

But the Thanksgiving Day game is also a bittersweet time. It’s the very last football game some of these kids will ever play in, and perhaps the very last time you’ll see an old friend. At least one person was openly sobbing on the sidelines, saying, “Eight years. I’ve followed my grandsons for eight years, and now it’s over.”

Powertown darted out to a quick 8-0 lead on their opening possession in Thee Game, when Quinn Doyle powered into the end zone from the Green 33 and Brown threw the 2-PAT to Ortiz.

Turners scored their second TD of the first quarter when Brown found Ricky Craver, who raced into the end zone for a 62-yard completion.

And the Indians scored again at 6:47 of the first half when Brown completed another long TD pass to Ortiz. After completing a 2-PAT to Nick Croteau, the Tribe led 22-0.

“It’s the passing,” Mr. Bush, who played against Greenfield in the 1940s, told me at halftime. “In the first game, Turners didn’t pass the ball. That’s the difference.”

And with Powertown firing on all cylinders – passing, running, blocking, and defense – the lead would only increase in the second half.

Jack Darling scored the next touch for Turners on the opening drive of the third quarter, and Doyle punched in the 2-PAT, giving the Tribe a 30-

point cushion.

Then in the fourth, Will Roberge made an amazing 72-yard run to put the finishing touch on the day, and on the 2016 football season.

It was a team effort on offense. Five different players scored the five touchdowns.

In the air, Brown made six completions for 187 yards, with no interceptions. He also threw two touchdown passes and converted two 2-PATs. On special teams he punted, kicked off, and had a 21-yard punt return.

Craver caught two of Brown’s passes, for 83 yards and a TD. Ortiz made two catches for 73 yards, and scored a touchdown and a PAT. Darling made a 24-yard reception, and Croteau had a 7-yard catch and caught a PAT.

On the ground, Doyle rushed for 73 yards, had a touchdown, and ran in a PAT; Roberge had one carry on his 72-yard touchdown run; and Darling had 58 yards on the ground and scored a touchdown. Marcus Sanders, Craver, Brown and Mike Babcock rounded out the Tribe’s running game.

On defense, it was a hit parade for the Boys in Blue. Tahner Castine had eight solo tackles and made a 5-yard sack. Ortiz had seven tackles – two of which were for losses – and caused the QB to hurry a pass. Ricky Smith made five tackles, one for a loss; John Driscoll, back from injury, made four with one for a loss, and disrupted passes with two hurries.

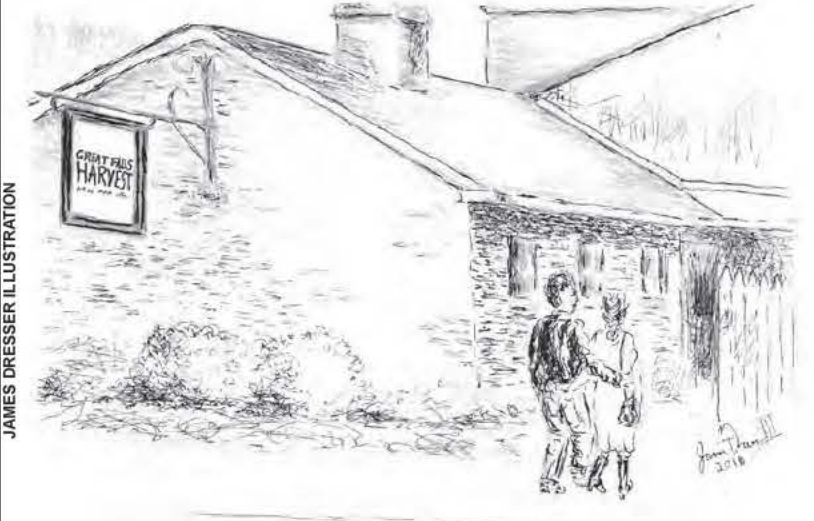
Kyle Bergmann and Reilan Castine made four tackles each, with one for a loss each. Roberge had three solo tackles and snagged an interception. Darling, Croteau, Doyle, Craver and Brown also helped out with solo tackles, with Brown taking away two picks.

So the 2016 high school football season is over. The very *successful* 2016 football season. A season when the Turners Falls Football Indians were the Western Massachusetts D-IVA Champions, won a record 11 games, and beat Greenfield for the seventh straight time. And a season when we said goodbye to 12 young men who finished their high school careers on Turkey Day 2016.

And in five or ten, or even 45 years from now, these young men will remember their salad days at their little Alma Mater, tell war stories and reminisce and gripe, and remember the one that got away.

Next week: Fall sports stats!

Community Dinner Will Benefit the Montague Reporter



JAMES DRESSER ILLUSTRATION

By KARI KYNARD RIDGE

FRANKLIN COUNTY – The community is invited to come together for dining, dancing, and an opportunity to raise much-needed funds for *The Montague Reporter*.

The fundraiser will be held at Great Falls Harvest restaurant in downtown Turners Falls on Friday, December 9 with a three-course dinner, followed by dancing to the tunes of the band Tawdry.

“The traditional sources of revenue for print journalism – subscriptions and advertising – are no longer enough to sustain even many well-established newspapers,” said Mike Jackson, managing editor. “*The Montague Reporter* is no exception – every year we rely on community support to balance the books.”

The *Reporter*, which was founded in 2002, is unusual in that it is an independent, non-profit newspaper with an all-volunteer board of directors. Donations and proceeds from fundraising events are essential to keep the paper operational. Every donation helps the paper continue to provide coverage of local events and news that might otherwise go unnoticed.

“Many of our subscribers will give a little extra at renewal time, and our volunteers hold raffles, bake sales, and special dinner events like this to help us out,” Jackson said. “This dinner is also a great time to hang out with readers and writers!”

Chris Menegoni and Bridgette Chaffee, co-owners of Great Falls Harvest, said it is important to them to help other downtown businesses thrive.

“It’s the idea of a small, inde-

pendent newspaper covering real things happening in a real town that is so important,” Menegoni said. “There’s a lot of talk about changing the world – but if we all work to help our own communities, the world will take care of itself.”

Great Falls Harvest opened in 2013 at 50 Third Street in Turners Falls, and quickly became known for its fresh, local and creative meals, such as the “Farm and Forage” dish, consisting of roasted roots, squash and potatoes with bacon-braised kale and mushrooms topped with balsamic reduction.

Menegoni and Chaffee said they plan to offer Farm and Forage as well as a creamy feta-rice with chicken dish at the benefit dinner, along with salad and a flourless chocolate cake.

“We live and work here, and *The Montague Reporter* is a vital part of our lives,” Chaffee said. “We need to all come together to raise money and support each other.”

Dancing is offered after dinner, as the Turners Falls-based Tawdry plays what band members describe as “ribald-Renaissance-rock Americana with hints of jazz and country.”

Tickets to the dinner benefit are on sale now and cost \$30 for a three-course meal, followed by dancing. Dinner begins at 6 p.m. Tickets are available at Great Falls Harvest restaurant or by calling Lyn at (413) 863-4779.

If you’re unable to attend, but would like to help, direct donations to the *Reporter* are always gratefully accepted.

Kari Kynard Ridge is a member of the Montague Reporter’s board of directors.



RANDY CROCHIER PHOTO

Veterans of the 1971 and 1976 undefeated Turners Falls football teams reunited last Friday.

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NOTES FROM THE ERVING SELECTBOARD

Board Pledges Help After Tragic Fire; Balks At Another Treasurer Training Request

By KATIE NOLAN

Erving selectboard chair Jacob Smith began the November 28 meeting by saying that the board keeps the Clark family “in their thoughts and prayers.” The family lost a child and their possessions in a house fire on November 22. Smith thanked the Erving community for the “outreach and donations” for the family. “Whatever the town can do,” he said, “we will do.”

The board reviewed a request from treasurer Margaret Sullivan for extra hours for the treasurer’s assistant and the payroll clerk, to cover additional training and coverage during a planned medical leave before Sullivan retires in May 2017.

Selectboard member Scott Bastarache noted that the training and extra hours requested – 17 hours per week, for 26 weeks – were the same as Sullivan’s September 2016 request. The September request stated that extra hours were needed to complete tasks associated with preparing the treasurer’s office for the next elected treasurer, meeting reporting requirements for the Affordable Care

Act and the Franklin County Retirement System, and new requirements for records storage.

“It seems like the requests are one after another, with different reasons,” Bastarache said. He also observed that the additional hours would move one employee from a part-time to a benefited position. He said that the request actually had two components – training and medical leave coverage.

The board decided to ask Sullivan to specify the number of hours needed for training, and the number for medical leave coverage.

Bastarache said that a resident called him to commend the Erving police and fire departments for “how quickly they responded, and how professional and well organized they were” in response to a November 17 head-on collision on Route 2.

The board had a preliminary discussion of the cost-of-living adjustment for Erving employees for FY’18. Selectboard member William Bembury said he considered a 1.5% COLA as a starting point. Bastarache said his initial thought was a COLA of 1.5% to 2%.

The board asked administrative coordinator Bryan Smith to prepare a report on the impact of a 1% COLA on the FY’18 budget.

The selectboard appointed six people to the nine-member open space committee. The committee will update the town’s open space and recreation plan, which is necessary for applying for certain grants. The appointees are: Bastarache (selectboard); Beth Bazler (conservation commission); Eric Duffy (historical commission); Jillian Betters (recreation commission); Jacquelyn Boyden (planning board); and Leonard Clark (zoning board of appeals). Three positions remain unfilled: two citizen representatives, and one Council on Aging representative.

Bembury said he had a citizen request for a letter from the board to her employer, documenting the traffic detour for the November 22 house fire that made her late to work.

Jacob Smith and Bastarache both said that documentation of the detour was available from public media sources, such as the Massachusetts State Police website. The board took no action on the request.

NOTES FROM THE MONTAGUE SELECTBOARD

Residential Tax Rate Goes Down; Average Residential Tax Bill Goes Up

By JEFF SINGLETON

The Montague selectboard, at its meeting on November 21, continued the policy of a “split property tax rate,” approving a shift factor of 1.3 from residential to commercial, industrial and personal property (CIP). This produced a tax rate of \$16.67 per thousand dollars of assessed value for all residential property, as opposed to \$25.09 for CIP.

Director of assessing Karen Tonelli estimated that the shift would produce a tax bill for the average single family home of \$3,218.97. This would be an increase of \$16 dollars over the previous year (FY’16), despite the fact that the tax rate itself actually declined. Tonelli explained that the higher tax bills were the result of an increase in home values. The cover of the handout that explained various tax shift options showed a picture of “the average single family home in Montague, with an [FY’17] assessed value of \$193,100.”

The handout estimated the average commercial tax bill at \$3,816.19, and the average industrial bill at \$5,305.50.

Montague is one of the few towns in the region that has implemented a split tax rate. Most towns tax business property at the same rate as residential. Outgoing town administrator Frank Abbondanzio said that the policy began in the early 1980s in response to the statewide passage of Proposition 2.5, which cut the total tax level to 2.5% of total assessed valuation and limited increases to 2.5% plus “new growth.” These percentages apply to the total levy, not to individual taxes, which may increase by more or less than 2.5% depend-

ing on changes in relative values.

For comparison, Tonelli’s handout included data on Orange, which has a rate of \$21.70, an average single-family home tax of \$2,991, and an average home value of \$137,834. It also included data on Athol (a rate of \$19.83, an average single-family tax of \$2,561, and an average home value of \$129,149) and Deerfield (a rate of \$15.25, a tax of \$4,137 and an average home valued at \$271,258).

None of these towns has a split tax rate.

There was some discussion of the proposed assessment on the power company FirstLight, which owns Cabot Station, the Turners Falls power canal, and the dam between Montague and Gill. The FY’17 assessment on this property increased by \$17.5 million.

When asked if she thought that FirstLight might contest this assessment in state appellate tax court, Tonelli simply responded, “yes.”

She discussed the status of FirstLight’s appeal of its two previous assessments before the state court. She stressed that the resolution of the issue would probably depend on the state’s decision in the case of Erving, whose assessment is also being challenged by the power company.

Wages of Waste

Water pollution control facility (WPCF) director Bob McDonald came before the board to recommend wage increases for three current staff members – Tina Tyler, Tim Pura and John Little. He stated that the request was to compensate staff for its work on the “unique new process,” which brings in revenue by processing solids from other facilities.

“It is important to keep the staff intact,” he said, though he clarified that no one was “threatening to leave.”

The new process is currently on hold pending a state-mandated study. McDonald called the staff “so refreshing. They divvy up responsibilities before I get in.”

Abbondanzio said he agreed with the proposal, which involved changes in pay grades for positions, “in principle.” However, any changes would have to be negotiated with the appropriate unions and checked with the town’s current pay and classification policies to be sure they are consistent with similar positions.

Selectboard member Rich Kuklewicz said he would like to see the issues resolved quickly, hopefully by early December.

The board also appointed Christian Smith-Ahearn as a full-time WPCF day laborer. McDonald said Smith-Ahearn had served on the state environmental police force and was a “hands-on kind of guy.”

Other Business

The board, still acting in the capacity as the personnel board, made a “conditional offer” to Bruce Molnar to serve as a reserve police officer. Police chief Chip Dodge said Molnar still needed a medical exam.

The board then changed the title of the position currently held by Ariel Elan from “pipeline liaison” to “energy policies liaison.” Elan was then appointed to the town’s energy committee, whose members had approved of the title change.

At the request of the town administrator, the board extended the town’s contract with National Water Main Cleaning Company, which is

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NOTICE OF INFORMATIONAL MEETING
TOWN OF MONTAGUE

The Town of Montague will hold an informational meeting on **Monday, December 5, 2016 at 7:30 P.M.** in the Selectmen’s Meeting Room at the Montague Town Hall, 1 Ave A, Montague, MA.

The purpose of this meeting is to present and solicit public response to the Rutter’s Park Masterplan which is a component of the Town of Montague’s FY 2015 Massachusetts Community Development Block Grant award from the Department of Housing and Community Development.

The landscape architect from GZA will make a presentation of the Rutter’s Park Masterplan.

The Town wishes to encourage local citizens to attend the meeting where any person or organization wishing to be heard will be afforded the opportunity.

Board of Selectmen
Town of Montague

cleaning the drainage system that flows under the power canal. The extension will allow the company to install “permanent stop logs” which allow for regular cleaning. The logs are actually made of aluminum, according to highway department head Tom Bergeron, who has advocated for more frequent cleaning than “every hundred years.”

The board executed an agreement with Online Seives LLC for administering the town’s new software system for the building and health departments. The company will be paid \$28,100 in the first year, and \$16,500 for “each additional year.”

The board also executed a contract of \$4,700 for state funds targeted to the local Cultural Council. Council member Jen Audley said the council funds 23 programs that benefit Montague residents.

The board also approved the expenditure of \$10,000 from the Unsafe and Unhealthy Buildings fund to stabilize what was referred to as “that building.” On closer questioning, Abbondanzio confirmed that the building in question was the Strathmore, the town-owned former paper mill complex on the north side of the power canal.

As the board was about to adjourn, real estate auctioneer Doug Bilodeau, who had sat through most of the meeting, rose to complain that his request that the board approve the sale of a town-owned building in Millers Falls, 2 New Street, had been ignored. An apologetic board approved the sale, which was for \$24,150.

The next meeting was originally scheduled for Monday, November 28, but was moved to Monday, December 6.

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MARK HUDYMA PHOTO



The fixed-route model tends to favor population clusters. In this January 2016 file photo, a rider boards in Turners Falls, bound for Greenfield.

BUS SERVICE from A1 square mile in Leverett down to 30 in Wendell.

The study estimated cost-effectiveness by comparing the routes with FRTA's Route 23, which runs through Montague Center to Sunderland. The most economical of the proposals, which would pass through Montague Center, Leverett, and Shutesbury on its way to UMass, would cost nearly twice as much, collect 80% as much in fares, and travel nearly twice as far.

According to Roy Kimmel, a former PVTA driver who previously built bus shelters for transit authorities nationwide, and who in his free time conducted his own survey of Leverett residents prior to FRCOG's, the rule of thumb in bus transit is that fifteen passengers should ride on each trip.

"Until they create a situation that is better than getting in a car," Kimmel argues, "people aren't going to take the bus."

Other factors examined by the study are "transit dependent populations" and "special markets." Elders, the age group most dependent on public transit, make up 16% of the population in the study area, about

average for the county. 98% of survey respondents had at least one car in their household, suggesting very low dependence on mass transit.

"Special markets" are unique destinations, such as centers of commerce or employment. UMass-Amherst, as the largest employer of Franklin County residents, is the Christmas goose of special markets in the area.

But because Amherst is not a member town of FRTA, special funding from UMass would be critical to the success of a new route destined for the university.

The Chicken or the Egg

Advocates for expanded service contend that these rural towns face a Catch-22: demand for public transit is low so transit doesn't exist; transit doesn't exist, so demand is low.

"It's kind of a chicken-and-egg thing," says Peter d'Errico, Leverett's selectboard chair. "One of the puzzles that has been presented to us by car culture is that cars have really re-configured everything."

Cars' ability to travel anywhere there is pavement allowed the functions of towns – like goods, services, gathering places, enter-

tainment – to spread out across the landscape. This centerlessness, in turn, favored omni-directional transport by automobile over fixed-route systems, which required longer routes with more stops.

Kimmel explains the mentality: "After World War II, people wanted to get out of the inner cities, get a ranch house and a big car."

"We're trained to live in a culture that's unsustainable," argues d'Errico. "Given people's habits and the way money moves, it's hard to get buses and trains into a competitive situation."

A popular theory of economic choice assumes humans maximize the use of their money, always identifying and choosing the cheapest option for a good or service. This fails to explain why nearly all Americans drive cars, which, according to AAA, cost an average of \$8,698 per year.

Taste, not simply convenience, may also be a factor. For those who prefer to be alone, cars extend individual, private space of the home into the world of transport.

Not everyone values this as strongly. "I feel that being in public spaces, using public resources, feels good," says d'Errico. "I don't drive past North Amherst, I get on the bus."

Flexible Routes

While the East County Transit Study concluded a fixed route is not presently viable, it also points out ways this could change. One change would be an aging of the population. Elders are one of the biggest users of public transit, and over the next decades, many more people in the East County region may decide to drive less, or not at all.

A second would be if UMass felt it was in its interest to help fund a route.

A third, which could affect all public transit, would be the improvement of "demand-responsive

transport." This style of public transit is characterized by flexible routes and schedules, often using smaller vehicles for ride-sharing or "trip aggregation."

High-tech firms like Uber hope to shape a future, barely hinted at in the FRCOG report, in which demand response replaces both fixed-route mass transit and surpasses the allure of the personal car.

Uber has signed contracts to act as a subsidized public transit operator in a number of cities. But the firm's solution may widen a gap between those who own technology and those who do not.

Altamonte, Florida, an Orlando suburb, has contracted to subsidize Uber rides within city limits by 20 to 25%. While taking Uber in Altamonte is relatively inexpensive, it is often twice as costly as the bus operated by Central Florida Regional Transit.

One must own both a smartphone and credit card to use the new system. This excludes low-income residents, while siphoning revenue from the buses they still ride.

There are visions for demand-responsive transport that do not separate people into haves and have-nots. FRTA already offers on-demand service to people over 60, nursing home residents, and disabled veterans.

"I was surprised at the number of people who were interested in demand-responsive transport," says FRCOG senior transportation

planner Megan Rhodes, one of the study's authors.

"I think [affordability] is going to be a main factor in private services," she adds. "We need to look at public-private partnerships, and creative use of technology, to serve towns like this."

Outlasting

The East County Transit Study may have quantified what many already suspected – that the sparsely-populated towns of Leverett, Wendell, New Salem, and Shutesbury do not have the demand for public transit that will make a fixed route viable.

While the study will not lead to immediate action on the part of the FRTA, it could lead to action by individuals and communities. A shift in taste and values could make new routes more workable down the line.

"Transportation is a big energy user," says Wendell's von Ranson. "I hope some day people will be able to give up their convenience.... We're not that green and clean. Every time we look at a study like this, we lose a little bit of our complacency."

Like Rhodes, von Ranson sees hope in the demand-response model. "I think people will be able to get together and cooperate with the on-demand," he adds.

And in the long term? "The bus will outlast the private automobile," von Ranson predicts, "as the energy crisis arrives."



The FRTA's minibus fleet, shown here at its Deerfield Street barn, is used for on-demand transportation for people over 60, nursing home residents, and disabled veterans.

NOTES FROM THE WENDELL SELECTBOARD

Sunshine May Save Town Money, But Sunshine Law May Cost It

By JOSH HEINEMANN

The Wendell selectboard's November 16 meeting had a sixteen-item agenda. Was that a coincidence?

It included a visit by Haskell Werlin of Sunnectivity, the firm that is working to build a solar farm on land off Wendell Depot Road owned by Dave Arsenault. Werlin said the project is progressing, and he is asking Wendell's conservation commission to accept the DEP rulings on the project's configuration after Sunnectivity made an appeal to DEP about what Wendell's con com required.

Werlin offered a model of community solar different from the typical one, in which a homeowner may buy a portion of a community solar farm and get the same net metering credit he would get if the panels were on his roof. Werlin offered the town a 20% discount on its municipal electric bills, and Wendell residents a 10% discount on theirs, without their having to pay any money up front, just for signing on.

Wendell is still working with Colonial Power to aggregate electricity supply and reduce private electric bills, and the town was scheduled for a conference call on November 17. Any savings from that effort would not interfere with savings from the solar program.

There will be an information ses-

sion at the library on Sunday, December 4 at 4 p.m.

Mandated Access

Town coordinator Nancy Aldrich reported what she learned at a FRCOG training about the state's new public records law, which will become effective January 1.

Towns will be required to provide citizens any record they ask for within ten calendar days. They will have to designate a public records access officer, and no provision is made for towns where offices are not staffed full-time. Police departments will need their own public records access officers. A reasonable fee may be charged to cover the cost of making paper copies.

Board members tried to imagine who could become the public access officer in Wendell, and how the extra work might be paid for, or fit into an already-busy schedule. They came up with chief Ed Chase for the police department, and town clerk Gretchen Smith – who already works far more hours than her salary warrants – or Aldrich, who continues to get new responsibilities added to her list.

Al MacIntire, who was in the office for other reasons, said the law was passed because of abuses made by a larger town in the east. There a school board member made a request and was simply refused.

Selectboard member Dan Keller

called the change another "unfunded mandate," though the state has said it is not one.

The Tech Sector

MacIntire and selectboard member Jeffrey Pooser went to a meeting in Shutesbury with several other towns about the continuing process of expanding broadband coverage. Pooser said the general consensus among the towns represented was that although the towns will pay 2/3 of the project's cost, and are taking all the risk, the Massachusetts Broadband Institute (MBI) insists on making all the decisions.

MacIntire said "not having us there is simply bad management," and said taking all the risk and having no say in the process is not right. A letter is being drafted to address this problem, and Pooser said the towns will review the next memorandum of understanding (MOU) as a group.

Librarian Rosie Heidkamp said the library has four to six surplus flat screen monitors.

Selectboard chair Christine Heard suggested that word should go out to town departments to see if anyone has a need for one. Heidkamp said they can be stored in the library basement for a while.

The town got one response to its request for proposal (RFP) for computer and network supervision.

That response was for \$360 a month – six hours a month at \$60 an hour – for remote and onsite monitoring, through June 2017. The last date to accept proposals is November 29, and Heard said she felt "we should wait for more" responses, at least until then, adding that she thought that the need for services would drop off as months passed.

Other Business

Board members signed an appointment slip that put Gillian Budine on the cultural council and Al MacIntire on the website committee. Don Stone and Anna Gyorgy are new members of the energy committee.

Former town moderator Kathy Becker is interested in filling a vacancy in the open space committee, but that committee had not made a recommendation, and would not do so until their November 28 meeting.

Aldrich relayed that the final report from the east county transit study shows that there is not enough money to support a fixed schedule bus route for Wendell, New Salem, Leverett, and Shutesbury. (See story, page A1.)

She also reported that Good Neighbors donated \$500 to the town in recognition of its weekly use of the town hall.

Board members approved a request to waive the town hall rental fee for a fundraiser held November

20 to help pay for a trip with medical supplies to the Standing Rock pipeline resistance camps.


Nan Riebschlaeger also used the town hall without a fee, and provided a Thanksgiving meal and celebration for people who live alone or wanted to enjoy the company of other people on that day. Publicity started late and was not widespread, but the people who came went home with leftovers, one of the treats of Thanksgiving, and said it is a good tradition to maintain.

Keller said that the twelve-town Municipal Coalition Against the Pipeline (MCAP) is now meeting quarterly, and is monitoring the Berkshire Gas company's moratorium on new connections.

Heard reported on a joint meeting with the board of health and conservation commission about the property at 131 Lockes Village Road. There are three vehicles under a tarp there, and the tarp is supported by pallets: is that a structure? She asked Aldrich to collect papers from all the town boards about the property.

Wendell is eligible for a small town partnership with the DEP for help getting a mutually acceptable plan for environmental situations that are not in compliance with regulations. Heard asked that the DEP be invited to give more information. The town has until December 15 to respond.

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GILL from page A1

Snedeker fired back with the question of why Comcast, which has a financial interest in creating their data, was consulted when Gill had already provided accurate data in their request for proposals (RFP). He went on to say that the town would “like answers, and to be assured that Gill would not be built out last, but instead first.”

Larkin said they would “speak to Comcast about this.”

Snedeker reminded Larkin and Donnelly that, while he was “in no way pointing a finger” at them since they had just entered the fray, a great many things had transpired with the MBI and Comcast that “did not sit well with the town.”

Selectboard chair John Ward quietly added that, since the “MBI has a lot of leverage with Comcast,” they might go to bat for the town in this matter.

Snedeker repeated that he wanted the MBI to request that Comcast make Gill’s broadband rollout a priority since, due to the fact that Gill had to give up close to \$100,000 of PEG Access money due to the disagreement with Comcast, the town was now footing the buildup cost with its own money.

In the end, it was agreed that the MBI would speak to Comcast about Gill’s request, and that Snedeker would serve as the town’s “point person” for future clarifications.

Transparent and Concerned

The selectboard arrived early to the meeting for a special “working session” with town clerk Lynda Hodsden Mayo, to discuss preparations for the state’s new public records law, which will go into effect January 1.

The law will require all agencies and municipalities to designate one or more records access officers (RAOs) to handle requests for any pertinent town records, whether they’re requested by hand, first-class mail, or email.

As town clerk, Hodsden Mayo will fill this role. Her new duties will include coordinating the town’s response to requests, assisting individuals in identifying the records they seek, assisting the custodian of records in preserving records, and preparing guidelines for requestors.

The session developed into a lively discussion about how to ensure all Gill residents understand the new guidelines, and how Hodsden Mayo and administrative assistant Ray Purington might accurately filter the requests received through Gill’s website, currently in transition, to accommodate each time-sensitive demand.

Various apprehensions were raised during the working session about the currently untested procedures.

Snedeker wondered how each request would be “time stamped” in order to insure the RAO’s response deadline of 10 business days was adhered to.

Selectboard member Randy Crochier said he was “worried

about the requests that came in via email,” and how they would be sorted. It was agreed that Hodsden Mayo would take the lead, and solicit Purington’s help as needed.

Purington noted that it would be essential to add a couple of paragraphs to the town’s website explaining how to submit each request. Like other towns, he added, Gill is slowly moving towards keeping more and more public records online.

Another concern voiced was how to gently inform the town’s various boards and committees that their full cooperation would be needed to help provide public access to their records.

In the end, all agreed they were not sure what the internal guidelines would look like, and that such details would be worked out as Gill and other municipalities learned how to comply with the law. The board thanked Hodsden Mayo for her hard work on the complicated and important project.

Compensated and Alert

The board had a brief conversation with fire chief Gene Beaubien concerning the \$3,500 annual stipend he is contracted to receive through the Emergency Management Performance Grant (EMPG) for serving as Gill’s emergency management director. Beaubien said he was just checking whether he would still receive the stipend even though the Vermont Yankee nuclear reactor was now offline.

Ward asked if Beaubien’s duties had been reduced by the shutdown.

Beaubien responded that “there’s still stuff there” to be dealt with, that the town needed to stay vigilant, and that he was still “doing what needed to be done.”

Ward then suggested that the town should continue to use the money in the EMPG fund until it is finished.

Crochier added that, in his opinion, “annual” meant that the selectboard had already voted in favor of paying out the stipend to Beaubien through 2017.

Purington agreed, and further suggested that, as a safety precaution, the town should build the cost of emergency management into the FY’18 budget. All concurred with this idea.

The board then asked Beaubien to stay on to discuss the service agreement for the CodeRED alert software, which was up for review and approval. Beaubien complied and, with a small laugh, noted that Purington had told him that there was now a contract that was “acceptable to the town.”

Purington agreed, stating that the agreement “was not perfect” but would suffice. He explained that if the town used the alert software as it should be used, then there is no risk involved; if they misuse it, there is the possibility of some risk.

Crochier asked when they might test the software, to which Beau-

NOTES FROM THE LEVERETT SELECTBOARD

Forsythia Destruction: “An Act of Vandalism,” or of “No Common Sense”?

By JEFF SINGLETON

A member of the Leverett selectboard may be working with a local resident to repair a “swath of forsythia and lilacs” that has been cut down by an employee of the town highway department along Chestnut Hill Road. The board agreed at its meeting Tuesday night that member Tom Hankinson should work with Todd Campbell to replant the bushes, which were destroyed in what Campbell was reported to have called an “act of vandalism” by a town employee.

Hankinson has been in discussions with both Campbell and highway department superintendent David Finn about the problem. Finn told Hankinson that he had measured the distance of the cutting from the center of the road, and suggested that the forsythia had been blocking the vision of motorists.

Selectboard member Peter D’Errico disagreed. D’Errico, who has visited the site, said the sightline of drivers up the road is frequently blocked by trees, as opposed to the forsythia. He also discussed conditions on the road with a postal employee, who failed to mention the forsythia as a problem.

D’Errico suggested that cutting the bushes reflected “no common sense.”

The analysis of the problem was further complicated by the opinion of an employee of the private landscaping company, The Whole Tree. The employee, who had been called to the scene to evaluate and possibly fix the problem, opined that the bushes had been “pushed back” well before the highway department cutting. Campbell, however, was dissatisfied with this analysis – and “rightfully so,” said Hankinson. He suggested that the Whole Tree employee “did not want to be there.”

So the resolution, in a classic ex-

ample of small town voluntarism, will be to replant the forsythia and lilacs. D’Errico also proposed that the board encourage the highway department to be more careful in the future.

The Coming Transparency

The board held a lengthy discussion of the new state regulations for local public records requests that will go into effect at the beginning of January. D’Errico suggested that town hall staff needed to draft a memo to departments about the regulations before January. He urged town hall to be “proactive... If we get something started, we can tweak it later.”

Towns are not required to finalize official policies in response to the new state regulations until July.

Local officials recently attended a workshop on the new rules, sponsored by the Franklin Regional Council of Governments, and featuring a presentation by the legal firm Koppelman and Page. A sample response letter to a public record request, as well as a template for meeting minutes, were presented. Board members stressed that meeting minutes are not the same as a meeting transcript.

The board also discussed how to save documents onto the town website in a way that would be “searchable.” Town clerk Lisa Stratford will serve as the official “records access officer.”

Internal Affairs

The board also discussed the process of hiring a new full-time police officer to replace Scott Minckler. Minckler, who is currently designated a sergeant, has been promoted to replace chief Gary Billings upon Billings’ retirement in January. Minckler will be replaced by a patrolman.

The board tentatively agreed to

ask three citizens, along with Minckler, to serve on the hiring committee. The first stage of the process involves advertising internally among the current part-time officers.

The board agreed that if an internal candidate satisfies the committee and the board, there would be no reason to extend the process. If none does, the position will be publicly posted, and the process will continue into early January. This may mean that the town will briefly have only one full-time officer.

Other Business

The board discussed a recent meeting with Amherst officials, including the new town manager Paul Bockelman, about the extension of a water line into southeast Leverett. The line is needed to serve residents whose wells have been contaminated by a closed landfill.

The group agreed that Amherst could provide the water, but would not own or install the extension. The two towns agreed on this “concept,” but the proposal in its current form requires funding from the U.S. Department of Agriculture. It may also require funds from the Leverett share of a 2018 community development block grant.

The application for the 2017 block grant was also discussed. The board approved a “community development strategy,” which was developed with the assistance of Bruce Hunter from the Franklin Regional Housing and Redevelopment Authority. The strategy, which includes proposals for social services and low income housing rehabilitation, is part of a joint application with the towns of Sunderland, Deerfield and Conway.

Finally, the board signed a malt and wine license for the Leverett Village Co-op.

The next scheduled meeting will be on December 17.

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The Magic Imagination of Danny “Monster” Cruz

By JOE KWIECINSKI

TURNERS FALLS – Danny Cruz is an inspirational guy. But don’t let him hear you say that.

You see, in the World of Cruz there are many possibilities, with perfunctory attention given to limitations. First diagnosed with muscular dystrophy at the age of 18 months, Danny grew up as a fighter against this constellation of diseases that bring about loss of muscle mass and progressive debilitation.

How does Danny cope with his life’s numerous challenges? “Sure,” said Cruz with more than a bit of annoyance, “I’ve dealt with some difficulties in life, but I’ve learned to not let my struggles define me. I draw on spiritual strength and mindful meditation as my foundation.”

Although he needs a wheelchair and an around-the-clock attendant, the bearded 24-year-old leads an incredibly busy life. He plays in a heavy metal group, attends Greenfield Community College’s art program, practices his art, has plenty of friends, and is extremely well-known.



One of Cruz’s signature figures in marker.



Danny Cruz

Cruz is an alumnus of Turners Falls High School. Thanks to multiple community fundraisers, Danny is able to attend GCC.

“I love school,” said Danny with a big smile. “I’ve worked hard, studying painting and drawing. Being a student helps me be a better artist. My classmates and instructors are very nice and I’ve learned a lot.”

As an artist, the friendly young man continually attempts to integrate his work at college with his own fashion designs, collages, paintings, and sketches. One of his favorite collaborators is Rodney Madison of Millers Falls, who also works as one of Danny’s personal care attendants.

Cruz considers his art “very abstract surrealism.” That appraisal is earned by his intense, imaginative use of flamboyant colors with fantastic imagery produced by unnatural combinations and juxtapositions. Cruz sells his unique art and refers to it as “Cruzian.” One of Danny’s main influences is Jean-Michel Basquiat, a neo-expressionist painter who achieved fame in the 1980s. Basquiat collaborated with iconic pop artist Andy Warhol and was noted for his visceral, primitive technique.

Danny’s intense passion for art is matched by his fervent love of another art form, music. “I enjoy being

see CRUZ page B8



MARY AZARIAN WOODBLOCK PRINT

THE GARDENER’S COMPANION

The Dark Days and Long Nights

By LESLIE BROWN

*Clearing blue sky,
A promise in bare branches.
In winter, there are sunny days.
In adulthood, childhood can return.*

MONTAGUE CITY – Of late in these dark hours we take some comfort from reading ancient Chinese poetry and the meditations of Deng Ming-Dao, author of *365 TAO*. The times are troubling and the dark long, but we embrace the day’s meditation, which is entitled “Optimism.” The final paragraph reads:

There was an old man who began an orchard upon his retirement. Everyone laughed at him. Why plant trees? They told him that he would never live to see a mature crop. Undaunted, he planted anyway, and he has seen them blossom and has eaten their fruit. We all need that type of optimism. That is the innocence and hope of childhood.

We are grateful for friends and family, the sharing of love and car-

ing, for health, for a warm home and food for the table. After years of traditional large family gatherings at Thanksgiving, we have become dispersed. Some of the older members have let go of being the center of the gathering; many of the offspring have families of their own and in-laws; some of the adult children are living far away.

Indeed, one niece is in Taiwan where she teaches English. The gatherings are smaller and many. For some it is a short holiday as they work the day before and the day after. And the caregivers work every day.

We dislike the shortening days and the earlier and earlier nightfall. Anxieties increase, both with the darkness and the times. There is no good thought in the middle of the night.

But in the morning the sunrise is golden and the light bright. The cat settles at the end of the bed ready to bask.

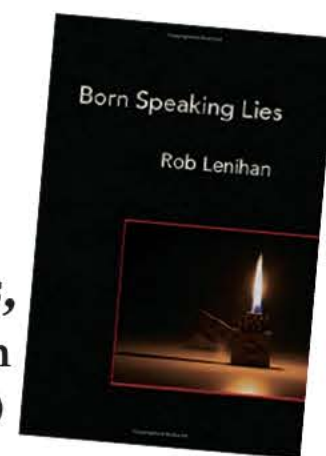
We welcome the coming season of lights. The Solstice will fall this year on December 21. It is the shortest day. Then the days will stretch,

see GARDENERS page B3

BOOK REVIEW

Lies that Tell the Truth:

Born Speaking Lies,
by Rob Lenihan
(Fomite Press, Vermont)



By RICHARD ANDERSEN

Rob Lenihan’s debut novel *Born Speaking Lies* is one of the best crime novels ever written. Maybe even the best.

The action, as expected, is fast, furious, and relentlessly violent. The plot, which ranges back and forth between Brooklyn and a small town in Pennsylvania, is complicated but always clearly stated. The characters are complex and infinitely engaging, even when their behavior borders on the implausible. The women, for example, are almost always saintly, and one of the bad guys would wear out the devil.

Born Speaking Lies opens with a twentieth-century incarnation of Billy the Kid narrowly escaping his own murder. Shot and left for dead by his former partners in crime, he is rescued by Lora, who finds him bleeding by the side of a road. The two hit it off, and Billy has an opportunity to escape his life of violent misdeeds and bury himself in a new and very different world of domestic bliss.

But old habits are hard to break, and Billy’s desire for revenge has to be satisfied first.

That’s the tip of an iceberg that can’t begin to describe the experience of reading Billy’s long and sordid tale. Imagine a collage of the best scenes from Martin Scorsese’s greatest film noir hits.

Take *Goodfellows* as a starting point. Now imagine a compilation of characters whose mental wires are crossed in ways similar to the roles Robert De Niro plays in *Mean Streets*, *Taxi Driver*, and *Raging Bull*.

As inventively graphic as these movies may be in depicting the behavior of down-and-out sociopaths who live on the wrong side of every law, Lenihan’s characters transcend these stereotypes in ways that Scorsese’s movies don’t ever approach. Perhaps because he has more to work with in the novel form, Billy the Kid & Co. are more fully realized human beings. We find ourselves empathizing with them even as we simultaneously abhor their behavior.

see BOOK REVIEW page B5

At the Wendell Free Library: “Jack Sikes: Paintings From the Road”

By ANNIE SOUZA

WENDELL – Painter Jack Sikes has the heart of a ramblin’ man. An exhibition of his work called “Paintings from the Road” is on view now through January 2 at the Herrick Gallery in the Wendell Free Library.

Born in Girdwood, Alaska, he hit the road at age 17, hitchhiking along the Alcan Alaskan Highway 4000 miles to Sacramento, California. In 1965 he enlisted in the Navy; for the next 4 years he traveled to 80 different ports and circumnavigated the globe, a feat which earned him admission into the Order of Magellan.

In his off-duty wandering while stationed in Newport, Rhode Island, he discovered the Worcester Art Museum and eventually became a student there. Jack notes one of his instructors, the late artist Leon Hovsepian, as a great influence and someone who taught him so much about the many techniques involved in making an oil painting.



“Hurry Up and Wait,” 30” x 40” oil on canvas by Jack Sikes.

After the Navy and Art School, Jack joined the U.S. Merchant Marines and sailed up and down the east coast delivering home heating oil for the Boston Fuel Transportation Co.

Currently very much rooted in central Massachusetts, he still travels along the byroads of New England

observing the scenes of everyday life. What some passersby barely manage to glimpse, Jack takes as a jumping off point for his soulful renderings of bus stops, a garage open late, a factory roof or just the road itself.

Jack states, “My goal as an artist

see SIKES page B6

Make it happen!

Registration is now open for Spring 2017!

Greenfield Community College



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Senior Center Activities

DECEMBER 5 to DECEMBER 9

GILL and MONTAGUE
Gill / Montague Senior Center, 62 Fifth Street, Turners Falls, is open Monday through Friday from 9 a.m. to 2 p.m.

Congregate meals are served Tuesday through Thursday at noon. Meal reservations must be made one day in advance by 11 a.m.

All fitness classes are supported by a grant from the Executive Office of Elder Affairs. Voluntary donations are accepted. Council on Aging Director is Roberta Potter. Kitchen Manager is Jeff Suprenant. For more information, to make meal reservations, or to sign up for programs call 863-9357. Messages can be left on our machine when the Center is closed.

Tues, Weds & Thurs Noon Lunch
M, W, F 10:10 a.m. Aerobics; 10:50 a.m. Chair Exercise
Monday 12/5
1 p.m. Knitting Circle
Tuesday 12/6
9:30 a.m. Chair Yoga
12:45 p.m. COA Meeting
Wednesday 12/7
9 a.m. Veterans' Outreach
12:45 p.m. Bingo
Thursday 12/8
9 a.m. Tai chi
10 a.m. Coffee & Conversation
1 p.m. Cards & Games
Friday 12/9
Reflexology by Appointment
1 p.m. Writing Group

For information, call Paula Better, Senior Center Director, at (413) 423-3649. Transportation can be provided for meals, shopping, or medical necessity.

Call to confirm activities, schedule a ride, or find out about the next blood pressure clinic.

The following events are based on a typical schedule. Call the center to confirm all activities.

Monday 12/5
8:30 a.m.-2 p.m. Holiday Bazaar
9 a.m. Tai Chi
10 a.m. Healthy Bones & Balance
Tuesday 12/6
8:45 a.m. Chair Aerobics
10 a.m. Stretching & Balance
11:30 a.m. Homemade Lunch
Wednesday 12/7
8:45 a.m. Line Dancing
10 a.m. Chair Yoga
Noon Bingo, Snacks & Laughs
Thursday 12/8
8:45 a.m. Aerobics
10 a.m. Healthy Bones
Noon Brown Bag Pick up
Friday 12/9
9:30 a.m. Bowling
11:30 a.m. Pizza, Salad & Dessert
12:30 p.m. Movie & Popcorn

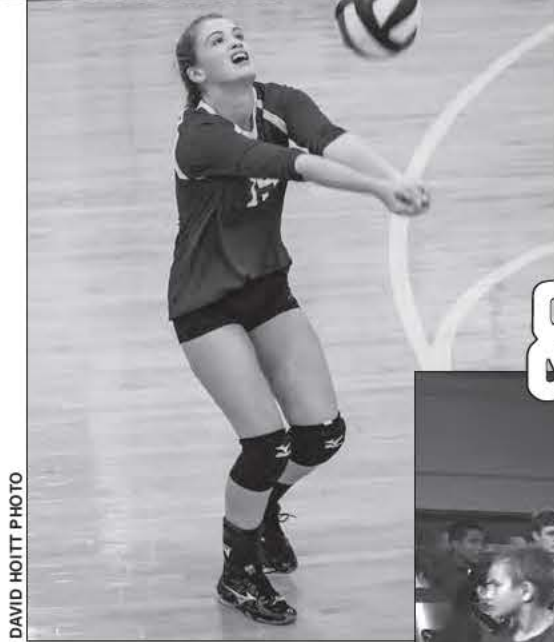
LEVERETT
For information, contact the Leverett COA at (413) 548-1022, ext. 5, or coa@leverett.ma.us. Flexibility and Balance Chair Yoga – Wednesdays at 10 a.m. at the Town Hall. Drop-in \$6 (first class free). Senior Lunch – Fridays at noon. Call (413) 367-2694 by Wednesday for a reservation.

WENDELL
Wendell Senior Center is at 2 Lockes Village Road. Call Nancy Spittle, (978) 544-6760, for hours and upcoming programs. Call the Center for a ride.

ERVING
Erving Senior Center, 1 Care Drive, Erving, is open Monday through Friday from 8 a.m. to 4 p.m. for activities and congregate meals.

Lunch is at 11:30 a.m., with reservations required 2 days in advance. Call (413)-423-3649 for meal information and reservations.

FACES



DAVID HOIT PHOTO

ABOVE: Congratulations to Turners Falls High School volleyball setter Sienna Dillensneider, who was selected for the Annual Western Massachusetts Girls High School Volleyball All-Star Team and played in the Spaulding All-Star Game.

BELOW: Sheffield Elementary school kicked off a major fundraiser last week with an all-school sing. Music teacher Susan Hoffman led the students in an enthusiastic musical beginning to the school day, after they watched a brief video about the "Buzz Off Challenge." On January 19, the school will be host a "Buzz Off" event to benefit One Mission, a charitable organization that supports kids with cancer. Students will collect pledges and then shave their heads in solidarity. Members of the Greenfield Fire Department presented a \$100 donation at the beginning of the assembly to get the ball rolling. To learn more about how to participate, visit Sheffield Pride fundraising page at www.onemissionbuzzoff.org/sheffieldpride.

&

ELLEN BLANCHETTE PHOTO

PLACES



Erving Fire Victims Benefit Luncheon

ERVING – On Tuesday, November 21, the home of Lenny and Cyndi Clark was consumed by fire. Six of the occupants escaped, some with minor injuries, but tragically their 1-year old granddaughter perished in the fire. One son remains hospitalized.

A benefit luncheon is being held on Sunday, December 18, from 1 to 4 p.m. at St. Kazimierz' society in Turners Falls.

It will include a 50/50 raffle, themed basket raffles, as well as some high-value silent auction raffles. Lunch will be served, buffet style, at 2 p.m., and will consist of New England mac-n-cheese, baby baked potatoes, herb-roasted chick-

en with lemon sauce, broccoli, and rolls. Catering will be provided by Historic Catering. The cost is \$12 for adults, and \$7 for children 12 and under.

Both Lenny and Cyndi were born and raised in Greenfield and graduated in the Class of 1964 from Greenfield High School. Len joined the Navy right after graduation and he returned to Massachusetts in 1969 to settle in Millers Falls (Erving's inside) on Pratt Street.

He was employed by Millers Falls Paper until the plant closed, and then worked for Rugg Lumber. He retired from Erving Fire Department as the deputy chief after 26 years of service.

After his divorce in the early '90's he was fortunate to run into his high school sweetheart, Cyndi, and even more fortunate she agreed to a date. They rekindled their long-standing friendship and then married.

As foster parents they have taken in as many as 160 children during their career, and have also adopted a granddaughter and two boys under their foster care.

Please join us to help this family rebuild.

Pre-sale tickets will be available this coming Friday at area businesses, by calling Marisa Dalmaso-Rode (413) 522-5328, or by contacting Bobby Campbell, Rebecca Easton, or Donna LaClaire on Facebook.

Pet of the Week

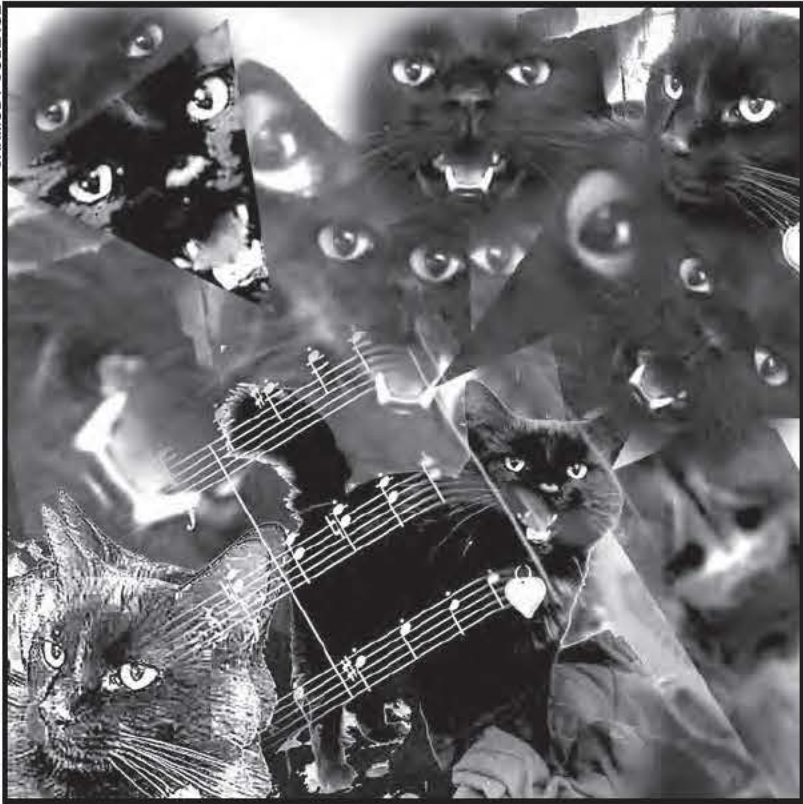
Peta had a stint on the streets, but his luck changed when he sweet-talked a good Samaritan into letting him camp out with her, but her cat had other ideas, so this handsome, friendly boy is once again looking for a home!

Peta is a ball o' feline fun - he's chatty (as you can see from his pictures), active, and quite playful! He even went outside on a leash!

He might initially play hard to get with strangers, but he warms up quickly, especially if you entice him with a game. Peta is very affectionate and likes to be petted all over.

Could this awesome guy be the one for you?

Contact the Dakin Pioneer Valley Humane Society at (413) 548-9898 or at info@dpvhs.org.



CARMODY COLLAGE

"PETA"

Monday, December 5: Wagon Wheel Word

GILL – Wagon Wheel Word is back and better than ever, kicking off the new season with local poet Xinef Afriam as our Special Feature! We welcome all to come on out for an evening of spoken word, poetry and storytelling.

Open mic sign-ups start at 6, and we will start running down the list promptly at 6:15 p.m. with 5 minute time-slots for all. Don't hesitate to bring new work, old work, or work by other artists that you feel called to share.

Xinef Afriam is a motivational speaker, performance artist, human



Poet Xinef Afriam.

rights activist, author, and educator from Western Mass. He works

as the Assistant Director at CAPACIDAD After-School Program, and as the Choir Director at Hope Community Church in Amherst.

Afriam's poetry focuses on themes including but not limited to identity, love, social justice, spirituality and life purpose. He writes: "Any work that you will ever do intended towards the true betterment of yourself must begin by doing one simple thing – choosing yourself."

For questions, or to discuss accessibility needs, call (413) 387-8761.

At the Wagon Wheel Restaurant, 39 French King Highway, Gill.

Welcome Yule: The Sun is Returning

TURNERS FALLS – Although winter doesn't officially start until the winter solstice, the light starts to return, albeit slowly, in the last week of December. This turning point of the year has kept the families who create and perform in "Welcome Yule: A Midwinter Celebration," coming back for the last 32 years.

This year, the show is at the newly refurbished Shea Theater, at 71 Avenue A in Turners Falls, on December 9 and 10 at 7:30 p.m. and Sunday December 11 at 2 p.m.

The chorus performs some seldom-heard Christmas carols, giving the show a bit of a Christmassy feel, but the appeal of the show reaches a wide audience drawn to a trove of unusual solstice-themed music.

This year brings the debut of the first third generation performer, five-year-old Ramona Lamoureux who joins the children's chorus. She is the daughter of cast member Hattie Adastra, who also joined at five years old, and granddaughter of lon time cast member Montserrat Archbald. There are five children in the children's chorus. Several teens who have performed since they were children have joined the adult chorus of about 30 singers and musicians.

Although the theme of each year's show varies, a few songs and poems appear every year. These central elements of the show include: Susan Cooper's poem "The Shortest Day;" the Abbotts Bromley Horn Dance; and the songs "Furry Day Carol" and

"The King," and the mummies play.

This year's show was written by long term cast member and Brattleboro resident Kate Greenough Richardson.

Tickets are \$12 for adults, \$10 for seniors and children five through sixteen, age four and under free. Purchase tickets in advance at Jones Library in Amherst, Broadside Books in Northampton, World Eye Bookshop in Greenfield, via brownpapertickets.com/event/2596352 or buy them at the door.

For more information and reservations, visit welcomeyule.org or email info@welcomeyule.org. Check it out on Facebook at [facebook.com/WelcomeYule](https://www.facebook.com/WelcomeYule).

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Aquí se habla español

Esta es la página en español del periódico **The Montague Reporter**. Aquí podrán encontrar cuestiones acerca de la comunidad hispana, eventos de interés, curiosidades, y noticias en español. Si quiere colaborar o compartir alguna sugerencia, envíenos un correo electrónico a: spanish@montaguereporter.org. Esperamos su participación.



Fidel Castro, ¿héroe o villano?

Por VICTORIA MAÍLLO

El viernes 25 de noviembre Raúl Castro anunció en la televisión cubana la muerte de su hermano Fidel. Tenía 90 años, y con él se cierran 60 de historia desde que en 1956 lideró desde México a un grupo de rebeldes hasta lograr derrocar a Batista en 1959. Estuvo en el poder 47 años hasta decidió dar el testigo a su hermano Raúl en 2006 aduciendo problemas de salud y definitivamente, le cedió el poder en 2008.

Su muerte había sido tantas veces falsamente anunciada desde la comunidad cubana de Miami, incluyendo truculentas historias protagonizadas por la CIA y helados envenenados, que no ha sido una sorpresa, era una muerte anunciada.

Raúl Castro concluyó informando acerca de los actos de homenaje a su hermano que se llevarán a cabo el 4 de diciembre y con el grito revolucionario: ¡Hasta la victoria! ¡Siempre!

Aunque Fidel ya no era presidente del Consejo de Estado, seguía siendo protagonista ya fuera recibiendo a mandatarios extranjeros, o bien escribiendo artículos desde la tribuna política del diario Granma. Hace unos meses recogí en esta misma página sus reflexiones acerca de la visita de Barack Obama a La Habana.

Desde su triunfo contra la dictadura de Batista en enero de 1959, Fidel se convirtió en ídolo, aclamado por los intelectuales de izquierda, y un demonio para los de derecha. Castro nacionalizó desde el inicio de su gobierno el sistema de salud y la educación y llevó a cabo una profunda reforma agraria, y aunque había prometido celebrar elecciones antes de los primeros 18 meses de su mandato, estas nunca se produjeron, convirtiéndose en un dictador.

En 1980 más de 125.000 cubanos salieron de Cuba con destino a los Estados Unidos, especialmente Miami. Esto se produjo debido a una crisis diplomática entre Perú y Cuba que obligó a Fidel Castro a abrir el puerto de Mariel, por ello, dichos inmigrantes fueron conocidos como los Marielitos.

Más tarde, cuando cayó el gran gigante de la Europa del Este, empezaron los grandes problemas económicos para Cuba. En 1994, unos 37.000 cubanos salieron de la isla. El documental “*Balseros*” recoge su difícil aventura echándose a la mar en botes de fabricación casera, algunos consiguieron llegar a



Fidel y Raúl Castro aplaudiendo tras un discurso

su destino y cumplir sus sueños, y otros acabaron en Guantánamo.

Castro gobernó Cuba con mano de hierro donde cualquier voz disidente terminaba en prisión. Se calcula que encarceló a unos 60.000 prisioneros políticos y aunque las cifras que se manejan no son muy claras, algunos expertos dicen que 6.000 personas fueron condenadas a muerte o murieron en la cárcel por sus ideas políticas.

A mediados de los noventa, influenciado por las circunstancias mundiales, Castro levantó el acelerador de su persecución contra la comunidad LGBT, que había padecido en Cuba los horrores de campos de re-educación, la cárcel o el exilio forzoso.

Hay dos bellas películas que reconocen este sufrimiento: *Fresa y Chocolate*, basada en el relato de Senel Paz, *El lobo, el bosque y el hombre nuevo*. La película es una crítica a la intolerancia de la revolución cubana. La segunda es *Antes de que anochezca* que narra la vida del poeta homosexual cubano, Reinaldo Arenas.

También en esa época trató de tender puentes a la Iglesia Católica a la que el régimen castrista había prácticamente destruido. Empieza a permitir el turismo, e incluso la utilización del dólar. Y ya que hablamos de películas, no me resisto a citar otras dos obras de arte del cine cubano que reflejan desde diferente perspectiva la realidad cubana.

Lista de espera, una crítica a la sociedad de la revolución realizada desde la misma revolución. Un precioso relato de lo que podía haber sido y no fue, y se quedó solamente en un sueño. Y para quedarnos con un buen sabor de boca, nada mejor que *Buena Vista Social Club* de Win Wenders. Un do-

cumental acerca del resurgimiento de la música cubana y que al mismo tiempo retrata la sociedad en la Cuba de 1999.

Con sus logros y sus fallos, Castro era el último dirigente vivo de la Guerra Fría, el hombre que desafío con misiles nucleares a los Estados Unidos, al Imperio, como él decía.

Y se ha ido un revolucionario, capaz de llevar sus adeptos a luchar en África, que resistió el embargo, que vio pasar seis papas y once presidentes del Imperio, y que antepuso la revolución a todo lo demás: “Dentro de la revolución todo, contra la revolución, nada”. Esta frase basada en una de Mussolini, resume perfectamente lo que significaban las ideas políticas de Fidel Castro.

Por supuesto, al ser una de las figuras políticas más controvertidas de América Latina, las reacciones ante su muerte no se han hecho esperar. Las calles de la Pequeña Habana en Miami se llenaron de gente celebrando su muerte durante toda la noche con música y bailes al grito de “Viva Cuba libre”.

Maduro, amigo por excelencia del gobierno cubano, declaró que “Castro y Chávez dejaron abonado el camino de la liberación de nuestros pueblos”. El escrito peruano Vargas Llosa dijo que “la historia no lo absolverá”. Trump se apresuró a llamarlo “brutal dictador” y el futbolista Maradona dijo de él que era como su segundo padre.

Ahora la expectación se centra en que ocurrirá después de Raúl, que tiene ya 85 años. La mayoría de altos cargos en este momento son ocupados por militares, y dirigentes de perfil bajo. Fidel ya no tenía ningún cargo público, así que su muerte no tendrá ningún efecto inmediato.

OPINIÓN

Reflexión sobre las elecciones presidenciales de 2016

Por VICTORIA MAÍLLO

No es fácil para mí como mujer, migrante e hispana ver a Trump en televisión y pensar que por cuatro años será el presidente de este país, que no es el mío de nacimiento, sino de vida. Muchos al leer estas líneas pensarán que no tengo derecho a opinar puesto que no soy estadounidense, y respeto su opinión, pero a veces la distancia nos hace ver las cosas más claramente.

Allan Lichtman, profesor de la American University, predijo que Trump ganaría las elecciones y pocos le creyeron. Pecamos de ingenuos, al igual que hicimos con el Brexit, o con el reciente referéndum en Colombia.

Los votantes de Trump son ciudadanos descontentos con las instituciones y con los políticos tradicionales. Trump durante su campaña ofendió a mujeres, hispanos, inmigrantes, musulmanes y discapacitados. Pero al final, estos también escucharon el mensaje de Trump que les prometía un país grande en el que ellos pudieran encajar.

La gente estaba deseando un cambio. A uno y otro lado del Atlántico, nos enfrentamos al resurgimiento de los populismos, tanto de izquierdas como de derechas. Trump representa ese populismo en los Estados Unidos. Sus votantes han expresado su rechazo a las élites y han creído lo que este encantador de serpientes les prometía: Un gran país de nuevo donde ellos tendrían un lugar.

Los medios de comunicación le dedicaban minutos y páginas, e incluso los que hasta entonces habían sido tradicionalmente republicanos, le atacaban como si fuera un saco de boxeo y apoyaban a Hillary sin recato. Puede que esto tuviera el efecto contrario a lo que se esperaba, y esos votantes desencantados e indecisos por empatía y/o simpatía se posicionasen a su lado.

Hillary por su parte se enfrentaba

a un partido demócrata dividido. Los seguidores de Sanders no confiaban en ella puesto que representaba todo lo contrario del mensaje que Bernie había proclamado y con el que había conseguido mover de nuevo a las masas adormiladas. El partido demócrata tiene ahora una oportunidad de oro para reflexionar acerca de las causas de su derrota y sobre los errores cometidos con la elección de Hillary como candidata.

Las élites demócratas echan la culpa de la derrota a los blancos no universitarios. En un país en que la educación es desigual desde los primeros años de escolarización y donde la educación universitaria es la más cara del mundo, es injusto achacar desde la tribuna de la academia a esos votantes, que por las circunstancias que sean, no han recibido la educación adecuada.

Ese ha sido uno de los grandes fallos del partido demócrata en estas elecciones, no ha sabido conectar con los que deberían ser sus votantes, la clase blanca trabajadora, y no solamente la élite educada.

La mitad de los ciudadanos de Estados Unidos ha votado contra la otra mitad, son tiempos inestables en los que Trump será el presidente de un país dividido. Tendrá que resolver temas como el cambio climático, la inmigración, acuerdos de libre comercio, crisis económica, violencia, drogas, desempleo, conflicto social y racial, e inestabilidad financiera.

Si Trump cumple lo prometido, tendremos un país en el que los derechos de las mujeres, los musulmanes, los inmigrantes, de la comunidad LGTB van a retroceder en todo lo conseguido hasta ahora.

Lo bueno del sistema democrático es que dentro de cuatro años habrá elecciones de nuevo, y para ello debemos prepararnos y aprender de los errores. Pero, mientras tanto, ¿qué hacemos?



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LOOKING BACK: 10 YEARS AGO THIS WEEK

Here's the way it was November 23 and 30, 2006: News from the Montague Reporter's archive.

Town Buildings Rise in Wendell

The electrical and plumbing contractors are working now inside the new town office building, at the north end of the common. Over on Wendell Depot Road, the walls are up in the front of the new library. A crane arrived Friday, November 17, to lift the library's roof trusses into place. This is more progress than Wendell has seen in years.

Selectboard chair Ted Lewis said some of the plywood sheeting is already in place, and some of the white insulation panels being stored in back of the town office building are beginning to delaminate in the recent wet weather. He is concerned the roof shingles are not on yet, with only a limited number of days remaining this year warm enough to install them.

The town office completion date is set for February 15, 2007, and the library completion date is March 31. Lewis praised the cost saving efforts of John Flemming, clerk of the works for both projects.

School Closing Decision Deferred

The Gill-Montague Regional School Committee failed to reach consensus on closing an elementary school in Montague on Tuesday, but several key members indicated a willingness to re-examine options in view of a projected \$800,000 budget gap looming over the district. The committee took three votes on various elementary configurations, all of which failed

to reach needed majorities.

The first vote, on a motion by Mike Langknecht, seconded by Ted Castro-Santos, would have created an early education center at Hillcrest Elementary, where Montague pre-K students would be educated.

Next, Valeria Smith proposed closing Montague Center School and leaving the Turners Falls campus intact, with a pre-K through grade 2 school at Hillcrest and a grade 3 through 6 school at Sheffield.

Finally, Terry Lapichinski proposed a pre-K through K school at Hillcrest, and a grade 1 through 5 school at Sheffield, with Montague 6th graders moving to the middle school, and Montague Center school closed.

The school committee asked for more financial data on the impact of the first and third proposals, since they represented variations on scenarios previously considered, which ad showed a range of savings from \$89,000 to \$225,000.

Three Trustees Who Want to Become Librarians

In Erving, the three elected library commissioners have doubled – or tripled – as the town librarians for a good many years. Selectboard chair Andy Tessier recalls the town used to have a paid librarian once, but when no one could be found to take her place, the library commissioners stepped in to take her place. And they've been checking out books ever since.

"As far as we know, we are the only town in Massachusetts where the trustees run the library," said Marcia Bernard, one of the three.

"We got rid of the two zip codes, the two area codes, now it's time to

get rid of this," said Marion Overgaard, another trustee.

Along with Beth Bazler, Bernard and Overgaard have made impressive progress at the Erving public library in the last five years. For one thing, they consolidated operations at the Erving side branch, and persuaded the town to close the underutilized Erving Center library, which for a number of years was located in the basement of town hall. They modernized the collection, expanded the hours of operations, took courses in library science, and began tracking the steady increase in circulation that followed.

They received state accreditation for the Erving Library in 2001, and began utilizing the state grants for purchase of materials that followed. They joined the C/WMARS regional library materials sharing system, so patrons could get books, audiotapes, and DVDs from any library in the area, and order materials from home.

They added computers and high speed internet. They wrote and received grants and ran free programs ranging from beekeeping to chess club to a traveling zoo, which brought creatures great and small to a packed library filled with parents and awestruck children. They set up a summer reading program with over 100 participants. They are working to fully automate circulation at the library by February of 2007.

For this, the trustees have so far received a stipend of \$12,500 a year, to be shared as they see fit.

At a meeting with the selectboard, who came to the library, Bernard and the others advocated to be allowed to quit as trustees and be hired as paid librarians instead.

BOOK REVIEW from page B1

This doesn't happen in a Scorsese movie. We remain objective in the theater because we don't want to get emotionally involved. In the pages of Lenihan's book, we can't help ourselves. The result is very much like "seeing" a Scorsese movie as well as "feeling" what Scorsese never did – nor could – create.

Lenihan's greatest, most singular achievement, however, is not his ability to populate action scenes with flesh and blood characters. Others have done that as well. Lenihan's and the book's claim to fame is the prose style of the amazing narrator.

This guy not only knows what he's talking about, he graces every page with word pictures that can only appear in our imaginations and, like Shakespeare, can't appear in any improved way once they are experienced there.

We don't learn, for example, that Billy the Kid deserved to die; we read he "should've been wearing a bull's eye t-shirt and a toe tag to

speed things up." The road chosen for his execution is not just quiet and serene but "beneath a sky full of mutely exploding stars."



Rob Lenihan

Billy's would-be murderers, of course, can't appreciate the beauty that makes Billy feel as if he's "talking to God on the telephone." They're from Brooklyn. What they know about the great outdoors is limited to "breathing in smoke, reading by neon, and stomping on concrete." What's amazing about these phrasings is they all take place within a span of thirteen lines

on one page.

I mentioned Shakespeare. What makes Shakespeare great is not his plots, most of which he took from other sources, or even the behavior of his characters, many of whom had to conform to his patrons' expectations. It's the language. "To be or not to be" says and means more than "Death is the end all."

Lenihan's characters don't talk in Hamlet's kind of elevated prose because they inhabit a very different world. They are the lowest of low-lives whose inescapably violent existence doesn't just often "scare them shitless," it "demolishes their BVD's."

On Page 1 of *Born Talking Lies*, Billy the Kid tells us "God is good all the time." These words are also the last he utters, but 498 pages later, we are no longer willing to believe him.

What's ironic is that Billy, as he has been doing throughout the book, is no longer deceiving anyone but himself. And that's no lie.



Notice of Intent to apply for EPA Cleanup Grant

The Town of Montague intends to submit a proposal for an EPA Brownfields Cleanup Grant in order to conduct cleanup activities at the vacant mill at 20 Canal Road (Former Strathmore Mill).

A public meeting will be held on **Wed December 14, 2016 at 4:30PM** at the **Montague Town Hall** First Floor Meeting Room One Avenue A Turners Falls Ma to receive public comment and to discuss the draft proposal and draft Analysis of Brownfields Cleanup Alternatives (ABCA). Public comments may also be submitted via email to planner@montague-ma.gov no later than December 15 at 4:00 PM.

Copies of the draft proposal and draft ABCA will be available on or before Dec 5 at www.montague-ma.gov and the Montague Planning Office at Town Hall during regular business hours Mon-Thurs.

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OUT OF THE PARK

By JON DOBOSZ

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Our **Open Swim Program** will also begin early January (Friday the 6th) at Turners Falls High School. We have Family Swim from 6:30 to 7:30 p.m., and Adult Lap Swim from 7:30 to 8:30 p.m. If you're looking to get outside during the winter and get some exercise, consider dropping by for a few laps... or if you want to get the kids out of the house, what better way to spend a brisk winter evening? A full schedule is available on our webpage at montague.net, so check it out!

We'll also be partnering with our friends from the Turners Falls Knights of Columbus for their Free

Throw Contest on Saturday, January 7. The emphasis here is *free*, as there is no charge for this event. The contest is available for girls and boys ages 10 to 14, and will be held at Sheffield Elementary School. We encourage all kids, whether or not they play basketball, to give it a shot!

We have some other winter programs that you can review on our webpage at montague.net. Feel free to give us a call at 863-3216 if you wish to have our brochure mailed to you, or if you have any questions regarding MPRD services. We have our own Facebook page, so be sure to "like" us to receive regular updates.

That pretty much wraps it up from here. I look forward to the journey we'll be taking with one another each month, and hope you will too!

Happy Holidays from all of us here at Montague Parks & Recreation!

*Jon Dobosz, CPRP is the
director of parks and recreation
for the town of Montague.*

SIKES from page B1

is to paint my most accurate and intimate response to a particular scene at the time when that scene excites me the most.

"If I succeed in translating these emotions onto canvas by imposing my personal visions on the viewer and the viewer is able to see and share my excitement about the scene, then has the painting come full circle."

Jack has been sharing his vision and showing his paintings regularly in juried exhibitions at ARTSWorcester since 2003. His work has garnered numerous awards and been featured in Worcester Magazine; he was also awarded First Prize by Fitchburg Art Museum for his painting "Hurry Up

and Wait" which is included in this show, along with five other views from New England and Virginia.

Libraries have always held a special place for Jack. He spent a lot of time as a kid in Alaska in his small town library, and later on, even in a town he was just passing through, he would seek out the library, a place he knew he could always find something familiar: a book about painting.

*Wendell Free Library hours are
Tuesdays noon to 7 p.m., Wednesdays 10 a.m. to 7 p.m., Thursdays 3 p.m. to 7 p.m., Saturdays 9:30 a.m. to 3:30 p.m., and Sunday 11:30 a.m. to 3:30 p.m.*



UNITY PARK - Hello fine *Reporter* readers! I hope to be occupying this space (or some other space on a different page) at least once a month on a long-term basis, promoting Montague Parks and Recreation programs, services, parks and facilities, projects, trends and pretty much anything else I can think of relative to the vast and exciting world of parks and recreation!

First, let's start out with our ever-popular **Bluefish Swim Team**! The Bluefish is currently competing in the Pioneer Valley Swim League, and despite being one of the smaller teams in the league (50 swimmers), the competitiveness and skill of our young swimmers often rival those of teams twice their size. Our coaches are doing a great job with the swimmers, who are currently 2-1 in the PVSL, and I'm sure they'll continue to perform quite well for the remainder of the season. We'll keep you up to date.

This winter, we will also have four travel teams in our **youth basketball program**: one 3rd/4th grade co-ed team; one 5th/6th grade boys team; and two 5th/6th girls teams. It's great to see such a significant interest in girls wanting to play basketball these last couple of years. Here's hoping this trend continues!

I would be remiss in not mentioning, however, our K-2 Instructional League. We get the little ones out on the court once a week starting in January, and it is a sight to be seen when a five-year-old is learning how to dribble, pass, and shoot.

With the New Year, we welcome our **Annual Sawmill River 10k Run**! This year's event, typically held on New Year's Day, will be held on Saturday, December 31 so as to not conflict with services at the First

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ARTS & ENTERTAINMENT

ONGOING EVENTS

EVERY SUNDAY

McCusker's Co-op Market, Shelburne Falls: *Celtic Sessions*. Musicians of all levels welcome to play traditional Irish music. 10:30 a.m.

Rendezvous, Turners Falls: *TNT Karaoke*. 9 p.m.

EVERY TUESDAY

Carnegie Library, Turners Falls: *Play Group*. Unstructured play-group. Grown-ups can chat and connect with other parents and caregivers while supervising their children's play. 10 to 11 a.m.

Carnegie Library, Turners Falls: Crafts and activities for children of all ages. 3:30 to 4:30 p.m.

EVERY WEDNESDAY

Carnegie Library, Turners Falls: *Story Time*: Thematic stories, projects, and snacks for young children and their caretakers. 10:15 a.m.

Leverett Library, Leverett: *Tales and Tunes Story Hour*. For ages 0 to 5 and their caregivers. 10:30 a.m. to noon.

Carnegie Library, Turners Falls: *Homeschool Science. Hands-on STEM (Science, Technology, Engineering, Math)* activities for homeschoolers of all ages, with Angela or special guest. 1 p.m.

New Salem Public Library: *Teen and Tweens*. Program for 11 to 18 year olds. 1:30 to 5:30 p.m.

MONTHLY 1ST WEDNESDAY

Root Cellar, Greenfield: *Roots at the Root Cellar*. Reggae DJs mixing up roots, dub, dancehall, steppas and more. 9 p.m. Free.

1ST AND 3RD WEDNESDAY

Arts Block (4th floor), Greenfield: *Creacion Latin Big Band & Late Night Open Mic JAM*. 20 piece ensemble play son, salsa, chacha and much more. 8 p.m. Open Mic starts at 9 p.m. Free.

EVERY THURSDAY

Millers Falls Library, Millers Falls: *Music and Movement with Tom Carroll & Laurie Davidson*. Children and their caregivers invited. 10 to 11 a.m.

Pioneer Tavern, Millers Falls: *Franklin County Pool League*. 6 to 11 p.m.

The People's Pint, Greenfield: *Derek Bridges*. Live acoustic guitar. 7 p.m.

2nd AND 4TH THURSDAY

Hubie's Tavern: TNT Karaoke. 9 p.m.

FIRST THURSDAYS

Gill Tavern, Gill: *Trivia Night*. 8:30 p.m. \$

EVERY THIRD FRIDAY

Element Brewing Company, Millers Falls: Brule's Irish Band. Food carts supplement the local beer. 6 p.m.

EVERY FOURTH FRIDAY

Community Yoga and Wellness Center, Greenfield: *Greenfield Circle Dance*. 6 to 8 p.m. \$

EVERY FRIDAY

Slate Memorial Library, Gill: *Story Hour*. Stories and hands-on arts & crafts. 10 a.m. to noon.

The Pioneer Tavern, Millers Falls: *TNT Karaoke*, 8 p.m.

FIRST SATURDAY MONTHLY

Montague Common Hall: Montague Center. *Montague Square Dance*. Family fun, October through May. 7 p.m. \$

EVERY SATURDAY

Highland Park, Millers Falls: *Adult Co-Ed Pick-Up Soccer*, sponsored by Montague Parks and Rec. 10:30 a.m.

EXHIBITS:

Artspace Gallery, Greenfield: *inside art iii*, an exhibit of photography and writing by residents of the Franklin County Sheriff's Office. Through December 2.

Discovery Center, Great Hall, Turners Falls: *Art Display of Junior Duck Stamp Exhibit*. Through December 22.

GCC Downtown Center Gallery, Greenfield: *Venture/Adventure: Applied Photography Projects*. Photography by students Anthony Borton, Elaine Findley, Cynthia Mead, Elie Shuman, and Shoshana Zonderman. Artists' reception on Friday, December 2, 5:30 to 7 p.m.

Leverett Crafts & Arts, Leverett: *Annual LCA Resident Artists Exhibit*. Paintings, graphic art, pottery and more. Through December 9.

Little Big House Gallery, Shelburne Falls. Open by appt.; see littlebighousegallery.com.

Madison Gallery, Millers Falls: Temporary space while Avenue A is being renovated. *DeBix Art*

– *Released*, paintings by *Deborah Bix*, and wood turner *Jon Kopera*.

Nina's Nook, Turners Falls: *"Wee the People"* presents little people, pets, and creatures. Includes garden slug figurine, a Frida Kahlo doll, a felted Kibosh creature, a paper robot, and a flying death angel. Great gifts. Through December.

Salmon Falls Gallery, Shelburne Falls: *The Liquid Edge: Polar Regions, photographs by Sarah Holbrook*. Also *Painting Nature: Botanical Watercolors by Thayer Tomlinson*. Tomlinson artist reception Sunday, December 4, 4 to 6 p.m. Both shows run through December.

Shelburne Arts Co-operative, Shelburne Falls: *"Wintery Mix"*, Holiday Group Show. Music by *Uncle Hal* on Saturday afternoons. Through January 23.

South Gallery, GCC, Greenfield: *Memory, Dream and Invention: Recent Work by Anna Bayles Arthur*. Through December 9.

EVENTS:

THURSDAY, DECEMBER 1

Rendezvous, Turners Falls: *Falltown String Band*. 8 p.m.

Mocha Maya's, Shelburne Falls: *The Collected Poets Series* featuring poets Sydney Lea & Tim Mayo. Readings. 7 p.m.

Deja Brew, Wendell: *The Shadow Twisters*. Classic '60s & '70s Rock. 8 p.m.

Root Cellar, Greenfield: *Vimana*. Franklin County ensemble, psychedelic funk-rock jazz. 9 p.m. \$

FRIDAY, DECEMBER 2

Old Wendell Town Hall, Wendell: *12th Annual Wendell Holiday Craft Fair*. Crafts, food, live music by *Rik Rolski*. Benefit for the Swift River School Music & Art Departments. 4:30 p.m.

Pothole Pictures, Shelburne Falls: *Peter and John*. Vermont director Jay Craven's latest film based on a de Maupassant novel, set in 1872 Nantucket. Director will be present to discuss film which starts at 7:30. Music by *Small Change* at 7 p.m.

Rendezvous, Turners Falls: *Drew's 1940 Hit Parade*. (Farewell for now show!) 7 p.m.

Shea Theater, Turners Falls: *GCC Fall Dance Concert 2016: Eclectic*. 7 p.m. \$

Mocha Maya's, Shelburne Falls: *Patti Rothberg*, pop rock. 8 p.m.

Root Cellar, Greenfield: *Ballads and Soft Core Porn w/Tuzko*. Northampton band, funk and soul. 9 p.m. \$

Deja Brew, Wendell: *The Equalites*. Reggae Fantastico. 9:30 p.m.

SATURDAY, DECEMBER 3

Shea Theater, Turners Falls: *Montague Community Band*

125th Gala Anniversary Concert. 3 p.m. Donations.

Old Wendell Town Hall, Wendell: *12th Annual Wendell Holiday Craft Fair*. Crafts, food, live music by *Wendell Community Chorus*, 2 p.m. Fair 10 to 4 p.m. Dinner 5 to 7 p.m.

Pothole Pictures, Shelburne Falls: *Peter and John*. Vermont director Jay Craven's latest film based on a de Maupassant novel, set in 1872 Nantucket. Director will be present to discuss film which starts at 7:30. Music by *Radiolaria* at 7 p.m.

Our Lady of Peace, Turners Falls: *Christmas Concert by the Pioneer Valley Acapella Choir* who present Service of Lessons and Carols. 7 p.m. Free-will offering.

Mocha Maya's, Shelburne Falls: *Everything Turned to Color*. Indie/folk/jazz. 8 p.m.

Deja Brew, Wendell: *Hillary Chase*. Bluesy Folk. 9 p.m.

Root Cellar, Greenfield: *Dave Loomis and Friends with the Diamondstones*. 9 p.m. \$

Pioneer Tavern, Millers Falls: *Jimmy Just Quit*. 9 p.m. \$

Rendezvous, Turners Falls: *Full Tilt Dance Party w/ DJ Funkadelic Fern*. 9:30 p.m.

SUNDAY, DECEMBER 4

Deja Brew, Wendell: *Dale Reynolds*. "Folky rocked alt country land." 8 p.m.

Jane Doe, Jr., Greenfield: *Phantom Erratic 11*, featuring *Aspec[t]*, *Pod Blotz*, *Craow*, and *Boy Harsher*. 8 p.m., \$

Rendezvous, Turners Falls: *TNT Karaoke*. 9 p.m.

MONDAY, DECEMBER 5

WagonWheel, Gill: *Poetry Readings featuring Xinef Afriam*. Sign-up to read at 6 p.m. Readings begin at 6:15.

WEDNESDAY, DECEMBER 7

Root Cellar, Greenfield: *I-Ganic Sound Systems and Monthly Artist in Residence*. Monthly reggae event. 9 p.m.

THURSDAY, DECEMBER 8

Deja Brew, Wendell: *Doug Plavin's All-Stars*. Featuring this month's special guest. 8 p.m.

FRIDAY, DECEMBER 9

Arms Library, Shelburne Falls: Mohawk Trail Concerts sponsors *"Music at the Arms,"* with cellist *Rebecca Hartka*. At noon.

GCC Lobby, Greenfield: *GCC Chorus*, informal holiday concert. 12:15 to 12:45 p.m.

Throughout Turners Falls: *It's A Wonderful Night in Turners Falls* holiday event. (See story, page A1.) 3 to 9 p.m.

Shea Theater, Turners Falls: *32nd Annual Welcome Yule Midwinter Celebration* of the return of light – festive family show filled with music, dance,

songs and stories. 7:30 p.m. \$.

Mocha Maya's, Shelburne Falls: *Gold City Ashes*. Heavy blues rock. 8 p.m.

Deja Brew, Wendell: *Zydeco Connection*. 9 p.m.

Memorial Hall Theater

POTHOLE PICTURES

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CRUZ from page B1

famous in the underground music scene," said Cruz, who goes by the nickname of "Monster" and has been a lead singer with the Flaming Dragons of Middle Earth since late fall of 2006.

"I sing the apocalyptic lyrics," said Cruz cryptically, "that make everything seem like the truth and a lie."

Danny calls his band a "mud lightning metal super group." He not only sings, but also plays lead guitar, keyboards, and rhythm guitar.

Andrea Glampyre, one of the ensemble's members, notes that the band's style of music is a fusion of many genres such as: metal, electronic dance, Goth, emotional

rock, funk, and free psychedelic rock. "It's a whole new kind of music," said Glampyre. "We've been trying to encourage other bands to join us in playing it."

The Flaming Dragons get together to practice Thursday nights at the Brick House in Turners Falls. "It's a lot of fun," said Andrea, "and it's open to anyone who wants to come and practice with us."

Bob Sekula, one of Danny's personal care attendants and close friends, agrees with Andrea. "Practices are a blast," said Sekula. In addition, Bob takes Danny to a meditation group at the Recovery Learning Community in Greenfield. The class is led by Lane Smith.

"I've known Danny for 10 years,"

MONTAGUE REPORTER

Deb Radway of Montague Center catches up on the Steve Ellis hiring news on a frigid morning in the Sahara desert near Merzouga, Morocco!

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ON THE ROAD

said Sekula, "and he always amazes me with his zest for life. We have a great time together in the band. All



Cruz's cover art for Flaming Dragons' "The Purple Album".

the members are really into it and we all contribute in a creative way."

One of Danny Cruz's musical influences is the legendary Ozzy Osbourne, who got to meet our local "Monster" in 2010 at the Comcast Center in Hartford. The meeting was arranged by the Make-A-Wish Foundation.

"I found him to be a true rock star," said Danny. "He's also a very nice guy, really down to earth."

Other Cruzian musical inspirations make up an eclectic list and include among others: the late Leonard Cohen, Lady Gaga, Madonna, Bjork, Cyndi Lauper, Neil Young, Black Sabbath, the Beatles,

and Nirvana.

Cruz is proud of his own band's newest album, *Freedome*. Released in October on the OSR label of New York City, the collection was mixed and recorded by a pair of Danny's friends, Adam Langellotti and Derrick Hart. "It's a very lively album," said Cruz. "I think it's our most advanced material ever." The release is very experimental with an emphasis on indie rock.

What's the best cut on the album? "I would have to say," answered Danny slyly, "each one is magic. I would give the album five stars out of five."



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