

The Montague Reporter

YEAR 17 – NO. 9

also serving Irving, Gill, Leverett and Wendell

\$1

EDITOR@MONTAGUEREPORTER.ORG

THE VOICE OF THE VILLAGES

DECEMBER 20, 2018

ERVING SELECTBOARD

Next Up After New Library: Affordable Senior Housing

By KATIE NOLAN

Laura Shufelt, assistant director of community assistance for the Massachusetts Housing Partnership, and the Erving senior housing committee met with the selectboard Monday night to review the town's request for proposals (RFP) for building affordable senior housing. The purpose stated in the RFP is "to select a developer to construct and manage new affordable senior housing units on approximately 5.4 acres on Care Drive, Erving, MA."

According to Shufelt, the RFP was developed over the course of more than a year. "The committee went through the process thoughtfully," she said. The committee held several community meetings to find out what Erving residents wanted in affordable senior housing.

Senior center director Paula Betters said that at one meeting, attendees used clickers to rate different styles of housing as Shufelt projected images on a screen. "It felt like a community, it looked like a community," she said.

see **ERVING** page A7

NEWS ANALYSIS

Federal Rule Change Could Undermine Local Access

By JEFF SINGLETON

MONTAGUE – "I think local access sometimes gets a bad rap. I think everybody thinks it's just Wayne's World. It's not," said Chris Collins, addressing the Montague cable advisory committee (CAC) at its December 10 meeting.

"For the people in rural communities, [local access television] is how they find out what's going on in the government. At my particular station, we do every government meeting we can do... There's a lot of stuff that goes on those stations that people expect is going to be there: 'Why can't I watch the Selectboard tonight?' Because there's no money to run the station, because the FCC just changed the rules!"

Montague residents may be familiar with Collins as their new town meeting moderator, or as a columnist who appears regularly in the Friday edition of the *Greenfield Recorder*. But he is also the executive director of Frontier Community Access Television, a local access station that serves Sunderland, Deerfield, Conway, and Whately, and he sits on the board of Greenfield Community Television (GCTV).

Collins was at Montague town hall last week to warn the CAC about an obscure federal rule change that, he believes, could significantly reduce revenue for local access television.

The rule change being considered by the Federal Communications Commission (FCC) would cause the "in-kind contributions" required in license agreements see **LOCAL ACCESS** page A5

THE YEAR'S DARKEST DAYS



Bare trees and a farmhouse witness the four o'clock dying light at the Zak Farm on Lyons Hill Road in Gill.

MIKE JACKSON PHOTO

DISPATCHES

After the Climate Conference: The Meeting Over, the Movements Growing

By ANNA GYORGY

BERLIN – German radio reported that 91% of Germans did not expect major advances from the 24th UN climate conference that ended late Saturday night, December 15, in Katowice, Poland. But conference delegates did reach their basic goal, allowing relieved conference organizers to declare COP24 a success.

For after a long extra day and night of deliberations, delegates from almost 200 countries unanimously approved a detailed "rule-book" to implement the 2015 Paris Agreement on climate change. In the huge Polish coal-themed conference center – it was built on a closed coal mine – they agreed to make national plans to limit global warming to 1.5° Celsius (2.7°F) compared to preindustrial times. That was the goal hoped for in Paris – and one that will be hard to meet, given that the average temperature gain is now already at 1.1°C, and more than that in particularly vulnerable areas such as the Arctic.

At the beginning of the Katowice



Protestors in Cologne, Germany on the eve of this month's climate summit.

GYORGY PHOTO

conference in early December, 1,908 points in the document were marked with disagreements. On Saturday the last ones were settled, with a few delayed for future meetings.

Next year's climate conference will be in Chile, instead of Brazil, as planned. The incoming president there, the arch-conservative

Jair Bolsonaro, rejected the plan for Brazil, citing the high costs and the limited time his government would have to prepare. Bolsonaro is well known as no friend of the environment, having campaigned on plans to further develop the Amazon rainforest for agriculture, a major

see **DISPATCHES** page A4

The Week in Turners Falls Sports

By MATT ROBINSON



DAVID HOITT PHOTO

Jovanni Ruggiano drives the ball past defender Tim Brazeau of North Adams' Drury High School Blue Devils.

GILL-MONTAGUE – This week in sports, the Turners Falls girls' basketball team dropped two overtime games, the boys' basketball team netted their first win, the girls' swim team won their meet, and all three swimmers of the boys' team took firsts.

Boys Basketball

Drury 75 – TFMA 46

Lenox 66 – TFMA 55

TFMA 67 – Hampshire Regional 56

On Wednesday, December 12 the Turners Falls boys' basketball team opened their 2018-19 season at home against the Drury Blue Devils of North Adams.

It was a little tough watching Blue as they warmed up. Five of them were in street clothes, with a least one pair of crutches stowed behind the bench. But the surviving varsity players gave it all they could, even though they had very few respites.

In the beginning of Wednesday's game, Powertown kept it close, and after one quarter, the Devils were ahead by a point, 10-9. But in the second, Turners' game became unraveled. Two charging fouls, missed rebounds, and several giveaways gave the ball back to Drury time and time again, and when the halftime buzzer sounded, Turners was down by 14 points, 35-21.

The Devils picked up where they left off in the

see **TFHS SPORTS** page A4

MONTAGUE SELECTBOARD

Town Warns Of Strathmore Condition on TF Hydro App

By JEFF SINGLETON

MONTAGUE – At its December 17 meeting the Montague selectboard approved a statement on behalf of the town on an application submitted by Turners Falls Hydro, LLC to the Federal Energy Regulatory Commission (FERC).

The 937-kW Turners Falls Hydro plant is located within the former Strathmore mill complex between the Turners Falls power canal and the Connecticut River. The company is applying during a broader federal relicensing process that includes the dam across the Connecticut River, the power canal in Turners Falls, two other plants on the canal, and the pump station on Northfield Mountain, all of which are owned by a different company, FirstLight Power Resources.

The selectboard had commissioned a study to demolish nearly all of the town-owned Strathmore Mill, but on December 10 said they were backing off on that plan because it would compromise the hydro plant's structural integrity, and

see **MONTAGUE** page A5

Barred Owl Rescued After Run-In With Car

By ANNA FORBES GYORGY

GREENFIELD – On the afternoon of Friday, December 14 an adult barred owl was struck by a vehicle at the busy four-way intersection of Bernardston Road and Route 2. The injured bird was taken to Tufts Wildlife Clinic at Tufts University's Cummings Veterinary Medical Center in North Grafton, where it will be one of nearly thirty barred owls being treated for injuries sustained from being hit by unsuspecting drivers.

"Traffic was backing up to the point that I had to be directing it," said Ashlee Riddle, a local animal lover who stopped to assist when she saw the helpless owl.

"I grew up on a farm in Vermont, and I've been constantly rescuing animals just voluntarily," said Riddle, who, with the help of other good Samaritans, helped to get the owl into a box for transport to the clinic. "I've just been around animals and it's hard for me to see them in pain."

Though she had a towel and a suitable box in her car, it was a worker from the state Department of Transportation who had stopped at the scene that provided the thick rubber gloves necessary to avoid the bird's sharp beak and talons.

An unidentified passerby, on his way to the Boston area, volunteered to take the owl to the Tufts clinic, and the owl was soon secured in the back seat of his vehicle.

At the wildlife clinic, radiographs revealed a bone fracture in the owl's left wing. It was otherwise unharmed.

"Pins were placed in the fracture,

see **OWL** page A8

The Montague Reporter

"The Voice of the Villages"

Editorial Group

Mike Jackson, *Managing Editor*
Nina Rossi, *Features Editor*
Chris Sawyer-Lauçanno, *Poetry Page*
Victoria Maillo, *Spanish Page*
Beverly Ketch, *Children's Page*
Lisa McLoughlin, *Science Page*
Gloria Kegeles, *Editorial Assistant*

Production Group

Lyn Clark, *Interim Distribution Manager*
Charlotte Kohlmann, *Layout Assistant*
Christopher Carmody, *Layout Assistant*

Technical Administration

About Face Computing

Founded by
Arthur Evans Harry Brandt David Detmold
August 2002

New Year's Resolve

This fall, a team of economic researchers at the University of Notre Dame and the University of Illinois at Chicago studied what happened to 296 local municipalities where newspapers folded between 1996 and 2015.

What they discovered, published in a paper titled *Financing Dies in Darkness?*, was that the newspaper closures had a measurable negative effect on municipal borrowing: “long-run municipal borrowing costs increase by as much as 11 basis points,” they conclude. “[O]ur results suggest that local newspapers are important for the health of local capital markets.”

The findings, which have been discussed on NPR, in the Guardian (UK), the Boston Business Journal and elsewhere, indicate that there is a direct link between the oversight local papers can provide on public-sector spending and the long-term willingness of lenders to trust towns, counties, and cities with access to money for development projects.

Four companies own most of the newspapers in our region: New England Newspapers, Inc., runs the *Berkshire Eagle* in Pittsfield; the *Brattleboro Reformer*; the *Bennington Banner*; and the *Manchester Journal*.

Newspapers of New England, Inc. owns the *Daily Hampshire Gazette*; the *Greenfield Recorder*; the *Athol Daily News*, which now takes Sundays through Tuesdays off; and the weekly *Valley Advocate* and *Amherst Bulletin*; and in New Hampshire, the *Concord*

Monitor, the *Valley News*, and the twice-weekly *Monadnock Ledger-Transcript*.

The *Republican*, in Springfield, is owned by Advance Publications Inc., a privately held company that takes in \$2.2 billion a year and owns dozens of other newspapers, magazines, and websites including all of Conde Nast’s brands (the *New Yorker*, *Wired*, *Pitchfork*, *Vogue*, etc.). Compare the *Republican*’s web affiliate, *MassLive.com*, with *nola.com*, *mlive.com*, *NJ.com*, and *cleveland.com*.

And there are others – the incredible non-profit *Commons* to our north in Windham County, fourteen small weeklies run by Turley Publications in the area around Palmer, and some digital-only upstarts like the *Shoestring* shaking things up.

We’re a small, independent fish in a small pond, relying on pluck and goodwill to survive from month to month. Organs of investigation once covered this country from coast to coast, from the big-city legends to the un-glamorous hyper-locals, but something broke, and now no one knows quite how to restore a proper investment in the fine art, or hard labor, of journalism.

The woes of other papers don’t bring us joy. Anyone still in print is a colleague, a fellow steward of the open society, and should be praised.

Change is in the air, but we’re not going anywhere. Our readers know the value we bring and they are loyal. And though the world may be on fire, we look forward to 2019 with hope and curiosity.

See you in the new year!

Letter to  the Editors

Keep It Going

Since the memorial and tributes for Don Clegg were printed in the *Montague Reporter* on November 29, I’ve been thinking a lot about him and the newspaper and all of the communities it serves.

While Don contributed countless hours to many organizations in town, he was especially invested in the newspaper and making sure that it continues and grows.

I’m guessing that a lot of us take for granted having a local paper of this quality, but we shouldn’t. The paper is always getting by on a shoestring, and its continued existence depends on all of us. It would be an immeasurable loss to not have

this paper with the outstanding and creative articles and artwork provided by local folks.

Think about making a tax-deductible donation to the paper that could be in someone’s memory (like Don), or, if you have a business, advertising in it. How about buying gift subscriptions for neighbors and friends, even ones who may have moved away but would still enjoy keeping up with what’s happening here?

Wishing everyone a happy and healthy New Year, and many more years of the *Montague Reporter*.

Anne Jemas
Turners Falls



Carrie Mazar poses behind the candy counter at the Black Cow Burger Bar in Turners Falls, where she has worked for 2½ years. The location was once Equi’s Candy store; chocolate is still sold there, but not the huge candy canes that were popular items at the old Equi’s.

GUEST EDITORIAL

Anderson: School Committee Taking Concerns Seriously

By HALEY ANDERSON

TURNERS FALLS – As a member of the Gill-Montague regional school committee, I sat last Tuesday during the public comment section of the Committee meeting and heard calls for action from parents and grandparents – people of color – expressing their outrage about racially-based aggressions that their children have experienced in our schools, along with their frustration about what they feel has been inadequate response from school administration.

I deeply hope that those parents left the room that night feeling that their words were well heard by the school committee, and that our board is taking their concerns seriously and acting upon them. Speaking for myself, that is certainly my intent.

My few months as a member on the GMRSD school committee have taught me a lot about the process of open meeting, and some of that has been eye-opening and somewhat frustrating. I find that the many rules and regulations of the state Open Meeting Law, while largely necessary, impose a stifling effect; response to public comment, especially, feels cumbersome.

Open Meeting Law requires that governing bodies post the agendas of their meetings 48 hours in advance. This rightly affords the public the opportunity to preview the topics on deck, and attend a meeting if they so wish.

The law is direct when it comes to issues that may spur community interest or contention. The Massachusetts Open Meeting Law guide, available online at mass.gov, states:

*“Although a public body may consider a topic that was not listed in the meeting notice if it was not anticipated, the Attorney General strongly encourages public bodies to **postpone discussion and action on topics that are controversial or may be of particular interest to the public** if the topic was not listed in the meeting notice.”* [Emphasis mine.]

The unfortunate side effect of that, especially when public comment brings up an emotionally charged and important issue, is that the committee’s response in that moment may appear as something like, “Thank you for bringing this to our attention, we will add it to a future agenda.” No wonder people sometimes leave feeling like they might have done better talking to a wall.

However, a lack of definitive action in the moment of public comment does not signal the committee’s indifference to the issue. I hope that came across clearly in this last meeting.

Our schools, and our community at large, need to join together in rooting out racism and hate in all

its forms. My vision is that Gill-Montague become a leader in educating students in a meaningful way about social justice, including the messy and often uncomfortable topics of race and racism, both historical and contemporary. When some students feel able to use the “N” word, that is evidence that we have dropped the ball somewhere along the line.

Whatever messages those students are getting at home, it is our responsibility to make sure that from K-12, they are receiving direct, specific education in our schools about the history and current context of race. We cannot shy away from this work simply because it is difficult. We must hear and trust the families who are speaking of their experience of racism in our schools, even if their accounts differ from our own perceptions. School staff need to be aware that turning the other cheek is not an option, that racist behavior will not be harbored.

The first of a few public forums on civil rights incidents in our schools and equity education will be held on Monday, January 14, from 6:30 to 8:30 p.m. at Turners Falls High School, and district families are invited to be part of this dialogue.

For those who feel that their reports of racism in the schools have not been sufficiently addressed by the administration to date and fear that the discussions will be “more of the same,” I want to emphasize that the discussions will be facilitated by representatives from the Collaborative for Educational Services (CES), a separate and distinct organization. In order to encourage open exchange among participants, school committee members and school district administrators will not be present for the first forum.

It is my hope that these forums will draw strong participation and will prove to be a safe zone for people to air their concerns. As a committee member, I will be paying close attention to the findings and recommendations from CES.

I encourage anyone to reach out to me via email at haley.anderson@gmrtd.org if they have a concern, a topic that they would like to request appear on the agenda, or a specific action that they would like to see in a school committee vote. Your input is vital.

Lastly, I would like to remind anyone who would like a seat at the table that we have an open Montague seat on the committee from now until May, when that seat is up for reelection. The Superintendent’s office is currently accepting letters of interest until Wednesday, January 2. On January 8, the committee will review the letters submitted, and vote to appoint a new member.

Haley Anderson is a GMRSD school committee member. She lives in Turners Falls.

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

PHONE: (413) 863-8666
Please note new email addresses:
editor@montaguereporter.org
features@montaguereporter.org
ads@montaguereporter.org
bills@montaguereporter.org
circulation@montaguereporter.org
events@montaguereporter.org
poetry@montaguereporter.org
subscriptions@montaguereporter.org

Send address changes to:
The Montague Reporter
177 Avenue A
Turners Falls, MA 01376

Advertising and copy deadline is
MONDAY at NOON.

This newspaper shall not be liable for errors in advertisements, but will print without charge that part of the advertisement in which an error occurred. The publishers reserve the right to refuse advertising for any reason and to alter copy or graphics to conform to standards of the newspaper, such as they are.

Annual Subscription Rate:
\$30 for walking subscriptions;
\$40 for driving route subscriptions;
\$60 for mailed subscriptions.

Call us or contact
subscriptions@montaguereporter.org
with any questions.

WE WELCOME YOUR LETTERS!

(ORIGINAL CONTENT ONLY, PLEASE)

Montague Reporter
177 Avenue A
Turners Falls, MA 01376

editor@montaguereporter.org

Sign Me Up!

\$20 { 8 months (31 issues) for our walking routes
6 months (23 issues) for our driving routes
4 months (15 issues) for mailed subscriptions

The Montague Reporter

177 Avenue A, Turners Falls, MA 01376

Name: _____
Address: _____
Town: _____ State: ____ Zip: _____
Email (optional): _____



Compiled by **CHRIS PELLERIN**

With the untimely passing of Don Clegg, it wasn’t clear what was going to happen to this column. As a subscriber, I turn to **Local Briefs** to find out what’s happening in town and didn’t want it to go away like the *Recorder’s* “Neighbors” column did. I thought it would be a nice tribute to Don to keep it going, so I volunteered to take it on.

Mike said that I should be sure to introduce myself to you, the readers. I’m **Chris Pellerin**. I’ve lived in Montague Center for a little over 10 years with my husband and adult son, a former student at Four Winds School in Gill and Franklin County Tech.

We attend Our Lady of Peace Church in Turners Falls. I do a lot of volunteer work with the church’s women’s group, and I also volunteer monthly at Great Falls Books through Bars, which meets every second Saturday afternoon at La Mariposa. This organization collects and sends books to prisoners.

I don’t work full time, but I do help staff at Sawmill River Arts Gallery (near the Book Mill) where I am a fiber artist and member of the cooperative. My other interests include genealogy, organic gardening, and taking care of my four goats, 11 chickens, and dog (adopted from the Franklin County Regional Dog

Shelter). I love our community, and our community newspaper.

My husband and I went to the “**It’s A Wonderful Night in Turners Falls**” celebration last Thursday after having a great dinner at the Voo. We got lots of stickers and filled up our Holiday Open Door card.

If you have one of those, you better hurry up and get your stickers! The cards are due back on the 22nd at either LOOT or Black Cow Burger. I’m looking forward to winning one of the \$150 gift certificates, are you?

On Thursday the 20th, from 7 to 8:30 p.m., we may join the group going **caroling in Montague Center**.

We’ll meet at the Common Hall, and go from there. Songbooks and bells will be provided. I’m hoping there’s a large crowd to drown out my voice!

Carnegie Library has **used book sales** on the first Saturday of each month, but this month there is a special sale on December 22. Get down there between 10 a.m. and 1:30 p.m. for \$3 and \$1 bags of books, and stock up on reading material for the winter months.

A great way to get into the Christmas spirit is to attend the **Christmas Candlelight Service** at the Leverett Congregational Church on

Sunday, December 23 at 7 p.m. The free service will feature traditional readings, choral anthems, and carol singing, closing with Silent Night by candlelight.

The church is located across the street from the Leverett Post Office and is accessible and open to all. For more information you can contact Claudia at claudia@claudiagere.com or call (413) 359-0003.

Looking for something to do with the kids during school vacation? The **Great Falls Discovery Center** is open Wednesdays through Sundays 10 a.m. to 4 p.m., and Tuesday, January 1.

On Fridays from 10:30-11:30, they have the Kidleidoscope program in the Great Hall, which includes a story, game, and craft. While the program is geared toward kids ages 3 to 6 and their adult caregivers, siblings are welcome too. On December 21, they will learn about owls, and on December 28 the theme is winter birds.

The Discovery Center is also sponsoring a **First Day Hike** on January 1 from 1 to 3 p.m. Dress for the weather, and be sure to bring your dog on a leash.

If you are an overachiever and strolling for 2 miles is not strenuous enough for you, try the **Sawmill River 10K Run**, sponsored by Montague Parks and Recreation. I’ve watched this run, and I can tell you those are some hardy souls!

Hope for good weather on January 1, and be sure to pre-register for the run at www.runreg.com. For more information go to www.tinyurl.com/ya8gmjpt, where you’ll also find other great family activities happening this winter.

This event is a little outside our coverage area, but sounds like a lot of fun: **Last Night Brattleboro 2018**. I checked out their Facebook page and there are lots of family-friendly activities -- music, skating, sleigh rides, etc. -- going on throughout the day on Monday, December 31.

The day ends with fireworks over the Brattleboro Retreat Meadows at 9:30 p.m. Then you can drive home, put the kiddos to bed, and have a glass of bubbly with your spouse to ring in the new year.

If you’re looking for some color to brighten your dreary day, head over to the Leverett Village Co-op between January 1 and February 28 for an **exhibit of hand-hooked rugs** by Margaret Arraj of Mill River Rugs. The Co-op is located at 180 Rattlesnake Gutter Road. They are open from 7 a.m. to 7 p.m. daily.

Looking ahead to January 3, there will be a **Genealogy Gathering** from 6 to 7:45 p.m. at the Carnegie Library for genealogy geeks like me. They have it the first Thursday of each month, but somehow I always manage to forget about it.

Now that I’m supposed to be keeping up with local events, I will have no excuse.

I’ve been told that I have next week off because we won’t be publishing a paper on December 27, so stay warm, have some hot cocoa and gingerbread cookies, and I’ll be **back on January 3** to let you know what’s happening in our freshly minted New Year!

Send your local briefs to editor@montaguereporter.org.

LIVE IN

EST. 1754

MONTAGUE?

www.MontagueMA.net
local gossip, news & business listings

GILL TOWN HALL

will be closed on Monday, December 24 so that employees can enjoy time with their families.

Also, due to the Christmas and New Year’s holidays, Gill’s trash & recycling collection will be postponed to Saturday, December 29 and Saturday, January 5. Please have your items to the curb by 7 a.m.

GREENFIELD

FARMERS COOPERATIVE EXCHANGE

Locally Owned Since 1918

269 High Street - Greenfield
(413) 773-9639

Local Farmer-Owned

Products for the home, farm, pets, yard & garden

If you Feed it - Seed it - Weed it We GOT it!

www.greenfieldfarmerscoop.com

Nina’s Nook

Uniquities, Frivolities, Un-necessariums ~ Creative items ~ bringing joy to life

Open 12 to 5 p.m.
Thursdays through Saturdays
125A Avenue A Turners Falls
413.834.8800

www.ninasnook.com

Great Falls Middle School Students of the Week

Week ending Dec. 7:

Grade 6
Khiarieliex Huertas-Hernandez

Grade 7
Logan Franklin

Grade 8
Madison LeBorgne

Related Arts
Kailey James-Putnam

GUEST EDITORIAL

By **RICHARD WIDMER**

MILLERS FALLS – This week I heard that the N-word was spoken in our schools. As a white, middle-aged male, I cannot possibly comprehend the experience of black families and children in our school district, hearing the N-word – a threat to basic human dignity, intelligence, and survival – in a place where children go to learn.

Once again, we are faced with a school crisis: *Are our schools racist?*

In Montague, in Massachusetts’ 351 municipalities, in every town and city in America, seeing race as a point of division among people is a fiction that we teach in our schools, propagate with our national news and entertainment media, and celebrate with our nation-building mythology.

As great as our nation may be, our 400 years of cities on hills, manifest destiny, and melting-pot narratives also serve to obscure the brutality of genocide, colonialism, slavery, rape, murder, and injustice against people of color perpetrated by the white ruling class.

We are all one people – *one race* – humans. Why don’t we teach this right?

I believe we don’t teach this right because the truth is too shocking. Teaching the truth would undermine the privilege of the white ruling class, destabilize our society, and probably lead to revolution – a natural reaction of rational people against

an amoral leadership. It is intellectually, psychologically, and spiritually impossible to reconcile our crimes against humanity with concepts of “liberty and justice for all.”

In my most cynical moments, I wonder if our schools are teaching us to open our eyes, or to close them.

Writer James Baldwin tells us that what we say about someone else reveals ourselves, and is dictated by our own psychology of fears and desires. When white people use the N-word, we are not ascribing others, but ascribing ourselves. Black people did not invent the N-word. Black people do not need the N-word. The N-word is an invention of white people. What do we fear? Why is this N-word concept necessary to white people?

In the words of Baldwin, “you’re the n----, baby. It isn’t me.” Let’s teach that in our schools.

Public education, by definition, serves the broadest of student populations. People from many places, with many different backgrounds, are brought together in classrooms to learn.

Identity politics is an issue at every level of society in our country – of course it shows up in our classrooms. We live in a white male-dominated, racist country. We elected a racist President. Of course we are racist. And of course we don’t want to see it.

These are hard lessons to learn... and unlearn.

When I was 9, in fourth grade, I had a friend named Michael Battle. One day we got into a shoving match during class cleanup time. I called him the N-word – I was trying to hurt him. He challenged me to a fight after school.

Michael and I were friends. He had attended several of my birthday parties. Now, surrounded by 40 seething elementary school boys and girls, we were raising our fists and preparing to fight.

I knew that I was wrong. The principal did not magically appear to save me from public humiliation. I knew the fight was unavoidable. I also knew that Michael could kick my butt.

My words had hurt him. I could see the confusion and anger in Michael’s eyes. I had betrayed him. Then BANG! to my chest. I was flat on my back and gasping for air. One punch knock-out. Charlie Brown. The crowd was certainly disappointed. I don’t think I told my mom much about school that day.

Michael Battle taught me a lesson: the N-word is disrespectful, hurtful, and ignorant. The N-word is disrespectful because it is a negative stereotype for black people. The N-word is hurtful because it is scary for a person of color to hear threatening language from dominant culture peers. The N-word is ignorant because it exposes white fear and oppression. Unacceptable.

In western Massachusetts, in Montague – with declining student

enrollments, competition from choice, charter, and tech schools, plus rising costs and inequitable state funding formulae – our schools are already in a highly precarious position.

Our school district is our town’s single largest investment. To tar and feather our schools with negative labels would seem unwise.

While we are a predominantly white community, if you look into our classrooms, you will see that students of color are important members of our community and an integral part of the future of our school district and towns. I also know many district personnel who are sensitive to the needs of students of color, and work hard on their behalf. Is it fair to take the action of a single student, administrator, or staff person to characterize the whole school?

What changes would improve the situation? For what benefit? At what cost?

The safety of students of color in our schools is of the utmost importance, as is the safety of all of our students. If students are using the N-word in schools, it is an opportunity for learning. There is work to be done here.

The need to help our schools to better serve students of color cannot be ignored.

Richard Widmer is a parent, teacher, and coach in Gill-Montague schools. He lives in Millers Falls.

PLACE YOUR BUSINESS CARD HERE (12 WEEK MINIMUM). CALL 863-8666

SHEEP

SHAWL

YARNS • CRAFTS • COMMUNITY

SHEEP & SHAWL

Tues., Thurs., Fri., Sat. 10-6
Wed. 12-8 • Sun. 12-4

Serving Franklin County as your Local Yarn Shop for 5 years!
Regional yarns & handmade crafts
www.sheepandshawl.com
413-397-3680

Located in the Tibetan Plaza on Rtes 5/10, South Deerfield, MA
See website for classes and free Wed. Crafts Nite

REAL PICKLES

Locally grown vegetables
Fermented & raw
100% organic

A worker co-op in Greenfield, MA
www.realpickles.com | (413) 774-2600

Overwhelmed by stuff? Try Franklin County’s Most Convenient

IN-TOWN SELF STORAGE

UPPER END OF WELLS STREET, GREENFIELD

413-883-7323

Easy in-town location
Secure 24-hour access

VARIETY OF SIZES
THE BEST PRICES

OFFICE AT 50 CHAPMAN STREET, GREENFIELD, MA
Contractors, Flea Marketers, Tradeshow Vendors and Artists encouraged to inquire

RECYCLE

PAPER
Week of December 24
BOTTLES & CANS
Week of January 1
in Montague



more info? call: 863-2054



Partridge-Zschau
Insurance Agency

**Standing Between
You and Loss**

Since 1891

25 Millers Falls Road
Turners Falls, MA 01376
tel: 413-863-4331
fax: 413-863-9426
www.pzinc.com

**Riverside
Laundromat**

131 West Main St. Orange
Behind OIC

&

**Village
Laundromat**

**63 French King Hwy
Greenfield**

Tired of quarters?
\$1 coins & quarters accepted

**Big 40 & 60
Pound Washers!**

**WE HEAT
FRANKLIN
COUNTY**

- **System 2000**
(Energy Kinetics)
- **Thermo Pride**
- **Weil-McLain**
- **Other Major Brands**
- **Expert Burner Service**



(413) 773-3622

TFHS SPORTS from page A1

second half, and outscored Blue 40-25 for the final score of 75 to 46.

Tyler Lavin led the pack for Turners with 14 points. Kyle Dodge and Anthony Peterson each got 9, Jake Dodge and Jovanni Ruggiano put up 6 points apiece, and Jaden Whiting added 2.

The next day, the team traveled to Lenox to play the Millionaires. Turners got behind early in this game trailing 19-10 after a quarter. They made a couple of runs in the second, but were unable to make up ground, and at the half it remained a 9-point game, 33-24.

Turners kept pace in the second half, scoring 31 to Lenox’s 33, but they were unable to make up any ground and Lenox took the game 66-57.

Again, six players accounted for Powertown’s points. Lavin had 15 points, Ruggiano put up 10, Peterson got 9, Kyle Dodge and Whiting 8, and Jeremy Russell scored 5.

Then on Monday, December 17, the team went to Westhampton and beat the Hampshire Red Raiders 67-56.

It was nice seeing the boys play with confidence. Peterson banged the boards, Lavin hit from the out-

side, and Kyle Dodge forced it up the middle. Powertown took a 21-7 lead in the first quarter and never looked back, coasting to a 67-55 win.

Three different players hit double figures for Turners, with Lavin netting 23, Ruggiano adding 13, and Kyle Dodge scoring 10. Whiting (8), Peterson (7), and Russell (6) also scored for Blue.

Girls Basketball
Athol 56 – TFMA 55 (OT)
Southwick 43 – TFMA 42 (OT)

This week, the Turners Falls girls’ basketball team dropped two close games, and both in overtime. On Friday December 14, the Blue Ladies were nosed out by Athol in the fifth quarter, and then on Wednesday, Southwick outlasted them 43-42.

Against Athol, Turners was leading big in the fourth quarter but as the game progressed, more and more Turners players got into foul trouble. In OT, Turners took a 4-point lead, but Athol managed to win the game on foul shots.

Dabney Rollins had a big night inside, popping in 16 points. Karissa Fleming drove to the hoop well and ended with 15. Lily Spera played hard against the boards to put up 8,

Aly Murphy added 7 points, Eliza Johnson had 4, Sarah Waldron hit 3 foul shots, and Vanessa Moreno added a field goal.

Then on Wednesday, December 18, Turners suffered their second overtime loss in as many games, this time against the Southwick Lady Rams. The game was delayed a bit as the JV game went into overtime. In the JV game, Turners came from a 12-3 deficit to tie it at the end of regulation, and then won mostly off three-pointers.

In the varsity game, Turners skyrocketed out to a 14-2 lead, but again the Blue Ladies got into foul trouble, and Southwick took advantage. By the time the halftime buzzer sounded, the Rams were up 22-21.

Southwick stretched their lead to 36-29, but in the fourth, Blue came back to tie it at 40 all. Turners got a couple of foul shots in overtime, but Southwick closed the game out with a three-pointer to win 43-42.

Rollins had a monster night, controlling the boards and scoring 21 points. Murphy played through an injury to score 8, Fleming got 6, and Waldron (3), Lindsay White-man (2) and Lily Spera (2) also scored for Blue.

Swimming
Sci-Tech 70 – TFMA 51
TFMA 68 – Sci-Tech 35

On Tuesday, December 18, the Turners swim teams traveled to Springfield to take on Sci-Tech. The boys dropped their meet 70-51, while the girls won 68-35.

There are only three swimmers on the boys’ team for Turners so the relays were forfeited, as well as any second and third places. But they fared pretty well nonetheless. Cameron Bradley won two events, the 100-yard butterfly (1:02:50) and the 100-backstroke (1:07.30). Nik Martin won the 500 freestyle in 7:07.49, and Jack Putala took the 200 freestyle (2:46.81).

In the girls’ meet, Allison Wheeler won two events, the 200 individual medley (2:51.78) and 100 backstroke. (1:17.52). Jade Tyler also won two, the 100 butterfly (1:08.15) and the 500 freestyle (6:08.81).

Olivia Whittier won in the 100 breaststroke (1:17.63), and Lillian Poirier took first in the 200 freestyle (2:42.33). The Powertown relay team (Whittier, Abigail Johnson, Tyler, and Wheeler) swept the 200-yard medley relay (2:23.25) and the 200-yard freestyle relay (2:12).

DISPATCHES from page A1

ecological and climate threat.

But if the rules for implementing the Paris Agreement and setting targets for lowering emissions are now set, just how the very ambitious goal of controlling warming will be reached was not defined. The only mechanism to ensure that countries meet their Nationally Determined Contributions (NDCs) to reduce emissions is the requirement to report regularly, publicly and following guidelines that apply to all countries.

As a German commentator said (in English), for those not meeting the targets, the “enforcement” process amounts to “naming and shaming.”

There are also no fixed goals for phasing out fossil fuels, nor specific requirements or enforcement mechanisms. Contributions to the fund for affected countries are voluntary.

Moving Forward

What happens now depends on the individual countries, and action on the local as well as national levels.

But the conference results will at least keep the UN and international process going. Even given the situation in Poland – with its strict, even repressive, regulations limiting demonstrations and civil society actions at and during the COP – the two-week event provided a forum for strong statements and protest, especially from island nations and climate activists.

The speech and press statements of 15-year-old Swedish student activist Greta Thunberg resonated especially, as she accused world leaders of “stealing our future” and called for student strikes around the world for action on climate.

US negotiators were present, as the Trump pullout from the Paris Agreement will only become official in January 2021. Although American delegates actively attempted to weaken the results, the leading German weekly news magazine *Spiegel*’s report concluded that “probably the most important result from Katowice is that the UN steamship was not forced off course even by the world power USA, and that the climate process continues – and all countries are taking part.”

Climate NGO Germanwatch policy director Christoph Bals agreed: “The achievement of Katowice is also a victory for multilateralism... The test will be implementation of the Paris Agreement. We need Government decisions for ambitious climate protection at home. The climate movement, that has developed worldwide from the [defense of the endangered German] Hambacher Forest to resistance against pipelines and student strikes, has also been present here in Katowice, and will be ever stronger and demand the necessary climate protection.”

And In The Streets

Parallel to the conference in Poland, major blockades and demonstrations took place in French cities, with highway barricades preventing holiday shoppers from reaching towns and gas stations.

The first actions of the so-called “yellow vest” activists started in mid-November in response to an announced increased tax on diesel gasoline. Identified by the emergency vests they wore, a safety requirement in French cars, the protesters organized over social media. Their actions were “spontaneous” in not having defined leadership, organizations, or meetings.

Touted by French president Emmanuel Macron as a way to reduce both pollution and gas consumption, the tax was seen by working people, especially in rural areas, as the last straw in a policy of taxation clearly benefiting the rich. The tax was accompanied by increasing closure of local state facilities, from post offices to local rail lines.

The nature and demands of the movement are changing due to support from both left- and right-wing militants, and due to widespread violence, including from the police. But the issues it is raising remain.

The situation in France was reportedly a major topic of conversation during coffee breaks at the climate conference. It was seen as a clear consequence of top-down measures, not part of a coherent plan to deal with transportation pollution or the climate crisis.

It also, perhaps, serves as a warning to decision-makers as to how *not* to force changes in

lifestyle and costs connected with the transition to renewable energy.

New Campaigns

Meanwhile, new initiatives around climate action were being announced: in Washington by newly elected progressive Democrats presenting plans for a Green New Deal, and in the streets of London, with the new direct action movement Extinction Rebellion.

Visiting Extinction Rebellion’s website at <https://rebellion.earth>, I found much that should be of interest to communities in western Mass. Many are well aware of the dangers of climate change and its realities in our own area. Hundreds have been involved in opposing the NED gas pipeline and similar projects. And we may know that it is those people around the world who are least prepared for global warming, and contribute the least to its causes, who are most affected by it.

But what to do on a state and national level?

Extinction Rebellion (XR) formed just this past October in England, but is part of the activist group Rising Up, which practices nonviolent civil disobedience in various and creative ways. The group is a response to the most drastic realities of climate changes, which cannot be reversed or cleaned up, and calls for emergency action to force attention on the need for change.

Dr. Gail Bradbrook, of Rising Up and an XR founder, presents a packed program in a 50-minute video on the website. She starts with the most recent scientific data around climate disruption and what it can mean, arguing that new information indicates the timeframe will be shorter and more deadly. I found her description of putting yourself at risk of arrest, and agreeing to be part of a focused movement, moving in itself.

Impressed, I signed up for more information, and found that among the list of new area groups forming, there are three in our great state: Boston, Cape Cod – and western Mass! Right there above the last, Wyoming. International actions are being planned for next March.

Interest and sign-ups are growing around the world, as people fight despair on the subject with – if not hope – then courage.

PLACE YOUR BUSINESS CARD HERE (12 WEEK MINIMUM). CALL 863-8666



Bringing Peace to Tired Muscles
Do you need a tune-up?

Let me help
Gretchen Wetherby LMT

Massage Offices in Shelburne Falls and Millers Falls
www.gretchenwetherby.massagetherapy.com

gretchenwlmt@gmail.com 413-824-7063



OrigamiUSA

*Origami is for anyone,
anywhere, anytime!*

Join us at: **OrigamiUSA.org**
Email: **admin@origamiusa.org**
Tel: **212.769.5635**

- Find a local community origami group
- Fold from diagrams in our publications
- Shop for origami paper and books
- And much more!

Renaissance Excavating, Inc.




**COMPLETE
SITE WORK**

Septic & Drainage Systems | Sand, Gravel & Loam
Main Road, Gill
Douglas Edson 413.863.4462
renexc@gmail.com cell 413.834.2201

French King

Restaurant & Motel



OPEN BREAKFAST, LUNCH & DINNER
WEDNESDAY - SUNDAY 7 A.M.

SPIRITS, BREWS & FINE WINES

53C S. Main St. South Deerfield, MA
295 Amherst Rd. Sunderland, MA

New Location Now Open:
6 Main Road, in Gill
(formerly Jan's Package Store)
Come check us out!

Deerfield: (413) 665-2456
Sunderland: (413) 665-5030
Gill: (413) 863-5730



Fred Holmgren

Piano Tuning & Repair



**Stay
tuned!**

(978)544-5494
fredholmgren@gmail.com

MONTAGUE from page A1
attempting to stabilize that building while demolishing the rest of the complex would most likely be prohibitively expensive.

In its comment on Turners Falls Hydro’s relicensing application, the town argues that the hydro company relies on an outdated 2007 architectural study of the condition of the surrounding buildings, and fails to note that the state fire marshal has ordered most of the complex boarded and “marked as abandoned.”

It goes on to suggest that demolition of the Strathmore may be the town’s only option:

“The [Strathmore] has deteriorated to the point where the Town has determined that demolition of the improvements on the site is warranted. The Town does not have the resources to do otherwise. As noted, the hydroelectric plant shares walls with the Town Building, and uses the Town Property for access and the running of utilities.

“The [application] does not acknowledge that the structural integrity and other essential components of the hydroelectric plant are dependent upon a building that has failed to such a degree that the Town sees no alternative but to demolish it.”

The comment concludes with the observation that “at the minimum,” the hydro company will need to make provision for utilities “that do not involve utilizing the Town Property,” and must “address alternative supporting components” to the Strathmore complex. The comment, which does not explicitly oppose the hydro application, urges the company to “reach out to discuss this matter.”

Turners Falls Hydro, LLC is owned by Eagle Creek Renewable Energy which, in November, was purchased by Ontario Power Generation, a Canadian government-owned company which produces approximately half of Ontario’s electricity. Eagle Creek owns 63 small hydroelectric facilities in the United States.

Community Development

Much of the agenda of the December 17 meeting was taken up by an “informational session” on the proposed 2019 federal Community Development Block Grant (CDBG). The application for the grant, which could total \$612,066, is due on March 1. It was introduced by Brian McHugh of the Franklin County Regional Housing and Redevelopment Authority, the agency which administers the program for Montague.

As is the case every year, the CDBG funds one or more public construction projects, social service programs, and housing rehabilitation projects. Next year the CDBG will fund the reconstruction of Spinner Park, a small “pocket park” on Avenue A in Turners Falls. The plans and the bidding process for Spinner Park were reviewed by town planner Walter Ramsey.

McHugh said there might not be enough money in the 2019 grant for

housing rehabilitation, but funds might become available as previous recipients repay their loans.

During the discussion, Tim de Christopher, the creator of the “Rock Paper Scissors” sculpture on the corner of Avenue A and Third Street, asked the board to consider more lighting on the corner, “if for no other reason than [the sculpture] has been vandalized.”

Selectboard chair Rich Kulewicz said he “opposed” underground lighting, but that there was a nearby post on which a light could be attached.

Upfront Soft Costs

Town treasurer Eileen Seymour reviewed the town’s new bond rating from Standard and Poor’s. She said the town had been upgraded “a notch,” from AA- to AA.

Selectboard member Michael Nelson asked “what that actually means,” to which Seymour replied that it was only one level below the highest rating, AAA. “It’s good for rates, when you’re going out to bond,” she said.

Town administrator Steve Ellis highlighted a number of the positive elements in the rating report which, he said, “should be celebrated.”

Seymour also reviewed Montague’s planned borrowing for next year, which she estimated at \$4.725 million. Of that, \$2.5 million will cover “upfront soft costs” for the planned Department of Public Works garage.

Other Business

Ellis discussed the response of state officials at the Department of Local Services to an inquiry about policies governing state-owned land in Montague. The letter called for better communication “establishing values for state-owned land,” and better consultation about state land purchases.

Ellis said that DLS had responded and that senior deputy commissioner Sean Cronin “is someone who does work to try to be very responsive,” but that the town needed to continue to press for “better communication prior to purchase.”

Water Pollution Control Facility (WPCF) superintendent Bob McDonald read a long list of FY’19 sewer abatement requests. The board approved all his recommendations. The board also approved a \$15,500 agreement with the firm JK Muir to develop a Request For Proposals for a solar installation at the WPCF.

The board approved a very long list of liquor, entertainment, food, and automobile license applications, set to go into effect at the beginning of 2019. The one exception was a “junk license” for Bob’s Auto Body on Avenue A, which Nelson moved only be approved for three months.

Nelson questioned the number of large trucks parked on the company’s property “at least for as long as I’ve been alive.” “I’ve had multiple complaints in the past few months of ‘why are they there,

LOCAL ACCESS from page A1

between cable companies and local “franchising authorities” to be counted under the 5% cap on franchise fees set by law.

To untangle the jargon a bit, the cable licenses granted by local “franchising authorities” – cities and towns in Massachusetts – stipulate that a percentage of a cable company’s total revenue be directed toward the localities. Generally these “franchise fees” are then directed toward the funding of local access television stations, also known as PEG (public, education, and government) stations. The fee that a town may charge is capped under federal law at 5% of the revenue the cable company makes in that town.

In Montague, the 5% franchise fee, which will total approximately \$136,000 in 2018, finances nearly all the programming on the town’s local access station, MCTV.

Many license agreements with cable providers also include non-monetary benefits for local communities, such as discounts for low-income and elderly residents, free cable service in town buildings, and the channels for public access.

The proposed FCC rule would essentially define these benefits as “in-kind contributions,” allowing the cable companies to subtract their value from the 5% cap, potentially reducing funds available for local access. Collins told the cable committee that the rule change could decimate local access television unless cities and towns step up to fill the gap.

“Now, I don’t know what it costs to provide two channels on the cable system,” he said. “And probably nobody does, except for Comcast, but they can pretty much name a price. The concern that a lot of people in my profession have is that it could gut – and by that I mean remove – all funding for PEG access.”

Cable television and local access channels have been around since the 1980s, so why has the FCC abruptly decided to move the goalposts on this important issue?

The FCC has justified the change as part of an effort to encourage more competition in local cable services. A 2007 opinion by the Commission found that local demands for certain “in kind” contributions from new cable applicants were “unreasonable” barriers to competition. The agency ruled that year that for new applicants, such contributions should be applied toward

the federally mandated 5% cap. Then last September, the FCC issued a new rule that extended this logic to towns’ existing license agreements with cable operators. The agency argued that requiring various “in kind” contributions from cable companies would open the door for an “end around” the 5% cap. It suggested, for example, that local governments could theoretically require cable companies to provide “unlimited or discounted cable service and service...” as a precondition for a license.

Collins argued that the federal agency could implement the new rule in the near future, effectively reducing local access revenues as early as the first quarter of 2019.

Collins, on the other hand, told the CAC that the new rule was designed to save cable giants like Comcast money: “The lobbyists have been pushing for this, and you just knew at some point they were going to try to find a way – they were going to recoup that money they were losing.”

Geoffrey Beckwith, executive director of the Massachusetts Municipal Association, calls the proposed FCC policy “another windfall for industry, coming at the expense of local taxpayers, residents, and consumers.”

Crucially, the FCC’s discussion of the rule change is vague regarding what contributions would be considered “in kind,” and how the value of these contributions would be calculated. The agency requests

... commenters to provide examples of the types of cable-related, “in-kind” contributions that have been or are being required by [local authorities]. We further propose that cable-related, in-kind contributions be valued for purposes of the franchise fee cap at their fair market value. We seek comment on this proposal, and how such a market valuation should be performed. Alternatively, we seek comment on whether cable-related, in-kind contributions should be valued at the cost to the cable operator...

Local access stations and their supporters have mounted a last-minute drive to stop the proposed

FCC rule change. The agency’s website has been bombarded with “public comments” posted before the official December 14 deadline. Not only the Montague cable advisory committee, but the Montague selectboard endorsed a protest letter to the federal agency. The change has also encountered opposition from members of Congress in the Northeast, including Senator Ed Markey of Massachusetts. Collins said the US Senate may be able to exercise some oversight on the issue.

Collins argued that the federal agency could implement the new rule in the near future, effectively reducing local access revenues as early as the first quarter of 2019. He said he believes the new rule could immediately override the provisions of existing local access agreements.

MassAccess, the Boston-based advocacy group for local access stations statewide, announced recently that they had hired a law firm, the Cohen Law Group, to “help us file opposition to the proposed rule change.” An appeal of the decision to implement the rule could at least delay it from taking effect.

Meanwhile, language in existing cable licenses may suggest that if regulatory changes affect those agreements, both parties would be able to negotiate the impact.

According to the license agreement between Montague and Comcast,

Should the Commonwealth of Massachusetts, the federal government or the FCC require [Comcast] to perform or refrain from performing any act the performance or non-performance of which is inconsistent with any provision herein, the Issuing Authority and Licensee will thereupon, if they determine that a provision herein is affected, modify any of the provisions herein to reflect such government action.

The current contract between Montague and Comcast requires that the cable company provide two channels for public access programming at no cost to the town. (MCTV currently only uses one of these, Channel 17.) It also states that 5% of Comcast revenues be directed toward “PEG Access Support.”

If the proposed federal rule is implemented, these provisions would, at a minimum, need to be renegotiated.




NO PAPER
NEXT WEEK

SEE YOU
JANUARY 3

HAPPY
NEW YEAR!



PLACE YOUR BUSINESS CARD HERE (12 WEEK MINIMUM) CALL 863-8666!



**Authentic American Food & Drink
at the Montague Bookmill**

THEALVAHSTONE.COM • 413.367.5345 • OPEN 7 DAYS + NIGHTS



**Bryan Hobbs
Remodeling LLC**

Blown Cellulose Insulation • Spray Foam Insulation
Airsealing • Energy Audits • Replacement Doors & Windows

Email: bryanhobbsremodeling@gmail.com
Now Accepting Credit Cards

Office: (413)775-9006
Lic # 083982
Reg # 139564



Bryan G. Hobbs
PO Box 1535
Greenfield, MA 01302

CHARON ART VISIONARY TATTOO

Inspired, holistic tattoos
with a focus on personal energy,
experience and spontaneous creation.

www.CharonArt.com
413.676.9146
107 Avenue A, Great Falls



**New Mortgage Special
Limited Time Offer***

Check it out at
BestLocalBank.com

GREENFIELD NORTHAMPTON
Cooperative Bank

*On loans applied for on or after 3/12/2018 and which close by 9/30/2018;
subject to change or end without notice.



**OPEN DAILY
LUNCH and DINNER
24 Federal St., Greenfield
773-0333 / thepeoplespint.com**

The Pint Says: TURN THE KEY!
When you idle your car's engine for more
than 10-20 seconds, you're wasting fuel.
Save on Gas - Save our Climate

Call 413.549.3766
LEGAL SOLUTIONS IN PLAIN ENGLISH, PC

Business Law, Liquor Licenses, Special Permits,
Zoning & Land Use, Civil Litigation. (And More.)

KRISTI A. BODIN, ESQ.

150 Fearing Street, Suite 23, Amherst, MA 01002
Tel 413.549.3766 • fax 800.760.1225 • cell 413.695.9848
KAB@LAWYERAMHERSTMA.COM • WWW.KABESQ.COM



Happy 2019!

Two Convenient 24 HOUR ATM Locations




GSB Turners Falls
282 Avenue A



Montague Public Safety Complex
180 Turnpike Road



(413) 774-3191 • (413) 584-4441 greenfieldsavings.com

Member FDIC/Member DIF • Equal Housing Lender 

NEW GSB CreditCenter



FREE with GSB Online & Mobile Banking

Free

Credit Scores Credit Reports Credit Alerts

- Get your Credit Score and monitor your Credit Report as often as you like *without* affecting your Credit Score
- Set up alerts
- Learn how to improve your Credit Score
- All for FREE—no credit card required

Check your Score, today!

(413) 774-3191 • (413) 584-4441
greenfieldsavings.com



Member FDIC/Member DIF • Equal Housing Lender 

ERVING from page A1

Shufelt called it “a really good RFP.”

The RFP calls for a contractor to build up to 60 units, at least 35% of them deed-restricted to people earning, at a maximum, 80% of the Franklin County median income. It states that the design should “reflect the local existing buildings.”

According to the document, “[t]he Town of Erving is looking for creative use of the land and creative space design for the units, with a preference for open concept floor layouts.” In addition, the town is asking for units that will “increase the tenants’ energy and water savings and limit the project’s environmental impacts.”

After the RFP is published, interested developers will submit plans and apply for state funding. The senior housing committee, with help from Shufelt, will then evaluate the proposals and select a developer.

Shufelt said that many projects go through several annual funding cycles before being funded, and that construction of senior housing in Erving might be three years away. “Late January to early February is the best time to get the attention of developers,” she added.

“The sooner we get it out there, the more people will be able to look at it,” Betters said.

Selectboard member Jacob Smith said that, while the new library is being built and while MassDOT has the Route 63 roadway opened up for sidewalk construction, it will be possible to install cable, telephone and electrical infrastructure to serve future senior housing. A water main stub is already in place for a housing project, and a wastewater main can be installed.

Selectboard chair Scott Bastarache said the board was waiting for a review of the document by town counsel Donna MacNicol, and that, assuming that her review finds few issues, it would vote on the RFP at the January 7 meeting.

French King Bridge

MassDOT has sent memos to the towns of Erving and Gill listing various alternatives for reducing the risk of suicides at the French King Bridge, which connects the two towns. Interim district highway director Peter Cavicchi requested written support for one alternative.

The board voted to reply that they preferred alternative “2d,” a 9.5-foot-high curved picket railing mounted behind the existing railing. Bastarache said he had spoken with Gill selectboard member Randy Crochier, and learned that Gill prefers the same alternative.

The non-preferred alternatives included a vertical picket extension, a wire mesh barrier behind the railing, clear plastic panels along the existing railing, and safety nets below the bridge deck.

MassDOT estimates the cost of installing the curved picket railing at \$3 million.

OSHA Standards

In March 2018, Governor Charlie Baker signed legislation applying federal workplace safety standards to public employees. The federal Occupational Safety and Health Administration (OSHA) sets workplace safety standards for workers in private industries, but states regulate safety for state and local employees.

In the past, Massachusetts cities and towns were not required to comply with OSHA standards. Ac-

cording to administrative coordinator Bryan Smith, towns have until February 1 to show that they have a plan showing how they will comply with the federal standards.

Fire chief Philip Wonkka said that fire and police associations and unions have been discussing the new standards with the Massachusetts Department of Labor Standards (DLS), and “pushing back” on some of the regulations as unfunded mandates. For instance, towns will be required to fund regular and costly physical examinations for firefighters.

Wonkka said that the DLS had agreed that the requirement that workers be attached to a safety tether while on a roof would not apply to firefighters actively fighting a fire.

Administrative coordinator Smith said that the town’s insurance company had been very helpful in explaining the steps the town needs to take. Currently, department heads are doing self-assessments to determine what is needed to comply with the safety standards. In January and February, an insurance company staff member will conduct a “walk-through” audit of each department to identify risks.

The DLS, which develops regulations under the worker safety law, is requiring each town to identify a safety coordinator to oversee compliance with the regulations.

Bastarache suggested that the executive assistant to the administrative coordinator, a newly proposed position, could take on some of the safety coordinator tasks, or that the responsibilities could be spread over several departments.

Other Business

The selectboard and two members of the fin com met with Wonkka, police chief Christopher Blair, tree warden Michael Gordon, highway foreman Glenn McCrory, and chief water and wastewater operator Peter Sanders to discuss their departmental budgets. Neither the board nor the fin com, which did not have a quorum present for the majority of the meeting, took votes on the budget requests.

Blair recommended hiring an additional full-time police officer for FY’20. He said that, because two officers were out on extended leave this year and because of vacations and training time, “I have been paying overtime to have coverage.”

Wonkka said he was still waiting to find out what the Orange Emergency Medical Service would charge for ambulance service.

Gordon’s budget request was approximately double the FY’19 request, partly because tree work formerly done by the highway department would be completed under the tree warden’s budget. Also, Gordon said that residents requested additional tree work, including replanting where trees were cut down, during community meetings.

McCrory revisited the building and grounds maintenance budget, discussed at the last joint selectboard/fin com meeting. He said the budget should be increased to cover additional time mowing Riverfront Park. Sanders said that the water department was “basically level-funded” for FY’20, and noted that wastewater electricity costs will be lower.

The selectboard voted to renew three restaurant all-liquor licenses, three retail package store licenses, one innkeeper liquor license, and numerous business licenses.

NOTES FROM THE WENDELL SELECTBOARD

“No Precedent” For Using CDBG Funding For Broadband

By JOSH HEINEMANN

The Wendell selectboard’s table was graced on December 12 with two platters of cookies and savory treats, more than seven different flavors. Selectboard member Christine Heard arrived just as the meeting started, and the spiced chocolate rounds on her platter were still warm. Town coordinator Nancy Aldrich uncovered the platter of treats she had baked. She brought bags so anyone who came to the meeting could bring some home.

Brian McHugh, assistant director of community development at the Franklin County Housing Authority, came to tell selectboard members what services and financing the authority can offer the town and its residents using Community Development Block Grant (CDBG) money. The authority administers money from the federal department of Housing and Urban Development (HUD) which passes through the state.

The most commonly understood program, the program that is most likely to get funded, offers no-interest loans with which residents can pay for improvements to their homes, aimed at bringing those homes up to state code. Repayment of those loans is not due until the home changes ownership, and when each loan is paid back it stays in the town’s fund, and can be used to finance more home improvements.

McHugh said that Wendell households currently have a total \$1.5 million out in loans that have not been paid back. The money available now in the town’s home improvement fund is \$10,000.

If a project benefits a large part of the town, or if the residents on a section of street involved chosen

for an improvement meet income guidelines, town infrastructure may also be funded with CDBG money. Drainage work on Morse Village Road in the 1990s that eliminated its annual central pothole was done using CDBG funds.

Selectboard chair Dan Keller asked about the sidewalk proposal between the Country Store and the common, which town voters declined because of its expense. To qualify for CDBG money, the mean income of households on that stretch of road would have to be “low to moderate.”

The idea of allocating CDBG money for broadband infrastructure is being “kicked around,” and Keller asked if that could include the drops to homes. McHugh said he was not sure. There has been no precedent.

Grant applications are due March 1, and a public hearing is required 30 days prior to the application date.

As he left, McHugh took some cookies, and said, “Don’t consider these cookies a bribe.” (By most accounts, the cookies’ cash value was less than the \$50 deductible that ethics considerations allow.)

Future Chief

State community compact money is likely to be the best source for money to hire a consultant to help the police chief succession planning committee.

Wendell is considering sharing its police chief with New Salem, similar to how the towns share both town coordinator and fire chief, and the application will need approval by the New Salem selectboard.

Shared coordinator Nancy Aldrich attended the New Salem selectboard meeting on Monday, December 17, and she said approval was granted.

If the community compact does not offer the grant money, a second choice for money would be the FRCOG.

Other Business

Board members signed a renewal of the Class III automobile salvage license for Scott’s Garage, and the liquor licenses for Deja Brew and the Wendell Country Store.

They also signed a three-year extension of the contract with Colonial Power to buy electricity in aggregation, and more often than not, save ratepayers money.

The American flags are still up at the veterans’ memorial and outside the office building. Taking them down requires a special tool, and Keller thought it may be necessary to ask to use the tool that belongs to Harry Williston.

Board member Laurie DiDonato said she was told by Full Moon Coffeehouse committee member Fran Doughty that the stage-level emergency exit is blocked by a pew and some poles of unknown purpose or origin.

Keller said he got the pew from a church that was coming down, and it is not necessary now. Fin com member Al McIntire said that many woodworkers might be interested in the pew for its old wood. The poles are heavy to move, and can go to the WRATS if no one claims them.

Tom Robinson, owner of the property that includes the Bowen’s Pond dam, asked for copies of the minutes, agenda, and posting of the November 28 meeting at which Massachusetts Audubon representatives, town residents and neighbors of the pond discussed the dam, its condition, and the state effort to eliminate man-made dams.

LOOKING BACK: 10 YEARS AGO THIS WEEK

Here’s the way it was December 18, 2008: News from the Montague Reporter’s archive.

Seeking a Permanent Home for Sk8 Park

Skaters, their parents, and supporters crowded into the selectboard meeting room for a discussion on the figure of the Turners Falls Sk8 Park on Monday, December 15. “I don’t think there is any interest in having a skate park in Unity Park,” said Fred Cassidy, of 88 First Street, whose home borders the park, near the old Red Bridge abutments.

Director of Montague parks and rec Jon Dobosz said the space in Unity Park that supporters have been eyeing as a possible site for relocating the skate park, on the opposite side of the playing fields from the Cassidy residence, is also under consideration by the parks and rec commission for needed expansion of parking for overflow events.

“Just because it looks like there would be space doesn’t mean it’s the right space,” said Dobosz, referring to the open lawn by the intersection of Williams Way and First Street.

He said his understaffed department has had to contend with “discipline, vandalism, and cleanliness issues” at the current skate park location next to Unity Park, behind the former Chick’s Garage.

The park, which was constructed in 1998, was closed and locked in 2003, due to deterioration of plywood ramp surfaces and some vandalism, causing unsafe conditions. It remained locked for four years, while work parties organized by the Brick House’s Teen Center gathered funds and materials to repair and reopen the park in April.

However, the skate park’s ten-year lease with a private landowner expired at the end of October, and its future location is now at issue.

Native Ceremonial Site Eligible for National Register

Paul Loether, chief of the National Register of National Historic Landmarks, confirmed that a stone formation on the top of a small hill to the northeast of the runway at the Turners Falls Airport has been determined eligible for inclusion in the National Register of Historic Places.

“This makes the Federal Aviation Administration... treat the site as if it were listed in the National Register,” said Loether.

Narragansett deputy tribal historic preservation officer Doug Harris said the tribes had received verbal assurance from the FAA that “they will not move forward with any impacts to the hill” as a result of the successful determination.

A five-million-dollar runway ex-

tension project at the Turners Falls Airport, funded by the Massachusetts Aeronautics Commission and the FAA, has been held up for two years while the cultural significance of the stone formation on the hill-top site was deliberated by the FAA, the National Register, and the three federally recognized tribes who are interested parties to the dispute.

Montague Will Fund Commissioner’s Budget

On Tuesday Montague came to terms with the FY’09 school budget imposed on the town by Mitchell Chester, commissioner of the Department of Elementary and Secondary Education (DESE), and agreed to fully fund operations at the Gill-Montague regional school district for the present school year.


The DESE took control of the GMRSD’s finances and budget in the beginning of December, when the district and towns failed to agree on a budget, after repeated attempts at town and district meetings.

Chester set a \$16,625,875 operating budget for the schools, a 2.75% increase over last year’s figure.

Article One of Tuesday’s meeting called for the town to spend \$188,000 from reserve funds to supplement the amount Montague approved to fund the GMRSD at town meeting in June.

PLACE YOUR BUSINESS CARD HERE (12 WEEK MINIMUM) CALL 863-8666!


RIVERSIDE RADIATOR
General Auto Repair
RADIATORS for CARS - TRUCKS
and HEAVY EQUIPMENT
Foreign and Domestic


Propane Filling Station

Route 2, Gill
863-4049 1-800-439-4049
8-5 Monday – Thursday



Open every day, 10 to 6

**BOOK MILL**
440 Greenfield Rd.
Montague, MA 01351

413-367-9206 www.montaguebookmill.com

Books you don't need in a place you can't find.

Doug's Auto Body
Doug Smith - Owner

**PRECISION REPAIRS**

MA Reg. #RS2190

Ph. (413) 863-2785
Fax: (413) 863-0120
FREE ESTIMATES
REPAIRS ON FOREIGN & DOMESTIC CARS AND TRUCKS

39 Center Road
Gill, MA 01354
FREE LOANER CARS

OWL from page A1

and must stay in for a minimum of three weeks, during which time the owl will be monitored and administered appropriate supportive care and pain medication,” said Tara



Passing motorists helped reroute busy Route 2 traffic around the wounded owl last Friday, and helped pack it into a box for transportation to the Boston area.

Pettinato, who manages public relations for Tufts Veterinary School.

If all goes well, Pettinato said, the owl will then be moved to a “flight barn” at the wildlife center, where it will regain strength in its wing before being released back into the wild.

Barred owls are the most common owl found in Massachusetts, and the third-largest. According to local ornithologists, their population numbers are on the rise. Unfortunately for birds and drivers alike, a spike in their population also means a higher incidence of traffic accidents.

Owls and other raptors are often struck by cars as they swoop down across roads to strike their prey. Roadsides provide owls and other raptors with ideal hunting conditions: high perches, open space, and short grass, which harbors small mammals. To avoid injuring hunting birds and other wildlife, drivers can slow down while traveling at night, especially in heavily wooded areas.

FRANKLIN COMMUNITY CO-OP

• DELI • BAKERY • GROCERY • BULK • WELLNESS •

40 YEARS

LOVING LOCAL

AT THE CO-OP

For 40 years we've been working with local farms and producers to offer the finest local and organic foods for our community.

One co-op, two store locations. Everyone welcome, every day.

Green Fields Market

144 Main Street, Greenfield, MA

Open Daily 8 a.m. - 9 p.m.

AND

McCusker's Market

3 State St, Shelburne Falls, MA

Open Daily 7 a.m. - 8 p.m.

WWW.FRANKLINCOMMUNITY.COOP

PLACE YOUR BUSINESS CARD HERE! (12 WEEK MINIMUM.) CALL 863-8666.

Roundabout Books

a bookstore for book people

Wed - Sun: 12 to 5 pm

26 Kenwood St. Greenfield

(413) 773-0820

roundaboutbookstore.com

Dennis L. Booska

Dennis L. Booska, Jr.

Phone & Fax

413-863-3690

Booska's Flooring

Tile

Lino

Carpet

169 Avenue A, Turners Falls

Member The Flooring Network.

DIEMAND FARM

Take the Chill Off!

Homestyle meals available to heat & eat year-round

Come see what's cooking in our farm store!

126 Mormon Hollow Road, Wendell, MA 01379

www.thediemandfarm.com

Bob's HOME PROS

413-221-3837 WWW.BOBSHOMEPROS.COM

25 Years Experience in Commercial and Residential Building & Remodeling

SHANAHAN CONSTRUCTION SUPPLY CO. INC.

SCSC "Rock solid service with level advice"

Complete Masonry Supply

Offering a complete line of pavers, wall stone, retaining wall block and more.

298 Avenue A., Turners Falls 413-863-4322

and at our new location 529 S. Main St, Brattleboro or 802-579-1800

www.shanahansupply.com

TURN IT UP!

MUSIC & MOVIES

BOOKMILL | MONTAGUE CENTER | 367.0309

Turners Falls Pizza House

Family Owned & Operated

Serving Turners Falls area for 40 Years

Dave Argy, Family & Staff

PIZZA, GRINDERS, DINNERS, SALADS, BURGERS

www.turnersfallspizza.com

119 Avenue A, Turners Falls (413) 863-8000

magpie

woodfired pizzeria

Pizzas

Entrees

Salads

Full Bar & Patio

magpiepizza.com

21 Bank Row, Gld. 413-475-3570

A BEAUTIFUL Smile Starts With Healthy Teeth

GEETU SHOKEEN, DMD

Montague Dental Arts General Dentistry

300 Avenue A, Turners Falls, MA 01376 • 413-863-2288

Peter Waters Painting Services

Interior/Exterior Custom Residential Fully Insured

Office: 978-544-6534

Cell: 413-461-5172

Wendell, MA

peterjwaters88@gmail.com

Schedule Winter Service Now!

Parts & Service for all Makes & Models of Home, Farm & Commercial Equipment!

SIRUM FARM • TURF • INDUSTRIAL 413-367-2481

Pick up & Delivery Available!

facebook

Route 63, Montague 413-367-2481

BLUE DRAGON APOTHECARY

CUSTOM CRAFTED HERBAL PRODUCTS

TRADITIONAL MEDICINES & HOLISTIC HEALTH

OFFERING BODYWORK AND CONSULTATIONS

RETAIL HOURS: TUE-FRI 10-6; SAT 10-4

413-773-3730, INFO@BLUEDRAGONAPOTHECARY.COM

158 MAIN ST, SUITE 10 GREENFIELD, MA 01301

BLUEDRAGONAPOTHECARY.COM

Open a new GSB Checking Account and get 2 FREE Thank You Gifts*

Get a FREE Small Cheese Hillside Pizza or \$10 off your Hillside Pizza order, when you open a new GSB Checking Account and get your new GSB Debit Card.

Get 1,000 BUZZ Points, good for a \$10 Local BUZZ Points Reward, redeemable at more than 50 local restaurants, stores and businesses when you sign up for BUZZ Points.

Get the GSB Mobile App at: Google Play App Store

To enroll go to: www.buzzpoints.com/greenfieldsavings

(413) 774-3191 • (413) 584-4441 greenfieldsavings.com

Greenfield Savings Bank

*Offers good through 12/31/18. See Bank for details.

**Double points earning offer (2X points) applies only to locally-owned businesses in the GSB Buzz Points Database at time of purchase.

Member FDIC/Member DIF • Equal Housing Lender

LOCAL, NATURAL, ORGANIC

PRODUCE BAKERY GROCERY CRAFTS

RED FIRE NORTH

Food That Sustains • The People & the Planet

OPEN DAILY 10-6 413.367.3071

485 FEDERAL ST ROUTE 63 MONTAGUE

FIND US ON FACEBOOK! WWW.REDFIRENORTH.COM

Obear CONSTRUCTION

413-367-6022

www.obearconstruction.com

Follow the Sun into the Future

allEarth SOLAR PREMIER DEALER

2 Fiske Avenue, Greenfield 413.772.3122

solarstoreofgreenfield.com

Quality and reliability you can count on.

AllEarth Trackers are engineered and made in VT.

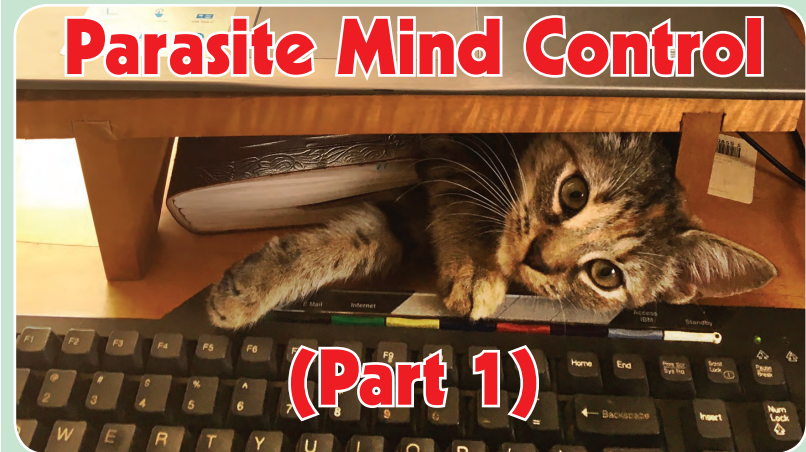
A system that's effective and efficient every day.

Panasonic Solar AUTHORIZED INSTALLER

Artist: Christine Pellerin



FEATURES@MONTAGUEREPORTER.ORG OF THE MONTAGUE REPORTER DECEMBER 20, 2018



MONTAGUE CENTER – Depressed with the news and in need of a good distraction, I headed down to the local animal shelter “just to look.” Famous last words. The next day, Nali, a nine-week old spayed female, fresh off the operating table, joined our household. My husband Ben had one condition for our new addition, that I handle the litter box. Sure, sure, I said. Small price to pay.

As the designated scooper, it has become my job to fill the dreaded box. Fortunately, the choices in litter available today promise to all but clean the box. These are all-natural, clumpable, disposable, flushable, odor-absorbing, biodegradable, and almost-good-enough-to-eat litters (our dog Ella can attest to this last one).

Yet as helpful and harmless as the products available today may be, there is one thing they can’t promise: to lock away Toxoplasmosis gondii. The parasite is a particular risk to those who are immunocompromised or pregnant.

The last time I worried about this was two cats ago when our daughter was born. This was, by the way, also probably the last time my husband ever scooped. Now, twenty-two years later, our daughter Sophie is the one writing about T. gondii.

Below is her essay, and it turns out that T. gondii is more fascinating, and more insidious, than we could ever have imagined back in the day. It may also explain a bit about some human behaviors. Enjoy.

– Emily Monosson

How a Single-Celled Parasite Carried by Cats May be Tweaking our Behavior

By SOPHIE LETCHER

BOSTON – On November 30, 2012, “J. E.” fell from a 30-foot ledge in Missouri’s Rock Bridge Memorial State Park, landing in a bed of leaves at the foot of a cave called Devil’s Icebox. The Missouri native teen was hiking with a friend when he got carried away jumping from rock to rock along the trail – ultimately leading to the disastrous accidental slip.

J. E. was airlifted to the local hospital and made a full recovery, but this kind of behavior was not unusual. He is an extremely intelligent, thoughtful, and kind hearted person, but as his mother, E., attested after the accident, he

tends to put himself in reckless situations: jumping atop slippery rocks along a ledge perhaps the most devastating example.

As mothers do in these situations, E. searched for some way that she was at fault for her son’s fall. Sitting around a table of friends discussing the horrific accident post-recovery, E. mulled over why J. E. could be so reckless when he’s generally such a clear-headed person. “I did spend a lot of time around cats when I was pregnant with him – maybe he contracted that parasite that makes you crazy,” she half-joked.

The parasite she was referring to is called *Toxoplasma gondii* (*T. gondii*, for short), and it was around this time that pop science was picking up the idea that many cats carry a mind-altering parasite (*T. gondii*) that can infect humans and manipulate them into illogical risk taking behavior. Although the idea seems like science fiction, mounting evidence suggests that she may have been onto something.

While she isn’t at fault for her son’s fall, infection with *T. gondii* may very well change one’s behavior – uncharacteristic recklessness being just the tip of the iceberg.

What is Toxoplasma Gondii?

T. gondii has been on a list of major pathogenic parasites since the 1920s, but until fairly recently, knowledge of the effects of

see **PARASITE** page B4



Photos at top and above: Nali, the cat.

THE AUTHORS’ CORNER: MATT DE LA PEÑA

By IZZA VACHULA-CURTIS

TURNERS FALLS – Happy December! Christmas is just around the corner, so today I’m going to be reviewing some holiday story collections that would make great gifts, as well as interviewing Matt De La Peña, who wrote a short story in one of these books!

My favorite of the two books was a book called *Let It Snow*, by John Green, Maureen Johnson, and Lauren Myracle. This is a series of three interconnected novellas. (A novella is a book slightly longer than a short story.) These three short stories are all Christmas romances.

My favorite of the three was the one by Maureen Johnson. I loved the main character Jubilee, and the way the story was written. In the novella, Jubilee has to face the biggest snowstorm to hit Virginia and North Carolina in fifty years! Jubilee was supposed to go to her boyfriend’s Christmas party, but when her parents are put in jail – you’ll have to read the book to find out why – Jubilee is sent to Florida to her grandparents’ house. When Jubilee’s train gets stuck in North Carolina, she decides to venture into the storm. She then meets a guy wearing all tinfoil, and a Target employee with plastic bags on his head!

This story was both funny and romantic; it would make a great gift this season. (This just in: *Let It Snow* will be made into a romantic comedy movie on Netflix!)

The other book is an anthology of 12 holiday stories, titled *My True Love Gave To Me*. A few of the authors who wrote this book are Holly Black, Matt De La Peña, and Laini Taylor. The anthology was edited by Stephanie Perkins, who also writes a story in here.

One of my favorites was Stephanie Perkins’; I really loved her characters, and the ending of the story! Ms. Perkins’ story is about a girl named Marigold Moon Ling, and a boy named North Drummond, whose family owns a Christmas tree farm.

Marigold is an aspiring animator who needs the perfect voice for one of her characters. She’s been vis-



Our correspondent reviews these two seasonal short story anthologies, and interviews one of the authors!

iting the farm for a week, trying to summon up the courage to ask North to help voice her character. Then one thing leads to another, and Marigold accidentally ends up buying a tree, which she can’t pay for, or fit in her house!

My other favorite short story from *My True Love Gave To Me* is by Matt De La Peña. Mr. De La Peña’s story is about a boy named Shy, who is cat-sitting for his boss. Shy misses his dad and sister in San Diego, California. Shy is Mexican American, and has gotten a full college scholarship to a college in NYC. He doesn’t

see **AUTHORS** page B2

GREAT FALLS APPLE COLUMN

By RACHEL LABRIE



The Eastern white pine tree.
Photo by James St. John (creative commons usage, Flickr).

TURNERS FALLS – Welcome to the fourth edition of the Great Falls Apple Corps Column. December has arrived, and with it the hustle and bustle of the holiday season. GFAC warmly wishes you the happiest of Holidays!

The first snow came a bit early this year, and we had our Fall Clean Up at the Unity Park Community Gardens in November with an inch or two of snow on the ground. We weren’t able to sheet mulch the paths as planned, but we did organize the shed, harvest the last of the herbs that were still hanging on, dig up some wild carrot, turn the compost, and cut back plants that had gone by.

We urge folks who have beds at the Community Gardens to do their own fall clean up, as we only tend to the public pick-your-own beds. It may be a bit chilly for outdoor work, but the snow is holding off for now, and it’s a great time to pull out annuals, add compost, and mulch.

As the cold and dark have crept in, we have spent less time outside and more time cozying up with our favorite plant friends. In this dreary landscape when all the leaves have turned brown and the deciduous trees are naked and bare, the conifers bring us the green we need so much at this time of year.

An all-star evergreen is the prominent eastern white pine, or *Pinus Strobus*. White pine is abundant in the Northeast, and the tallest tree as well: white pine can grow up to 180 feet in height, and huge trees filled the forests of New England when the settlers arrived. These tall trees were highly valued and the best ones were marked with the King’s Arrow to reserve them for the Royal Navy

see **APPLE CORPS** page B2

Pet of the Week

Guinea pigs are social creatures and if they’re already paired up here at the shelter, they need to stay together. They need a spacious habitat equipped with hiding and napping spots, things to climb on, safe wood to chew, and guinea pig toys.

Their diet should consist of grass hay available at all times, with a small amount of timothy pellets. They don’t naturally make their own vitamin C, so they must get it daily from their diet. Snacks like red pepper, kale, mustard greens, dandelion greens, and other leafy greens will do the job nicely! In fact they love these snacks so much that they will call “wheet, wheeeet” when they see you bringing them some!

Guinea pigs’ average lifespan is 5 to 7 years. Please speak with an adoption specialist for more information or to inquire about adoption! Contact the Dakin Pioneer Valley Humane Society at (413) 548-9898 or info@dpvhs.org.



“PANDA”

Senior Center Activities DECEMBER 24 TO JANUARY 4

GILL and MONTAGUE The 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 machine when the center is not open. M, W, F: 10:10 a.m. Aerobics; 10:50 a.m. Chair Exercise T, W, Th: 12 p.m. Lunch Monday 12/24 1 p.m. Knitting Circle Tuesday 12/25 <i>Senior Center Closed</i> Wednesday 12/26 9 a.m. Veterans’ Outreach 9 to 11 a.m. Blood Pressure Clinic 12:30 p.m. Bingo Thursday 12/27 9 a.m. Tai Chi 10:15 a.m. Chair Yoga 1 p.m. Cards & Games 4 p.m. Mat Yoga Friday 12/28 1 p.m. Writers’ Group Monday 12/31 1 p.m. Knitting Circle Tuesday 1/1 <i>Senior Center Closed</i> Wednesday 1/2 9 a.m. Veterans’ Outreach 9 to 11 a.m. Blood Pressure Clinic 12:30 p.m. Bingo Thursday 1/3 NO Tai Chi or Chair Yoga 10:30 a.m. to noon: Brown Bag 1 p.m. Cards & Games	 4 p.m. Mat Yoga Friday 1/4 12 p.m. Pizza Party 1 p.m. Writers’ Group WENDELL Wendell Senior Center is at 2 Lockes Village Road. Call Nancy Spittle, (978) 544-6760, for hours and upcoming programs. Call the Center for a ride. ERVING Erving Senior Center, 1 Care Drive, Erving, is open Monday through Friday from 8 a.m. to 4 p.m. for activities and congregate meals. Lunch is at 11:30 a.m., with reservations required 2 days in advance. Call (413) 423-3649 for meal information and reservations. 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 12/24 and 12/25 <i>Closed – Merry Christmas!</i> Wednesday 12/26 8:45 a.m. Line Dancing 10 a.m. Chair Yoga 11:30 a.m. Congregate Lunch 12:15 p.m. Bingo & Snacks Thursday 12/27 8:45 a.m. Aerobics 10 a.m. Healthy Bones 11:30 a.m. Congregate Lunch Friday 12/28 9 a.m. Quilting Workshop 9:15 a.m. Flex & Stretch 9:30 a.m. Bowling Fun 10:15 a.m. M3 Exercise Games 12 p.m. Lunch Monday 12/31 8:45 a.m. Stretch & Sculpt 10 a.m. Healthy Bones & Balance
---	---

PLACE YOUR BUSINESS CARD HERE (12 WEEK MINIMUM) CALL 863-8666!

B. RUBIN & SONS INC.



COMPLETE AUTO REPAIRS
Shocks • Tires • Batteries • Starters
Struts • Tune-ups • Brakes • Oil Change
194 MILLERS FALLS RD. • **413-863-2236**
10% SENIOR DISCOUNT FREE ESTIMATES
MASS INSPECTION STATION: NO. 13051

“Home Town Auto Care - The Way It Used To Be”



JP TIRE & AUTO
Complete Quality Auto Care
147 2nd St.
Turners Falls, MA 01376
413 -863 - 5423
Foreign - Domestic - Tires - Diagnostics
Aftermarket Accessories - Installation

SALES • SERVICE • INSTALLATION
RESIDENTIAL • COMMERCIAL
DOORS & OPENERS

Devine Overhead Doors
Gerry Devine

106 West Street
Hadley, MA. 01035

Hampshire: 586-3161
Franklin: 773-9497

AUTHORS from page B1

have enough money to fly home, or buy food. One day, when Shy is very hungry, a wealthy girl named Haley visits him one night because her shower isn’t working.

Will Shy be honest about his situation with Haley, or keep to himself during Christmas?

Now, we are going to interview Matt De La Peña!

Izzy V-C: *What do you think is your greatest accomplishment?*

Matt De La Peña: I’d still say it was getting my first book published. It’s so hard to get your foot in the door as an author. I was so blown away when I first saw a book, with my name on it, in the bookstore.

IVC: *How did you feel when your book Mexican Whiteboy was banned in Arizona?*

MDLP: I used to think being banned was a badge of honor for an author. And then I saw who was unable to read my book – kids interested in the same identity issues that I was.

That’s when I was deeply saddened. Mexican American students were not allowed to read a book fea-

turing a Mexican American student. That really hit me hard.

IVC: *I read online that when you grew up you felt stuck right in the middle between being white and Mexican. Do you think biracial kids growing up now have it better or worse than when you were growing up?*

MDLP: I think the mixed kids of today have it better, for two reasons. First off, we are the highest growing demographic in the country. More and more kids are born racially mixed these days.

But we also talk about it more. When I was growing up, nobody talked about the mixed experience. Now people openly communicate about what it means and what it feels like, which is much more healthy.

IVC: *How much of your writing is based on events from your life?*

MDLP: I definitely use my own background in my work. I like to explore race and class, two subjects that I thought about a lot as a kid. But most of the stories are still mostly fiction. I use bits of my past as inspiration, then look for a way to turn those bits into good stories.

IVC: *Your most recent book was a kids’ book, Carmela Full Of Wishes. What are you working on next?*

MDLP: My next book is called *Superman: Dawnbreaker* (coming in March). It’s about Superman when he was a teen, part of the DC/Random House partnership.

After that I have another picture book called *Patchwork*, as well as a YA novel that doesn’t have a set title yet.

IVC: *Since “Angels in the Snow” is a Christmas story, what was your favorite holiday memory that really sticks out to you?*

MDLP: Growing up near the border in San Diego, I loved Christmas with my family. Instead of the traditional spread, we would have tortillas and empanadas and chile colorado. And even though none of us had any money, we’d all be together. I miss those days.

Thank you, Mr. De La Peña, for letting me interview you!

And Happy Holidays to my readers. These two books are great books, either for you, or as a gift!

Talking Cloth at the Discovery Center

From combined sources.

TURNERS FALLS – A new exhibit is coming to the Great Hall of the Great Falls Discovery Center on January 4. A unique textile collection will brighten this drab winter experience with patterns and images printed on cloth called *kanga*, popular in East African countries.

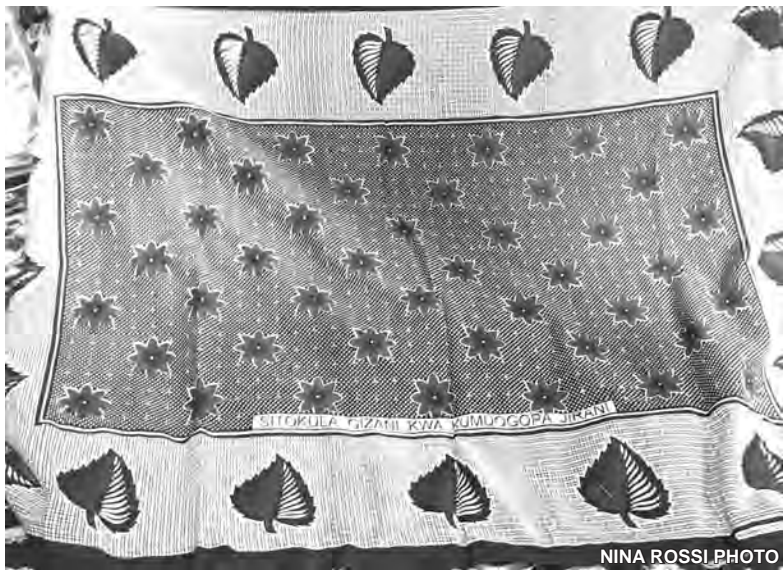
Before there were T-shirts to convey our thoughts and identities, there were kangas. Kangas are the everyday cloth worn and used by women in many East African countries, unique for their colorful patterns and also their printed text.

The messages, slogans, and sayings printed on these cloths are used by women to trade barbed insults, give each other compliments, commemorate events, or to express hope, sorrow, and pride. The kangas in this exhibit are from the collections of two local women who have lived and worked in Kenya and Tanzania, Peggy Hart and Nell Koenings.

The opening reception on Saturday, January 5 between 1 and 3 p.m. will feature a talk about the history and cultural context of kangas.

The reception will also be a kid-friendly opportunity to try on kangas, and participate by imagining and drawing your own kanga design. Design a border and center, and then think about what message you might want to convey. Do you have a mantra or favorite proverb? Include it here.

The exhibit will be on view until February 17. The Discovery Center is open Wednesday through Sunday, 10 a.m. to 4 p.m. during the winter. Admission is free.



One of the kangas at the Discovery Center.

APPLE CORPS from page B1

when the region was still an English colony.

Therefore, like most of our old-growth trees, they were decimated and few are left today. There is an amazing stand of old-growth white pine in the Mohawk Trail State Forest in Charlemont that I highly recommend you visit. These trees commonly reach 200 years old, and have been known to live to 450 years old!

White pine can be identified by their long, slender needles, two to five inches in length, that grow in bundles of five needles. To help remember the number of needles that identify the tree as white pine, you can remember that there are five letters in the word “white,” and that there are five needles per bundle. Their pinecones can be four to seven inches long and are usually covered in resin.

White pine is also high in Vitamin C and essential oils. Its best medicinal use is for respiratory and bronchial issues. A tea of the needles, or needles and twigs, helps remove and thin mucus in the lungs. When you have a wet cough, white pine is your best friend.

The tea is wonderful, but a steam is even more heavenly. Place white pine in a bowl and pour hot water over. Place your face over the bowl and breathe deep, with a towel over your head if you like. If you have a wood stove, throw some white pine in a pot of water on the stove to release its healing benefits into your home. A white-pine-infused oil put into bath salts for a salt scrub is an excellent way to boost immunity and soak in the loveliness of pine. Who doesn’t love the delicious smell of pine, especially at this time of year?

This holiday season, take a walk in the woods, find yourself some white pine boughs – they can often be found lying on the ground, so cutting from the tree is not needed – and share them with your loved ones. This tree is one of New England’s most prominent, and deserves to be celebrated.

Happy Holidays!

B. RUBIN & SONS INC.



COMPLETE AUTO REPAIRS
Shocks • Tires • Batteries • Starters
Struts • Tune-ups • Brakes • Oil Change
194 MILLERS FALLS RD. • **413-863-2236**
10% SENIOR DISCOUNT FREE ESTIMATES
MASS INSPECTION STATION: NO. 13051

“Home Town Auto Care - The Way It Used To Be”



JP TIRE & AUTO
Complete Quality Auto Care
147 2nd St.
Turners Falls, MA 01376
413 -863 - 5423
Foreign - Domestic - Tires - Diagnostics
Aftermarket Accessories - Installation

SALES • SERVICE • INSTALLATION
RESIDENTIAL • COMMERCIAL
DOORS & OPENERS

Devine Overhead Doors
Gerry Devine

106 West Street
Hadley, MA. 01035

Hampshire: 586-3161
Franklin: 773-9497

PARASITE from page B1

infection on humans halted after the initial stage of infection. Acute toxoplasmosis, an infection with rapidly dividing *T. gondii*, is usually asymptomatic in healthy humans, sometimes causing mild flu symptoms such as swollen lymph nodes, muscle aches, or fatigue.

However, when the immune system is unable to quell the rapidly dividing invaders, as is the case with the immunocompromised (such as people who are HIV positive), infection can lead to severe fever, nausea, confusion, headaches, or seizures: potentially life-threatening situations. Acute toxoplasmosis is also a risk factor if acquired while pregnant. As the host's immune system starts to halt rapid division of *T. gondii*, the parasite switches gears and barricades itself in intracellular cysts that are safe from the host's immune response. It remains inside these cysts, slowly dividing, throughout the host's lifetime.

Parasite-filled cysts can be found in all types of host tissue, but seem to have a higher affinity for neural and muscular tissue. Though this slowly-dividing stage was initially thought to be asymptomatic, evidence now suggests that the parasite may be quietly tweaking our behavior and underlying some of the most devastating neurological diseases.

From Cats to Rats and Back

To understand these parasite-induced behavioral changes in humans, it is important to understand why *T. gondii* may have evolved the ability to change host behavior—and the parasite's complex life cycle is at the root of it. *T. gondii* can only reproduce inside the cat intestine, but because sexual reproduction is slow and costly, the parasite outsources

itself to an intermediate host where it can asexually reproduce.

Dormant forms of the parasite leave the cat through its feces and are ingested by other mammals (the intermediate hosts). During this period of the life cycle, *T. gondii* divides rapidly, proliferating for as long as it can until ultimately returning to the cat intestine to sexually reproduce again and complete its life cycle.

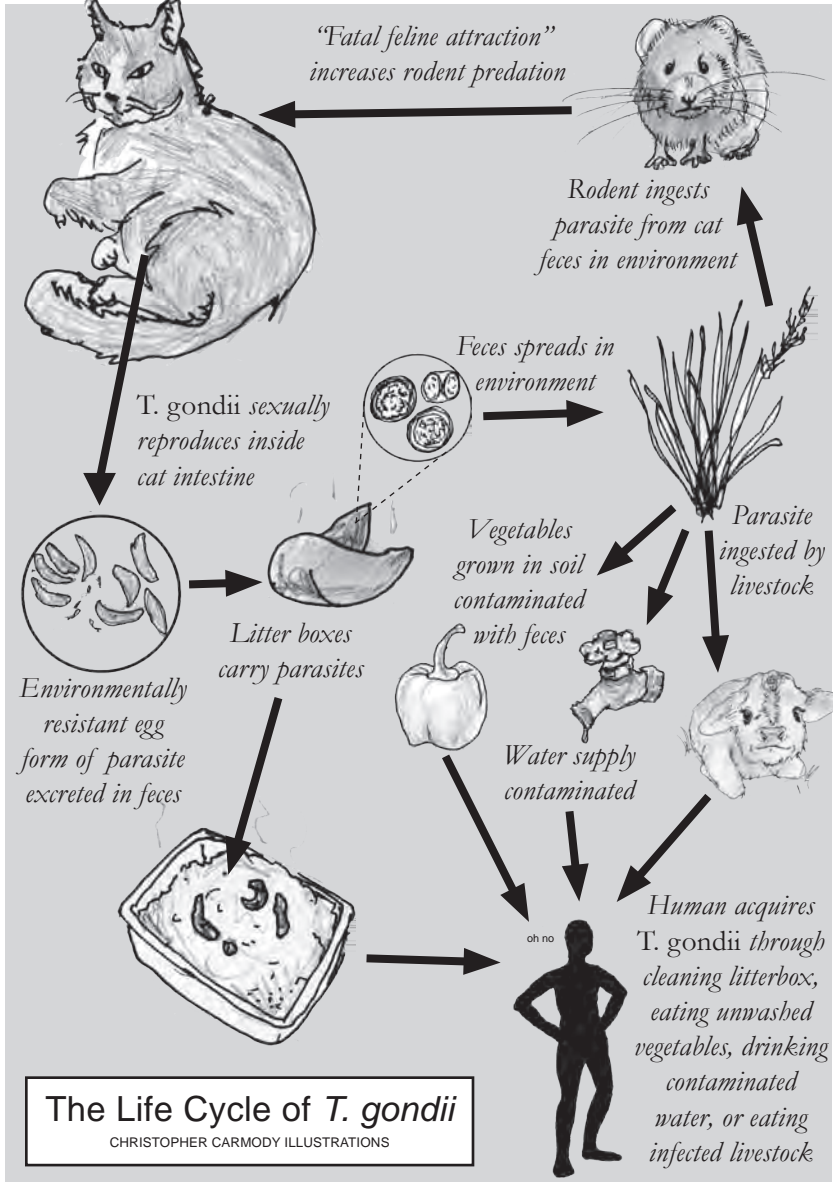
How does the parasite find its way back to the cat intestine? Although it is able to infect any warm-blooded mammal, it makes the most sense for *T. gondii* to infect mammals that will be eaten by cats—and this is where it gets interesting. When *T. gondii* is ingested by rodents (common cat prey), the parasite manipulates the rodent's behavior in a way that makes them easier prey for cats: infected rodents experience “fatal feline attraction” where they lose their innate fear of cats, spend more time in vulnerable positions, and are even sexually attracted to cat urine.

So what does this have to do with humans? As mentioned before, once *T. gondii* is shed from the cat in its feces, any warm-blooded mammal is susceptible to infection. It turns out that humans can contract the parasite through many means, leading to a 30-70% infection rate worldwide.

The life cycle of *T. gondii* is summarized in Figure 1, including possible routes of transmission to humans. It seems as though the behavioral manipulation that *T. gondii* induces in rodents to facilitate its life cycle may go slightly haywire when the parasite finds its way into human tissue.

From Cats to... Humans?

From *T. gondii*'s perspective, infection in humans is a dead end;



unless we have really powerful, sadistic pet cats or find ourselves in the presence of a hungry lion it is unlikely that we will be eaten by a cat and thus return *T. gondii* to the cat intestine.

Nonetheless, the manipulative parasite still finds its way into a large proportion of the human steak population. Although cats play a pivotal role in *T. gondii*'s life cycle, most of the transmission to humans happens through consuming undercooked contaminated meat, contaminated water, or eating unwashed vegetables.

A study done in 2002 found that 38% of British commercial meat was contaminated with *T. gondii*, and countries such as France that prefer meat undercooked have a higher rate of infection. Unwashed vegetables carry the parasite when grown in dirt with cat feces containing *T. gondii*, and parasite-laden feces also find their way into water supplies.

Lucky for cat lovers, it seems as though domestic cats have a very low chance of carrying the parasite, negating the *T. gondii*-based “crazy cat lady” theory.

Strange Behavioral Changes

The acute symptoms of *T. gondii* infection are easily digestible – the fact that single-celled organisms such as viruses and bacteria can bring us physical harm is accepted and understood. The behavioral changes, however, are far more complex, and as such, much more terrifying. As humans are “ac-

cidental hosts,” it seems as though the behavioral changes are spin-offs of the manipulation seen in rodents to make them easier prey for cats.

One of the pioneer studies in uncovering behavioral changes in humans with chronic *T. gondii* infection was done by a Czech scientist named Jaroslav Flegr. Flegr found that a potential combination of reckless behavior and decreased reaction time in infected individuals leads to a greater likelihood of getting in a car accident. More specifically, infected individuals are 2.65 times more likely to be in a risky crash, an odds ratio that may contribute to up to one million car crash-related deaths per year.

Crazy as it sounds, this study has been replicated in other countries and the theory holds in context of further studies on *T. gondii*-induced behavioral changes. Interestingly, many *T. gondii*-induced changes seem sex-specific. One of the most fascinating differences is that while men seem to retain the “fatal feline attraction” seen in infected rodents, perceiving the smell of cat urine as more pleasant compared with uninfected controls, infected women are the opposite, finding cat urine less appealing than uninfected controls.

Though there hasn't been an explanation for this sex-specific difference in odor perception yet, some of the other differences may be explained by the fact that *T. gondii* infection leads to increased testosterone (the male sex hormone) in males but not in females. Many

scientists also speculate that differences occur simply because the male and female brains are wired differently, and thus may react to the parasite-induced neurological changes in different ways.

What does appear to be conserved throughout infected humans regardless of sex is the correlation between an immune response to *T. gondii* in the blood and various neurological disorders. Numerous links have been made between infection and depression, suicides, personality changes, bipolar disorder, OCD, and, most prominently, schizophrenia. Recent studies have also found correlations between infection and epilepsy and certain types of cancers.

Putting together all the indirect ways *T. gondii* infection could kill you, the parasite may be one of the most successful undercover assassins that most people have no idea exists!

We will return to explain how *T. gondii* changes host behavior in Part 2 of this essay next month.

Sophie Letcher is a Kenyon College and Turners Falls High School graduate. She currently works in a neuroimmunology lab at Brigham and Women's Hospital in Boston.

More information can be found here at the CDC website: [cdc.gov/parasites/toxoplasmosis/index.html](https://www.cdc.gov/parasites/toxoplasmosis/index.html).

A full list of citations is also available for this article where it appears on Emily Monosson's blog: [toxicevolution.wordpress.com](https://www.toxicevolution.wordpress.com).

PLACE YOUR BUSINESS CARD HERE (12 WEEK MINIMUM) CALL 863-8666!



COUTURE BROS.
Since 1910

Professional Painting & Decorating Contractor
Commercial • Residential • Industrial

“SERVING WESTERN MASS FOR OVER 100 YEARS”
www.couturebros.com
400 Avenue A Turners Falls, MA • 413-863-4346



EDWARDS TREE SERVICE
Matthew Edwards
Certified Arborist

Tree Climbing Specialist • Pruning And Removals
Stump Grinding • Practicing Fine Arboriculture

Residential / Commercial / Municipal
60 Ft. Aerial Lift • Brush Chipping
Fully Insured With Workers Comp. • Insurance and Liability

WWW.MATTEDWARDSTREE.COM
Wendell, MA

Serving Hampshire And Franklin Counties

413-325-7823 or 978-544-7452



Pipione's
SPORT SHOP

- Fishing supplies; Live bait
- Fishing & Hunting Licenses
- Paintball & CO₂ Refills
- Guns & Ammo

Open 7 am 7 days a week
101 Ave A, Turners 414.863.4246






DOLAN & DOLAN
ATTORNEYS AT LAW

174 AVENUE A
TURNERS FALLS MASSACHUSETTS
01376
413-863-3133


PERSONAL INJURY, WILLS & ESTATES, WORKER'S COMP



Renaissance Builders

Quality. Craftsmanship. Original Thought.

www.renbuild.net
863-8316





Cell: (413) 834-4444
bedson1@comcast.net
Home Fax: (413) 863-0218

Maniatty Real Estate
92 Federal Street
Greenfield, MA 01301

Barbara A. Edson-Greenwald
Realtor, Broker, ABR, CRS, e-PRO, GRI, SRES, CBR
Ma. License #009535800


www.ManiattyRealty.com



ARTS & ENTERTAINMENT

EVENTS

THURSDAY, DECEMBER 20
Tilton Library, S. Deerfield: *Book Discussion*. 6:30 p.m.
Hubie's Tavern, Turners Falls: *Open Mic Night*. 7 p.m.
Rendezvous, Turners Falls: *Half Shaved Jazz*. 8 p.m.

Hawks & Reed, Greenfield: *The Equalites*. Local reggae band. \$. 8 p.m.
Hawks & Reed, Greenfield: *Sciencefight, The Fawns, Vi-mana*. Indie rock in the Perch. \$. 8:30 p.m.
Root Cellar, Greenfield: *Lucky Shots, Bunnies, Hot Dirt, Brandee Simone*. \$. 9 p.m.

Sierra Grille, Northampton: *Raising Ulysses, Viewer, New Parents, Ma Turner, The Awful Din, Grey Matter*, and four more. Holiday benefit show – bring items for donation to Margaret's Pantry in Holyoke, or cash which will go to support refugees and asylum seekers. 9:30 p.m.

FRIDAY, DECEMBER 21
Element Brewing Co, Millers Falls: *Brule's Irish Band*. 6 p.m.
Arms Library, Shelburne Falls: *Open Prose and Poetry Reading*. Arrive early to sign up for 5- or 10-minute slots. 7 p.m.

Memorial Hall, Shelburne: *Ratatouille*. Part of Pothole Pictures' series of food themed movies. Remy, a Parisian sewer rat, wants to become a great chef. Preceded by live blues music by James Smith at 7 p.m. \$. 7:30 p.m.

Hawks & Reed, Greenfield: *Deadgrass*. Dead tribute band with Matt Turk. \$. 8 p.m.
Root Cellar, Greenfield: *Holiday Hustle* with *Selector Krefting* and friends. Funk, hip hop, disco, soul, classic, demented holiday music, and dancefloor hits. Strictly vinyl. No cover. 8 p.m.
Rendezvous, Turners Falls: *Roots Music Jam*. Hosted by Sunny Lowdown. Acoustic and electric players welcome. 9 p.m.

Hubie's Tavern, Turners Falls: *Acoustic Country*. With Heath Lewis. 9 p.m.

SATURDAY, DECEMBER 22
Hawks & Reed, Greenfield: *Solstice Storytelling and Songfest*. Suggested donation \$5-10; proceeds going to ACLU. Please bring canned foods for Franklin

Area Survival Center. 7 p.m.
Memorial Hall, Shelburne: *Ratatouille*. Part of the Pothole Pictures series of food themed movies. Remy, a Parisian sewer rat, wants to become a great chef. Preceded by live music by Ratatat Cats at 7 p.m. 7:30 p.m.

Root Cellar, Greenfield: *Lou Barlow, Scott Helland, Dredd Foole & Jen Gelineau Duo*. (Former members of Deep Wound, the Din, Egg, Eggs, and Deluxx Folk Implosion.) \$. 8 p.m.
Hawks & Reed, Greenfield: *No Lens, Immortal Jellyfish*. Experimental/indie funk fusion. \$. 8:30 p.m.

Rendezvous, Turners Falls:



Pamela Means (above, with band) is a performer, singer, composer and producer. She'll be performing at Hawks & Reed in Greenfield on December 28, along with multi-disciplinary artist Diana Alvarez and folk-rock trio Zoki. Catch these three acts starting at 7 p.m. Tickets, \$12 in advance, \$15 at the door.

Sedagive. 9:30 p.m.
SUNDAY, DECEMBER 23
McCusker's Market, Shelburne Falls: *Celtic Sessions*. Musicians, all levels welcome. 10:30 a.m.

Root Cellar, Greenfield: *Gary Higgins, Tarp, Big Band, Post-Moves*. Legendary psych-folk. \$. 8 p.m.
Rendezvous, Turners Falls: *TNT Karaoke*. 9 p.m.

MONDAY, DECEMBER 24
Rendezvous, Turners Falls: *Scotty K's Open Mic*. 8 p.m.

THURSDAY, DECEMBER 27
Hawks & Reed, Greenfield: *River Rhapsody*. Adult contemporary songwriters, founded by Eric Phelps. \$. 7 p.m.
Hubie's Tavern, Turners Falls: *Karaoke Night*. 8 p.m.

FRIDAY, DECEMBER 28
Hawks & Reed, Greenfield: *Pamela Means, with Diana Alvarez and Zoki*. Means is a fierce guitarist, singer-songwriter; Alvarez is a Xicana vocalist, poet, video and sound artist; Zoki is a folk-rock trio. \$. 7 p.m.

Hubie's Tavern, Turners Falls: *Acoustic Country*. With Heath Lewis. 9 p.m.
SATURDAY, DECEMBER 29
Hawks & Reed, Greenfield: *Hamp Get Down Year II*. Presented by Valley musicians' co-operative, presenting over 20 acts on three stages. 1:30 p.m.
Luthier's Coop, Easthampton: *Antepenultimate Night* with Chris

Scanlon and the Other Guys, The frost heavens and haless., and Austin & Elliott, plus surprises and special guests. 7 p.m.
Guiding Star Grange, Greenfield: *5th Saturday Contra* with *Pete's Posse* and caller *Steve Zakon-Anderson*. Sliding scale admission. 8 p.m.
SUNDAY, DECEMBER 30
McCusker's Market, Shelburne Falls: *Celtic Sessions*. Musicians, all levels welcome. 10:30 a.m.
Race Street, Holyoke: *The Living Novel, a Walking Exhibition*. Amber Scoon presents works exhibited in motion along the street with help from the Greenfield Six. 1 p.m.
Rendezvous, Turners Falls: *Literary Rendezvous*. Everyone is a feature at the last open mic session of the year. Hosted by

Beth Filson and Candace Curran. 2:30 p.m.
Shea Theater, Turners Falls: *Felice Bros*. \$. 8 p.m.
Rendezvous, Turners Falls: *TNT Karaoke*. 9 p.m.

MONDAY, DECEMBER 31
Shea Theater, Turners Falls: *The Meditations*. Roots reggae with guest artists *Simon White and Rhythm Inc*, and Amherst band *Outer Style*. \$. 8 p.m.
Guiding Star Grange, Greenfield: *New Year's Eve Contra* with *Calluna* and *The Guiding Stars*. Callers are *George Marshall* and *Dela Murphy*. Potluck. \$. 8 p.m.
Hawks & Reed, Greenfield: *Badfish* (spirit of Sublime), *Roots of Creation* (Wailers influence), and *Joe Sambo* (reggae-rock). \$. 8:30 p.m.

Deja Brew, Wendell: *The Shadow Twisters*. 9 p.m.
Great Falls Harvest, Turners Falls: *She Said*. Local all-female band playing original tunes for a New Years eve concert in a pop-up venue: the Great Falls Harvest storefront on Avenue A. Dinner specials available for this event. \$. 9 p.m.

WEDNESDAY, JANUARY 2
Carnegie Library, Turners Falls: *Story Time*. Stories, projects, snacks for young children and their caregivers. 10:15 a.m.
Leverett Library: *Tales and Tunes Story Hour*. Ages 0 to 5 and caregivers. 10:30 a.m.

Carnegie Library, Turners Falls: *Homeschool Science*. Hands-on STEM learning. Call to register. No class December 26. 1 p.m.
Hawks & Reed, Greenfield: *Salsa Wednesday*. With McCoy and DJ Roger Jr. \$. 8 p.m.
Hawks & Reed, Greenfield: *Creacion Latin Big Band Jam*. On the fourth floor. 8 p.m.

THURSDAY, JANUARY 3
Millers Falls Library: *Music and Movement*. For children and caregivers, with Tom Carroll and Laurie Davidson. 10 a.m.
SATURDAY, JANUARY 5
Root Cellar, Greenfield: *Sister Jawbone, Ona Canoa, Marlene Lavelle, and Patsy Clone*. Blues, soul, covers, Patsy Cline tribute band; all female-fronted. 8 p.m.

EXHIBITS

Brattleboro Museum & Art Center, Brattleboro, VT: Five new exhibits include a six-decade survey of the work of abstract artist Emily Mason, photographs by *Michael Poster* of people in recovery from addiction, and artwork by *Orly Cogan, Robert Perkins*, and *Elizabeth Turk*. Most exhibits through January and February.
DVAA Gallery, Northfield: *Season of Light Holiday show* with fine art and craft by member artists. Through December 23.
Flourish, Turners Falls: *A Good Year for the Roses*. Paintings by *Alison Williams* and collaborative mixed media work with *Glen Scheffer*. Through January.
Great Falls Discovery Center, Turners Falls: Junior Duck Stamps. Top Massachusetts youth entries for the 2018 Junior Duck Stamp competition. Through December

22. *East African Textiles: Talking Kanga Cloth* in January and February, with an opening reception and talk about the textiles by Peggy Hart and N. S. Koenings, Saturday, January 5.
Greenfield Gallery, Greenfield: *Paul Hoffman*. Bold narrative paintings. Through January.
Hawks & Reed, Greenfield: *Andrew Nighswander: Automatic Landscapes*. Through January. Reception Sunday, January 6, 2 p.m.
Herrick Gallery, Wendell Library: *Throne*. Paintings by *Anan Zorba*, influenced by the bright, geometric pop art of the 1950s. Works are available by silent auction, with a drawing to be held December 21. Through December.
Leverett Crafts & Arts Center, Leverett: *Holiday Shop*. Weekends in December.

Nina's Nook, Turners Falls: *No Rules*, small sculpture by *Mary Hakkinen*, from November 23 through December 24. Gallery closed after Christmas and through January, opening again in February.
Salmon Falls Gallery, Shelburne Falls: *One Size Fits All*. Banners and altered cabinet cards by *Amy Johnquest*. November 2 through December 31. Also on view, *Amanda Quinby's Leaves to Landscapes*, abstracts in precious metal leaf.
Race Street, Holyoke: *A Walking Exhibition by Amber Scoon with the Greenfield Six*. The Living Novel presented in a walking art exhibit starting at 1 p.m. December 30.
Sawmill River Gallery, Montague Center: *Pushing the Boundaries*. Recent works by Sawmill member artists.
Shelburne Arts Coop, Shelburne Falls: *Winter's Tale*. Members' exhibit. Through January.

NANCY L. DOLE
BOOKS & EPHEMERA

20 State Street,
Bucklandside
Shelburne Falls
413-625-9850
ndole@crocker.com
closed Mondays

Memorial Hall Theater
POTHOLE PICTURES

Friday & Saturday,
December 21 and 22 at 7:30 p.m.
RATATOUILLE

Live music, starting at 7 p.m.:
Friday: James Smith, blues and such;
Saturday: The Ratatat Cats, Ratatat cat music
51 Bridge St., Shelburne Falls 625-2896

THE LADY KILLIGREW:
*Awesome Beer
Amazing Food*

*Amazing, Awesome
Employees!*
440 Greenfield Rd, Montague MA
7 Days / 8am - 11pm (at least)
(413)367-9666

The Brick House
24 3rd Street, Turners Falls

Drop-In Teen Center
Mon, Tues, Fri:
2:30 to 6 p.m.
Weds, Thurs:
2:30 to 4:30 p.m.
www.brickhousecommunity.org
413-863-9576

**THURS 12/20 7:30 pm
Half Shaved Jazz**
**FRI 12/21 9:30 pm
Roots Music Jam
hosted by
Sunny Lowdown**
**SAT 12/22 9:30 pm
Sedagive**

78 THIRD STREET
TURNERS FALLS, MA
RENDEZVOUSTFMA.COM
TEL:413-863-2866

PLACE YOUR BUSINESS CARD HERE (12 WEEK MINIMUM).

CALL 863-8666

TNT Productions
DJ & Karaoke specialists

413-522-6035
www.tntprodj.net

413-256-6217
fine instruments
bought and sold
repaired and restored

Fretted Instrument Workshop
49 So. Pleasant St., Amherst, Mass. 01002

**HUGE
WASHERS!**
**HOT
DRYERS!**
Open 365 Days
6 A.M. - 10 P.M.

**SUZEE'S THIRD STREET
LAUNDRY**
TURNERS FALLS
FREE
WIFI
**Suzee's
THIRD ST. LAUNDRY
413-863-2866**



WEST ALONG THE RIVER OFFERINGS ON THE EVE OF WINTER

By DAVID BRULE

*When old Jack Frost has
threatened his worst
And fallen from branch to briar;
Then welcome the nights that
double delights
By the light of a bright burning
fire...*
Anonymous, 1651

THE FLAT – Winter is nigh, as you all know too well. Some of us are looking forward to it, some not. I’m one of those impatient ones, right now contemplating a barren landscape, wishing for snow. High up here in the north bedroom at my writing desk, in front of the poet’s window, I’m as far north as I can get and still be indoors. The night left a dusting of snow, mercifully. From my desk I can see Mineral Mountain rising up, a sheer wall of hemlock and birch, some ninety-foot grandfather white pines. Branches up there are trimmed with last night’s whitefall. This season’s year-end festive preparations try as they may to keep us distracted from the one hundred days of winter in the offing. Humanity has found ways of making the most of the darkest days of the year. It’s no accident that Christmas falls during this dark period. Pagan solstice rituals pre-date by multiple millennia the positioning of the birth of Christ on December 25. Or was it really January 6? Be that as it may, our tree is up and ready for the 25th, and most of us join in this semi-artificial celebration, a mix of pagan belief, with a dash of druidism and lots of Christianity tossed in. Although commemorating the birth of the Prince of Peace does bring a ring of optimism and hope, which we really need just now.

Out of doors, the circle of life commemorated by Pagans and those of us close to the natural world does not recognize the end of a calendar year, just a cyclical, perpetual renewal. I join in that circle of life by getting off my behind and going out to rake the leaves that were covered up by the Thanksgiving snowstorm and which are now once again exposed in all their matted and soaking mess. In the meantime, the cross-country skis spend their time loafing in their rack near the front door, next to their restless snowshoe cousins. Our winter clientele, the birds, squirrels and other assorted mammals, are not as harried as they could be, or will be. A wayward pheasant has again appeared in the yard, attracted by the activity of the jaybirds and cardinals. This poor creature, raised in a pen, then released onto the Montague Plains to be shot for sport, made her way down to our land below the Plains. She spent her first few hours here, trying to break into the fenced-off yard, a familiar prison to her I suppose. Then she figured out she could just fly up and over, and here she is day after day. I can even call her like I used to do for the chickens at feeding time, “cut-cut-cut,” and she comes running up for her corn. She may survive the winter, but there are canny predators out there, fox and fishercat, who have claimed many a similar refugee pheasant here in the past. But things are happening indoors this time of year too. A few weeks before Christmas found us in the Four Rivers Charter School, getting ready for a different kind of Solstice observation. It didn’t involve studying that particular angle of the sun that illuminates inner chambers of ancient stone structures.

It did involve the sun, and bridged the ancient pagan ritual with a modern investment in the future. Often our Tribal friends speak of acting in the name of Seven Generations. That’s what we were up to. We were investing the future generations, and atoning for the actions of several past generations. Those of us who are board members and volunteers of the Nolumbeka Project have, among our responsibilities, stewardship of a moonscape: the remains of a sand and gravel operation on the site called Wissatinnewag. In the years since commercial operations ceased, the pit was sold to our organization, but not without a fight. Now pioneering mosses, lichens, birch and pine have begun reclaiming the ruined sandscape. That landscape was ruined by several generations of a company that had no regard for that historical site that is a spiritual homeland of Native Americans. Money is money. But that one day at the school, a few weeks ago, we were to help make amends and, as I said, to invest in the future. We were, and are, determined to make a contribution and invest in the next Seven Generations: we had enlisted 38 ninth graders and their teachers to spend two hours with us making mudballs. Now if you can imagine 38 teenagers with forty pounds of mud, and set them loose in the school cafeteria, you begin to get the picture. We were about to produce seed balls made of clay, leaf mold and water. The effort was guided by Tom Sullivan, a resident of the Patch, a mason by trade, and now a pollinator prophet working with the Western Mass. Pollination Project. Tom mixed the ingredients, starting with clay he had harvest-



The author’s great-grandmother received this postcard in 1909.

ed during the construction of the Greenfield Court House. You may recall that at one time in its history, what is now Greenfield was at the bottom of glacial Lake Hitchcock. The clays laid down were exposed during construction, and now Tom was melding this ancient material into a substance that would give new life to a struggling landscape. He mixed in one part leaf mold to five parts clay, and added water to make a healthy mud. He then dumped the mud on the cafeteria tables where the students went to work rolling one-half inch mudballs. Let’s say that soon clay mud wound up on faces, forearms and elbows, tee-shirts and the floor. It was interesting to wryly note the gender differences between the mudball makers and their distinct methods. But, regardless, close to one thousand mudballs were produced! The next step was for a mix of seeds of native grasses and hardy wildflowers to be placed inside the mudballs to transform them into seedballs. How to get the seeds inside the balls? Tom spread a thin layer of seeds on every table. The students then separated the carefully rolled balls and tamped them on the spread-out seeds, then put the two halves back together, and rolled each one into a tight and shiny clay ball once again. Just before that step, students were reminded of the spiritual significance of preparing these seeds to

bring new life to a devastated and wounded part of our Mother Earth. This stage was to be carried out in complete silence. A church-like quiet settled onto the cafeteria, and the job was finished with respect. They were completing this for themselves and for generations to come. It goes without saying that before they left, the room was washed up and cleaned down spic and span. The seedballs were taken to our homes, left to dry, and will be placed on the barren earth on the Solstice. Out of respect for the open wounds of the earth there, we will place the seed balls in natural depressions, in deer tracks, coyote and fox tracks. No digging will occur. With our foot we will cover those seeds with a light layer of sand. It is expected that the seeds, nestled in a bed of leaf mold, protected from mice and birds by a layer of clay, will be covered by the next snowfall. And they will bloom in the spring, to welcome the bees and butterflies, when the sun and the light return.

*So it’s rise up friends and
sing this song!
For the summer is short and
the winter long!
Let’s all join hands and form
a chain,
’til the flowers of springtime
bloom again.*



PLACE YOUR BUSINESS CARD HERE (12 WEEK MINIMUM). CALL 863-86661

The Gill Tavern

Come For a Drink, Stay For a Meal

www.thegilltavern.com Open Wed - Sun at 5 PM
326 Main Road Gill, MA 413-863-9006

TURN'S LAWN CARE

Landscape Design & Maintenance
Accepting New Plow Customers
Within 7 Miles of Montague Center
522-2563
www.TurnLawnCare.com

BEFORE
AFTER

Jeffrey Collura, D.M.D.
Cosmetic Dentistry

7 Burnham Street
Turners Falls, MA 01376
Telephone (413) 774-6553
TurnersFallsDental.com

Office Hours By Appointment

CEREC : SINGLE-VISIT DENTISTRY

IN GOOD COMPANY

A SKILLED ELDER COMPANION SERVICE

Offering focused attention,
engaging activities, outings, and
respite for caregivers.

sitalang@ingoodcompanynow.com
www.ingoodcompanynow.com
413-834-7569

Sita Lang
Hospice trained
CPR certified

Be Merry!

We've got you covered
through the holidays!

SINCE 1888
A.H. Rist
INSURANCE
AGENCY, INC.

159 Avenue A | Turners Falls MA
413.863.4373 | ahrist.com

About-Face

Computer Solutions

(413) 863-5447
151 Avenue A, Turners Falls
WE FIX COMPUTERS!
www.about-facecomputers.com

GREAT FALLS HARVEST

fresh • local • creative

Rich flavors from around the world
with a local state of mind.

Thursdays - Fridays 5 to 9 PM
Saturdays 11 AM to 9 PM
Sundays 11 AM to 8 PM

Brunch Saturday & Sunday
11 AM to 3 PM

413-863-0023
50 Third Street
Downtown Turners Falls

Serving Home Grown Farm-inspired Food & Drink

H & O

44 Hope Street, Greenfield, MA 01301
Ph 413 774 3150 | hopeandolive.com

Geri Johnson, Realtor
ABR, CRB, CRS, GRI, SRES
413-863-9736 • GeriJohnson@Realtor.com

Geri Johnson & Associates
REALTORS

66 French King Hwy., Gill WWW.GJAR.COM
GERI JOHNSON, CRS 30 years of experience.

HEART & SOLAR

WORKER OWNED SOCIALLY RESPONSIBLE SINCE 2002

PV SQUARED

HEART & SOLAR

311 WELLS STREET, SUITE B
GREENFIELD, MA 01301
413-772-8788
PVSQUARED.COOP
MA ELEC. LIC. A13764 MA HIC 140077

Certified
B
Corporation