



LAKE PLEASANT MILLERS FALLS MONTAGUE CENTER MONTAGUE CITY TURNERS FALLS

The Montague Reporter

YEAR 15 – NO. 11

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THE VOICE OF THE VILLAGES

DECEMBER 22, 2016

For Thirsty Stretch of River, A Rare Chance for a New Deal



MIKE JACKSON PHOTO

Negotiations slated for this winter may determine the fate of the Connecticut River over the next half century.

By PETE WACKERNAGEL

TURNERS FALLS – The current licenses for both the Northfield Mountain Pumped Storage Project and the Turners Falls Hydroelectric Project expire in 2018. FirstLight Power Resources, the owner of both facilities, is currently midway through a 5-year relicensing process with the Federal Energy Regulatory Commission (FERC) and interested parties, including the town of Montague.

FERC grants 30- to 50-year licenses to power generators, giving them the right to generate electricity.

The Turners Falls Project's previous license, issued in 1968, gives the operator the right to divert nearly all of the Connecticut River's water into the power canal to use for power generation, leaving the river's natural channel a nearly dry gully.

For local residents, this is a Haley's Comet moment: a twice-in-a-lifetime chance to change the balance of

power in relation to the water and its use. This license, which will be binding for the next half century, will shape the river and the village's relationship to it.

The most important phase of the relicensing is beginning now. FirstLight has submitted their Draft License Application to FERC, and the town of Montague and other "stakeholders" – including the Appalachian Mountain Club, the Connecticut River Watershed Council, the Nature Conservancy, American Whitewater, and the US Fish and Wildlife Service – have submitted comments on this application.

FirstLight's application proposes that basically no changes be made in its use of the river or the land that it owns, but Montague officials hope to leverage concessions from the company that could materially benefit town residents.

The last negotiations, well over a generation ago, resulted in the power company's provision of public

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ERVING SELECTBOARD

Proposal To Expand Library Staffing Meets With Resistance

By KATIE NOLAN

A December 19 joint meeting of Erving's selectboard and finance committee meeting to draft the town's FY'18 budget was dominated by discussion of a request from the library trustees for extra library staff hours, and multiple departments' requests for merit raises.

Library trustee Mackensey Bailey presented a proposed budget of \$81,012, an increase of \$15,008 over the FY'17 budget of \$66,004. A new 14-hour per week staff position, at a cost of \$10,962, was the primary cause of the increase.

The previous week, the trustees had presented a budget of \$73,716, which included an increase in hours for the library assistant from 19.5 to

24 hours, moving the assistant from part-time to full time with benefits. At that time the board and fin com had estimated the annual cost of benefits – which would appear in the town's insurance line item rather than the department's budget – at approximately \$15,000.

At that meeting, fin com chair Eugene Klepadlo told the trustees, "For the cost of benefits, you could get two part-time staff."

Selectboard member Scott Bastarache agreed, and asked the trustees to consider adding a part-time staffer instead. "I agree you need more staff hours," he said.

But when the trustees returned with the new proposal Monday, the board and fin com members

see ERVING page A6



NINA ROSSI PHOTO

Library trustees have requested funding for a new part-time employee.

Course Boosts Workers to Cutting-Edge Jobs

By MIKE JACKSON

TURNERS FALLS – Last Friday, thirteen workers being trained in the county's "Advanced Manufacturing Pipeline" received certification that they had completed a crash course in computer-controlled precision machining, offered evenings at the Franklin County Technical School. They were joined in the school's cafeteria by friends, family, educators, politicians, and potential employers in recognition of their achievement.

The course, a cornerstone of a complex local collaborative aimed at providing area manufacturers with motivated and educated trainees, was held in the tech school's machine technology lab, a shop well equipped with computer-numeric control (CNC) milling machines and lathes.

For Elsie Jordan of Turners Falls, this meant a walk down memory lane.

"I actually graduated from here in 1979," Jordan said. "It was like déjà vu for me!"

Jordan first got involved when she saw a newspaper listing for the program and went to an information session at the Franklin/Hampshire Career Center in Greenfield. After taking aptitude tests in math, English, and basic mechanical skills, she was selected for the tuition-free training program, which included plenty of hands-on time in the CNC lab – a facility the school didn't have her first time around.

"I worked in manufacturing, but this is all new stuff for me," said Jordan, a veteran of local employers including Greenfield Tap & Die, Polar Focus, and Energy Foods. "I had

see TRAINING page A3

How's Business This Season?

By ANNA FORBES GYORGY

TURNERS FALLS – For many downtown businesses, the holiday season is a time of anxiety, hard work, and intense preparation, as well as a time to look forward to the coming season.

"As we've gotten closer to Christmas, people absolutely have to make shopping count," says Steve Vogel, the owner of Stuff, a brightly lit and carefully curated curiosity shop on the corner of Third Street and Avenue A.

But are holiday shoppers coming to Turners Falls to check off the items on their lists? And are the hungry shoppers settling in for a meal, or a beer, after their errands?

This is a question on the minds

of many downtown business owners, and a quick trip around the town to talk to the proprietors themselves provided many differing perspectives.

Some business owners, such as Richard Mascavage of Pipione's Sport Shop, report that business is good, stable, and similar to previous years. Norm Emond, Jr., owner of the Gun Rack on Avenue A, said that business has been very good this holiday season, before returning to help a growing queue of customers in the shop.

At Steve's Aubuchon Hardware, assistant manager Kelsie Bardsley says that business has been so brisk that the store sold out of Christmas trees nearly a week ago, while

see BUSINESS page A3



Connor Johnston, Kelsie Bardsley (pictured with Rambo), and Jeff Preston man the store at Steve's Aubuchon, where business is reportedly brisk this season.

18 YEARS LATER...

Local historian Ed Gregory is chronicling the construction of the new pedestrian bridge on Greenfield Road in Montague. This picture, taken December 14, shows the bridge on the north abutment with the "falsework" supporting the section being erected.

The project will reconnect, in a limited sense, the sections of Greenfield Road (now known as Greenfield and Old Greenfield roads) left severed after the closure of the bridge in 1999. State and railroad officials disagreed over responsibility for a collapsing abutment.



ED GREGORY PHOTO



PHOTO COURTESY GCC

Thirteen students graduated in this fall's CNC trainee cohort last Friday.

The Montague Reporter

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LOCAL BRIEFS

Compiled by DON CLEGG

Holiday Music with Bobby C, “world famous DJ,” will fill the lobby of Greenfield Savings Bank in Turners Falls with the sounds of the season this Friday, December 23, from noon to 2 p.m.

Come and gather for a short time or stay for the full two hours in the Bank’s cozy customer service area. Enjoy a warm beverage and a cookie while you sing-a-long.

Where have all the animals gone? Children of all ages will enjoy Investigation Station at the Great Falls Discovery Center, Wednesday December 28 through Friday, December 30, from 10 a.m. to 4 p.m.

Winter is a time for staying snug and warm for animals, too. Where are their secret homes? The GFDC will have activities and crafts for children at the front Welcome Desk.

The Massachusetts Department of Conservation and Recreation invites all to join all 50 states on Sunday, January 1, for a **First Day Hike**. Enjoy a leisurely two-mile stroll along the Canalside Rail Trail, and start a healthy New Year off on the right foot.

This family-friendly walk follows a gentle route, providing an opportunity to discover the natural,

deserving of America’s (almost entirely imaginary) welfare benefits, regardless of their labor; the Chinese, undeserving of favored-nation status, again regardless of their labor; the Europeans, undeserving of defense under NATO.

The enormous energy unleashed this year appears as a gleeful refutation of values of universalism, inclusion and deservingness. But for the past forty years, these have functioned only as official values, held over from a bygone era in which collective struggle and social movements shaped the world.

The USSR similarly functioned as a system of administration long after most of its citizens stopped believing in the ideology it was designed to implement. When the structures that governed that federation imploded, the void was filled by an assortment of opportunists, warlords, and oligarchs. But it would be a mistake to say the oligarchs overthrew the government; they were merely who was left.

Perhaps what we are living through isn’t, *at its root*, an insurgency and coup by a movement against deservingness, as much as it is the beginning of the collapse of an ostensibly democratic social order, long since hollowed of meaning by market forces.

Unless we can create a new shared vision about what kind of a world we want – what kind of a world *we all deserve* – there will be no motivation for collective action, and the American state may remain in the hands of whatever trolls and Trumps manage to grab it.

The first step is to figure out why that’s not what we deserve.

historical, and cultural features that make Turners Falls such an amazing place.

Be prepared for cold weather. Dress in layers and wear winter boots. Dogs are welcome on leash. Afterward, enjoy a cup of hot chocolate in the Great Hall thanks to the Friends of the Great Falls Discovery Center. Meet in the Great Hall at 1 pm. Hike begins at 1:15 pm.

The First Day Hike takes place in all fifty states. Because of state budget cuts that have affected DCR, the Great Falls Discovery Center is the only park in western MA that will be participating this year. The GFDC had over 200 hikers last year, and one of the largest crowds in the state.

Is the next Larry Bird or Sheryl Swoopes living in the area? Maybe you will find out at the **Youth Free Throw Championship** sponsored by the Turners Falls Knights of Columbus.

All boys and girls ages 9 to 14 are invited to participate in the local-level competition held on Saturday, January 7 starting at 2 p.m. in the Sheffield School Gym, Crocker Avenue in Turners Falls.

All contestants at the local level will be recognized for their participation in the event. Participants are required to furnish proof of age and written parental consent. Registrations are welcome in the gym.

For entry forms or additional information, contact Stephan Smith at 863-4373.

¿Quieres conversar en español?
A weekly **Spanish group at the Leverett Library** is seeking new members. This free group meets from 4 to 5 p.m. on Tuesdays. All levels are welcome. If interested, just drop by at 75 Montague Road in Leverett.

El grupo de conversación en español reúne todas los martes de cuatro a cinco en la biblioteca de Leverett. El coste es gratis. Todos los niveles de español son bienvenidos.

There will be no issue of the *Montague Reporter* on Thursday, December 29. Our next issue is January 5. Happy New Year!

Send your local briefs to editor@montaguereporter.org.

Christmas Eve and Christmas Day Services

- Friday, December 23**
7 p.m. Leverett Congregational Church (across from Leverett P.O.)
- Saturday, December 24**
4 p.m. Our Lady of Peace, 7th Street, Turners Falls. Children’s Mass
4 p.m. Our Lady of Czestochowa Church, K Street, Turners Falls
4:30 p.m. Church of Grace, L Street, Turners Falls
5:30 p.m. Gill Congregational Church, Gill Town Common
6 p.m. Spanish Mass – Our Lady of Czestochowa
7 p.m. North Leverett Baptist Church, 70 N. Leverett Road
7 p.m. First Congregational Church of Montague, Montague Center
10 p.m. Our Lady of Peace (music starts at 9:40 p.m.)
- Sunday, December 25**
10 a.m. Our Lady of Peace Church, 7th Street, Turners Falls
10 a.m. First Congregation Church of Montague, Montague Center
10 a.m. North Leverett Baptist Church, Leverett, 70 N. Leverett Road
10 a.m. Church of Grace, L Street, Turners Falls
10:30 a.m. Our Lady of Czestochowa, K Street, Turners Falls



Published weekly on Thursdays.
*Every other week in July and August.
No paper last week of November,
or the Thursday closest to 12/25.*

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TRAINING from page A1

gotten out of manufacturing for a while, and I always wanted to get back into it.”

The program was broken down into two parts – a four-week “fundamentals” course, followed by 11 weeks of more intensive training. At four nights a week, and five hours a night, the whole experience added up to 300 hours of classroom time.

Thirteen instructors, hired by Greenfield Community College (GCC), took turns teaching sessions. They covered the range of a machinist’s foundational skill set, from manufacturing math to blueprint reading to mill and lathe training, both manual and computer-controlled.

Precision Recruitment

But Friday night’s graduation only marked the end of a first step for the workers’ retraining.

“Becoming a skilled machinist is a real career,” said Andrew Baker, who oversaw the course on behalf of the Franklin Hampshire Regional Employment Board (FHREB). “And a real set of skills that’s in high demand.... What we’re really doing is finding and vetting people who have basic aptitude, and motivation, and ability, and willingness to learn. Putting those things together is the sweet spot for finding who your skilled workforce is going to become.”

Baker explained that the local program dovetails with a statewide certification initiative called the Manufacturing Advancement Center Workforce Innovation Collaborative, or MACWIC. Even as opportunities available at the “bottom end” of the sector – “very basic warehouse, shipping, and production jobs” – have trended toward minimum wage, Massachusetts employers find themselves challenged to recruit, vet and train a local skilled workforce capable of competing in modern global manufacturing.

“There’s a real skills gap, in terms of people knowing how to do the combination of manual machining, computer work, and design work,” Baker said. “This 15-week program just gets you to the front door. Whoever hires these guys is going to spend the next three to five years

turning them into machinists.”

The collaboration now known as the Advanced Manufacturing Pipeline came together after the FHREB, Career Center and GCC were approached by area manufacturers for help whittling down the area’s large pool of unemployed and under-employed workers to identify those most likely to stay the course and thrive as machinists in a high-tech age.

“The employers are the first to say they can’t recruit alone,” said Alyce Stiles, dean of workforce development at GCC. “When they recruit alone, they have to invest a lot in training. By going through and showing motivation – to complete the 300-hour training, and jumping through the hoops we have them jump through – this really has been something that’s been super successful for the businesses.”

According to Stiles, in its seven semesters, the CNC training program has had a 97% completion rate, and an 83% placement rate in related jobs. “Some find it’s not for them,” she noted, “and that’s not a bad thing!”

Dislocation and Adjustment

The backbone of the training collaboration is currently funded by combining two major grants from the federal Department of Labor. One is the Guided Pathways to Success in STEM, a \$20 million pot of money awarded to fifteen Massachusetts community colleges to

spend on technology workforce training between 2014 and 2018. This, in turn, was part of an overall \$2 billion earmark for community colleges in the 2010 Health Care and Education Reconciliation Act to provide career training in the name of “trade adjustment assistance” – i.e., aid to offset the negative consequences of increased international trade, a federal policy dating back to the 1974 Trade Act.

GCC is using \$627,000 of that money to fund the non-credit course taught at Franklin Tech as well as a sequence of for-credit engineering courses. At least one of last week’s graduates, Stiles said, will be continuing on with credited courses at the college in the spring. About half already have jobs lined up.

The other major source of funding comes from a highly targeted Sector Partnership National Emergency Grant, a \$3.28 million grant awarded to the state of Massachusetts in order to train and place 323 “dislocated workers” between 2015 and 2017. (This \$10,000 per worker ratio gives a sense of why employers are interested in outsourcing the training to regional specialists.)

A portion of that statewide money goes to the FHREB which, according to Baker, is tasked with “getting a pipeline together that builds a track record” in Franklin and Hampshire counties.

“Having an 80% placement rate is no small thing. It takes a lot of doing,”

he said. “We have additional funding called ‘On the Job Training’ where, if an employer wants to take somebody on but feels like they need a little extra, or we need to grease the wheels a little bit, we design a 2- to 3-month extra training program. It’s kind of a probationary onboarding process.”

Typically, Baker said, a probationary trainee would be a payroll employee, but the Regional Employment Board “subsidize[s] the wage for the first two to three months.”

A Non-Partisan Cause?

Can local employers expect this collaborative to be funded by the federal government in coming years?

“All bets are off – we’ll just have to see,” said Baker. “The one thing I can say that would be positive is that there’s not many things that Republicans and Democrats in Congress have agreed on, but workforce training is one of the few places. It’s not really a partisan thing....

“If they are serious about bringing jobs back from overseas, or preventing the outflow, they’ll be doing more of this.”

Baker also noted that the country’s workforce includes an “over-educated surplus of people in certain fields.”

“We get some of them who come here,” he said, looking around the cafeteria at the semester’s graduates as they snacked on cookies and bid farewell to their instructors. “There’s people in this room who have bachelor’s degrees and master’s degrees.”

As Elsie Jordan, the returning student said, she would “most definitely” recommend the experience to fellow workers.

“I enjoyed it,” she said. “If you’re just floating around out there and don’t know where to go, it’s definitely a course worth taking.... It’s a good opportunity, because everything seems to be going that way, especially in manufacturing.”

The final information session for next year’s CNC training program will be held Monday, January 9, from 3 to 5 p.m. at the Franklin/Hampshire Career Center, located at One Arch Place in Greenfield. To reserve a seat, call (413) 774-4361.



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Greenfield's mayor, William Martin, congratulates Friday's graduates.

BUSINESS from page A1

customers continue to shop for lights and stocking stuffers, exceeding the sales projections for the month. Bardsley cited the recent cold weather as a factor which may have customers in the hardware store in a more festive mood.

But others say that this year’s holiday crowd has been unseasonably small.

Aric Binaco, an owner of the Five Eyed Fox, a bar and restaurant on Third Street, says that sales are a bit down this season. “Restaurant people are always looking to reason away why things are busy or slow,” says Binaco.

What could it be? “The weather?” he suggests. “Probably. The election affecting people’s priorities? Maybe. Are people trying to keep their head down until 2016 is finally over? Who knows, I certainly am.”

“Maybe we can call it post-election, but there was a fallow period of about six weeks, and it seemed like the seasonal shopping would never pick up,” says Nina Rossi, owner of Nina’s Nook on Avenue A.

Luckily, Rossi says, business has picked up at her shop over the past few weeks. She hasn’t discussed the lull with her customers, saying that she is so happy to see them that all analysis is out of the question.

Other business owners also conjectured on the effect that the recent election has had on their sales. Allan Cadran, owner of the music gear store Replay, is one of the business owners downtown who has observed a slight downturn in sales from last holiday season – though the store only recently moved from its previous location in Greenfield to its new space at 370 Avenue A.

“This winter season our business has been slower than last year,” Cadran said. “I don’t know whether it was the move, or the season, or the economy, or everyone shouting ‘Trump!’ and saving their money and waiting for the revolution.”

But despite reports from some quarters of a slower holiday season, the majority of downtown business owners expressed hope and excitement for the new year, and gratitude for loyal customers and a supportive local community.

“This is a great community for businesses,” said John McNamara, co-owner of the shop Loot Found + Made on Avenue A. McNamara cited special downtown promotions, and opportunities for local businesses to refer customers to one another.

This was echoed by many others, including his business partner Erin MacLean, who made mention of the current “Open Door” promotion,

which was created by Turners Falls RiverCulture director Suzanne Lo-Manto in collaboration with Rossi.

This promotion functions as a scavenger hunt, bringing people into stores, restaurants, and venues which they may not have investigated otherwise, and according to many he spoke to has been a great success.

Kara Mondino and her partner Jae Roberge run Tangible Bliss, which sells handmade jewelry, crafts, leather goods, and local art on Third Street. Mondino says that she and Roberge have been supported by their community as shop owners, and are eager to find ways to give back, such as workshops and other events.

Adam Langelotti, manager at Replay, points out that it’s not simply through cross-promotion that businesses support one another. “I know a lot of gearheads that go into Loot,” he says, “because they often find cool old electronics. Just the other day, my buddy went in and found a bunch of old transistors.”

Many owners also referred to the arrival of the Brick & Feather brewery, and or a new management group at the Shea Theater, as being beneficial to the downtown economy. Downtown bars and restaurants can rely on the bustling crowd of a Shea Theater show night.

“I think the Shea is great,” says

Steve Vogel. “Anything that brings people downtown, I’m up for that. I think that’s good. People are not coming here to buy retail when they’re coming to the Shea, but if the retail places are lit at that time and they take a walk around... And in the summer, people may take a walk around after, and they see storefronts lit and they say, ‘Hey, we can come to Turners Falls.’”

“The Shea Theater has been a huge addition, getting lots of new faces to explore Turners,” says Aric Binaco, “and having Brick & Feather right down the road has been wonderful. We see lots of people stopping at our restaurant, and their brewery, while they’re in town.

“Their beer is so good, I’m glad people are able to experience it. We always go into the spring hopeful, and this year isn’t an exception.”

James Fountain is an example of a larger circle of contractors, craftspeople, and artisans whose businesses are boosted by the fortunes of downtown retail shops and restaurants. A carpenter and woodworker, Fountain operates a workshop directly opposite from Brick & Feather on Eleventh Street. He moved there last year, both to have a bigger work space, but also to be closer to the downtown community.

“Last winter was very slow,” he

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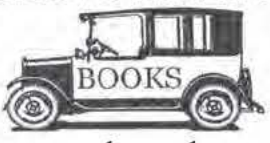
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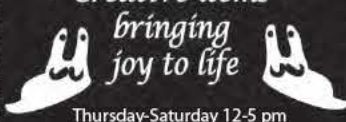
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**Great Falls Middle
School Students
of the Week**

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Grade 6
David Damkoehler

Grade 7
Dylan Burnett
Zachary Emond

Grade 8
Catherine Reynolds

RIVER from page A1

recreational land, including Barton's Cove, Cabot Woods, the Northfield Mountain Recreation Center, and commitments to help boaters portage around the dam and canal. This time, the focus is on environmental and economic development concerns. "We are trying our best," explains Montague town planner Walter Ramsey, "to get the relicensing to align with our community goals."

Minimum Flows

Relicensing is Turners Falls' best chance to get a new river. The Connecticut has not followed its channel around Turners Falls since the construction of the first dam here in the beginning of the 18th century.

A view of the downstream side of the Turners Falls Dam shows a sight more common in the arid West: an eroded riverbed of weathered sandstone ribs. These angle thrillingly skyward, according to Montague geologist Joe Kopera, because of the way the land pulled apart when this was a rift valley.

Ramsey estimates that 90% of the Connecticut River's water is directed into the Power Canal, leaving very little for the natural channel, which FirstLight refers to as the "bypass."

This estimate may be generous. The canal often flows at 18,000 cubic feet per second, and during shad spawning season in May and June, the dam is only required to release 150 to 400 cubic feet per second into the bypass.

"The 'bypass' is an environmental travesty," says Ramsey. "It's a dry riverbed. We don't want to be known as a place where fish come to die."

Through relicensing, the town hopes that a minimum flow will be mandated that will enable recreation – such as canoeing – and the restoration of riverine habitat in this stretch of the river. "The river is vastly underutilized for recreation," says Ramsey.

Since the project's original licensing, the federal government has changed its stance on what rivers are for. The Electric Consumers Protection Act of 1986 modified the Federal Power Act of 1920, the act that created licensing for power generators, saying that FERC "in addition to the power and development purposes for which licenses are issued, shall give equal consideration to the purposes of energy conservation, the protection, mitigation of damage to, and enhancement of fish and wildlife (including related spawning grounds and habitat), the protection of recreational opportunities, and the preservation of other aspects of environmental quality."

Norman Sims, who is working with the AMC on its comments to the license application, explains what this change means: "Fishing, recreation, and aesthetics, in the eyes of the federal government, have equal claim to power generation."

The stretch of river just below the dam is of special interest to paddlers. It is one of only three areas of whitewater on the Connecticut, the others being at Hartland and Belows Falls, Vermont.

Frank Mooney, owner of Crab Apple Whitewater, believes the bypass reach has huge potential for commercial rafting. At a meeting with the town's Economic Development and Industrial Corporation in June, he described the bypass stretch from a river guide's perspective.

"[The rapids] look small when you're up on the bridge," he said, "but when you're down there, they're twelve feet tall. Almost every day we see eagles – five eagles today. The record is thirteen."

This year, Crab Apple purchased the former Cumberland Farms building, on the former site of the Grand Trunk Hotel at Avenue A and Second Street, in anticipation of a new minimum flow being established that would make more

rafting trips feasible.

"When [the studies are] finished, we are very confident that the science is going to come back to move the fish," said Mooney. "There will be sufficient water for whitewater recreation on a regular basis." Sims is also optimistic about the chances for a river to return to this rocky canyon. "There will be a minimum flow," he predicts. "Otherwise, FERC wouldn't allow it."

Rebuilding Bridges

Montague is also hoping to use the relicensing to help make possible the redevelopment of the Strathmore Mill complex.

While the town owns the vacant buildings, FirstLight owns the land that surrounds them, as well as two important bridges over the canal. These bridges, not currently accessible to the public, are seen as key factors in the redevelopment of the Strathmore and other properties on the "power island."

"Reactivating our riverfront and mill district is intimately tied to the river project," explains Ramsey. "The canal that powered the mills is why the village is here, and that canal is now the biggest barrier to the town."

In its comments on the company's Draft License Application, the town states its commitment to repair and maintain public access to the island: "The Town is asking that FirstLight identify a management plan for the Strathmore Bridge, IP Bridges, and Canal Access Road with a commitment to repair and maintain public access over the power canal to the Historic-Industrial Mill District."

Improved public access to the river is another goal that the town hopes to meet through the relicensing negotiations. Under the original license, FirstLight's predecessor, Northeast Utilities, built the campground and boat ramp at Barton's Cove, but did not allow for any water access on

the Montague side of the river. FirstLight has more recently taken steps to prevent people from accessing the river – for example, by removing the stairs that went down to Rock Dam.

In the comments, the town requests that public access be improved at a number of sites: at Cabot Camp, at the mouth of the Millers River; at Unity Park; below the dam; at Rock Dam; and at Poplar Street in Montague City, at the confluence of the Deerfield.

When the original Turners Falls Dam was built at the end of the 18th century, it may have partially submerged a site important to Native American history – the Peskeomskut massacre of 1676. More historic land may have been flooded with successive versions of the dam. It is now in its fourth incarnation, having last been heightened in the late 1960s to create the lower reservoir of the Northfield Mountain facility.

In 2004, a reconciliation ceremony occurred between the Town of Montague and the Narragansett Tribe, and the towns of Montague and Gill are currently part of a federally funded "battlefield" study to determine the specifics of what happened in 1676.

As part of this process of "spirit healing and reconciliation," which is mentioned in the town's comments on the Draft License Application, the town is considering a proposal to build a "Great Falls Native Cultural Landscape Park" on the power island. To this end, it suggests that FirstLight should help establish and fund an interpretative center discussing the area's Native American history.

Representatives of the town and FirstLight will meet over the winter to negotiate an agreement over the company's use of the river, and riverfront land. What they decide may well shape the path Turners Falls takes for the next half-century.



NOTES FROM THE MONTAGUE SELECTBOARD

Shea Theater Beer License, Mascot Referendum, Centralized Emails...

By JEFF SINGLETON

The Shea Theater in downtown Turners Falls has been serving beer and wine at music events through a series of one-day licenses individually approved by the Montague selectboard. That monthly ritual may soon come to an end, after the board approved an annual "general on-premise wine and malt beverage license" for the theater at its December 20 meeting.

The request was made by Shea Theater Arts Center board members Lisa Davol and Monte Belmonte, who sat at the front table during the public hearing. "Rather than coming every month and asking for specific dates each month, the beer and wine license that was the Five-Eyed Fox's – and we knew was reverting to the town – we thought it might make

things easier for everyone if we had that beer and wine license," said Belmonte.

Selectboard member Rich Kulewicz asked whether the frequency of events with beer and wine would increase as a result of the license. "I can't anticipate that we would get more [of that business]," replied Belmonte, "unless we get more events because of the fact that we can sell beer and wine."

"It really just helps with the revenue, bigtime," added Davol. "A lot of theaters make a lot of their money on concessions."

The license will now go to the state for its approval. Administrative assistant Wendy Bogusz noted that the process could take at least a month, during which time the Shea may not apply for a one-day license in case of an event.

Belmonte asked whether "an outside producer wants to apply – is that legal?" Town administrator Steve Ellis told him he would look into the matter.

New Pay Scale

The board approved the reclassification of employees at the town's water pollution control facility (WPCF). This essentially upgraded job descriptions and pay scales of at least three members of the WPCF staff in line with their expanded duties treating solid waste from other districts.

The board also approved a memorandum of understanding (MOU) with the United Electrical Workers union, which represents some of the WPCF employees.

"This puts us more in line with other facilities of our size," said

WPCF director Bob McDonald. "[It] gives us more credibility..."

During the discussion of this topic, it was announced that chief operator John Little, who had played a central role in developing the "Montague process," was retiring.

"Could you give us a little more detail about his retiring?" asked Michael Nelson. "That caught me a little off guard."

McDonald said that Little had made the decision in consultation with his wife when he was recuperating from his recent knee surgery. McDonald asked him to stay on part-time, at 16 hours per week. With increased engineering expertise in the new job categories, "hopefully we can get it all straightened out within the next six to twelve months," McDonald said.

Borrowing the Truck

The board also approved an MOU involving the use of a town-owned vehicle by highway department

see MONTAGUE next page

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NOTES FROM THE WENDELL SELECTBOARD

Board Approves 0.4% Tax Reduction; Discusses Diaper Noncompliance

By JOSH HEINEMANN

Town coordinator Nancy Aldrich and selectboard chair Christine Heard both brought cookies to the last regular selectboard meeting before the holidays, on December 14. Aldrich brought bags so that anyone who came to the office could take some home, and towards the end of the meeting she said she did not want to take any home. Enough people came in to reduce the cookie supply considerably, but not all were gone at meeting’s end.

The first attendees were assessors Chris Wings and Ted Lewis, who came for the annual tax classification hearing. They said the excess levy limit is \$605,654, up from \$463,000 in FY’16, and they recommended a single tax rate for the town, \$19.31 per \$1,000, down seven cents from FY’16. The selectboard approved the single rate.

They appointed town clerk Gretchen Smith and Aldrich as general public records access officers, and police chief Ed Chase as police records access officer.

With members of the finance committee and technical advisory committee, they reviewed the three responses that answered the town’s request for proposals for computer and network supervision and security. One seemed a boilerplate response and not aimed at a town of Wendell’s size, but the other two, PJP Enterprises of Millers Falls, and Scott Conant of Conant Tech Computer Solutions in Turners Falls, were of interest.

Board members agreed to inter-

view one, then the other at an extra selectboard meeting Thursday, December 22, with the goal of making a choice at the December 28 regular selectboard meeting so that work can begin in January. Whichever firm is hired will have to interview all town departments and the tech advisory committee, and deal with demands of the new public records law.

The selectboard approved the annual Class III automobile salvage license renewal for Scott’s Garage on Mormon Hollow Road.

Heard said that the most recent joint meeting of the conservation commission, board of health, and selectboard concluded that a tarp draped over two-by-fours and pallets is not a structure, and the dwelling at 131 Locke Village Road has three unregistered vehicles outside. After that, Heard recused herself. Selectboard member Jeoffrey Pooser said the board should send the occupant, Andy Hamilton, a certified letter to tell him that one of those vehicles must be removed within 30 days.

The planning board clerk, Mary Thomas, and a school committee member, Jess Zaykoski, submitted resignations. Heard also commented that board of health member Shay Cooper does not plan to run for re-election in May.

The board agreed to waive the normal fee so the Wendell Community Chorus could hold a concert to benefit the Friends of the Meetinghouse on December 17. (On that day, the concert was postponed to an unnamed date due to weather and less-than-ideal driving condi-

tions.)

Facilities engineer Jim Slavas had to go down into the hole again, and clear another clog from the grinder pump that pushes solid waste from the library over the town common so it can drain into the town septic system. Although they may be advertised to be flushable, diapers are not flushable. Signs have been put up in the library bathrooms to tell people not to put them in the toilets, but those signs have been ignored.

A replacement pump would cost the town \$1,200, but better than that would be if people disposed of non-flushable things into the proper designated containers. If the problem continues, the next step may be to lock the bathrooms and have a key at the desk, an option no one likes.

Harry Williston offered to buy and install a light for the flagpole on the town common. It is illegal to fly a flag after dark unless it is illuminated. On the other hand, people have objected to lights on the common being on all night, because dark nights are an important part of the lives of many creatures.

Heard said she would contact people who live around the common and get their thoughts.

In a budget re-adjustment, the Mahar regional high school returned just over \$400 to Wendell.

As chair of the energy committee Nan Riebschlaeger brought proposals for Wendell’s use of Green Communities grant money whose total would be \$23,109. If the grants are approved and the town gets the money for all three, \$31,635 will

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MONTAGUE from previous pg

superintendent Tom Bergeron. According to Kuklewicz, Bergeron is currently allowed to drive a town vehicle from home to work “because of the nature of his job – he’s on call 24 hours a day, and so forth.”

The memorandum acknowledges this policy and also notes that “there may be instance during the normal work day where Tom may need to respond to a personal emergency that may reasonably require his use of a town owned vehicle.”

The MOU states that the borrowing should not exceed a distance of twenty miles, “as the crow flies.”

Nelson noted that the DPW foreman was also allowed the use of a town vehicle during the winter months. Bergeron agreed that a similar MOU should be written for this case.

Bergeron reported that the new compactor at the transfer station is working out “very well,” and the facility is sending fewer containers of waste to Springfield. Ellis

estimated that over the first two months the compactor has been in place, the town has saved approximately \$1,200.

Voting on Indians

Steve Ellis reported on a request for a legal opinion concerning the feasibility of a referendum on the use of the Indian mascot, or logo, at Turners Falls High School. According to Ellis, the town legal firm, Kopelman and Paige, has advised that “there is no mechanism in state law to include a binding question on an election ballot for such purposes. The further opinion, however, was that a non-binding question could be included under the provisions of Chapter 53 Section 18A.”

Ellis went on to state that there were a number of ways to put the question on the ballot, the simplest of which would be for either the selectboard or town meeting to place the issue on the annual spring ballot. A more complicated procedure would be directly by petition,

which would require 10% of the registered voters.

Kuklewicz asked if the petitioners could ask for a special election to consider the issue. Ellis said that issue was not raised with town counsel.

Chris Boutwell suggested that the school district might put the issue on its own ballot. Kuklewicz noted that had been his original suggestion. “If we get a group of people who want to come to the selectboard,” he said, “we’ll cross that bridge when we come to it.”

Endless Transparency

Ellis reported on a pilot project to create a central email system, with standard, “semi-personalized” email address for town employees. The emails would be retained in a central location, the town server.

Ellis said the issue had been raised during a training involving the state open meeting law. He noted that one purpose of a central system was to avoid potential access to the

private email accounts of town officials in an open meeting law complaint or public records request.

“You’ve got a great smile on your face, by the way,” said Ellis to Mike Nelson.

“I’ve got that. I love the concept of it. I understand the reasoning for it. I don’t want another frickin’ email,” said Nelson.

After further discussion, Nelson said he was “willing to give it a try.”

In a related matter, the board appointed 16 town employees, most of them department heads, as “records officers.” They will be in charge of maintaining public records, and responding to requests for them in a manner consistent with state law.

A new public records law will go into effect on January 1, although, according to Ellis, the town has until July 1 to publish its new policies. Town clerk Debra Bourbeau and assistant clerk Madelyn Hampp will serve as “super records officers.”

Other Business

The board executed a tax title deed for the sale of two parcels of land on New Street in Millers Falls. The properties were sold for \$24,150. Nelson applauded the DPW for doing “yeoman’s work” cleaning up the sites.

The board also executed a “certificate of substantial completion” for the main drain cleaning project.

The board appointed Ellis as the town’s “environmental certifying officer,” which primarily involves oversight on community development block grant proposals.

It also approved the disbursement of \$4,833.40 to GZA Environmental for planning work on the Rutters Park project in Lake Pleasant.

The board adjourned to an executive session to consider the purchase of real estate. The next scheduled board meeting will be on January 9.



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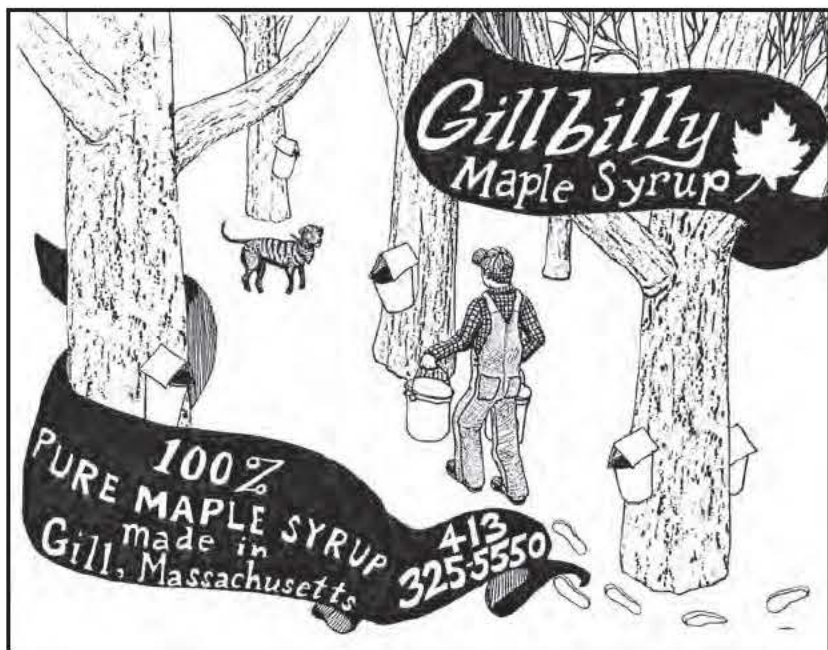
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ERVING from page A1

told Bailey that the additional 14-hour per week position, too, would be too costly. Finance committee member Daniel Hammock said that he was not comfortable with a 23% increase in the library budget over FY'17, as there is a 2.5% cap on property tax increases, and he expects departments to keep their requests for increases under that level.

"There are many people in town who never use the library," Hammock observed, saying his committee needed to consider the perspective of the entire town.

Bailey told the board that the additional 14-hour position would free library director Barbara Friedman from desk duties, allowing her to administer and supervise the library, attend meetings and prepare reports. Bailey and Friedman both said that Friedman works, at no pay, many hours beyond the 18 per week she is paid for. Friedman said she had been documenting those unpaid hours in the weekly timesheets she submits.

Selectboard chair Jacob Smith said, "You're doing the job you're supposed to do, that's not above and beyond the duties of library director."

And selectboard member William Bembury observed that, when he worked for the state, he put in additional hours and bought equipment with his own money. "That's not right," he said, "but it's how the system works."

Asked why the December 12 request had been for only 4.5 additional staff hours, while Monday's proposed 14, Bailey said that the trustees had "scaled back on everything else" and tried to "go for one over the other" in order to present a reasonable request to the town.

The three fin com members present decided to wait to make a decision on the trustees' request when their full committee meets. The board and fin com will reconsider the request on January 9. Bastarache told Bailey that the trustees should be specific and articulate in communicating what the department would use the additional hours for.

In an email written after Monday's meeting, Friedman wrote, "The library circulation has increased steadily over the past ten years and the annual circulation is now 137% more than it was ten

years ago. The physical collection has grown by 50%.

"The library staff of two has added many services in the last ten years: interlibrary loan, Kindles to loan, iPads to use in-house, e-Books, digital audiobooks, streaming videos, extensive programming, Friends of the Library events, STEM activities, delivery to shut-ins, and launched a building program for a new facility, which could open its doors as early as 2019."

Merit Raises

At the December 12 meeting, Bastarache commented that he felt the town's merit raise system was "broken," and that any requests for merit raises needed to be well documented, as merit raises should be approved only for employees who go "above and beyond" expectations. The board decided to discuss merit raise procedures at the January 3 and January 9 meetings, and asked administrative coordinator Bryan Smith to provide a list of all such raises approved for FY'16 and FY'17.

At that meeting, the board and fin com approved a 2% merit raise for the wastewater operator, after a short verbal recommendation by department head Peter Sanders, and a 1% merit raise for the municipal clerk, with administrative coordinator Smith calling the clerk "incredible" and "very supportive."

At Monday's meeting, treasurer Margaret Sullivan requested 2% merit raises for the payroll clerk and the treasurer's assistant, and provided a memo documenting her reasons for the requests.

Selectboard chair Smith observed the assistant's hourly rate had increased by over 30% over the last three years, and that the clerk had started at a high rate and had received a merit raise last year.

Hammock said that FY'18 merit raises for other employees had been set at 1%, and that raises should be consistent across departments. Bastarache disagreed, saying, "If it's consistent, then it's not merit," but said he agreed with the 1% raise for the treasurer's office employees. The officials approved 1% merit raises for both employees.

Highway department foreman Glenn McCrory requested 2% raises for a number of employees: building maintenance worker, highway labor-

Holiday Recycling Guidelines

FRANKLIN COUNTY — During the holiday season, the average American family throws away at least 25% more trash than they do during the rest of the year, according to the EPA. A large portion of this could be avoided, reused, recycled or composted. Recycling or reusing your holiday waste can help you save money on town trash stickers or bags, save money for your town, and be kinder to the earth.

The Springfield Materials Recycling Facility, which accepts recyclables from 75 communities in western Massachusetts, including those in Franklin County, asks residents to keep the following recycling guidelines in mind.

Wrapping paper and tissue paper are acceptable in household recycling, but only if they do not contain foil, metallic inks, or glitter. Tape is OK. Paper gift bags and shopping bags are also recyclable, and any type of handle is OK to include.

Other holiday waste that is recyclable: greeting cards (except those with foil, wire, glitter); envelopes; catalogs; calendars; corrugated cardboard boxes; and pa-

perboard gift boxes.

Please *do not* include: ribbons; bows; tinsel; holiday lights; Christmas tree netting; bubble wrap; packing peanuts; Styrofoam; plastic bags; or plastic "blister pack" packaging.

Holiday lights are *not* recyclable in your town's household recycling, because they get wrapped around the sorting equipment at the recycling facility. Light strings are accepted at some scrapyards. Home Depot and Lowe's often offer free recycling for holiday lights. You can get a coupon for 15% off energy-efficient holiday lights by mailing in your old light strings for recycling: www.holidayleds.com/christmas-light-recycling-program.aspx

Clean, dry packing materials such as peanuts and bubble wrap, inflatable "air pillow" packaging, and Styrofoam sheets are accepted for reuse at The UPS Store, 21 Mohawk Trail, Greenfield.

Battery purchases and usage increases by 40% around the holidays. All transfer stations in the Franklin County Solid Waste District accept rechargeable, button, and lithium batteries for free, year-round recy-

5% for her assistant. The officials approved a 1% raise.

Other FY'18 Requests

The meeting also considered budget requests from the recreation commission, treasurer's office, assessors, IT department, planning board, town clerk, tax collector, and highway department.

McCrory said that the major increases in the highway budget were for the merit raises. He told the board that a 19.5 hour per week recreation maintenance worker, who reports to him but works primarily for the recreation commission, resigned last week. He warned the board that, with maintenance needs for the new Riverside Park, the position might need to go to full time in the future.

The IT department's request, presented by coordinator Jacqueline Boyden, was level-funded except for cost-of-living adjustments. Bembury asked if it was "past time to hire an IT person." The department currently consists of Boyden, who fits the work around her assistant assessor duties, and selectboard chair Smith, who acts as an on-call consultant. "I'm not an IT person," Boyden replied, saying the town will probably need to hire a part-time expert in the coming years, and that if the town decides to comply with the state's new records law by putting most of its records online, the expert might need to work as many as 25 hours a week.

Sullivan estimated \$945,000 as the projected cost for employee health, dental and life insurance for all town employees. If the town approves any additional employees, she said, \$18,000 should be added to the insurance line item to cover the highest-cost family health plan.

The planning board's level-fund-

cling. Rechargeable batteries, found in any appliances that can be recharged, contain heavy metals and should never be thrown in the trash.

Composting is easy, and can greatly decrease holiday meal waste. The compost programs at the transfer stations in Greenfield, Lev-erett, New Salem, Northfield, Or-ange, Wendell and Whately accept all types of food waste, plus paper waste plates, paper to-go containers, and paper towels. These programs are harmed by the inclusion of plas-tic, metal, foil, or glass.

When the holidays are over, check with your town about Christ-mas tree recycling. Your tree may be recycled as mulch this spring!

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ed budget request was approved, as was the recreation commission's, which was level-funded except for cost-of-living adjustments.

Town clerk Richard Newton presented a decreased budget from FY'17, because no state or federal elections are scheduled for FY'18. His request was approved.

Sullivan said that "ordinary ex-penses" were level-funded in the treasurer's budget request, which the board and fincom approved.

The assessors requested "a slight increase in the expense line" to cover training for new members on the board of assessors, which was ap-proved.

Eight Resignations, 1 Appointment

Renee Tela resigned from the recreation commission. Carole Ly-man and Linda Downs-Bembury re-signed from the senior housing com-mittee. Son Hui May resigned from the cultural council and the school committee. Leonard Clark resigned from the ZBA and the open space committee. Phyllis Stone resigned from the cultural council.

Denise Maynard was appointed to the senior housing committee.

Senior Housing Grant

At the request of Franklin Coun-ty Regional Housing Authority infrastructure coordinator Bruce Hunter, the board rescinded an earlier transfer of \$10,400 in the five-town community development block grant from planning to hous-ing rehabilitation.

The funds, restored to the "plan-ning" line item, will be used to pay consultant fees for planning senior housing in Erving. Hunter said he ex-pected a request for propos-als for senior housing would be published in February.



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the poetry page

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

– William Carlos Williams

edited by Christopher Sawyer-Lauçanno
Readers are invited to send poems to the
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CHRISTOPHER CARMODY PHOTO

Near, in the aortic arch,
in the light-blood:
the light-word.

Mother Rachel
no longer weeps.
All weeping
carried over.

Still, in the coronary arteries,
unbound:
Ziv, that light.

– Paul Celan

Psalm III

To God: to illuminate all men. Beginning with Skid Road.
Let Occidental and Washington be transformed into a higher place, the plaza of eternity.
Illuminate the welders in shipyards with the brilliance of their torches.
Let the crane operator lift up his arm for joy.
Let elevators creak and speak, ascending and descending in awe.
Let the mercy of the flower’s direction beckon in the eye.
Let the straight flower bespeak its purpose in straightness – to seek the light.
Let the crooked flower bespeak its purpose in crookedness – to seek the light.
Let the crookedness and straightness bespeak the light.
Let Puget Sound be a blast of light.
I feed on your Name like a cockroach on a crumb – this cockroach is holy.

– Allen Ginsberg

Hanukkah

The swollen dead fish float on the water;
the dead birds lie in the dust trampled to feathers;
the lights have been out a long time and the quick gentle hands that lit them –
rosy in the yellow tapers’ glow –
have long ago become merely nails and little bones,
and of the mouths that said the blessing and the minds that thought it
only teeth are left and skulls, shards of skulls.
By all means, then, let us have psalms
and days of dedication anew to the old causes.

Penniless, penniless, I have come with less and still less
to this place of my need and the lack of this hour.
That was a comforting word the prophet spoke:
Not by might nor by power but by My spirit, said the Lord;
comforting, indeed, for those who have neither might nor power –
for a blade of grass, for a reed.

The miracle, of course, was not that the oil for the sacred light –
in a little cruse – lasted as long as they say;
but that the courage of the Maccabees lasted to this day:
let that nourish my flickering spirit.

Go swiftly in your chariot, my fellow Jew,
you who are blessed with horses;
and I will follow as best I can afoot,
bringing with me perhaps a word or two.
Speak your learned and witty discourses
and I will utter my word or two –
not by might not by power
but by Your Spirit, Lord.

– Charles Reznikoff

Contributors’ Notes

The poems for this issue of the poetry page reflect on the solstice and the two major holidays of this season: Christmas and Hanukkah.
Patricia Pruitt’s new book *DrawingPoint* is just out from Alyscamps Press, Paris & London. Her poem seeks to remind readers that not all are able to enjoy this season as a time of peace and tranquility. She lives in Turners Falls.
David Rowland of Gill is a retired English and drama teacher at Northfield Mount Hermon School. He writes about his poem: “As always at this point in the turning year, I post my poem/card to the Solstice occurring this coming Wednesday, December 21. Even as we enter the frigid, unrelenting domain of winter, this year attended by new uncertainty and fear,

the old promise is redeemed once more by shorter nights and lengthening days. May we all, peering into the dark and cold, remember the light that is love and the warmth that is human compassion.”
Russian and American poet and Nobel Prize winner Joseph Brodsky (1940-1996) though of Jewish heritage was so taken by American Christmas celebrations that he wrote a poem for Christmas for many years. These poems, collected in his book *Nativity Poems* are broad-ranging meditations on the season.
Charles Reznikoff (1894-1976) was an American poet whose life and work were shaped by Judaism. The selection here is the middle section of his long poem “Meditations on the Fall and Winter Holidays.”

Star of the Nativity

In the cold season, in a locality accustomed to heat more than to cold, to horizontality more than to a mountain,
a child was born in a cave in order to save the world;
it blew as only in deserts in winter it blows, athwart.

To Him, all things seemed enormous: His mother’s breast, the steam out of the ox’s nostrils, Caspar, Balthazar, Melchior – the team of Magi, their presents heaped by the door, ajar.
He was but a dot, and a dot was the star.

Keenly, without blinking, through pallid, stray clouds, upon the child in the manger, from far away –
from the depth of the universe, from its opposite end – the star was looking into the cave. And that was the Father’s stare.

– Joseph Brodsky

Solstice

We climb unwillingly from sleep to see
tress gaunt against grey sky like broken dreams
and trace a shallow arc of sun that seems
hope’s pale parabola. Simply to be
alive alone this morning must suffice.
December dawn casts flat its shadow bones,
turns fragile fantasy to frozen stones,
stills all our mere desire.

Yet under ice
the heart’s fire waits and glows, dumbly content
to know flames fed on faith can flare anew;
humanity may turn, love may come true,
children may climb toward grace. We can’t repent
because the wait is long, the sunlight thin,
but feed the flame, love still, live to begin.

– David V. Rowland

Sleigh Bells Ring

through our town if only in the song.
Are you listening? Are you focused
on joy and tinsel and the birth of the Babe?

Far from here on the plains
of Aleppo a stream of Syrians
try to survive by escaping
the homeland. A lone doctor
without a hospital
wanders through the devastation...
Those left behind are gone...

– Patricia Pruitt

Christmas Eve

As the orchestra falls silent, veiled
feminine shadows pass beneath the branches,
whose dry leaves filter frozen
chimeras of moon, pale cloudscaapes.

Lips sing forgotten arias,
giant lilies pretend to be ivory gowns.
Chattering and smiles in wild crowds
perfume with silk the rough thickets.

I hope the light laughs at your return;
and in the epiphany of your slender shape,
the festivity will sing in gold major.

My verses will then bleat in your land,
humming in all your mystical bronze bells
that the Baby-Jesus of your love has been born.

– César Vallejo

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FACES & PLACES



LINDA HICKMAN PHOTO

The Friends of the Montague Public Libraries recently held "Cards and Cookies," a program for adults and teens, at the Carnegie Library. A dozen people made holiday cards and enjoyed homemade cookies. Sixty-five cards were donated to residents of nearby nursing homes. Pictured are Naomi, Sheila, and Abigail Johnson of Millers Falls.



SHARON LABELLA-LINDALE PHOTO

Students at the Northfield Mount Hermon school take a break from studying for finals to visit with Leroy, one of several dogs brought by volunteers from Monadnock Therapy Pets. Nearly 100 students came to pet the dogs, who are trained, temperament-tested, and certified, and whose owners volunteer their time to visit schools, prisons, hospitals, and other places where people might benefit from some canine love.

LOOKING BACK: 100 YEARS AGO THIS WEEK

News from the December 20, 1916 edition of the Turners Falls Reporter.

Death of R.L. Atherton

R.L. Atherton, for many years a prominent resident of Turners Falls, died at the home of his daughter, Mrs. George Wright, in Deerfield, this morning, after a long period of failing health. He was 74 years old and a native of Gill, coming of an old Gill family, being the son of Zora Atherton, one of the famous old time cattle drovers.

Mr. Atherton was a veteran of the Civil War, responding to the first call for volunteers, and he served in Co. G, of the Tenth regiment. He lost an arm in battle, Captain J.F. Bartlett of this place being in the same engagement, when Mr. Atherton was shot.

After the war, Mr. Atherton returned to Gill and settled on a farm. Later he moved to Riverside and engaged in the meat business, for a time, after which he moved to Turners Falls, and lived here many years. A year or so ago, after the death of his wife, he went to Deerfield to live with his daughter.

Mr. Atherton was a lifelong Democrat, and served the town of Montague many years as a selectman and as assessor. He also represented this district in the Legislature. He was an able business man, a capable town official, and a genial friend.

Benefit Moving Picture Show

The entire proceeds of the moving picture shows at the Turners Falls Opera House next Wednesday, Dec. 27, both afternoon and evening, will be devoted as a benefit to Charles B. Sylvester of South Hadley, formerly principal of the Turners Falls High school, who has been a victim of infantile paralysis and has been left very badly crippled.

Turners Falls people should, and undoubtedly will, be glad to attend the Opera house shows next Wednesday in large numbers in order that as large a sum as possible may be raised for the unfortunate man, who made many friends here during his principalship of the High school. A special program will be given on this occasion and one that will also be suitable for children.

D.J. Shea, manager of the Opera house, generously gives the use of the Opera house,

and his time and the services of his employees, for this worthy purpose, and is co-operating with the Woman's Club under whose auspices this benefit is being arranged.

High School Notes

Last Friday evening, the basket ball team celebrated the opening of the season by defeating "Smith Aggies," 26 to 17. Owing to the delay in starting practice, because of the lateness of the football season, the team did not show up as well as could be hoped, but when more fully developed promises to be able to hold its own with any of our neighbors. The girls are considering the matter of having a team.

Turners Falls and Vicinity

Colds of all degrees of severity are very prevalent and nearly everybody is barking, sneezing or wheezing, if not doing all.

Winter arrived with a will, Friday, and this is real, old-fashioned winter and ideal for the holidays. The thermometer has started in to make a few records for so early in the season.

The Crocker National bank has already enrolled a large number of members in the various classes of the Christmas clubs, and some of the club members will get their first lessons in learning systematic thrift.

The lunch cart which for so long has stood on the corner of Avenue a and Fourth street, has been removed, and W.J. Sprague, the proprietor, now does business from his new stand on Fourth street above the Hibernian block. The appearance of the Avenue at this point would be greatly improved were a new block to be build on the vacant lot.

Ambrose Desautels of Third street was badly burned about the face and head Thursday night while at work on his automobile. He was handling alcohol and lighted a match. A spark set the alcohol afire and it flamed up into his face.

Santa Claus, as an advertisement for one of the local stores, appeared on the Avenue at about five o'clock last night, and almost caused a riot among the youngsters, who clamored about the jolly good fellow in a way which left no doubt as to his appeal to the children – and the demand for what he was giving away.

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When Winter was a Rip-Roaring Good Time

By NINA ROSSI

TURNERS FALLS – Before extruded plastics took over the sledding hills in the form of molded saucers and one-piece sleds, before people expected the blacktop roads to be cleared of snow right away, before kids did extreme winter sports in their living rooms with their thumbs on a controller – before these modern times, local kids slid through “Slippery Gap” on homemade sleds called “Rips.”

Invincible youths are predisposed to jackass contraptions and foolhardy stunts. This seems to be particularly the case in teenage boys. Their surging testosterone seems to activate a desire to defy gravity in stupid ways.

Almost everyone has a story of a father, brother or son who sustained an injury related to throwing himself through the air somehow. Whether they are tumbling down stairs in a cardboard box or balancing, surfer style, on a crib mattress down same, for flying through the air after hitting a homemade jump on a bike or board or skates, or attempting flight off a cliff or out a window, or building things with wheels, wings, keels and motors,

the desire to escape gravity dominates their imagination.

Funny as Hell, at the Time

“Gizmo,” as Ed Gregory is known to his Turners Falls friends, sat down with me recently to reminisce about riding on a Rip sled during his invincible high school years. By that time, kids were no longer sledding the Slippery Gap in downtown Turners, which is the intersection of Seventh and L streets. Gizmo and his friends went out to Millers Falls to ride their six-man ripper on what he calls “Zhener’s Hill,” which is where the road splits going up into Wendell. Zhener’s Hill was on the lower road, a long downhill run which then reverses itself to go up to the Diemand farm.

“The rips were around for a long, long time. It’s a very simple design, basically it’s a board that is fourteen or fifteen inches wide, and maybe ten feet long, on some wooden runners,” he explained. “The runners had metal strips on them for wear and tear, and the front runner you steered with a handle or ropes.”

Six boys rode on this board,

making it sag in the middle. They tucked their feet under the guy in front of them and held onto the side of the board with their hands. There was probably a thrilling lack of control for the five riders in back – and a lot of momentum building up from the combined weight.

“We had to get there right after the snow because if the snow plows came by, it would be done in short order,” remembered Gizmo. “We met in early morning and rode down there to Millers and had a hell of a time.” They’d one person to alert oncoming traffic. “Once the thing got going and we had to make any type of a turn, left or right, we all had to shift our bodies in that direction. It was the fun of doing it, all the laughs we had. Always the same bunch of guys...”

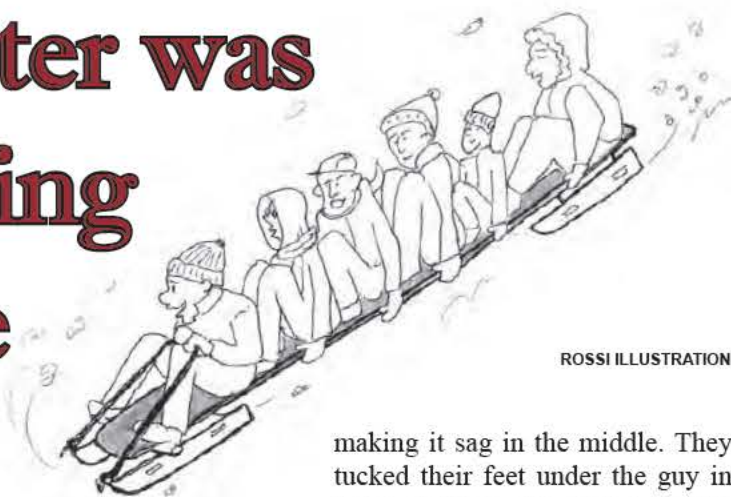
The years were 1960 to 1963. This rip had a fateful last run at the Thomas Memorial golf course after a few winters.

“We took this sled to Thomas Memorial golf course, where the high-tension lines are on the right side as you face the golf course. There’s a substantial hill there: not a long one, but it’s steep.

“We brought the sled down there one time and went down the hill with six of us on it. The real funny part about this is, we didn’t anticipate that the hill met the flat at too much of an angle for the sled, and the sled split in two pieces!

“It broke in half, but I was fortunate enough to be at the back end of it where it dug in, and we got flipped around and got a mouthful of snow. The guys who were at the front end of the sled – there’s a brick house, and they carried on right through a picket fence and

see **RIP-ROARING** page B4



ROSSI ILLUSTRATION



ED GREGORY PHOTO

This homemade rip sled was found by Ed Gregory in Sunderland recently.

The Week in TFHS Sports

By MATT ROBINSON

This week, the Turners Falls girls’ basketball team hosted ninth-ranked Hopkins Academy, the ice hockey team lost two 1-goal games in the Rabbit Graves Tournament and then dropped an open-net loss, the boys’ basketball team remained perfect, the swim teams split against Chicopee, and All-League selections were made for fall sports.

Ice Hockey

Wahconah 4 – TFHS 3

Greenfield 7 – TFHS 6

Wahconah 5 – TFHS 3

On its website, MassLive classifies high school hockey as “boys ice hockey.” However, it seems most teams have at least one girl on their roster.

One of those young ladies, Cassidy Wozniak, is a sophomore from Turners who has scored 46 goals in field hockey. According to her father Tom, she was unable to play hockey on the Marlborough 16-and-under girls ice hockey team this year, so instead, she decided to skate for the Turners Falls varsity team.

Wozniak did pretty well in the first two games, getting a couple of shots-on-goal in the first game and earning an assist against Wahconah. But in the Wahconah game, she suf-

fered an injury.

“It’s my shoulder,” she told me a day later. “I may need an operation.” Good luck, Cassie, and get better!

On Friday December 16, in the first round of the Rabbit Graves Tournament, the Turners Falls Ice Hockey Indians fell to the Wahconah Warriors 4-3 on a late game goal. The Warriors skated out to an early 2-0 lead, but by the end of the second period, Turners had knotted the game at 2 all.

Wahconah took a 3-2 lead with 10:25 left, but the Indians again tied it up less than a minute later. But later in the third, Wahconah scored the game-winning goal.

In goal, Jordyn Lavallee made 18 saves. Camden Barnes, Doug Haneski and Mason Whiteman scored the three goals, with Haneski giving an assist. Wozniak and Ethan Lafleur also had assists for Blue, while Bryan Baumann gave two.

The next day, the Greenfield Green Wavers scored a power-play goal with 23 seconds left to win the consolation game in the tournament. The game was penalty laden right from the get-go, much to the dismay of the True Blue Faithful.

For most of the contest, it seemed one or more players from either team was sitting in the penalty box, and at

times, three skaters were defending against five opponents. But the most important penalty came at the end of the game, when Greenfield was given a man advantage and scored with just 23 clicks on the clock.

Baumann and Bryce Jordan scored two goals apiece, with Jordan giving an assist. Haneski and Michael McGoldrick scored the other two, with Haneski passing for two assists. Dalton DeForest (2) and Whiteman also made assists. In goal, Lavallee made 22 saves.

On Tuesday, the Wahconah Warriors once again beat the Indians. Like their first contest, this game was closely fought until the bitter end. With two minutes left, trailing by a point, Coach Darren Lenois had to pull Lavallee out of the goal.

Wahconah then scored an empty-net goal with five seconds left, and took the contest 5-3. Lafleur, Baumann and Camden Barnes each scored a goal and gave an assist, while Haneski and Aurel Pydych also notched assists.

Girls Basketball

Hopkins 51 – TFHS 47

Last Friday, the Turners Falls Lady Indians welcomed the Hopkins Golden Hawks and gave them a run for their money. The Hawks came into town as the ninth-high-



POLLY FRENCH ILLUSTRATION

WEST ALONG THE RIVER

Down the December Days

By DAVID BRULE

MILLERS RIVER BEND – December 1. In the morning of the first day of December, there’s an occasional chirp of quiet birds, busy rummaging in late leaves getting their breakfast. This is a gray-sky kind of silence, hushed like the first few minutes before snow starts drifting down.

A slate-gray junco seeks out the random corn kernels scattered on the porch beneath the wooden work bench. This bench on the deck serves as work space in the summer and bird feeding counter in the winter.

December 12. Tree sparrows, down from the spruce and hemlock frontier at the edge of the tundra, are less fearful than other birds and come closer to the seed near my feet, snug in my Sorel felt-lined boots.

Their calls have a clear silver bell quality, audible just over the slight scratching of my pen on notebook leaf, the only movement I make besides the occasional sip at the steaming cup of coffee. They

take no heed of my slight gestures, calculating the difference between easy pickings of free seed and the low risk posed by the harmless human sitting a few feet away, seemingly lost in thought and scratching things down on paper.

By December 15, the air outdoors is washed clean by the snow. A fierce sharp-shinned hawk had taken up a perch on the back of my Adirondack chair set in the open south-facing woodshed just out the back door of the kitchen.

When I stepped out he moved off my chair to the towering rhododendron ten feet away where the sparrow colony cowered, knowing the deadly danger of this bird hawk.

The sharp-shin beat the bushes with his wings, but the sparrows stayed put. My heart gave a start when I recognized my lovely song sparrow flutter a bit deep in the bush, but he didn’t panic, and I didn’t have to intervene in nature’s plan. Eventually, the hawk gave up and headed off down through the birch grove along the river.

see **WEST ALONG** page B6

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est-ranked team in western Massachusetts, and came in with a confidence equal to their talent.

The Hawks shot out to a 23-8 first quarter lead, but in the second period, the Tribe’s defense began to tighten up, holding the vaunted Golden Girls to just a point until there was only 1 minute 14 seconds left in the half.

And although Blue was only able to put up 7 points of their own, the rowdy Hopkins fans were growing quieter, while the Turners fans were beginning to stir.

In the third, Powertown made up a point, reducing the deficit to just 36-29, and the home crowd began matching the Hawks, cheer for

cheer, applause for applause. In the fourth quarter the Indians clawed their way up, and with 2-1/2 minutes left in the game, the Tribe took their first lead of the night, 43-42.

Then the boys got involved. More than 20 high school boys got up from their seats, joined arms and began chanting. The refs finally asked them to move away from the court.

In the end, Hopkins managed to slide ahead and took the contest, 51-47. Aliyah Sanders was the high scorer for Blue with 15 points, including two 3’s and a free throw. Maddy Chmyzinski also popped in two 3-pointers, four from the floor,

see **TFHS SPORTS** page B2



DAVID HOLT PHOTO

Olivia Whittier wins the 200 IM and qualifies for the Western Mass Championships as the TFHS Girls Swim Team beats Holyoke High School 48-39 at the TFHS pool.

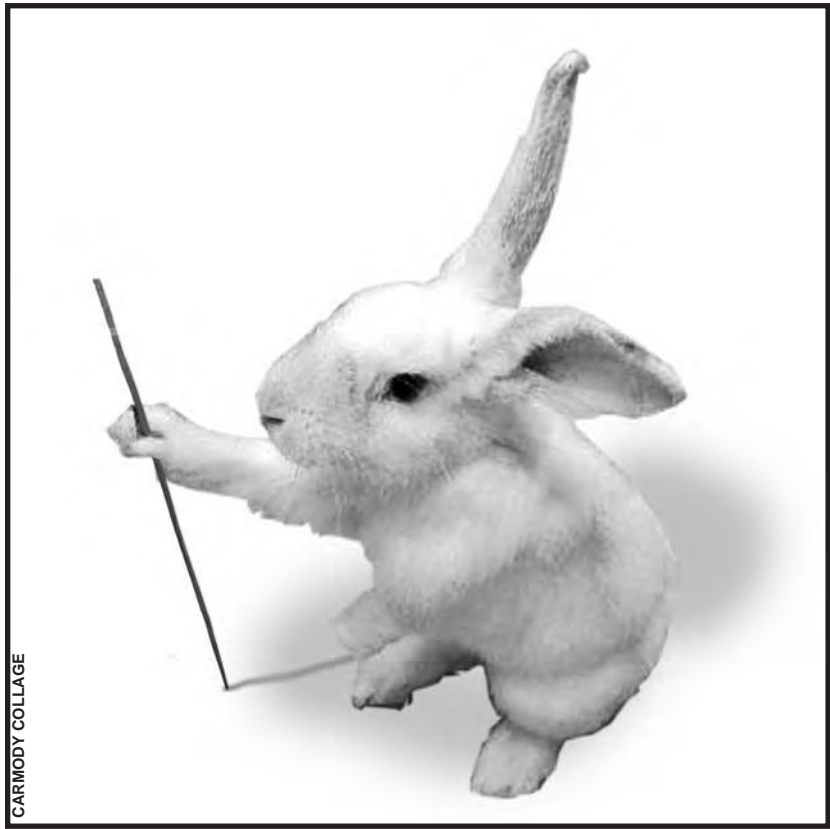
Pet of the Week

Do you like tomatoes and apples? They are my absolute favorite treats! Do you like when it's quiet and peaceful?

Me too! I'd love a nice, quiet home that I can wander around. I'm really independent and great at caring for myself. I wouldn't be much

trouble at all. It would be nice to have a gentle, calm friend who I can enjoy my apples and tomatoes with.

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



“BUNNY”

Senior Center Activities DECEMBER 26 to JANUARY 6

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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.
Call for schedule 1/2-1/6/17.
Tues, Weds & Thurs Noon Lunch
M, W, F 10:10 a.m. Aerobics; 10:50 a.m. Chair Exercise
Monday 12/26
1 p.m. Knitting Circle
Tuesday 12/27
9:30 a.m. Chair Yoga
Wednesday 12/28
9 a.m. Veterans' Outreach
12:30 p.m. Bingo
Thursday 12/29
9 a.m. Tai chi
1 p.m. Cards & Games
Friday 12/30
1 p.m. Writing Group

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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.
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.
For information, call Paula Betters, 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.
Monday 12/26 & 1/2
9 a.m. Tai Chi
10 a.m. Healthy Bones & Balance
Tuesday 12/27 & 1/3
8:45 a.m. Chair Aerobics
10 a.m. Stretching & Balance
11:30 a.m. Homemade Lunch
12:30 p.m. Creative Coloring (12/27); Knitting (1/3)
Wednesday 12/28 & 1/4
8:45 a.m. Line Dancing
10 a.m. Chair Yoga
Noon Bingo, Snacks & Laughs
1 p.m. Veteran's Guide (1/4 only)
Thursday 12/29 & 1/5
8:15 a.m. Foot Clinic (1/5 only)
8:45 a.m. Aerobics
10 a.m. Healthy Bones
Thursday 1/5 only:
11:30 a.m. Brown Bag Pick Up
12:30 p.m. Crafty Seniors
Friday 12/30 & 1/6
9 a.m. Quilting Workshop
9:30 a.m. Bowling
Friday 12/30 only:
11:30 a.m. Pizza, Salad & Dessert; Movie & Popcorn

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.

TFHS SPORTS from page B1

and three foul shots for 13 points.

Abby Loynd was a monster at the line, sinking five freebees for a total of 7 points. Kylie Fleming banged in a 3 and ended with 6 points, and Dabney Rollins and Emma Miner each put up 2 points.

Boys Basketball
TFHS 84 – Franklin Tech 53

On Tuesday, the Turners Falls Basketball Indians defeated cross-town rivals Franklin Tech 84-53. The win improved Powertown's record to 3-0 and the lopsided score allowed Coach Gary Mullins to give some of his younger players valuable game time experience.

In the Tech game, all 12 players for Turners took to the floor. This is significant because just two years ago, Turners had a very thin bench, with only one or two players coming in for a few minutes to relieve the starting 5.

Last year, Mullins had the luxury of using more of his players to support veterans Tionne Brown and Jalen Sanders. This year, Powertown has a very deep bench, eliminating fatigue and preventing foul trouble situations.

In Tuesday's game, the Tribe jumped out to a 33-13 lead after a quarter, increased the lead by a point in the second, went out to a 75-40 lead after 3, and cruised to an 84-53 victory.

Brown was Blue's high scorer, with 17 points on seven 2-pointers and a 3. Josh Obuchowski sank seven field goals and a free throw for 15 points. Tyler Lavin and Javonni Williams each put up 12. All of Williams' points came from inside the arc, while Lavin looped in a couple of 3-pointers.

Kyle Bergman also hit double figures with four field goals and two freebees. Ricky Craver hit two baskets from 3-point land for 6 points. Jeremy Wolfram (4), Anthony Peterson (4), Nick Croteau (3) and



Turners' Aliyah Sanders (30) scores 15 points in a close contest with Hopkins Academy. The Hopkins Golden Hawks edged the TFHS Indians with a 51-47 win.

James Vaughn (1) also scored. Marcus Sanders and Ian Moriarty also saw playing time.

Boys Swimming
TFHS 73 – Chicopee 67

Also on Tuesday, the Turners Falls Boys Swimming Indians beat the Chicopee Pacers 73-67. The win gives the Tribe a 2-1 record heading into the New Year.

Cameron Bradley won the 200-yard freestyle and the 100-yard butterfly events, while Ed Reipold (100-yard backstroke) and Chase Blair (100-yard breaststroke) each took first place in an event. The Turners relay team also took first place in the 200-yard medley relay and 400-yard freestyle relay.

Girls Swimming
Chicopee 105 – TFHS 70

The same day, the Turners Falls Lady Indians dropped their first meet of the year by falling to Chicopee 105-70. The loss pushes the Tribe into third place in the Constitution Class.

Turners won the 200-yard medley relay and 400-yard freestyle re-

lay. In individual events, Jade Tyler won two races, the 200-yard IM and 500-yard freestyle. Olivia Whittier also took two events, the 100-yard breaststroke and the 200-yard freestyle. Allison Wheeler finished first in the 100-yard freestyle event.

Both teams are back in the pool on January 6 against Palmer.

In other sporting news, area coaches made their all-league selections this week.

In golf, the All-Bi-County North League: Kyle Kuceinski of Turners Falls and Mike Patnode, Travis Cutting, and Hunter Sessions of Franklin Tech.

Field Hockey, All-West-League: Alysha Wozniak, Nicole Thibeault and Cassidhe Wozniak of Turners Falls.

Boys Soccer, All-Tri-County North League: Reuben Galvez, Giovanni Ruggiano, and Jaden Sadlowski, of Franklin Tech.

Girls Soccer, All-Tri-County League: Tabi Hamilton, Brooke Adams, of Franklin Tech.

Next week: No paper!



“Nasty Women”: Art Show Seeks Participants

LEVERETT – A deeply maddening remark by presidential candidate Donald Trump to Hillary Clinton during one of the debates has led to viral calls for female solidarity in the form of “Nasty Women” t-shirts and art shows. During the third debate, Trump leaned in to the microphone and muttered “such a nasty woman,” referring to his opponent Hillary Clinton, touching off a cascade of *#Iamnastywomanbecause* tweets. The sale of “Nasty Woman” t-shirts, to benefit Planned Parenthood, popped up soon after.

Trump has pledged that his administration will roll back women's rights, individual rights, and reproductive rights, and cut funding to a variety of programs that have to do with LGBTQ rights, education, racial equality, and reproductive health care.

Locally, Leverett resident Nancy Paglia is gathering the creative forces of area artists in a Nasty Women Art Show to be held in February at the Barnes Gallery in the Leverett Crafts and Arts building.

According to Paglia's Facebook page for the event, “The idea for the exhibit happening in January in Queens, NY was started by Roxanne



Artwork by Arnold Paglia.

Jackson and Jessamyn Fiore with a Facebook post that read: ‘Hello female artists/curators! Lets organize a NASTY WOMEN group show!!! Who's interested????’ The massive response has taken this call to arms into an ever expanding network of Nasty Women Artists & Art Organizers all around the world!”

Interested artists are urged to contact her via email at npaglia62@gmail.com for a submission form.

Proceeds from sales of the art will go to the Abortion Rights Fund of Western Massachusetts.

Deadline for dropping off is January 31. Works should be priced \$500 and below. Paglia hopes to get 50 participants for the show, which opens with a reception on February 10 at 7 p.m.

The Barnes Gallery is at 13 Montague Road in Leverett.

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MONTAGUE COMMUNITY TELEVISION NEWS

This Week on MCTV

BY ABIGAIL TATARIAN

School’s out for the winter holiday break starting this Friday, December 23! This week on MCTV, you can look forward to December 9 footage from “It’s a Wonderful Night” in Turners Falls. Watch kids and adults alike enjoy wintertime crafts, a dance party, singing and more!

MOVIE REVIEW

Hacksaw Ridge (2016)

By MELISSA WLOSTOSKI

GREENFIELD – Human beings sometimes can do the incredible. A couple of movies in theaters I have seen and liked very much – *The Finest Hours* and *Unbroken* – are proof of that.

Hacksaw Ridge is another movie that supports my opinion about human beings, by portraying what a man named Desmond T. Doss accomplished during World War II at Hacksaw Ridge, which was part of the island of Okinawa.

This man saved 75 soldiers’ lives and won the Medal of Honor. What made this even more incredible is that this man refused to carry a gun, but still very much wanted to serve, so he did so as a medic and a conscientious objector.

Being a conscientious objector led to Doss getting roughed up by his fellow soldiers, and his commander tried to have him kicked out of the army. People believed he wouldn’t be of any good to them on the battlefield. But his right to be a conscientious objector was protected at the last minute by a general’s letter that his father got, and presented to the people who wanted him kicked out.

What happened next, with his unit in the battle and with his actions, connect with his wife saying to him: “I fell in love with you because you weren’t like anybody else.”

Doss was a decent medic. His unit was forced to retreat down the ridge, leaving wounded members up there. The commander tried to get help to go back and get them, but he couldn’t get men to help him.

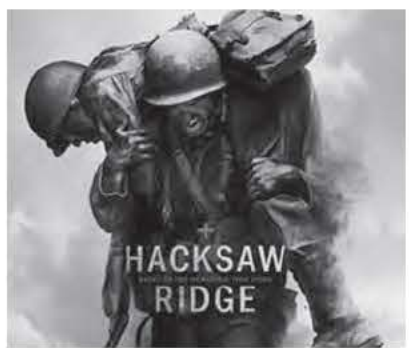
A tag-line on *Hacksaw Ridge*’s movie poster says, “When the order came to retreat, one man stayed.”

Desmond heard people yelling for help and ran back into battle. He sent soldiers down the rope through the night, again and again. He kept saying, “please, let me get one more,” over and over each time. He had the stamina and the determination to keep this up. That is basically what led him to save 75 lives.

People who wanted him out of the

Something going on you think others would like to see? Get in touch to learn how easy it is to use a camera and capture the moment.

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unit thought what he did was a miracle – so much so that when it was again time to advance up the ridge, they weren’t going up the ridge again without him. They waited for him to pray and then they went up.

They got a second miracle when Desmond saved a group of soldiers’ lives, his commander among them, when Japanese soldiers attacked them with a grenade. He was wounded because of that. An interview clip at the end of the movie shows the commander pointing out how incredible it was that Desmond saved him, the man who had most thought he should be out of the service.

Desmond Doss was said to be odd by many people besides his commander. His father, who had served in World War I and had lost three close friends in France, was one. He thought Desmond couldn’t handle himself in battle. A sergeant in Doss’s unit wondered that too.

But I believe various things made him the right person to do what he did. In Virginia, he climbed rocks with his brother in his youth, and once with his wife Dorothy, a nurse. He met her at a hospital, before he enlisted, when he helped an accident victim who hurt his leg. He tied off the bleeding leg with his belt and always wanted to be a doctor. He asked several medical questions at one point to Dorothy. That showed a talent and an interest in being a medic. He was just the right medic for his unit.

HIGHLIGHTS FROM THE MONTAGUE POLICE LOG

Pry Marks; Unshoveled Sidewalks; Tussling; Loose Horse and Dog; and Icy, Icy Roads

Sunday, 12/11

9:54 a.m. Officer requesting DPW to sand in vicinity of Rau’s.

12:55 p.m. 911 caller reporting two people arguing outside of a house on K Street. Checked outside and inside building; unable to locate.

3:36 p.m. 911 report of car vs. utility pole on Turners Falls Road across from Rau’s. Pole snapped and leaning. Officers, MCFD, and MedCare responding. Eversource advised and en route. Confirmed no entrapment.

5:45 p.m. Small fire in a toaster oven on J Street. TFFD on scene.

6:01 p.m. Officer out at Avenue A and Seventh Street with a pickup truck that lost a load of sheetrock out of the back. Operator picked up items from roadway and is now off to the side of the road resealing the load.

9:05 p.m. Report of vandalism to Christmas decorations on High Street. Area search negative.

10:31 p.m. Report of vehicle that struck a curb and popped a tire. Occupants limped the vehicle off of Unity Street onto Grove Street. Caller advises that before the accident, the same vehicle had passed him on Turners Falls Road at an estimated 80 miles per hour. Operator advised re: his driving, and his guardian will be doing the same. Operator subsequently called 911 requesting assistance contacting a tow company.

Monday, 12/12

7:26 a.m. Multiple reports of vehicles stuck on the hill at Turnpike Road and Walnut Street. Road has been plowed but not yet sanded. DPW and officer advised.

10:31 a.m. [redacted] was arrested on a default war-

rant.

3:42 p.m. Caller from Fifteenth Street states that her neighbor is pushing snow from other neighbors’ driveways behind her home and that it is an ongoing issue. Both parties spoken to and advised of options.

Tuesday, 12/13

7:13 a.m. Assisting with snow tows at Third and Fourth Street lots per request of DPW.

9:52 p.m. Passerby reporting a white box truck at the senior center; door to the center is open, and it seems suspicious because of the time. Officer off at location; truck is unloading food for Christmas.

11:12 p.m. Caller from K Street reports that someone appears to have attempted to break into the apartment. There appear to be pry marks near the deadbolt on the door. Report taken.

Wednesday, 12/14

12 a.m. Caller from Second Street reports what she believes to be a fight on the floor above her. Courtesy transport to H Street provided.

1:58 a.m. Vehicle vs. two (2) deer at Millers Falls Road and Mineral Road. One deer still on scene, possibly deceased. No injuries to human(s). Deer dispatched.

4:24 a.m. Caller from Central Street reports that she can hear her neighbors yelling and fighting outside; can also hear a car engine being revved. Officer made contact with involved male party.

8:30 a.m. Caller from Montague City Road reports that approximately 15 minutes ago, the attached female forced her way into his house, they “tussled” briefly, and she stole his wallet and left in a car heading toward the General Pierce Bridge. Female

has three active warrants and a suspended license. Services rendered.

9:20 a.m. Report of unshoveled sidewalk on G Street. Investigated.

12:48 p.m. Two reports of a horse loose on Turners Falls Road. Horse was tied up to a post behind the residence by some good Samaritans. Both callers expressed concern that the horse did not appear to have adequate shelter from the elements. Animal control officer advised; has responded to that residence several times recently and advises that the horse is old but he believes the conditions are adequate and the horse cared for; will check again upon arrival. ACO advises all set, no further action required.

9:57 p.m. Caller reporting that he and a friend were just assaulted by a known male on Avenue A. No medical attention needed. Involved parties advising they were just pushed by the male. Officers checked area for assailant; unable to locate.

Thursday, 12/15

2:35 a.m. Caller from George Avenue reports that her fire alarm is sounding and there is a haze of smoke in her basement. TFFD notified and en route. Malfunctioning furnace. FD ventilating basement.

5:20 a.m. Caller from K Street reports he can hear his neighbor’s dog, who has been left outside, whining for the last hour. Concerned for dog’s welfare. Dog is a husky and did not seem friendly toward the responding officer, who advises that the dog is whining but does not seem to be in distress. Message left for ACO.

7:26 a.m. Caller from Montague City Road reports that attached female came to his house asking for money, but he would not give her any. Female then reportedly wrestled with the caller, took \$25 off the kitchen table, and left on foot out the back door. Female and registered owner of vehicle she may be traveling both have active warrants and suspended licenses. Greenfield PD located vehicle in Leyden Woods, took registered owner into custody, and arrested female.

11:05 a.m. Report of a loose dog in front of Riff’s

North. Dog appears to be cold. Dog is reportedly loose often and had icicles on his fur the other day. Caller took the dog in the other day to warm him and then brought him back home. Owner claimed that a dog sitter was responsible for the dog getting out; however, the dog is frequently seen loose downtown for hours at a time. ACO off today; kennel personnel advise that they will follow up on this issue and pick up the dog if located.

12:34 p.m. Caller requesting removal of unwanted subject from the Third Street laundromat. Subject left laundromat prior to officer arrival. Officer spoke with subject and remained in area for a short time to make sure he did not return.

10:52 p.m. Caller from Second Street reports that a vehicle has just struck her home and is trying to leave the scene. FD en route. Officer advising minor damage to house and vehicle. Operator appears uninjured. Summons issued.

Friday, 12/16

1:38 p.m. Caller from G Street reports that the sidewalk is not shoveled and the snow is also blocking a fire hydrant. Responding officer reports that sidewalk is clear and no hydrants are blocked.

10:21 p.m. [redacted] was arrested on a default warrant.

Saturday, 12/17

2:05 p.m. 911 caller reporting that her neighbor keeps blowing snow into her yard. Sidewalks are currently clear; advised of civil options.

2:08 p.m. 911 caller reporting people on roof of Franklin Area Survival Center. Officer spoke to a few people who said they only went on the roof once; they were advised not to do it again.

5:54 p.m. Caller states that her neighbor accidentally backed into her car while leaving for church. Parties will work it out among themselves; just wanted it put on record.

9:06 p.m. Officer advising a vehicle to stop doing donuts in the Unity Park lot. Subjects moved along.

9:30 p.m. DPW called in at this time. Multiple walk-ins and officers reporting icy roads.

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LOOKING BACK: 10 YEARS AGO THIS WEEK

Here's the way it was December 21, 2006: News from the Montague Reporter's archive.

Concerns on Ceremonial Sites as Airport Expands

Describing progress on the runway expansion project, Mike Sweeny, commissioner of the Turners Falls Airport, told the Montague selectboard on Monday, December 18, "Archaeological investigations at the airport have been completed. All the sites that have been identified as significant by Mass Historic and the Federal Aeronautics Administration (FAA) will be preserved."

Sweeney didn't say it, but among the sites not deemed significant is at least one Narragansett Indians consider to be "of great significance," according to a spokesperson for the Narragansett Indian Tribal Historic Preservation Office.

In an interview following the meeting, Doug Harris, senior deputy historic preservation officer for the tribe said, "Stone sites have been encountered at the airport that the Narragansett Indians have determined to be ceremonially significant. The tribe is working with the FAA to find an alternative plan that will not impact the ceremonial site, nor impact the Paleolithic site at the airport."

"Its is crucial that the ceremonial site not be disturbed or destroyed."

Plan to Expand Montague Center School

In a surprising turnabout, the Gill-Montague school committee voted on Tuesday to create two broad grade-span elementary schools at either end of the town in Montague, and to turn Hillcrest Elementary into an early childhood education center for the district.

The vote, which not only keeps

the Montague Center Elementary School open, but also broadens it from a K-3 to at least a K-5 elementary school, comes after five public hearings, and more than eight hours of debate by the committee, spread over three meeting dates.

It caps a dialogue about the future of the town's elementary school configuration that's been years in the making.

Mystery Stream Floods Avenue A Basement

Margarita Fletcher, building manager of 108 Avenue A, woke up early on the morning of December 20, very early. It was 4 a.m. and her apartment was cold, because the heat had gone off for the entire building, which houses a number of apartments and storefronts, including Arnie's Wholesale and the Four Directions Healing Arts Studio.

Fletcher went down to the basement to check the furnace, and found a foot of water. But where was the water coming from?

That question continued to puzzle town and water department officials for the next 24 hours, as a steady stream of water exited the rear of the building via sump pump and flowed down Avenue A as far as the post office. Building inspector David Jensen said no pipes in the building appeared to be leaking. Highway super Tom Bergeron could not locate a source of inflow. Water department superintendent Mike Brown suspected ground water bubbling up from the dirt floor, but the volume of flow argued against that suggestion as the day wore on.

At press time, DPW workers joined the Water Department at the corner of Avenue A and Third, where a break in the water main was suspected. Excavation was in progress; the source of the leak had yet to be determined.

RIP-ROARING from page B1

into the side of the house. They had bloody lips and noses. It was funny as hell at the time!"

Gizmo had a photo of an old rip sled he encountered just recently when he was doing some historical research in Sunderland, around "the old Whittier farm, where the falls are out there." He photographed the remnants of it, which were pretty rotted away, but in one piece. You can see the metal on the runners, and the rope still attached to the front ones.

Flyers and Jumpers

I went to the Gill Historical collection in the Riverside building to view an intact rip sled donated by Arthur Chappell in 1991. Lynn Tombs uncovered it so I could take photographs – it was too heavy to carry outside for a picture against the snow.

This is a massive construction, lovingly painted with flames and a red fireball (which looks like a Harry Potter snitch). I wonder how they hauled it up hill for multiple rides – what a chore that must have been!

Down the road, I found Arthur's nephew Louis Chappell at his business, Chappell Auto, and asked him a few questions about the rips. He remembers hearing stories about them, but by his time, they had been replaced by the more nimble steel-runner Flexible Flyers.

Louis said it was his father's generation that built the rips and ran them through Slippery Gap, from the top of L Street almost down to the river. His father was born in 1913.

Louis remembers riding a "Jumper" down some of the hills surrounding the garage. Jumpers were made out of a single old wooden ski that had a platform nailed to it, with a crossbar that you balanced yourself on top of as you hurtled downhill.

"It went from the rip and the jumper to toboggans, to skis, and then to runner sleds. I think the runner sleds are very superior to the plastic sleds – you have a lot more control," he said.

"Route 2 was never as busy as it is now. You could come flying



NINA ROSSI PHOTO

The rip sled donated by Arthur Chappell to the Gill Historical collection in 1991, with painted flames and a fireball suggesting its great speed.

out of here across the yard and on to Route 2 and continue down the bottom of the hill, because you could slide the metal runners over the black top. But you'd be killed now, you'd be run over. There's more traffic every year."

Louis doesn't remember any accidents back then that he couldn't walk away from, despite the lack of safety features. He doesn't think the rips really performed that well, but "that's what they had, because you could make it yourself."

And Jeffrey "Soupy" Suprenant of Riverside remembers "shooting

across the road" on a rip sled loaded with five or six boys during the early 1960s, starting from up on the hill behind the Wagon Wheel restaurant. "We were out all day playing in the snow, and we'd go out on the river, playing hockey on the ice," he says.

"We only had black and white TV with three stations: channels 3, 22 and 40, I think."

Do you have a memory to share of years ago? We'd love to hear from you: features@montaguereporter.org.



Find New Direction in the New Year

TURNERS FALLS – A new round of the Montague Institute for New Directions (MIND) program will start on January 23 at the Women's Center at 41 Third Street in Turners. This program helps women identify strengths and set personal goals, along with the steps to attain them, over twelve weeks of training.

MIND is for women who are ready to take the next step in their lives, whatever that step may be. For some, it could be continuing their education, entering or re-entering the workforce, or starting a business. Women who feel ready to take their next step, but are unsure of what that step is, are also encouraged to participate. MIND can help them define their course, and set attainable goals.

"In the MIND Program we work toward discovering, acknowledging and embracing each woman's own strengths, wisdom and life experience," says Christine Diani, MCSM Women's Center Coordinator and facilitator of the MIND training. "We take the time to build confidence and self-esteem and then to identify, set, and work toward long

and short-term goals. We work on communication, basic computer and leadership skills."

Throughout the program, in-depth discussions help participants recognize, acknowledge and embrace each woman's innate wisdom and skills gained through life experience. The long range goal for the project is to create an extensive, supportive network that nurtures women's strengths and leads to self-empowerment. By building self-esteem, leadership, employability and economic development skills women can realize increased economic security and options to improve their lives and the lives of their families.

The MIND Program adapts to reflect each participant's self-identified needs. The MIND 2016 roster included several writers, and a local publisher was invited to come speak about getting work published. Participants started bringing in other resources and the possibility of a monthly Women Writers Series was discussed. One 2016 graduate made inquiries to other local publishers who are willing to be guest speak-

ers, and a schedule for the Women's Writers Series is being developed for 2017.

For the past two years, Kathleen Bowen from the Center for Biography and Social Art has met with the group several times over the 12 weeks to offer exercises designed to help participants recognize and expand upon personal strengths, build confidence, and identify goals.

MIND also helps women access local resources by inviting representatives from the community such as the Franklin County Community Development Corporation, Greenfield Community College, the Career Center and others, who can help women build personal and professional support networks.

MIND will run on Mondays from 10 a.m. to 1 p.m. from January 23 through April 17 at the Women's Center at Montague Catholic Social Ministries (formerly known as the Turners Falls Women's Resource Center).

Thursdays from 1:30 to 3:30 p.m. will be available for additional peer support, leadership building and use of the computer lab for re-

Give Them Your Blood

It can't be wrapped or placed under a tree, but the perfect gift can help save patient lives this holiday season. The American Red Cross urges eligible donors to give the lifesaving gift of a blood donation in December, a time when donations decline but the needs of patients remain steady.

Donors of all blood types are needed this holiday season to help ensure a sufficient supply for hospital patients. To encourage donations, all those who come to donate December 22 through January 8 will receive a long-sleeved Red Cross T-shirt, while supplies last.

To make an appointment to give blood, download the Red

Cross Blood Donor App, visit redcrossblood.org or call 1-800-RED CROSS. Donors are encouraged to make appointments and complete the RapidPass online health history questionnaire at redcrossblood.org/rapidpass to save time.

Here are the remaining blood donation opportunities this year in Franklin County:

Erving: December 29, 1 to 6 p.m., Erving Senior Center, 1 Care Drive.

Orange: December 27, 1 to 6 p.m., Athol Orange Elks, 92 New Athol Road.

Sunderland: December 22, 1 to 6 p.m., Sunderland Fire Dept., 105 River Road.

search, resume writing or whatever is needed to set and reach self-identified goals. Sign up now, the program fills up fast.

The MIND Training Program is funded by the Women's Fund of Western Massachusetts through the Franklin County Women's GARDEN (Growing Agricultural Resiliency and Developing Economic Networks) Project, a collaboration

with Greenfield Community College and New England Learning Center for Women in Transition.

There is no cost to participate. For more information contact Christine Diani, Women's Center Coordinator, at (413) 863-4804 ext. 1003 or christine@mcsmcommunity.org.

From combined sources.

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ARTS & ENTERTAINMENT



Nina's Nook latest show is "Wee the People" with pint-sized art for sale through December on Ave A, Turners Falls.

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.

FIRST SUNDAY MONTHLY

Franklin Community Coop/ Green Fields Market, Greenfield: *Co-op Jazz*. Blues, Latin, Straight-Ahead Jazz. Balcony. Afternoons.

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.

Root Cellar, Greenfield: *Jazz Series with Ted Wirt and his Hammond B3*. 7 p.m.

3rd WEDNESDAY MONTHLY

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.

Root Cellar, Greenfield: *Open Mic*. 6 to 8:30 p.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. \$

EXHIBITS:

GCC Downtown Center Gallery, Greenfield: *Venture/Adventure: Applied Photography Projects*. Photography by students Anthony Borton, Elaine Findley, Cynthia Mead, Elie Shuman, and Shoshana Zonderman. Through January 19.

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. Through December.

Sawmill Gallery, Montague Bookmill, Montague: *Light in the Darkness*, winter exhibit through January 1.

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

Wendell Free Library: *Paintings from the Road*, oil paintings by Jack Sikes at the Herrick Gallery of the library through January 2.

EVENTS:

THURSDAY, DECEMBER 22

Root Cellar, Greenfield: *Open Mic*. 6 to 8:30 p.m.

Deja Brew, Wendell: *Lunar Carnival*. Folk, Jazz & Americana. 8 p.m.

Roots Cellar, Greenfield: *Evolvement Music Presents Freevolt*. "Roots/rock/Americana/jam/reggae/funk/pop". 9 p.m.

FRIDAY, DECEMBER 23

Discovery Center, Turners Falls: *Kidleidoscope*. This week it's deer! For ages 3-6. Siblings and friends welcome. Children must be accompanied by an adult. 10:30 to 11:30 a.m.

Mocha Maya's, Shelburne Falls: *Kristen Hoffman*, singer/songwriter. 8 p.m.

Arts Block, Greenfield: *Latin Xmass/Paranda with Jose Gonzalez and Banda Criolla*. 8:30 p.m. \$

Deja Brew, Wendell: *Barrett Anderson*. Hypno Boogie Blues. 9 p.m.

Roots Cellar, Greenfield: *Winter Thang: Kristen Ford, Dan Friel, Peace and Rhythm DJs*. 9 p.m. \$

TUESDAY, DECEMBER 27

Arts Block, Greenfield: *Tyler Conroy and Rachel Sabol*. 7:30 p.m. \$

WEDNESDAY, DEC. 28

Discovery Center, Turners Falls: *Investigation Station: Where*

are all the Animals Hiding? Where are their secret animal homes? Activities and crafts for kids at the front Welcome Desk. 10 a.m. to 4 p.m.

Rendezvous, Turners Falls: *Open Old-Time Music Session*. 8 p.m.

Arts Block, Greenfield: *Peace & Rhythm DJs Studebaker Hawk & Andujar*. '70s Funk Rock party. 9 p.m.

Roots Cellar, Greenfield: *DJ Afropanther and friends*. 9 p.m.

THURSDAY, DECEMBER 29

Discovery Center, Turners Falls: *Investigation Station: Where are all the Animals Hiding?* See Wednesday's listing.

Roots Cellar, Greenfield: *Open Mic*. 6 to 8:30 p.m.

Deja Brew, Wendell: *Josh Hill & Friends with Jen Spingla*. Original Americana. 8 p.m.

Roots Cellar, Greenfield: *Karaoke Revival*. 9 p.m.

FRIDAY, DECEMBER 30

Discovery Center, Turners Falls: *Kidleidoscope*. This week it's rabbits! For ages 3-6. Siblings and friends welcome. Children must be accompanied by an adult. 10:30 to 11:30 a.m.

Also at the Discovery Center, *Investigation Station: Where are all the Animals Hiding?* See Wednesday's listing.

Roots Cellar, Greenfield: *The Trichomes*. Funk/jazz/blues/hip-hop. 9 p.m.

Arts Block, Greenfield: *Outer Style, Shokazoba, Art Opening/ Katie Shaw*. 9 p.m. \$

SATURDAY, DECEMBER 31

Arts Block, Greenfield: *New Years Eve Party* w/dinner and lots of rock and roll. See website for details. 6 p.m. \$

Roots Cellar, Greenfield: *New Year's Eve with Hot Body, Carinae, Hot Dirt & interactive art surprises featuring Opertura*. 9 p.m. \$

Rendezvous, Turners Falls: *Cozy You New Year's Eve*. "No show, no hoo-ha, just you and what you want to bring."

Pioneer Tavern, Millers Falls: *New Year's Eve with Community Smokes*. 9 p.m. \$

Deja Brew, Wendell: *New Year's Eve Party with Shokazoba*. "Afrobeat ensemble that blends jazz and old school funk with a West African beat..." 10 p.m.

SUNDAY, JANUARY 1

Deja Brew, Wendell: *Dale Reynolds*. Singer/songwriter from "folky rocked alt country land." 8 p.m.

WEDNESDAY, JANUARY 4

New Salem Library, New Salem: Book Discussion Group tackles *Uncle Tom's Cabin* by Harriet Beecher Stowe. Open group. 7 p.m.

THURSDAY, JANUARY 5

Mocha Maya's, Shelburne Falls: *The Collected Poets Series with feature poet TBA*. Poetry reading. 7 p.m.

Deja Brew, Wendell: *Eric Love*. '60s & '70s Gold. 8 p.m.

Root Cellar, Greenfield: *Open Mic*. 6 - 8:30 p.m. *The Snaz*. 9 p.m.

FRIDAY, JANUARY 6

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

Root Cellar, Greenfield: *Lovewhip w/ The Fawns*. Psychedelic. 9 p.m. \$



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WEST ALONG from page B1

Ten minutes later, all is motion again in the yard. If you look without fixing your gaze on a specific spot, your peripheral vision takes the whole scene in, as though you were somehow inside a snow globe looking out, with crystals of blue jay azure and red of cardinal swirling around your little world. You should try it.

December 16. The cardinals now number close to six, putting the red in the Christmas landscape, and rivaling the scarlet tanager of our summer tree tops, who is now wisely wintering in Guatemala. The demure pink-washed female cardinal, her plumage suggesting hints of pale olive, quietly watches her flashy spouse at the feeder, before coming in to her favorite feeding spot nearby.

A second male arrives, jealous of the first, and the two cock cardinals chase each other around the yard spending a lot of energy in shadow-boxing and feinting, not really interested in a real fight.

December 17. The snow falls steadily and silently at seven in the morning. Now the tinkling bell voices of the snowbirds hold notes of concern and urgency. They sense the low barometric pressure, and know that we are in for a precocious December storm.

For the moment, first flakes fall like the constant snow in Russia or the Arctic, falling, falling, but barely accumulating.

Time to retreat back indoors, to escape the zero degree temperatures: snow-clean air is wonderful to breathe, but no need to risk chill and frostbite for all that!

The kitchen table lamp spreads an inviting warm circle of yellow-tinged light. Snow and birds swirl outside the snug kitchen windows, we're sitting back inside the snow globe, looking out. Like Whittier, we're snow-bound for the morning, perhaps all day, like Christmases of long ago.

*"No cloud above, no earth below, —
A universe of sky and snow!"*

The Glenwood C cookstove ticks contentedly, the fireplace in the far parlor throws light and heat outward into the old rooms where Christmas spirits of the past are finally stirring. This old house, like a few others in our neighborhood built in the middle of the 19th century, sails on through the snowy landscape, the snowy seascape, like a sturdy ship. All is warm and bright inside this living house, while out there, the garden, shrubs, fence posts disappear beneath the white.

Just the same, it's impossible to linger indoors, while the world outside is fresh and new. The one-year-old Siberian pup rockets out the back door, racing through the element he was born to, and we're off on a trek down along the west-flowing river.

Snowbirds sheltering under the wooden footbridge over the frozen pond scatter when we traipse across. Ahead of us, the dog races through the white pine grove, leaping and laughing. (Huskies *can* laugh, you know.)

Pale amber beech leaves still on the branch shed their snow as they brush us along the path. Young hemlock show off their ornaments of snow cones. The river flows quietly under the snowfall, narrowed by ice margins and silenced by the ice flows formed by falling snow. Eagle wings through the white air, he's up from the frozen-over Connecticut.

Six bluebirds wait out the steady snow close to shelter in the impassible thicket of multiflora rose armed with their formidable thorns. Rose hips and holly-like red winterberry will keep them safe and fed for a while yet.

Along the shore, Nikolai the Siberian leaps and dances in his element, all blue eyed and pointy ears, his bright red Christmas harness flashing by. He bounds like a white-tailed deer,



PETER L. ALBRECHT PHOTO

kicks up his four paws like a kid goat bursting with youth, life and energy, he whips by us, barely brushing our knees at high speed, just to tease and impress.

December 21. Morning is a landscape of frozen snow, an early White Christmas. But this is the day that will yield to the longest and darkest night of the year.

Now is our time to bring out the intricate Victorian Christmas cards that have been saved upstairs in the old desk drawer. These cards, collected over the years by family elders generations ago, were delivered to our door regularly, starting back in 1902. Most contain a brief holiday greeting addressed to our great-grandmother Lizzie Smith, mailed the day before at the Millers Falls Post Office, and brought down the street by a mailman

driving a horse and sleigh.

Now is the time to open the heirloom copy of Washington Irving's *Old Christmas* and call forth the spirits of our old English teachers, who strove to inspire a love for reading and literature in spite of our stubborn young selves.

Now is the time to think back on the past years, to remember friends and family gone from us, and to treasure those who are still here.

With the world intruding on our need for some peace of mind, we have to find a way to give ourselves a respite from the ceaseless Breaking Bad News of the inescapable 24/7 CNN cycle.

It's time to take joy in the good things that have happened and can happen. Take joy in the snowscape outside the window: notice the quietly constant song sparrow, confident that in one hundred days springtime will arrive, and he'll be the first to sing about it. And what message is the great bald eagle bringing us from the skies, just now perched in a dead tree along the river?

We can find solace in the peace of wild things, if we want, even for a few days during the Christmas truce.

So what I'll do at least once during the twelve days of Christmas, is to walk away the weariness of these troubled times, to take a walk out in the early evening, to step away from it all.

I'll walk to the edge of my neighborhood and come slowly back, seeing the Christmas lights shining warm on the yards full of snow.

You can do that too. You'll notice that the stars are still up there, and you'll look at your own house with new eyes as you make your way back home, walking back into that fleeting moment of peace and grace that is Christmastime.



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